



South East Central 2015 Annual Report



In Confidence for South East Central CWU members

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Picture on front cover.

Winner of the branch photo competition - Lloyd Redmand, David Redman's son. Taken on 12 December 2012. He waited over an hour to take it in the freezing cold. This photograph was taken on a Nikon D700 with a 24mm lens and a 10 stop filter at f13, ISO100, 15 sec shutter speed.

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.

Secretary's Report - Chris Power



Looking back on 2015, we had 3 General meetings in Brighton and Tunbridge Wells and 2 Special Open-reach meetings in the patch, to cover Open reach performance issues too. The attendance at our General meetings has declined to be fair which either means that members are happy with the way the Branch is dealing with things, or that we are holding meetings in locations and at times that aren't suitable, or talk about stuff members don't want to talk about. The digital age, where, predominantly, communication is via some form of electronic means, the Branch is considering moving into that space, rather than perpetuate meetings that don't interest the majority greatly.

However, Branch Committee meetings continue to develop strongly and the 4 meetings we had in 2015 were all well attended. The

Branch may well develop that side of the meetings section, and hold more Special General meetings for single issues (Pay, Performance, attendance patterns) even some that the members ask for themselves, rather than calendarise General meetings. The Branch committee still needs representatives from the 9 percent of female membership we have, and members from a BAME (Black, Asian and Ethnic minority) background, and this is an area we are keen to develop in 2016.

BRANCH ORGANISING & RECRUITMENT

The Branch finished the year with 955 employed members, and around 122 retired members. The employed members is a figure that whilst has dropped a bit from last year, has been significantly consolidated with the 3 month recruitment drive we had in BT at the end of 2015. We ended that 3 month period with some 9 new members and 32 transfers of members for other Branches (Some of which will not be reflected in the numbers given) who now work within the South East Central Branch. This is the best end of year recruitment we have had in 10 years, and shows that there are so many BT employees that transfer from outside of

the Branch area, we will now have to concentrate on this throughout the year. The BT membership of this Branch is c850, we are awaiting final numbers as at mid January 2016.

Part of the recruitment also involves encouraging new activists, especially seeking youth, female, ethnic minority members to become more involved, as these areas are underrepresented. The first step is to come to a Union meeting and consider joining the Branch Committee.

During 2015 we held a high profile recruitment campaign with the Hastings Direct company based in Bexhill. The campaign started with reps sitting outside the premises at an early (7am) start counting employees as they turned up for work. After assessing there were around 1000 employees at the site, 5 Branch reps then parked outside the Hastings direct building at really early starts, many times, over the summer. Leaflets and giveaways were distributed, and it really got the name of the Union out into this workplace. In 2016 we will be targeting another company and will continue projecting the name of the CWU. Do you know of company employees that work in the



Brighton Withead (Openreach Centre of Excellence) has also seen new faces move in, but also a lot of the work conducted at the site has been altered and upgraded, which has caused quite a few concerns and continues to do so. This was only made more difficult when there were in excess of 25 requests to take release (in some form) from the company at this site.

CONCLUSION

Our Branch continues to attain representatives of real high quality, in my opinion, and we always respond to members issues as quickly as we can. Sometimes members become disgruntled about issue that are not only outside the grasp of the Branch, but also of the Union as a whole. This should not detract from the position that we must all stand together. As with the economic climate showing signs that it will be around for a few more years yet, there is no other alternative to standing together, united, both as a Branch and a National Union, to combat any threat that the employer thrusts upon us.

Telecoms sector that would welcome our Unions involvement? Let the Branch know.

As a Branch, organising and specifically recruitment are strong, and hopefully will remain so with the support of all the officers and activists, and support of the members.

BT Group Companies

Within BT Group companies the Branch officers continually meet with management in relation to local issues, and also deal with the many discipline, sick absence and performance related cases that the Company initiate, and the case numbers are very definitely up this year. The Company has taken on many new recruits, which sometimes we have difficulty in finding, and signing up to the Union, and many join the Company on the new grading structure

that was agreed with the Union in 2014. The agreement stated that the amount of Contractors would be reduced to a vast extent, on the understanding that new pay bands would be introduced (TM1 and TM2)

BT Sevenoaks Workstyle is one of our sites that (Openreach Centre of Excellence) has seen many new faces and people come on board, although not as many Openreach people as we were first told. BT Business and Consumer, as well as TSO, are also making Sevenoaks a bit of a home, and we welcome all new members at that site.



Disability Conference Report

The 2015 disability conference was held in the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow, a rather distinguished building to the side of Central station, many of the delegates were, already, familiar with the conference suite as the women's conference was held at the same venue the day before.

Conference started on time, which was a relief as there was a lot to get through in one day and the chairperson opened the event by thanking all the delegates for their attendance and setting out the order of debate.

The equality officer, Linda Roy was unable to speak, but the new general secretary, Dave Ward, took a few minutes to address the conference stating how important the work done, by the delegates, was to the CWU.

The first motion on the pad was proposed by North West London branch, it called on the DAC (disability advisory committee) to liaise with the T&FS executive to monitor cases where BT lines of business were failing to follow BT's own disability policies and procedures.

For me the single most important motion of the conference was motion two, proposed by the DAC, it

instructed the incoming DAC along with the NEC to," strongly campaign to challenge the indignant manner in which many disabled people are being treated by the government in relation to...the unjust stoppage of welfare payment". After reading, from various sources, the appalling treatment of people with varying types of disability by the DWP I believe we, as a union, should be doing everything in our power to highlight these injustices.

Motion seven, again proposed by the DAC, was to instruct the incoming DAC to work with the NEC, the Labour party and the TUC to organise a campaign to give equality reps paid facility time comparable to health and safety reps and ULRs. Although the other motions put to conference were just as important these two were voted as the two to go forward to general conference.

We had speeches from Ian Tasker, assistant secretary of the STUC and Eurig Scandrett who is the convener of Scottish Friends of Bhopal and chair of the Bhopal medical appeal. Eurig gave a detailed and impassioned speech on the continuing fight of the people of Bhopal to get justice for the families of those killed and injured in the

Bhopal disaster. It has been over thirty years since the Union Carbide plant leaked methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas and other chemicals into the atmosphere. Estimates on the death toll vary, but the official immediate figures state that 2,259 people died on that night. A government affidavit in 2006 stated that, the leak caused 558,125 injuries, including 38,478 temporary partial injuries and approximately 3,900 severely and permanently disabling injuries. Others estimate that 8,000 died within two weeks, and another 8,000 or more have since died from gas-related diseases.



A Bhopal Victim

The chairperson then gave a short speech thanking the delegates and closed the conference.

Right Road, Wrong Road?

It is an age old question, do we work better alone or as a team?

There really is no correct answer to this question, however, what we all have to do is find where best our individual persona takes us. Some people, from an early age, know they have to work for themselves whilst others like to work for large companies.

Some people like to work within boundaries and processes within a large company or organisation which helps guide their time at work. Others like more freedom and like the challenges of having to hit targets, to enable them to get payments and bonuses.

BT today is not the company most of us joined, it is a company being taken over from within by people who have, on the whole, never done the job and they are now directing others to do it their way.

Senior managers will tell you that, ***“you don’t need to be able to do the job, just manage people!”*** That’s not really true. If you don’t know what is involved in a job role, then how can you tell if someone is performing in that role? Spreadsheets, targets and goals only tell part of a story.



Within engineering, there are usually many factors that determine a person’s performance, such as; training, tools, local knowledge, geography and whether the job is in a rural or urban setting, to name just a few.

Being the fifth or sixth engineer on a fault, speaks volumes, as this is not a rarity within Openreach presently. I don’t know many companies who would work like this as it is a waste of resource, something which is expensive and precious.

BT Group need to wake up and smell the coffee!

Openreach deals with other telco’s as customers, rather than the millions of individual customers. It’s these CP’s who pay for the service to get their telemetry to a customer’s premises. That makes Openreach the custodian of BT’s telecom net-

work. So why do Openreach promote the poor working practise, of some management teams, in the chase for a mythical utopian spreadsheet driven performance target?

The times when volume/field/service delivery excelled and out-performed all others, was when **TEAMS** were created. Yes “teams”, where the only target was that of a manager, was to manage his patch, and for them to take ownership of their patch and sort out problem jobs, cables, poles or any other issues, and had patch working. There was no individual target because the whole team pulled together to sort out their patch.

Since 2009, Openreach has been driving down the wrong road, as far as driving performance, but if they reverted back to how they used to operate, then within

a short period of time there would be a turn-around in the work queues and attitude of staff. Openreach could create a better place to work and a much better customer experience.

“Individuality and targets!” I remember Joe Garner saying, it was bad behaviours that led to the BANKING CRISIS and he should

know, he came from that working environment. Has Openreach learnt nothing in what drives bad behaviours? In Openreach its usually local managers who push bad behaviours as the only way to achieve targets.

So as a union do we just react against the changes in BT and Business that effect our members, or do we cre-

ate and set an agenda of what we would like to see. If you think you have ideas to take us forward and want to get involved, join our branch committee, attend the odd general meeting and for a few evenings a year make sure you have your say!

Enquiries, contact Dave Kauffman (see page 22)

Retired Secretary - Dave Lomakin

2015, has now passed, with many challenges at Branch and Regional Level. The many issues concerning our Retired Members, brings to the fore how the government restraints can affect and dismay our members approaching retirement.

Our Branch Offices are always available to provide a listening ear to concerns of retired members, as well as advising of further assistance if required from our legal department.

I still retain the Chairperson of the CWU South East Region Retired Members Council [SERRMC]. The committee assesses the progress of pension and retirement issues related to the CWU, as well as, addressing national progression of government applied changes for pensions and social care in retirement. On behalf of the CWU I also attend retirement councils, together

with other union and retirement associations, at the TUC headquarters where government legislation and regulation is examined and questioned.

I attended, on behalf of the Branch and the SERRMC, this years CWU Retired Members Conference in Manchester. I put forward a proposition to conference, on behalf of SERRMC, concerning a greater influence for the CWU in highlighting and objecting to the reforms placed by the Conservative government, with retirement and welfare laws. The proposition was well received and accepted by Conference for further action.

Retiring soon or thinking of leaving BT? Enquire at your local Branch Office to continue your CWU membership, as a retired member and gain access for advice on pensions, benefits, access to the Union Legal Services



and entitlement to receive the CWU death benefit for your nominated next of kin or legal representative.

To help with yearly motor car insurances there is the new Union Line Motor Claims Service. This service can replace the need for members to purchase Motor Legal Cover, which is an addition to many motor policies costing up to £40 extra on the policy. A small but helpful consideration for retaining your CWU membership.

Assistant Secretary East - Steve Taylor



All I can say is that the year started off quite slowly and it could be said it finished at a sprint. After the moratorium on performance management, there was a lull in the system almost like the phoney war in 1939-40. Also like the war, this did not last, with the local management suddenly appearing from the forests of the Ardennes and then, it was batten down the hatches time.

The relentless drive for the utopian world of completing the job before it is given out had started. For those who know the sketch, you engineers don't know you're born! However, if you step back and have a quick reality check, this comedy sketch is actually a farce!

How many times have I gone into a meeting to say that a good improvement plan needs a "who", "what", "where", "when", "why"

and "how". Well most managers can cope with the first five, but neglect the difficult "how". This is not relevant to just engineers, this is relevant for all members to remember, you need to be shown how!

Where is the route cause analysis, showing where they need to improve? Instead all we see is, "use the enablers". So tell me please, which ones are they not using?

I had four cases at the end of the year, of which three went off sick, with stress, after the cases were put forward. Such was the pressure put upon them and the despair in not being able to achieve, they fell ill, unable to sleep, concentrate etc. I am sure their home life suffered too, all down to a performance improvement process at work!

It would appear that my powers of reason and argument failed, or fell onto deaf ears, when we lost the hearing and subsequent appeal. Such was my frustration I escalated this to head office who, unbeknown to me, had lots of other reps doing the same, and they were already in negotiations, with the company, to put a hold on all improvement plans as they were inadequate. This is the state of play, whilst writing

this report.

So have the local management managed to improve performance? I expect they will say they have. As our chairman refers to it, the spreadsheet performance has indeed improved, but we need to look behind the spreadsheet to find the truth.

Yes, most engineers will try to get enough done to stay out of radar view. But in order to do so they have to shorten their time on the job. Who wouldn't think that some of the safety rules are overzealous, and perhaps they could water them down, or not do them at all, as it might save 10 minutes per job? Who wouldn't think that perhaps, to get the job done they might work through their lunch? Who wouldn't think that if the line tested ok, they wouldn't bother to look for a fault and just move onto the next job? Who wouldn't think, I'll swap a pair, as its quicker than fixing the fault? So hence the spreadsheet shows an improvement.

However, what it doesn't show is the mental torment caused to the 3 engineers, driven to going sick for a total of 60+ days. I bet the spreadsheet doesn't subtract those inefficiencies against the improved productivity! It really is coffee smelling time!

Chairs Report - Dave Kauffman



I would like to Thank all those in the Branch for their support during 2015.

*The Branch Secretary,
The Assistant Secretaries ,
And all on the Branch committee*

Anyone wishing to take a more active role in the branch, please contact myself, then we can chat about how that may be achieved. I would like to offer you all a 'Happy New Year' on behalf of the Branch, as we march on into 2016.

Looking back over the year, we can see that BT started 2015 in disarray and confusion on a number of fronts,

it would be easy to comment on these but I am not going to write chapter and verse on BT's ill-conceived ideas. What I would like to concentrate on is how things have effected members of South East Central.

My role in the branch is to lead on any Openreach issues, and one of the burning issues through 2015, especially in the early part of the year, were the Centres of Excellence, commonly known as "site rationalisation", where the CWU nationally have been seeking to deal with this issue. Locally, we as a branch, have the Sevenoaks workstyle building which was identified to receive a number of Openreach people into it, however, many of the designated moves have been postponed until 2016. Witheadan, another centre of excellence, has seen changes with the control functions moving out, people taking release and new work coming in.

In Openreach, we saw the



moratorium on performance management end in March, and since then, there has been a steady ramping up of pressure on individuals to hit targets set by managers who can't show individuals how to achieve those targets.

We advise all Openreach team members who are feeling under pressure, to talk to the union about the issue, attend special branch meetings on the issue, as it's time to challenge Openreach on this process, the targets, and the stress it causes our members. Unfortunately, this issue is not restricted to service delivery, but in all parts of Openreach.

I have met, and continue to meet with Openreach managers, on a regular basis, to talk about business as usual problems and issues. I also attend the regular HQ forums on Openreach briefings. I have done numerous disciplines and grievance's in all parts of BT. As a Branch we have dealt with some important welfare issues in the branch and continue to look to recruit in all aspects of BT group.

SPEED BUMP

BY DAVE COVERLY



Union Learning - Steve Taylor

The last year has been a fantastic year, in which our photographic contest had entries of such high quality, I would be pleased to have some of them on my wall back home. I didn't realise that we had some very talented members and their families.

As with previous years, I only have the casting vote, should there have been a tie, but as usual my role was superfluous once again when the top three photos all had different points. The points were awarded by five individual judges, to negate any personal bias.

The winning photograph was taken by David Redman son Lloyd Redman and although it is not on this page, I believed it was good enough to appear on the front of this booklet. Although you should have a look at the website to get the full impact of the photograph, as the photo had to be cropped to get it onto the front of the booklet.

Second place was won by our member, Jack Graves, who works in Withead Grange, with an interesting photograph in black and white using a long timed exposure. To get the effect he wanted, he had to wait 12 minutes to complete the shot.



The third place went to another family member, that of Sam Green, Son of David Green, a customer service engineer. This was another photo with a long exposure, but Sam didn't wait as long as Jack, as he only waited 2 minutes while looking at the glorious Cornish scenery.



It was such a shame that we could only give out three awards. Look on the website

to see all the photos at cwusec.org.uk and click the link for the photo comp.

Lots of the photos appeared on our South East Central 2016 Desk Calendar, of which we still have a few left, so if you haven't got one and would like one, please contact the branch.

This year, again to be inclusive for you and your families, we are also having a competition for creative writing, where you can send in your creative stories, poems or perhaps even a play. There will be restrictions to how many words and there will be only 2 entries per member allowed - after all the judges have to read all of them. Look out for the next education newsletter which is sent out by email. If you don't have an email and would like to get involved, please contact the office and we will post out the details.

We also had several Genealogy lunchtime sessions which allows members to have access to the, "ancestry" and "find my past" websites during the lunch break. One person managed to find a habitual criminal in his family, who was only outside prison for one census....I wonder who that member is, and what's he doing looking after the union funds?

Political Report - Di Hill



With the devastating results of the General Election, Trade Unions knew within days of the Tories forming a majority in Parliament, they would attack them whatever way possible. We saw attacks on freedom of speech, Human Rights and the right to strike through the Trade Union Bill. This bill is unfair, not needed and undemocratic with wide ranging issues that will impact on our rights at work. Previous Conservative, leaders like Thatcher or Winston Churchill, have always negotiated with the trade unions for reforms, but not this lot, they believe they were born to rule. I attended the TUC Trade Union rally "protect the right to strike" in November at Central Hall Westminster, where many unions were represented, the midwives union was there having now affiliated to the TUC.

It looks like it's all about having one party in one

state. Boundary changes will lower the amount of MP's, going from 650 constituencies to 600; almost all will be Labour seats. The "Short Money", which is the political money that goes to political parties, is to be cut - this was in the small print, in the budget and Trade Union restrictions on funds to the Labour Party, which is the cleanest money in politics, we've all paid tax, will be restricted. TUC Secretary, Frances O'Grady, spoke of the attack on Unions, saying "don't see this in isolation it is part of the political strategy to keep the Conservatives in power for a generation". **We have a Government elected by 24% of the electorate with a 66% turnout.**

It will be difficult for any opposition party to win an election under these terms. Tories are backed by the Murdoch press, Hedge Funds and other asset strippers all after a stake in our services which were "public services". Richard Branson's company, Virgin Care has just landed £126m deal to provide health services in parts of Kent.

This Government has sold off the last 15% of Royal Mail and is selling off the rest of the Country bit by bit. It is expected that we shall be paying £4billion on

agency staff in the NHS this year as Doctors and Nurses are leaving. The change to Nurses bursary will see less applying and the treatment of Junior doctors does little to encourage doctors to stay. Our Education system is struggling with the amount of teachers giving up teaching. Other Countries have helped prop up their steel industry but not ours. The Northern Powerhouse looks like a ploy of George Osbornes nobody really believes him, who will provide the steel for the rail tracks in the North, not UK Steel!!!

In July I was asked to share a platform with the authors and UCATT at a book launch, in Tunbridge Wells. The book called "Blacklisted" the Secret War between Big Business and Union Activists' by authors Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain. Blacklisted tells the controversial story of the illegal strategies that transnational construction companies used to keep union activists away from work, most were Health & Safety reps. The event was a success with lots of people and lots of books sold.

I attended the Labour Party Conference in Brighton, I thought it could be interesting with so many new members, many young ones. **Peter Kyle** the new

MP for Hove opened Conference, his message, stop talking about what we did wrong, but say why we are right. On the 7th May Labour took 12 seats from the Greens in Brighton and now run the council. That did not happen elsewhere in the South East!

FBU, the fire fighters union, voted to join the other 15 Unions affiliated to the Labour Party. The Fire Brigades Union have been hit with huge cuts to services.

Housing is set to be one of the biggest issues in this Parliament. 65 million people in the Country, with 5 million on waiting lists, with 11 million private renters across the Country and 1 in 4 in London on housing benefit. Affordable housing in London is £450,000 and we see in the South East property rising as people from London are being priced out and mov-

ing into the area. The recent bill to make homes fit for humans was defeated by 73 Tories, a third of whom voted are landlords. The Homeless are growing with many having no hope and having to rely on Charity.

Food-bank use in Britain is at record levels. More than one million food parcels, each providing enough food for three days, were given out between 2014 and 2015, more than 400,000 of which went to children. The Trussell Trust said food poverty is set to get much worse, this is just the beginning, as more cuts kick in. The Government are threat-

ening the Trussell Trust who they say are scaremongering.

Family debt has risen in the last 6 months up to 40%, Cameron and Osborne can't blame this on Labour.

As they say, "to make the rich work harder you pay them more, to make the poor work harder you pay them less."

In 1834, farm workers formed a Trade Union, they were sent to Australia. In 2016 the Tories set to dismantle what our fore fathers fought so hard for, Our Rights at Work.

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival
15-17 July 2016

Police and Crime Commissioner, London Mayor
Elections May 5th

EU Referendum 2016?



Obituary

Every year we compile a list of those members who have died and this last year we unfortunately had six members.

Our thoughts go out to their family and friends.

Vincent McBride (retired member)
John Weise (retired member)
Harry England (retired member)
Ernie Ball (retired member)
William Kennard (retired member)
Graham Stanford (retired member)



Please make sure you keep the branch informed of any changes to your death beneficiary

Women's Report - Di Hill

Recognition was paid to Harriet Harman and her 28 years on the frontbench in Parliament at the Women's Labour Conference in Brighton. We should never forget how Harriet fought tirelessly for equality saying, we should never lose sight of the massive, ground-breaking progress the Labour government made for women - on maternity pay, on maternity leave, on childcare, on domestic violence, for women pensioners, on the Equality Act.



Harriet Harman MP

Labour women have more MPs than all the other parties put together.

2015 saw the sad loss to the Women's movement of Denise Marshall at only 53. Denise was the Chief Exec. of Eaves for Women, a charity set up to specialise in all aspects of sexual violence, trafficking and abuse.

She spoke at CWU Conference and she supported and was supported by the CWU. In 2007 Denise was given an OBE for "services to disadvantaged women", but handed it back in 2011 in protest at Government cuts to services for rape and domestic violence.

In September at our women's South East regional meeting we had a speaker from "Rise" the Brighton charity which gives a range of specialist support to help local families affected by domestic abuse, including counselling and special advisors on abuse, not just women but, for men also. They also run a refuge giving shelter to abused women and children. As with most refuges their Government funding has been cut, but they had just managed to secure some funding to carry on with their work. **Rise helpline 03003239985.**

Women's conference, held in Glasgow, was again very well attended with motions across a range of issues. The first one was asking for a working group to look at "flexible working regulations", which are not having the desired outcome, another one was the total disregard of BT management to understand women's issues, mainly the symptoms and effects of the menopause, a

new policy for managers to follow is needed, as we now have an ageing workforce and some adjustment needs to be made instead of conduct and discipline cases! Motions on this Governments' access to Justice for Women and the refuge crisis were carried, but one that I found a real issue was regarding the pressure put on young girls to be a perfect model weight. This was highlighted recently by a model, Charlie Howard, who claimed she had been dropped by her agency as too big for the fashion industry...5' 10 weighing 7.5 stone size 6-8! 20 years ago fashion models weighed 8% less than the average woman, now it's 23% less. The CWU were asked to raise awareness of this stigma which must be broken down, as it is causing many mental health issues including anorexia and bulimia.

Of the 650 MP's, 459 are men, that's 71%. There are 99 Labour women MP's with 132 men, 68 Tory women 263 men, 20 SNP - 36 men, and 4 other women MP's with 27 men.

Women are still bearing the brunt of Government cuts and low wages, maybe when we have 50% of MP's things will get better. **But....55% of all Union members are women!!!**

The film “Suffragettes”, gives an insight into what women went through so we could vote, we need to use it!!!! HerStory is now back in political HisStory, thanks to a wonderful campaign.

The cat and mouse Act 1913.

Hunger-striking women, given long sentences for minor offences, were fed by having a 4 feet long tube inserted down their throat, when they became

dangerously ill they were released, then re arrested when they were well enough to go through it all again.

Many suffered early death due to this treatment. And now women say that they, “can’t be bothered to vote!”

If you would like any info on Women’s issue or would like to get involved, please contact me (details on page 22).



Local Hero - Jack Cade



As a small boy of 9 years old, my school teacher said to me that there was once a battle not far from our Sevenoaks school. Well that fired my imagination of trebuchets, castles, knights etc.

As an adult, I found myself in the town of Heathfield, where any internet search of

that town will bring up the name Jack Cade - a traitor!

After completing my history degree, I thought I better put it to some use and who better than to delve into the character Jack Cade and find out what his story was, and below is an abridged version of what I found.

In 1450 (ten-to-three in old money) England was in a poor state. After the heights of Henry V, his frail son Henry VI had taken over and it started to go all wrong. Most of the French “acquisitions” had been lost and many people blamed the Duke of Suffolk.

The king tried to save his favourite lord, from the mob, by exiling him to Burgundy. But his ship was intercepted on route, and the

Duke of Suffolk was tried in a kangaroo court and executed and dumped on the shore at Dover (all rather rip roaring stuff).

The people in the South East at this time were subjected to high taxes and often robbery from the local lords, and the main stay of the woollen trade and subsequently clothing trade had also collapsed. They were not happy bunnies.

The catalyst for open rebellion seems to be that one of the lords threatened to make Kent a huge hunting park for lords, as a penalty for the death of Suffolk.

The people gathered together at fayres and decided to march upon London to air their grievances (sounds like branch organisation to

me). By the time they got to Blackheath, the word had spread and they were joined by many thousand others. Jack Cade had risen to the top of the pack and became secretary - I mean leader. A list of demands were sent out about their grievances and the what they wanted as recompense.

The King, who was holding court in Leicestershire at the time, decided to come down in force, to have a little chat with the upstarts and put them in their place. A few of the lords decided to race ahead and take on the rebels themselves in order to ingratiate themselves with the king (sounds familiar). However, when the saw the numbers of rebels they decided it wasn't so important to get in that early.

Cade, seeing the vast numbers decided to withdraw from Blackheath, and the king believing the crisis was over, sent two lords and up to 400 men to chase them on their way. However, when the lords reached Sevenoaks the rebels gave battle and slaughtered them. Cade even took the Lords clothes off and used them for himself.

The king panicked at this news, why wouldn't the people be pushed? So he sent out more Lords to find the rebels and backed them up with several thousand men. But these Lords took it

upon themselves to make themselves some more money, by robbing people of their goods.

Meanwhile, the word had got about that Cade had beaten the Kings men, and this drew even more people to his cause. Men from Sussex and Essex joined the men of Kent. Even the Kings soldiers began to say that Cades grievances were just, and started to desert the king, such that he decided to leave and let London look after itself.

On July 3rd, Cade entered London with a fanfare and procession. Cade became Lord of London and during the procession struck the mythical London Stone, (what's left of it is in Tesco's window, opposite Cannon Street station).

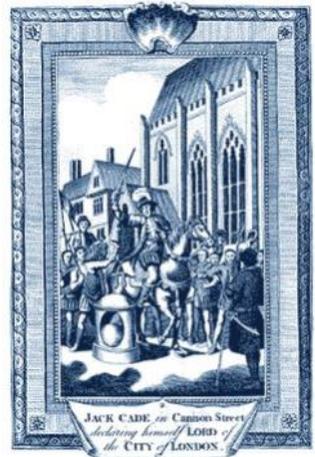
However, like most rebellions, even though Cade insisted that it was to be orderly, events started to overtake him. Initially he managed to execute the much hated James Fiennes (relative of Sir Ranulph Fiennes) the treasurer of England and his equally hated son-in-law William Cromer. But soon the rebels began to loot the local people, and the local populace rose up against them, culminating in a night long battle on London Bridge on 5-6th July.

A peace was negotiated and

pardons were issued to all participants for any misdemeanour prior to July 7th. With the pardons in their hands (and probably some borrowed London money in their pockets) most people started to filter away. But Cade and others continued causing problems in Rochester and Queensborough after this date, making the pardon irrelevant.

Some sort of argument amongst the leaders ensued, over money or organisation when Cade thought it best to split from the group and head South. He was caught and killed in Heathfield on July 12th. Although that seems to be a bad end to the story there was a good end. The King set up the Oyer and Terminer commission, to investigate the grievances of the rebels.

If you want to raise a grievance, let us know and we'll help. There's no need for swords!



Safety Report - George Hannah



Here we are at the beginning of another year; I would like to wish you all a happy New Year. May you all get whatever you wish for in 2016. My thanks go to the branch's USRs for their hard work throughout 2015, as ever it has been hard work. A big welcome to our newest safety reps, Richard

Cain and Steve Rhodes, and a fond farewell to Mickey Baines who, after many years service to this branch, has taken release. "*Lang may yer lum reek*", or in the words of Star Trek's Mr Spock, "live long and prosper", Mickey. Thanks also to Steve Taylor and Peter Hartley for taking the minutes of our meetings.

This coming year looks to be quite difficult as we look forward to the Trade Union legislation which, I have been led to believe, will have an impact on safety reps. Time will tell how this will affect us. We also have to deal with the retirement of the regional chair and the vacuum it has left.

The company has changed the HR system which has

meant that any accident reports are not coming to the branch, we are reliant on the managers contacting me when there has been an incident involving one of our members, this has been raised nationally and although we were promised that the situation was easily rectified we are still waiting. While I understand that the company wants to move forward with its systems, I feel, it has taken a real backward step by not ensuring that when the new system was set up the accident reports were still sent in the way they always had been in the past. I feel that, even though we have been given assurances that a fix is imminent, the company are dragging their heels. A more cynical person could begin to feel that this was all done deliberately in an attempt to prevent accidents being investigated. Thankfully I am not that cynical.

This coming year will see a big change to the way our branch USRs work, the branch recognised that the way we share information was, at best, dated and at worst insecure. We were relying on BT systems and computers to share information. In other words anything I had to send to the USRs, or they had to send to me, was sent through a BT computer and email service.



There was also a need for the USRs to have new cameras as the previous ones were about five years old, but when I looked into the cost I found that it would be more economic to buy tablets, rather than cameras. Each USR has now been issued with a Samsung Galaxy tablet which gives the USR the camera and also an, independent of BT, email account, these are early days as many of our USRs are of an age where they may find new technology challenging, I add myself to that list.

I have no doubt, that as the

year goes on, we will have plenty to keep us occupied as there has been no increase in the budget for building maintenance, so for all the building faults we will still have to keep badgering facilities services. The BT estate seems to be being left to ruin, and I can see very little changing in the coming year, so can I ask everyone to report building faults. The facilities number is 0800 332288.

As always, the USRs rely on your help and support and if you feel that being active, within your union, is something that interests

you, then why not give the branch office or me a call.

**IN CASE OF
FIRE**



**LEAVE THE
BUILDING BEFORE
PUTTING IT ON
FACEBOOK**

Financial Report—Steve Taylor



Once again I can report that the finances of the branch are in a healthy state with not much to worry about.

In our budget, which was agreed with the committee, our expenditure for the next year will be larger than our income, but this will mainly be due to the need to replace some expensive equipment - which will always remain

an asset of the branch. However, this does highlight the need to recruit more members, as with the more members we have, the more facility time and money the branch receives, allowing us to service you better. So if you know a non member, or perhaps a member which is in the wrong branch, please let one of the branch officers know who they are and they will do the rest!

The accounts have been completed and sent off to head office, but they are still waiting for the auditors to come and check them. However, by the time of the AGM, they will be fully audited.

The auditors this year are Gill Sargent and Steve Stutard. A special thanks to Steve for picking up the role late last year, as the role had been left vacant at the last AGM.

Do you fancy auditing the unions accounts? All you have to do is follow the guidelines from HQ, check the bank statements, and look at some of the receipts of the officers. We currently reimburse all auditors with mileage allowance and an auditors payment of £75.

If you fancy helping out for two years, put your name down at the AGM for junior auditor.

Assistant Secretary West - Peter Francis



2015 has been extremely busy year for myself and the branch. I currently work for BT Sport, based in BT Tower, working in the Sports Management Centre. It is a very busy environment and the hub for BT Sport, ensuring all viewers receive the coverage via BT TV, Sky, Web Player or your App 24x7. It can be a very fast paced environment and now BT have the rights to Champions League Football, even busier.

With BT diversifying into TV, and now re-entering the mobile market, with the purchase of EE, BT being able to offer quad play services, will have an effect on every one of us working in BT. We hope it will make the company even more successful, and with it will come more jobs, promotion

prospects, and more importantly maintain and improve our working conditions and reward all that have helped get the company to where it is now. Everyone has contributed to BT's success, and we are hoping to build on what we have already earned and more for the future.

My role in the branch is primarily looking after all the people in Sevenoaks, mainly in the WS2000 building. The site has seen growth in 2015, and we are anticipating substantial growth in 2016, with Openreach and BT Business naming Sevenoaks as one of their, "Centres of Excellence". The building will be unrecognisable from 2013, when Global Services closed down one of their main hubs, with the loss of approximately 100 roles. It appeared to be the end of

the building as a centre for BT, but thankfully this is not the case and it is now a growth area. Currently we have Openreach, Global Services, TS&O, BTB, and BT Group in the building, which shows that all divisions in BT value the site, and that can only mean long term jobs for our members.

The branch are aware that there may be some issues, for some individuals, moving into the COE and we are here to help those team members. Anyone moving into the site, please do not hesitate to contact me. It will be nice to put a face to the name and get to know personally, all those moving in.

This year, I am hoping to get around a lot more, assisting in issues affecting all our members across the branch. We are also looking



to make a lot more visits to our field colleagues, who do not have the opportunity to get into the buildings or get to a local branch office.

After meeting quite a few TM's at the end of 2015, it has become apparent that they appreciated our visits and have got to know their branch officers better, as well as getting any help and guidance that we could give. This also gave us the opportunity to meet all your colleagues that had previously not thought of joining the union, for whatever reason.

Some just did not realise the benefits, but with, "performance management", now affecting so many individuals they can see how important it is to join us in fighting this unjust process, harassment, bullying, amongst other things.

This will be a challenging time, especially as BT always seem to throw a few spanners around to keep us on our toes, but the branch are ready for the challenge

and as always, will do all they can to help and assist members. If you are aware of anyone who is a non-member, but wants to join their colleagues in trying to achieve better and fairer working conditions, please ask them to contact us and we will be more than happy to give them a welcome.



Youth Officer - Liam Reed



Within my first year of being the branch's "youth officer", I have embraced my new role within the union and have attended many events and courses, such as the union skills1 and 2.

I was very pleased to be asked to attend the Labour party conference, in Brighton, where I met Jeremy Corbyn with Jim Rand and Di

Hill. I also met several senior CWU officials such as Andy Kerr, the Deputy General Secretary, at the Labour party conference and again later at the national youth education event.

From these courses and events I have been able to identify some of the main issues that we, the youth of today, are facing such as; the lack of housing, the cost

of rents, and the constant pressure from employers to increase productivity - which is leading to increasing stress and mental health issues within the workplace.

Throughout the year, I have been networking in the union to build up a great contact list of other union members around the country, which will be invaluable to me at a later stage.



ABOUT THE TRADE UNION BILL

The government's trade union bill threatens the basic right to strike.

Employers will be able to break strikes by bringing in agency workers to cover for strikers. This could have big safety implications, lead to worse public services, and will undermine the right to strike. The bill also proposes huge restrictions on peaceful picketing and protests. Picket supervisors will have to give their names to the police – raising concerns about black-listing and will need to carry a letter of approval their union.

There are lots of other proposals in the bill too – including powers to restrict the ability of unions to recruit and represent members in the public sector, restrictions on how unions use their resources and lots more unnecessary red tape.

And all of it taken together fundamentally undermines the rights for unions to organise, negotiate and strike in defence of their members at work.

WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

If this bill passes, the right to strike will be under threat. That'll upset the power balance at work and undermine good industrial relations. Ordinary workers won't have any power to stand up to their bosses – even when they're being unreasonable. And that'll mean worse pay and conditions for everyone, and workers unable to raise concerns about service cuts and safety.

This government is determined to get the Trade Union Bill through Parliament with as little scrutiny as possible. We must not let them get away with it.

A Closer Look At The Government's Proposals

AGENCY WORKERS

The government plans to allow agency workers to replace striking workers. And by requiring 14 days' notice of strike action (rather than 7 as at present), employers will have more time to arrange agency workers to cover for strikes. This has been banned in the UK since 1973.

What are our concerns?

- This fundamentally undermines the right to strike, as it reduces the impact of strike action, and upsets the power balance between workers and employers.
- These changes will make the UK an outlier in Europe. Across the EU large agencies have agreed not to use agency workers to replace striking workers.
- There are health and safety concerns about inexperienced replacement workers taking on the roles of the permanent workforce.
- Inexperienced agency workers replacing strikers might lead to poorer quality services.

PICKETING AND PRO-

TEST

Unions will have to appoint picket supervisors. They will be required to carry a letter of authorisation which must be presented upon request to the police or "to any other person who reasonably asks to see it". The supervisor's details must be given to the police and they must be identifiable by an armband or badge.

Failure to comply could result in a court injunction to stop the picket, or thousands of pounds of damages for the union. Local authorities could also have the right to issue anti-social behaviour orders to picket line participants or protesters.

What are our concerns?

- Existing law already requires union members to comply with tough picketing rules. The new regulations are overly bureaucratic and the penalties are disproportionate.
- The protest restrictions are unjustified and would divert already scarce police resources away from tackling serious crime.
- Unions are currently required to give 7 days' notice before industrial action takes place. Doubling the notice period for strike action to 14 days will undermine negotiations and allow employers to recruit agency workers to cover for strikers.
- This level of scrutiny and monitoring is excessive, undermining freedom of speech and threatening the civil liberties of working people who should be free to defend their rights.

THRESHOLDS

In ‘important public services’ (fire, health, education, transport, border security and nuclear decommissioning), 50% of members must turn out to vote and 40% of the entire membership must vote in favour (that amounts to 80% of those voting, on a 50% turnout).

The government argues these thresholds are aimed at boosting democracy in the workplace.

What are our concerns?

- Strikes are always a last resort but sometimes they are the only way to resolve disputes at work – including in those industries and occupations included in the government’s definition of ‘important public services’.

- The government’s definition of ‘important public services’ is wider than the definition of ‘essential services’ in international law.

- If the government was committed to increasing democracy it would allow secure electronic and workplace strike ballots instead of arbitrary thresholds. Online voting is already used by several national membership organisations including the RNIB, the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales, the National Trust, the Magistrates’ Association, the Countryside Alliance and the Royal College of Surgeons. And it is regularly used by political parties – including by the Conservative party to select their London Mayoral candidate.

REGULATING UNIONS

The Certification Officer (who regulates unions) will be given powers to investigate unions and access membership lists even if no-one has complained about a union’s activities. The regulator will also be able to impose fines of up to £20,000 on unions. The government will be able to charge unions to cover the running costs of the Certification Officer. Costs are likely to increase as the regulator has new responsibilities.

What are our concerns?

- There is no reason why the trade union regulator needs new powers now.

- Giving the Certification Officer the power to confiscate copies of membership records and other documents is an intrusion on union members’ privacy and their right to have an independent relationship with their union.

- Significant new costs will be placed on unions to pay for this red tape – money that could be better spent protecting and promoting the rights of workers.

PUBLIC SECTOR FACILITY TIME

All public sector employers will have to publish information on the cost of time off for union reps, plus a breakdown of what facility time is used for – collective bargaining, representing members in grievances or disciplinary action, or running training programmes.

Public sector employers won’t be able to offer the option of paying for union membership direct through salaries anymore (“check-off”).

The government will be able to

cap the time public sector employers allow union reps to spend representing members.

What are our concerns?

- These changes will restrict public sector employers from investing in good relations with their own employees.

- Deductions at payroll are a common way that employers help their employees manage their money – often childcare, travel, bike or computer payments are made this way. It’s not clear why union membership fees should be singled out.

- These moves will reduce unions’ ability to represent their members and resolve disputes before they escalate.

- Individual public sector employers should have the freedom to decide how they manage employment relations.

- The changes add more red tape for unions, whose time and money would be best spent serving members.

A TUC view
www.tuc.org.uk/about-bill

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Niemöller

We are Trade Unionists— Lets speak out!

Meeting Dates 2016-17

Members of the South East Central Branch are advised that the following meetings are open to all members:

General Meeting	Wednesday, 25th May 2016	Tunbridge Wells
General Meeting	Wednesday, 26th October 2016	Brighton
AGM	Wednesday, 15th February 2017	Venue to be confirmed

Meeting venues will be advised closer to the time. Special Meetings may be called to address urgent issues and notified to you via the email address we have for you.

Committee members are advised that the following meetings are open to committee members:

Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 5th April 2016	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Thursday, 7th July 2016	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 4th October 2016	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 10th January 2017	Uckfield

Dates of all meetings are advertised on the website
www.cwusec.org.uk

South East Central**Current Points of Contact**

		<u>Telephone No</u>	<u>Mobile No</u>
Branch Secretary :	Chris Power cwu.sec.br@btinternet.com	01273 565771	07850 840581
Branch Chairperson :	David Kauffman chair.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01892 522948	07850 815644
Financial Secretary: (& Asst Sec East & ULR)	Steve Taylor cwu.sec.finsec@btinternet.com	01892 522948	0791 8147211
Asst Sec West	Peter Francis cwu.sec.assistsec@btinternet.com		07740 720573
Branch Safety Co-Ord: (& Equality)	George Hannah sec.safety1@btinternet.com		07802 231134
Women's Officer: (& Political)	Di Hill dianne.hill1@btinternet.com		07747 193133
Retired Members Sec	Dave Lomakin Via cwu.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01892 522948	
Youth Officer	Liam Reed Via cwu.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01892 522948	

**Map of the AGM venue. Preston Park Hotel, London Road,
Brighton. BN1 6UU**



*Is The Union Working For
You?*

*Would You Want Things Done
Differently?*

If So.....

*Become An Activist,
Get Involved!*

*The first step is to attend the **AGM on 17th
February** and have a word with Branch
Officers*



South East Central Branch
Annual General Meeting

Preston Park Hotel
Brighton

(opposite Brighton Withdean building, just toward Brighton a little

BN1 6UU

Wednesday 17th February
7.30pm

The agenda will include the submission of the Annual report, Branch officers/posts/committee elections and any proposals pertinent to an AGM, including proposals to Annual conference

Changes to branch bye laws (Biennial elections) and any proposals for the forthcoming year including financial proposals.

There will be a buffet provided for members in addition to a drink at the bar

YOU CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY-
PLEASE ATTEND