

BUILDING TOMORROW TODAY

EWU QUARTERLY UPDATE
ON **BTT** ACTIVITY FROM
TELECOMS & FINANCIAL
SERVICES



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COMPANIES



**OVER 500
SIGN UP FOR
CALL CENTRE
ACTION MONTH**

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FOR FULL REPORT ON
NATIONAL RECRUITMENT
ACTIVITIES IN THE
TELECOMMS SECTOR

*Pictured: Angie Prangell (left)
with Sarah Connolly*



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**ANDY
KERR
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It's been a busy few months for everyone as we continue to work hard to serve our members.

However, we also have the challenge of helping to unionise our colleagues in other companies, and the work we've done in EE in particular over the last few months is encouraging. I congratulate our branches for the effort they've put in, not just in ensuring members get the representation to which they're

“IT'S CLEAR THERE'S SO MUCH GOOD ORGANISING GOING ON ACROSS THE COUNTRY – KEEP IT UP AND BE SURE TO LET US KNOW ABOUT IT”



**KEVIN
LEETION
EDITOR**

I'd like to thank everyone who got in touch following the first edition of our Building Tomorrow Today newsletter. I'm glad that they've been

used in some areas to prompt discussion and generate ideas.

In response to some of the feedback we have a special focus this time around on reaching out to young workers, including a report from the South West on how branches can work together.

Effective co-operation between branches is also apparent in some of the developments go-

entitled, but for leading the way in organising them and recruiting new members.

On top of this, I've been impressed by the efforts made over the most recent Call Centre Action Month where I feel we continue to set a great example to our international colleagues looking on. The increased branch focus and participation has clearly been successful in recruiting, retaining members and identifying new activists. The challenge to branches will be to continue our follow up work over the coming months.

It's clear there's so much good organising going on across the country – keep it up and be sure to let us know about it. ■

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ing on in the North East where we hear how they as a region are tackling some of the challenges of organising workers in non-recognised companies.

Things are also moving on in the North West from last time around. In this issue we hear about how they are taking their regional communications strategy to the next level.

The clear message to come out of all this is that we can be more effective when we work together, and the ROCs supply a structure for enabling this to happen. ■

You can send any comments or contributions to me at:

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BUILDING TOMORROW TODAY



AN UNPUBLISHED JOURNAL FOR CWT ACTIVISTS FROM THE SOUTH & FINLAND



THINGS ARE LOOKING APP!

In our last edition **Mark Norris** reported on improvements branches in the North West had been making to their communications. With things moving on since then here he gives us an update on the latest developments.

Having identified communications as a priority area several months ago, the ROC has been continuing its work in this area. Having set up a communications sub-committee and with the topic forming a standard item on the agenda a survey was sent to each branch looking at what was in place and what improvements they would like to make. It became apparent from this that there was a demand for a mobile phone app, one which would be useful both to current members and to non-members looking to sign up.

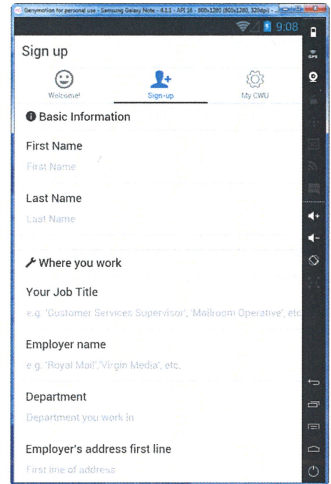
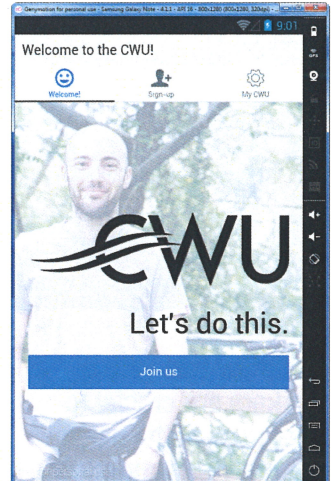
Eager to push ahead with this, the committee was made aware of Jordan Crow, a member who used to work for Virgin Media and while not having held any formal branch positions in the union had nonetheless been active at workplace level. Jordan was someone who had expressed an interest in communications and design and had the knowledge and skills to help develop an

app. Once he was approached he was able to supply the committee with some design ideas along with thoughts on cost, security and maintenance.

Following this, a second survey was sent to branches asking them to identify any questions or ideas about the app, which again received a good response, albeit with some concerns. While many were positive about the development and offered suggestions for what they would like to see included, there were some worries around security and about how beneficial it would really be.

Taking on board these responses, Jordan, with the help of Dan Lewis (Bootle Financial Services) produced a powerpoint presentation to address the concerns raised, to examine how we could build extra features into the design, and to look at production costs and maintenance should we agree to proceed.

A final proposal has now been sent to branches to raise the necessary finance to allow for an 8 month trial. If and when approval is given, we will liaise with the relevant parties at headquarters to discuss how we see the trial working and acquiring



any assistance that we may need during that period.

Nothing has been finalised at this point, but even at this stage it has been a valuable exercise. The first valuable lesson is that there are members out there with some real talent that can be harnessed by branches and the region. Furthermore, the ROC has the potential for allowing good ideas to bear some fruit. ■

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”

PLANNING FOR

We know that young workers are crucial to the future of the union but are you wondering how to get more of them in the union? Maybe you're looking for a branch youth officer or looking a few months ahead. Here are some ideas for starting to put a plan together.

Organising our young members remains one of the key objectives of the national BTT strategy, and a standing item on the agenda of Regional Organising Committees, but there obviously remains much more work to be done.

We all know the challenges involved and equally we all know the importance in overcoming them. While the finer details very much depend on local structures and circumstances, there are some general guidelines that branches and ROCs should find helpful in preparing to discuss and address this.

STAGE 1 IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL

When looking for young activists, we can't just presume that they will naturally come forward off their own back – some people don't realise that they have the skills we are looking for and that inexperience is no barrier. In addition to appealing for volunteers through branch newsletters, emails, surveys, and social media, make use of existing contacts and reps. Has anyone in the branch come across someone that has provided feedback, information or ideas? Are the young members you speak to able to identify any colleagues they think would be worth approaching?

At the same time, finding someone who may be interested in being involved is very much only a first step – commitment is just as important and can only be demonstrated in practice. For that reason it's a good idea to 'test' interested members – ask them to hand out some leaflets or speak to a colleague and then the following week ask them to feedback how they found it.

STAGE 2 SUPPORTING ACTIVISTS

Once you've identified someone that has demonstrated the necessary commitment it's important to not just leave them to get on with things. Assign them a mentor with whom they can have a regular meeting and bounce ideas off. While there's no need to be overly formal about such arrangements, it is a good idea to agree some specific tasks and objectives and meet to check progress.

Of course, support needn't just come from branch officers. You can put them in touch with other young activists in the branch, region or, indeed, the country. Have a look at the resources available (above/below/opposite) for more ideas.

STAGE 3 BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

A successful youth officer will not be acting alone. In order to properly represent them, he/she

FOR THE FUTURE

should have regular contact with young members to get feedback on certain issues. This can also be used as an opportunity to encourage activity and get more people involved. This could take the form of a committee or a looser network of points of contact. Either way, if done successfully, there should be members with skills and experience ready to put themselves forward should vacancies arise in the branch.

USE THE ROCs

Finally, the ROCs have an important role to play in helping branches. Not only are they a forum for discussing and sharing resources and experience but they can also set regional standards and objectives to inspire and inform branch activity. Ideas and concrete tasks can be discussed with a progress report supplied at the following meeting. The idea would be to encourage a mindset where such tasks are time-bound rather than easily postponed (although obviously it would be wrong to be completely inflex-

ible). Furthermore, the ROC can bring young activists together from across the region and provide another avenue for getting involved, finding out about the union and learning about organising.

As always, T&FS organisers are always available to help branches and ROCs develop realistic but effective plans and to help approach young members.

BTT VISION FOR ORGANISING YOUNG WORKERS:

“
TO INSPIRE OUR YOUNG MEMBERS AND TO BE INSPIRED BY THEM – BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE BY INCREASING INVOLVEMENT TODAY”

- A youth officer in every branch, supported by their fellow officers and actively engaging with young members in the workplace
- A network of young members in every branch, engaging in union activity, using their skills, speaking to colleagues, and supporting the BYO

- A young Point of Contact (POC) in each workplace to feed back to the key young activist and to talk about the union to colleagues
- To foster a culture of collectivism among our young workers
- Young members attending ROCs, involved in setting the strategic direction for organising in the region

USEFUL RESOURCES

- www.cwu youth.org
As well as including the latest news and events the site includes a branch youth officer toolkit and top tips
- BTT guide for young workers in telecoms and financial services – available in hard copy or to download from the T&FS section of the CWU website
- There’s also useful links and resources available from the TUC at www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/young-workers

SURVEYING THE SOUTH WEST



Some regions have already been putting some of the theory of reaching out to young workers into practice. Here **Adam Gibbins** from the South West tells us more.

As the Branch Youth Officer for Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, I also sit on the South West Regional Young Workers Committee, on which I also serve as secretary. Last year, as a committee, we created and distributed a survey to go out to all of our young members across the region.

After receiving the responses, 27 young members across the T&FS constituency stated they wanted to become more involved – many more than we were anticipating. Working with Dan Harris (who is the TSO SPOC for the South West Region) and with assistance from the T&FS organising team, a follow up plan was put in place.

The first step was for a copy of the BTT Young Workers' Booklet to be sent to each of the interested members accompanied with a letter from Andy Kerr explaining what the booklet is, why they were receiving it, and advising them that they would receive a call from the CWU.

“WHAT THIS SHOWS IS SENDING OUT A SURVEY IS JUST THE BEGINNING. WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT IS THE FOLLOW UP PROCESS.”

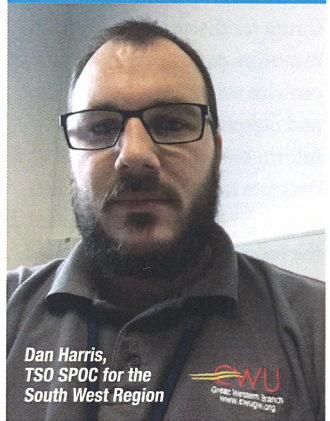
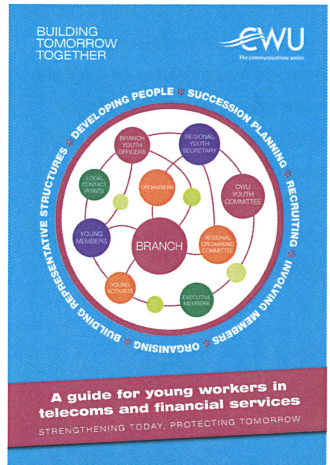
Following this, phone calls were made to each member in order to find out how they wanted to get involved, what they thought of the booklet, and how they thought they might be able to use it. Over six weeks, we made three calls to each of them, after which it became apparent that we had 13 members still interested.

We felt it would be a good idea to try to bring everyone together, to talk through the next steps and build a network to support each other, however, the geographic spread of members complicated matters, so we had to devise a way to bring the group together. As such, the branches set up a joint email group to keep everyone connected, which was led by myself and Dan. By using an email group, we were able to keep everyone engaged and we were able to test people to see who would be coming back to us.

It didn't all go to plan. We went on to set up an e-newsletter to go out to all young members across the branches to try and encourage more members to get involved, but this failed to generate the same sort of interest as the survey. However, the email group continued to be effective. Both branches have kept those

members involved with Jack England now serving as the new youth officer for Great Western Branch and the other now the BME officer for Somerset, Devon and Cornwall Branch.

What this shows is sending out a survey is just the beginning. What is really important is the follow up process. Without taking the time to speak to those members individually we would not have found the two young workers to take branch positions. ■



WORKING IN UNION



Organising and servicing members in non-recognised companies can sometimes put a strain on branch resources. **Pavel Krajca** tells us of how regional co-operation in the North East can help to address this.

With a number of high priority non-recognised sites in the region, the North East has, for some time, had to be smart about allocating resources in order to support those members. Since the introduction of the Regional Organising Committee, branches have successfully found ways to work together and become even more effective.

When Andy Kerr and John East were able to secure access for recruitment events in EE call centres, no-one was happier than officers of the Tyne and Wear Clerical branch who had been helping to organise, advise and represent members in the company and its predecessors for over a decade. When the call went out for volunteers to leaflet at the Darlington call centre in May, not only were the branch there as usual, but they would be joined over the two days by the ROC chair, Jonathan Bellshaw, the North East branch youth officer, Matty Proud, and Stephen Albon from the T&FSE.

Thanks to this team effort, hundreds of recruitment packs were handed out and dozens of new members signed up. How-

ever, while this is undoubtedly a positive development, increasing numbers of new members in EE creates new pressures on a branch that does not see a corresponding increase in facilities to allow



Left to right: Andy Kerr, John East, Jonathan Bellshaw and Kay Fletcher

them help new members with their issues. While reps are in place in Darlington, as well as the Doxford and North Tyneside sites, the region has found a way of supporting branches with large proportions of members working for companies that do not recognise the CWU.

Kay Fletcher was the secretary of Bradford Financial Services branch until four years ago; now she continues to be involved in the union as a Disciplinary and Grievance specialist. Based in Leeds, Kay spends approximately two days a week representing members in BSkyB, Virgin Media, and Direct Line, and in recent

months has also been assisting Tyne and Wear Clerical branch with representation in EE.

When asked about why she came back last year, Kay told us, "I've seen the difference a union makes. Some workplaces really don't treat their staff with the dignity and respect they're entitled to and get away with so much. I wanted to make sure that members, no matter where they work, are treated fairly."

While Tyne and Wear members have so far been the main benefi-

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ciaries of the close co-operation developing between branches, the Regional Organising Committee has also been discussing how a similar method could be implemented to help organising efforts at Capita, Dearne Valley in the coming months. It looks like a regional approach to organising members in the North East is here to stay. ■

OVER 500 SIGN UP FOR CALL CENTRE ACTION MONTH



Paul Donovan chronicles activities across the land to recruit new CWU members in the telecomms sector during the month of October.

Nationwide over 500 new members across T&FS have signed up to the CWU as part of Call Centre Action Month.

Lincolnshire and South Yorks organised three call centre events over the course of the month in Lincoln, Doncaster and Nottingham, signing up new members in Eurest and BTFS as well as former Manpower members who had recently started a BT contract.

“What came through loud and clear was that the CWU was there for them,” workplace rep Jonathan Bellshaw told us. “We had lots of discussions about the services that we provide and it was encouraging that many members expressed their desire to become more involved in the union.”

“Whilst the aim of our activities on call centre action month was about promoting the union and communicating with our members, it resulted in nearly 50 new members on top of our ongoing efforts.”

At the EE site in Merthyr Tydfil, the union signed up 32 new members over two days. The reps found that some staff were coming up to the stall on Monday then coming back to sign up on

the Tuesday. “We couldn’t have been more pleased with how it went,” said Angie Prangell, “We are still getting feedback on the back of the days, so we hope more members will sign in the next few weeks.”

In the Midlands, reps from the ALGUS branch set up a stand outside the restaurant at the Santander site in Leicester and handed out leaflets, goody bags and application forms to join the CWU. Elsewhere, Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester organised a recruitment event at the Midland Telephone Exchange, centring on the theme of “being in the union is a sweet deal. The organisers gave out our retro sweetie pots and CWU diaries.

“We had a great time meet-

ing members new and old”, said Vicki Cornelius, branch secretary at Birmingham Black Country and Worcester. “We encouraged people to sign up to receive CWU Connects, the weekly CWU update and we are hopeful that this will generate some more activism.”

In Truro, Debbie Hardy, branch chair, and Adam Gibbins, youth officer, ran a stall in the canteen to attract new members. Members were offered CWU goodies, non-members got information and an application form with a pen.

At Exeter, Debbie was joined by Julie Rich, rep, and Sara Barnicoat, field organiser ran a stall during lunchtime. People walking by were given information (post-cards) and a bottle of water. Anyone Julie did not know was asked if they were a member. ■

“WE ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO SIGN UP TO RECEIVE CWU CONNECTS, THE WEEKLY CWU UPDATE AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THIS WILL GENERATE SOME MORE ACTIVISM”



Debbie Hardy (left), Sara Barnicoat (middle) and Julie Rich (right) talking to members