

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

South East Central CWU Annual Report *2007 / 08*



In Confidence for South East Central CWU members

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INTRODUCTION

Within the BT Group 2007 was quite a watershed in regard to Industrial relations in my opinion. It appears more and more issues are now being left with branch negotiating officers to deal with, and this takes up a lot of time and whilst there are more Union reps coming forward, the ability to attain time of work to complete Union time is becoming much more difficult. In fact last year we were over claiming some 5 hours from BT for release of employees to conduct Industrial relations work- and that won't be allowed in 2008. It should be said that 60% of this work is carried out within the BT Openreach Field services sector, and since mid 2007 this was led by the attendance patterns issue. Meetings with 7 different management streams within Openreach were conducted, to discuss attendance patterns and negotiate on the voluntary National agreement. The issue is not over (By far) and we have held attendance patterns meetings in Brighton, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells for members to have their say on the issue.

GENERAL MEETINGS

During 2007 we had 8 General meetings in total around the branch area. These meetings were spread out over the main areas of Tunbridge Wells, Brighton and Hastings including a meeting at Eastbourne. All were well attended, although it is a little surprising that none of the meetings were exceptionally well attended when you consider the massive impact the attendance patterns situation on Openreach could have on peoples working lives.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Branch committee Uckfield- January 2008

The committee continues to "find its feet" in my opinion during the year. Decisions were taken at the committee which raised my eyebrows several times, although it should be said that committee meetings were never dull. In fact one committee meeting



went on for so long the meeting had to be adjourned for the night and reconvened 3 weeks later. Therefore this year we did end up in having 5 committee meetings. We have 23 members on the branch committee although we have very few female and members from an ethnic minority background and it would be welcomed if members who haven't thought of standing for the committee could consider standing this year.

BRANCH RECRUITMENT

It has been a good year on recruitment during 2007. We finished the year on 1010 Occupational Union members (Those members in employment) of which around 920 were within the BT Group of businesses. Predominantly we recruited within Openreach Field services where around 30 new members were signed up during the year, with the addition of apprentices and employees picked up from other parts of the business. Whilst we lost a fair percentage of members due to retirement and release schemes the overall picture was pretty good. The year did finish on a high with recruitment campaigns being held at Brighton Withdean and Kemptown, and Sevenoaks, with a campaign for Tunbridge Wells in the pipeline. It should be said, however, that the campaigns were triggered by neighbouring branches transferring large groups of members away from our branch resulting in a "quid pro quo" position battle. The amount of members we have greatly affects the service we can offer as the amount of members within the company dictates the amount of time we get for representatives. To finish over 1000 members was a good achievement and my thanks go to those officers whom helped the ongoing campaign. It has been a quiet year for recruiting within other areas such as Virgin media, INKFISH, Monteray- although we did have a specific General Meeting during the year for our Virgin media member which was well attended by over %60 of the Virgin media members.

GENERAL BRANCH ISSUES

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the officers and committee of the branch for their assistance and commitment over the last 12 months. Both A/ Secs Steve Taylor and Dave Kauffman have worked very hard on Industrial relations issues within BT Group, and have attended meetings on their own, on behalf of the branch. Steve Awcock continues to pursue safety issues with the vigour he always has, and Dianne Hill is the overseer of all the branch membership records. The finances are kept in good fettle by Chris Dunn and thanks to all.



**Chris Power (Secretary), Dennis Noble Chair
and Dave Kauffman (A/Sec)**

BRANCH SECRETARY – CHRIS POWER continued

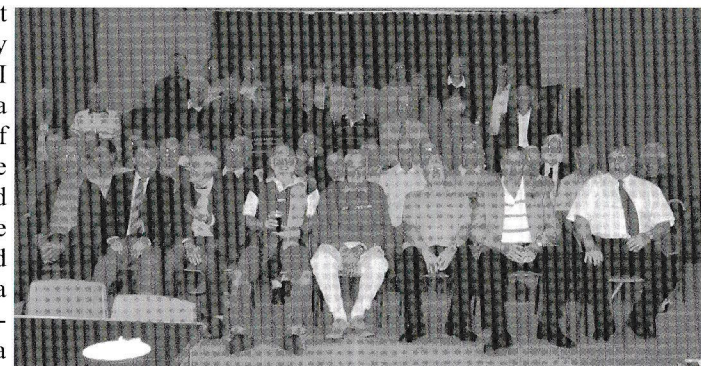
On a personal basis it has now been some 14 years since I became a full time official, being Secretary of the old "Brighton branch" and having taken over the mantle from Chris Dunn for the South East Central branch some 3 years ago. However, as has been said, the workload gets ever more heavy and I couldn't write this report without stating my thanks the Dennis Noble – Brach Chair- whom I have worked with for several years, and with whom I have a great deal of respect for. Dennis always puts up with my knee jerk reactions on situations and robust opinions, but always brings me down to earth with realistic arguments and sensible opinions. So once again, thanks to Dennis for his help over the last year and I hope our friendship, both working and on a social basis can continue. We make a great team and working relationships are so important to be able to carry out work effectively and Dennis and myself have that relationship I feel.

Within Openreach both management style and discipline cases have been areas we have continually referred through to Regional Director Level, and the continual identification of surpluses within the rest of BT Group are always a cause for concern. Whilst nobody likes surplus identification of people, and the method surpluses are explained are always spurious to say the least, however, it is a fact that the Union have one of the best agreements around in regard to the Personal rights in perpetuity agreements, which means that pretty much nobody can loose their current pay scale, and there appears (at this point in time) no move by the company to compulsory redundancy.

I am aware that at some stage most members question their Union membership but it is most definite that the Union can only help and assist Union **members**. It was good to see during 2007 a pay award of 4.7% which was one of the best in the country across all industries, and this was overwhelmingly accepted by members in a ballot even though it tied everyone to a pay deal for 2008.

SOCIAL EVENTS

This is an area that did not see a lot of activity last year and one which I feel it would be good for a member to take hold of and breathe new life. We have funds, and just need to find a member with the inclination to pursue and carry out functions of a social nature because social occasions are such a good way for Union members to interact. The retired members function for 2007 is now being moved to early 2008 as far as I am aware, to avoid nasty weather when travelling and deciding upon an alternative venue. This is a great event, and the last one I went to at Hastings



Retired Members Social Event Hastings

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BRANCH SECRETARY – CHRIS POWER continued

Civil Service club, during 2006 was well attended by mainly ex Tunbridge Wells retired members although it is hoped a more central location will attract more retired members from the Brighton area. Let's hope we can do more, but, as is usual, it's the time and input for someone to organise from start to finish.

For those that have supported me during the last year I thank, and for those members I have helped- I was pleased to be of service. It is hoped that many members can make the Annual General meeting on Wednesday 13th February starting 7.30 at the Preston Park Hotel, London Road, in Brighton. I wish all members health and good fortune for the coming year.

Chris Power- Branch Secretary- South East Central CWU Annual Report - Jan 2007

Chairs Report 2008

May I begin by wishing all our members & their families a belated Happy New Year, on behalf of the officers and committee of the South East Central Branch of the CWU. "Wow" where did that year go then? It seemed to just fly by.

Once again it was a year when we saw a relentless need for change by the company.

The pace of change never seems to slow down even for a minute, so that we can all get our breath back. Needless to say along with change goes uncertainty in some areas for our members. Will my job for example be moved to India, will technology engulf my present job, will I be made redundant as a result, are all questions we in the union office are frequently asked. Unfortunately we do not have all the answers at present. Indeed I don't believe the company has all the answers at this moment in time either.

Like I say, unsettling times for us all.

Regional /Committee Structure.

The branch committee did meet on a regular basis throughout this past year. We have had some good contributions and debates at the meetings and overall attendance has been good. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those members who served on the branch committee this year for all their time and effort. In short it can seem to be a thankless task serving on the branch committee; however it is much appreciated by the officers.

Chris Power and I have once again been part of the South East Regional committee. We also attend the newly formed Openreach Southern Committee on your behalf.. We also sit on the South East Regional Joint committee of which I am the Chairperson. These meetings prove useful to us in getting the same message from our members across the whole of the region. We have continued to raise your concerns right across the South East area via these meetings.

I am also pleased to report that Both Dave Kauffman & Steve Taylor has been attending Industrial Relations meetings with management on your behalf, so many thanks Dave & Steve for your efforts throughout the year.

Finances.

I would like to thank Chris Dunn our Financial Secretary for looking after our finances for the past year. It gives me great pleasure to tell you that the branch accounts are once again looking very healthy. This was due to some stringent accounting by the Financial Secretary throughout the year.

Women's Issues.

Dianne Hill has served as our women's officer again this year. She has also looked after the Political & Equal Opportunities side of things on behalf of the branch so thanks to Dianne.

Health & Safety.

I would like to thank Steve Awcock and his safety team for all the excellent work they have done on the safety front this year. I have to say once again the South East Central branch has been at the forefront of the health and safety arena with innovative ideas and suggestions to enhance the way forward as far as health & safety is concerned. Once again accidents this year have still been higher than we all would like. As the officer who deals with the accident cases for the branch I can say that one accident is one to many. We all need to particularly focus on our individual risk assessments and work safely. I know there is currently a big drive by management and the union to try and get the accident rate down within our area good news for us all.

Openreach

By far the biggest issue on Openreach at the moment is the Attendance Patterns review. Currently taking place. Both Chris Power and I have attended several meetings on the subject. I am sure Chris will cover the negotiations in more detail in his report. Currently around 70% of our workload is accounted for within the Openreach organisation.

We continue to meet with the local senior managers on a regular basis to air your concerns.

Here are just of the other main items discussed with managers throughout the year, Work Allocation, Jobs Furthered Back, Tour build, Disciplines, Critical Defects, to name but a few. We currently meet with five Senior Operations Managers or SOMs in our branch area. So as you can see we are kept pretty busy with Openreach issues.

BT Wholesale.

With the onset of the 21CN project now firmly upon us as we speak, I can only say these are very worrying times for our members within the Wholesale division.

There is no doubt that 21 Century Network will decimate the traditional work our members have always embraced.

BT's "Efficiency Challenge" is now very much in evidence.

BT Operate and Design is now operational. Most of our members mainly at C3 grade, fall into the category of BT Operate. Again we will have to wait and see how this new set up performs. Our members in Global services particularly in the Sevenoaks Workstyle building have also seen some of their lines of work going to India. Fortunately for them, they have been moved onto other teams & contracts within the division. The union nationally are trying to negotiate with the company to try & stop as much work as possible going abroad

I have to say the problem is purely based on cost. It's a fact that BT can save in the region of 40% of its wage bill by outsourcing work to India. Bearing this in mind, you can appreciate the difficulty we have in trying to keep this work in house.

Our business division colleagues have also faced similar changes to their work streams although the HITS project seems to be going from strength to strength.

Branch Meetings.

We have held regular branch meetings around the patch and they have been well attended. Please try and get along to a branch meeting near to you. I will guarantee you will find out about something that is of interest to you, so come on give it a try.

Finally I would like to thank you the members for giving me your support as your chairperson over the last year. It really has been a pleasure to serve you on behalf of the CWU. I hope to see & talk with many of you at this year AGM. Should I be re-elected, I will continue to fight for better terms & conditions of employment for you all.

Dennis Noble South East Central Branch (Chair)

Branch committee 2008

If you are interested in joining the South East Central branch committee which meets 4 times a year on a Tuesday evening in a central location (At the moment Uckfield Civic centre) to help formulate branch policy and discuss the branch negotiating standpoint on many issues please return this form to either branch office as detailed in this report, or make yourself known at the AGM, at the Preston Park Hotel in Brighton on Tuesday 13th February starting 7.30pm. It is unlikely all positions for committee will have been filled.

Committee meetings last 2 hours and we are especially seeking members from ethnic minorities backgrounds, women, and gay/lesbian members to join the committee.

Also members from companies other than BT are particularly welcomed as we represent members in some 9 companies in this area. If you are unable make the meeting please forward the slip below to **fax 01273 555533** where upon receipt an officer will contact you to discuss more

NAME.....

EMAIL ADDRESS.....

CONTACT NUMBER.....

David Kauffmans report to the branch for 2007

2007 has been a year of challenge we as a branch have had to negotiate with many different parts of BT on Attendance patterns
Within the field service area, within the complex teams, within the controls and within WLR3. The impact will have effected most but we hope that any changes made we have got down to a minimum of upheaval.

We have seen a challenging time at work within certain areas following a very strange discipline procedure where even on a first offence 10 point failure during audit we see people being disciplined without any chance to rectify there error through training or coaching. This led to a number of discipline cases for the principle officers of the branch to deal with over the year. I was always under the impression if people can't do a task, you coach them! With this in mind I feel we have to urge management to coach and train through work systems where there might be misinterpretation and misunderstanding of particular rules and processes that may offer grey areas of working to our members.

2007 has seen movement in the work people do in our area being moved over to India work that was supposed to be non technical. It would seem in some cases this may not be Non Technical. It could also be said that the management in some of these work areas does not understand the meaning of negotiation and feels its more like a dissemination of information when and if we talk with them. We depend on our members bringing to our attention times and divisions where this may be happening and even if we cannot deal directly with the situation then perhaps we can escalate to national level. I think that a lot of BT customers want to be dealt with by people in the UK this might be for many reasons about information retention and security but we need to show BT that we understand what there customers want and its not always what BT gives them.

We have had a recruitment drive like we do every year as we always encourage people to join the union so we can negotiate on your behalf from a position of strength These recruitments went well and if you know of anyone who wishes to join please let the branch office know and we can get forms out for you to sign them up.

We have seen change s within BT to Operate and Design and in some cases we have seen people we have known for many years retire
I wish all those that have retired good luck in the future with whatever they do.
Those that are left in BT design and Operate have been faced with career changes and redeployment some within the unit and some have moved on to other teams.
We have seen the 21cn build continue to be rolled out and this will only have more of an impact on us all as it happens
I myself have spent a lot of time designing a new branch banner which I hope to have completed by the AGM in FEB 08
Yours sincerely
David Kauffman



BUYING OR SELLING A HOUSE?

CWU members can use our solicitors for all conveyancing matters. We have negotiated a 20% discount on our solicitors' standard rates.

**20%
DISCOUNT**

Members wishing to use this service should contact Legal Services Department on **020 8971 7444**



As you know, the CWU Legal Services Department in conjunction with its approved panel solicitors set up the CWU Accident Helpline.

CWU ACCIDENT HELPLINE

FREEPHONE 0800 804 6674

www.cwuaccidenthelpline.com

Member's Name _____

Membership Number _____

The scheme was established to make sure that if you, or a member of your family have an accident (or have had one in the last three years) you can register the details with us quickly and easily.

USE EXPERTS YOU CAN TRUST!

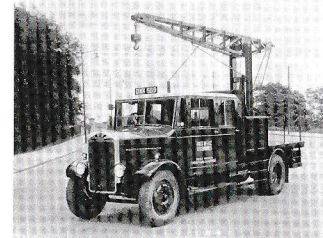
DON'T BE TEMPTED to contact the compensation companies advertising in the media, or use any other company Help scheme offered. **ONLY CWU APPROVED SOLICITORS HAVE THE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE to ensure the best possible result when you make an accident claim.**

We work for you totally free.

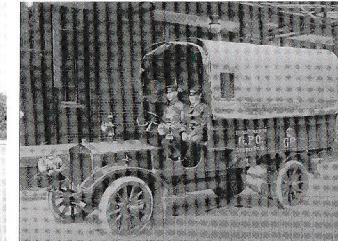
There are NO legal or any other costs to you at all!

Through the Ages

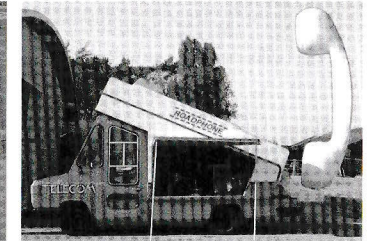
A fun quiz to test your knowledge of days gone by!



- A) Morris
- B) Leyland
- C) Albion



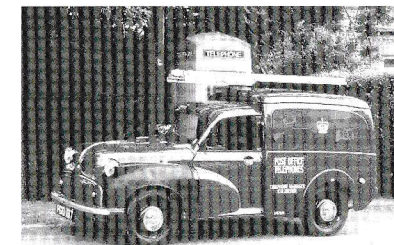
- A) Albion
- B) Aldays & Onions
- C) Karrier



- A) Sherpa
- B) Ford Transit
- C) Dodge



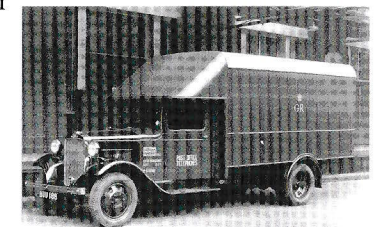
- A) Commer TK
- B) Commer PB
- C) Commer OK



- A) Morris Minor
- B) Morris Clubman
- C) Morris Dancer



- A) Alday & Onions
- B) Karrier
- C) Morris



- A) Morris
- B) Bedford
- C) Albion



- A) Sinclair
- B) Halbit
- C) Leyland

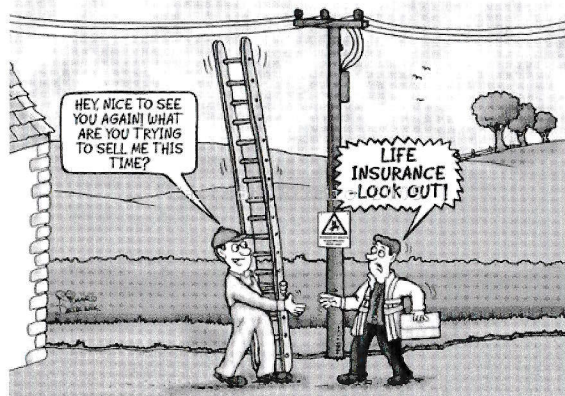
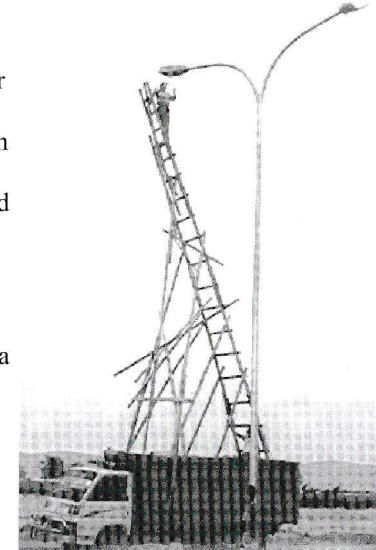
Answers can be found at the Branches web site:

www.cwusec.org.uk

Steve Awcock Health & Safety Co-ordinator

I must take this opportunity to thank all of the safety committee as I do every year. This year however has been a particularly trying year for various reasons and the committee has come through it with more resolve and determination than before. I have told them all that they should all be very proud of what they have achieved this year and their enthusiasm is unprecedented throughout the region. I hope this Branch and all its members appreciate the work that all the active USR's (Union Safety Reps) do. They carry out their safety duties extra to their normal work duties and by just being a USR raise their profile within the company which can sometimes make their working conditions a little more complicated than normal.

It has been a very challenging year this year as we have tried to open better channels of communication with Openreach management. Sometimes this has not been easy and other times it has been very successful. We continue to represent the members throughout the Branch in all division as well but on a local level we deal mainly with Openreach management. This mainly involves Customer Service divisions and there are plenty of issues within this division to keep the Branches two Safety Officers all 20 Union Safety Reps (USR's) and myself busy. I would like to report it is mainly down to the failure of management to create a safe working environment but this would not be true. We are forever getting cases of individuals not complying with even the basic safety regulation laid down by the company. This situation however does not exonerate the company as

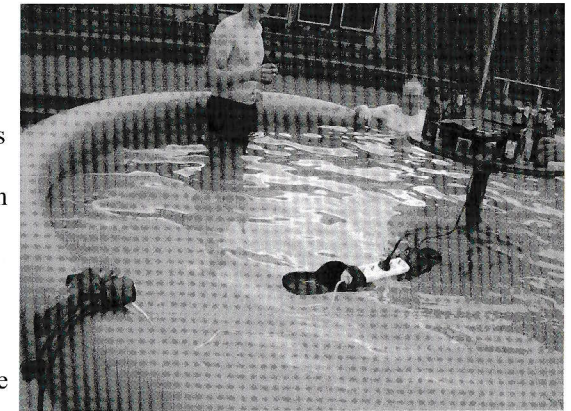


we feel there are areas where the company can improve its training and awareness greatly. Recently I attended a meeting to present a "Safety Forum" the Union would like to run for new recruits. It is this Branches safety committee's opinion that these are the engineers most at risk. It was received reasonably well and we are just waiting to hear whether it is something the company would allow us to run within the southern region of Openreach.

Throughout the year I attend various team Meetings throughout the Branch area and throughout the safety issues discussed I often get the comment that Health & Safety is purely down to common sense. Whilst there is an element of truth in that statement, it does take a huge leap of faith. We are assuming that everyone has common sense. A recent photo sent to me (opposite) by one of the Safety Officers proves this point perfectly. We have to have safety regulations to protect "Us" from people like them and protect them from themselves. I would also agree however that we do have to strike a balance and sometimes that balance is missed.

Issues

The main issue that we have to deal with at present is the same as it has been for the past couple of years and that is LOW DROPWIRES. There are numerous reasons for this of which I can't go into all of them now (assuming you still want to be awake at the end). The main issue has to be that if you are unsure of what constitutes a road crossing then please, please contact your line manger before carrying out any work. If once you have spoken to your manager and you are still not sure try and get then to attend the site, seeing is much better than describing. If they are unable to attend site and you are not sure please contact the Branch, the three principle safety officers numbers are at the end of this report (please use them). Due to recent cases I have been accused of being "disconnected" from Openreach management and their interpretation of the regulation applying to Drowpwire, A/C heights across "carriageways" and the definition nightmare that statement opens. I have been more than willing to discuss these issues as I feel that most cases are now arising through paranoia and fear of discipline. So far I have not been given that opportunity but if I am I will make sure all the concerns raised to me throughout the year will be put to the company. Some of you may or may not be aware but the whole issue of Low Dropwires is being reviewed at the moment and a whole new approach is being considered and discussed with the Union as you read this.



Health & Safety & Common Sense!

Next Year

As a committee we are already preparing for the next year. We have just purchased approximately 30 thermometers to place in various MDF's throughout the region to monitor the temperature throughout the year. We will require the assistance of the frames engineers for this and a full briefing will be issued where we place these thermometers.



Publication from the Health & Safety Committee of the South East Central Branch
www.safetycommittee.org.uk

Safety Cont...

The plan being to go to the company with hard evidence of the problem of heat in MDF's rather than it just being hear say. We also plan to start issuing a safety briefing once a month on varying topics to keep you the members informed on existing and new Health & Safety Issues.

Lastly if there is anyone interested in becoming a Branch Safety Representative please contact either office or any of the safety officers listed on the contacts page of this report. If you are interested and contact the branch before the AGM you can be nominated on the night and if your nomination is accepted and agreed by the meeting you could start your role immediately.

Equality

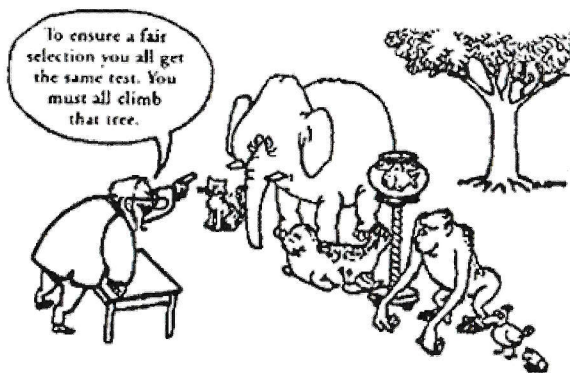
Almost all of our reps have now received the CWU one-day Equality and Diversity course, joining forces with local postal branches to deliver three courses locally; this was to bring us in line with the then EOC ruling. On October 1st 2007 the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission combined to form the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This now gives us some joined up thinking and actions. BT as with many other employers now also takes Equality and Diversity very seriously.

If you are under 30-years old the branch is in desperate need of a Youth officer, you would need to attend 2-4 S.E. Regional youth meetings per year and the Youth Conference if possible. CWU Youth, debate and campaign on many issues, minimum wage, affordable housing and Agency workers to name a few. If you would like to get involved, please ring or email myself or the branch office.

We also need representatives to attend the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Conference, dealing with Rights, Civil Partnership, Goods & Services and current issues. The CWU LGBT, banner was paraded at the Brighton Pride festival many branches taking part, if anyone is interested in getting involved in this email laurie.smith@centrallondon.org.uk

Also the Black Workers Conference and the Disability Conference we need representation. If anyone is interested or would like information please contact myself or the branch as it is always better to be represented by you the members who know and are affected by these issues.

Dianne Hill



Women

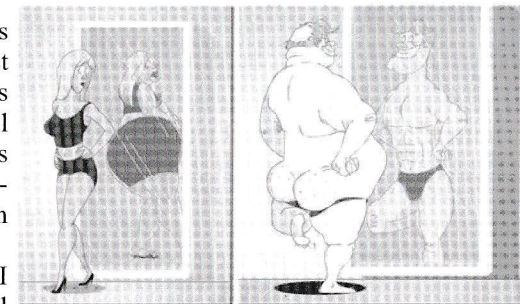
We now have our first President of the CWU Jane Loftus and the Deputy leader of the Labour Party is Harriet Harman, so women are escaping from that "sticky floor" and chipping away at the "glass ceiling". Unfortunately at present BT fall short of women on their board of directors and senior positions, but we are now seeing more female engineers coming into the Industry, which the CWU have fought for. The struggle continues to involve more women not only in the CWU, but all walks of public life and although our Headquarters are very supportive, we still lack female reps at all levels.

The S.E. Regional women's committee published our first Women's Newsletter which was distributed around the Region to all our women members, local articles are needed for the next one, especially the experiences of women field engineers.

As the S.E. Women's secretary I organised a stall at the our National Union Learning Forum in Crawley,

this was very successful advertising events and women's issues, with a slide show of the CWU women at the Black Country Women Chain makers Festival where we had an abundance of branches and banners. We also raised £20.00 for breast cancer.

Saturday March 8th is International Women's day and this year a march is being organised, calling for an end to violence against women, it is hoped that over a million women will march, hence the name the "Million Women Rise" March. All women and children (under 16) are invited, men can support by getting involved in the white ribbon campaign. <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk> and wearing the white ribbon that day to show solidarity. The March will start at noon in Hyde Park, North Carriage Way and finish in Trafalgar Square. If any women are interested in the March or any other issues relating to women, please contact Dianne Hill 01892 702809 / 07747193133 or cwuse.women@btinternet.com



The Difference Between Women & Men

Dates for your diary

Lewes Trades Council is to hold an event in June
(date to be confirmed)

Million Women Rise march London March 8th

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 18-20th July

SE Regional Labour Party Conference Hove town hall

March 15-16th

Brighton Pride Festival 2nd August

What's it all about!

The Telecom exhibition hall at Amberley, founded by BT, is one of 9 locations across the country that BT's Heritage collection is now located, under the banner of Connected Earth.

The theme of the collection at Amberley is the "public face of telecommunications" and the displays trace the development of communication from Fire Beacons and Optical telegraph through to the latest mobile technology.

The entrance to the hall opens onto a street scene with displays of street furniture associated with telecoms, including poles, cross connection cabinets, a police post, kiosk and a walk in manhole, complete with cables and joints.— along with a number of vehicles, from hand cart to motorcycle, small van to linesman's lorry all in working order.

Side rooms throughout the building are devoted to specific topics:

- **The Post Office** contains amongst other things an early Silence Cabinet, the forerunner of the Kiosk and a working pneumatic tube system to allow demonstration of how a telegram was created and sent out.
- **The Telegraph Room** houses examples of telegraph and telex equipment from the earliest times and a period telegraph room has been created with working teleprinters and pneumatic tube to continue the story of the telegram from the Post Office. The room also has a number of interactive telegraph exhibits for visitors to use.
- **The Cable Room** this tells the story of the development of cables through to Optical fibre, with interactive displays. It also houses period test equipment for both main cables and transmission.



Retired volunteers preparing an Exhibit. (A rare glimpse of Pete Jones WORKING)



Inside Connected Earth at Amberley Museum

- **The Telephone Room** from bells to telephones, this room follows the development of the telephone instrument from Bell's invention through to the latest Fusion phone. Working period phones around the room allow visitors to hold conversations on phones of all ages..

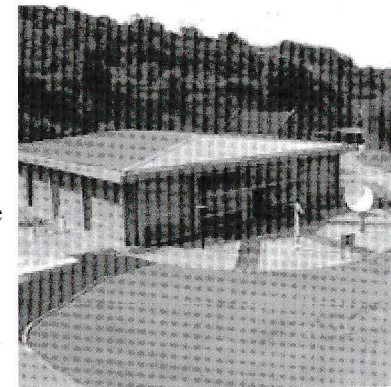
- **The Exchange Room** this room covers both public and office switching systems and includes a working Strowger exchange, a demonstration unit to show how the system worked and a CB1 manual exchange wired to allow demonstration of its operation. A number of office systems are displayed from — a cord switchboard to House exchange systems, all of which visitors can operate.

Around the building a number of monitors show clips from archive films on a range of telecom related subjects and within certain displays sound bites have been added to create a period atmosphere.

Why not come and see us, along with the numerous other exhibitions in Amberley's 36 acre site.

On Sunday 20th April we are holding a Post Office Vehicle Rally at Amberley, a chance to see a large collection of both Postal & Telecom vehicles from pre-war to the present day from across the country along with a number of displays and demonstrations.

To find out more log on to www.amberleymuseum.co.uk or to see details of all the Connected Earth sites www.connected-earth.com



Remember if you are a current or retired BT employee you can gain free entry to Amberley Working Museum on production of your BT Pass OR BT pension slip.

Editor: I have been asked to include a request for volunteers to help run the exhibition Hall, Connect Earth are always looking for people to join the team, particularly younger people willing to learn the old skills, so that they can keep the interactive and working exhibits going into the future. Also apart from those willing to be involved with work on the exhibits they are keen to find guides to show the visitors around, answer questions and generally police the hall during the days it is open to the public.. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Fred Stanford for contributing this article and hope it encourages some of you to go to the museum.



FREE

Will writing service for ALL CWU members and their partners

CWU's Legal Services Department is offering a FREE will-writing service for members and their partners.

To take advantage of this service simply telephone
020 8971 7444
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freewills@cwu.org

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Provision of first aid training for singleton workers

George Hannah

After being told of an incident in the Tunbridge Wells CST I decided to look into provision of first aid training for singleton working engineers.

The incident I refer to involved an engineer who, when sitting in his van, was suddenly taken ill and fainted. He was very fortunate in the fact that he had a trainee with him at the time. The engineer was out cold for long enough that the trainee had time to check that he was still breathing and that he had a pulse. The trainee was quick thinking and rang the emergency services.

I do not want to turn this report into a complaint about my perceived inadequacies in the duty of care process but I do want to highlight the lack of first aid training given to engineers working on their own.

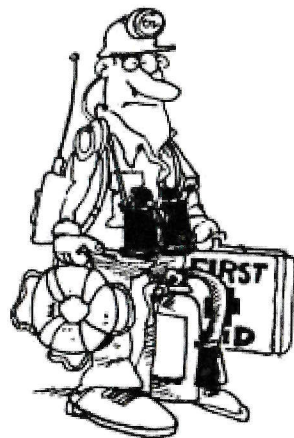
Although engineers are provided with adequate PPE there is always the risk that an individual can make a mistake, unfortunately in some cases the smallest error of judgement can have serious, and in certain circumstances, tragic consequences.

I feel that the role of the engineer is probably the most hazardous job across BT as a group; they have to use a variety of tools some of which are dangerous if not handled correctly. I feel it would be helpful to enquire as to how many engineers know how to dress a wound properly or how many know whether or not a tourniquet should be used.

I think it would be in BT/Openreach's interest to provide the engineers with some first aid training which could then be refreshed periodically; this would be useful both at work and at home. On more than one occasion I have come across an injured person while performing my duties and although I had the ability to call the emergency services I had no idea how to make the injured person comfortable until the ambulance arrived.

I do not advocate putting every engineer through a full first aid course but it would be helpful if they were given a basic understanding of what to do if they come across a colleague or a member of the public that has been injured.

The ISIS document, PNL/EMP/D020, gives details as to how many first aiders are required for the amount of staff at any location, it also states that all liveried vehicles must carry a first aid kit but in my twenty years of working for the company I have never been asked if I know how to use the items included in that kit, this may seem petty but I feel if you are not given instruction in how to correctly apply dressings to wounds then there is the chance that infection could set in.



Having recently had a family member taken ill with a heart attack it has brought home to me how sudden a life threatening illness can strike. The BBC, on their website gives advice on first aid in which they say "A blocked airway can kill someone in three to four minutes, but it can take more than eight minutes for an ambulance to arrive. So a simple procedure such as opening someone's airway can save their life while they're waiting for emergency medical help." but if you are not trained in first aid you are not going to know this and sometimes doing the wrong thing is as bad as doing nothing at all. There is also on the BBC site a skills programme which takes the participant through various scenarios covering different injuries that they may come across. I found this programme to be very easy to use and also quite informative.

I feel that BT/Openreach should adopt some form of first aid training for the engineers if not for all staff. I think it would be very helpful at low cost and would give the members of staff a basic understanding of what can be done in an emergency.

I was recently sent an e-mail telling me of three simple tests to carry out on someone suspected of having a stroke, I searched to see if the information was true and, according to the National Stroke Association of America, I found that the information was based on fact, below is the information from their web site.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do this simple test:

ACT F.A.S.T.	
FACE	ASK THE PERSON TO SMILE. DOES ONE SIDE OF THE FACE DROOP?
ARMS	ASK THE PERSON TO RAISE BOTH ARMS. DOES ONE ARM DRIFT DOWNWARD?
SPEECH	ASK THE PERSON TO REPEAT A SIMPLE SENTENCE. ARE THE WORDS SLURRED? CAN HE/SHE REPEAT THE SENTENCE CORRECTLY?
TIME	IF THE PERSON SHOWS ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS, TIME IS IMPORTANT. CALL 911 OR GET TO THE HOSPITAL FAST. BRAIN CELLS ARE DYING.

Stroke Symptoms include:

Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg - especially on one side of the body.
Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.

Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.

Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.

Sudden severe headache with no known cause. If you have experienced any of these symptoms, you may have had a TIA or mini-stroke.

The main thrust of this information is that time is critical in the event of someone suffering a stroke and as Openreach engineers frequently visit customers houses and are in almost constant contact with the general public it would certainly be a feather in the company's cap if their engineers were trained to know how to react and what to do in the event of a customer or even a colleague suffering a stroke.

South East Central CWU

General Meeting Dates

2008

AGM Wednesday 13th February Preston Park Hotel **Brighton**

Wednesday 5th March **Hastings**

Wednesday 7th May **Sevenoaks** (Venue to be confirmed)

Wednesday 4th June **Tunbridge Wells**

Wednesday 6th August **Brighton**

Wednesday 3rd September **Hastings**

Wednesday 12th November **Tunbridge Wells**

Wednesday 3rd December **Brighton**

Committee Meeting Dates

2008

Tuesday 15th January **Uckfield Civic Hall**

Tuesday 8th April **Uckfield Civic Hall**

Tuesday 8th July **Uckfield Civic Hall**

Tuesday 7th October **Uckfield Civic Hall**

All members of the South East Central CWU Branch are welcome to all General Meetings. There will be a buffet and a drink courtesy of the Branch at every General meeting (To be agreed at the AGM)

South East Central

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COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

South East Central CWU

2008 AGM

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Wednesday 13th February 2008

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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.