



The communications union

South East Central

2013 Annual Report



In Confidence for South East Central CWU members

Page

Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page</u>
Chairs Report	Dave Kauffman	3
Retired Members Report	Dave Lomakin	4
Political Report	Di Hill	5
Obituary List		6
Spreadsheet Culture	Dave Kauffman	7
Assist Sec West Report	Peter Francis	8
Equality Report	George Hannah	10
Photo Comp Winners	Steve Taylor	11
Secretary Report	Chris Power	12
Just for Fun - Who am I?		15
Assist Sec East Report	Steve Taylor	16
Women's Report	Di Hill	18
Education Report	Steve Taylor	20
Safety Report	George Hannah	22
Acoustic Shock	Steve Taylor	24
Fin Sec Report	Steve Taylor	25
Quiz answers		25
Meeting Dates		26



Picture on front cover.

Ian Belton replacing an aerial cable after a lightening strike in the Heathfield area. One of many members working hard to restore service in the recent bad weather.

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.

Chairs Report

Some things in BT are Business as usual and I can report to the Branch that I, and the Branch officers, deal with things like discipline, be it performance, attendance or serious or gross misconduct throughout the year, we also deal with MCC cases, accidents at work and anything else that crops up.

The branch and the officers also meet as regularly as we can with Lines of Business managers to talk about issues that affect our members.

“..nothing stays the same”

It would seem that nothing stays the same and BT and Openreach have shown us that this year, as they have done over the last few years, this is still true. Trying to implement change by eroding the terms and conditions of its employees. The CWU fights hard to maintain the status quo but I am sure at some time, unless we see a change of attitude in management the CWU will have to make a stand.

Openreach and BT have made a change, a change of BT group CEO and a change to the head of Openreach. What can we expect? We can expect a hard fight

for the CWU and as its members. We need you to stand strong and join with us in facing the challenges ahead.

I have taken a lead role in the Branch on Openreach issues. It started at the CWU Annual conference, back in April, when I rose to speak on a number of Openreach issues.

I warned the conference and the National executive not to take Openreach at their word on issues. Some of the issues discussed included; Contractual Overtime, Performance management and the use of Contractors in Openreach as a Business as usual resource.

Openreach and senior management GAVE THEIR WORD that contractors would be gone from Openreach volume by 31st December 2013 and yet we start a new year with contractors firmly rooted within volume. I wonder if anyone in Openreach management got the DN for that one.?

During the year we have also seen very little let up on performance issues and as a branch I have written to National Officers on the issue. We have been told we



Dave Kauffman

are waiting for the results of the independent review from Dr Nita Clarke.

Openreach then tried to railroad through WINTER WORKING attendance patterns, which incensed many members followed this up with a rejection of a permanent change in a vote.

Openreach then bought in a temporary change for 2013/14 winter. I wait, with anticipation, to see the evidence of how this went. Did productivity improve, after all there was no shortage of work? I am waiting for further news in regards to the discussions being had with the CWU National Team and Openreach, in how this issue is going to be resolved and we can all move forward.

Volume has not been the

only unit open to change, service enablement has rung the changes as well, again on attendance and reduction in night working.

Business connections is building for the future but, you can see the problems with work flow now that Planning and cabling are separate divisions. With the "spread sheet culture" (see page 7), each division works for self-interest and results, rather than working together as one team.

Finally I would like to thank you, the members, for your support throughout the year and if I am re-elected to the

post of Chairperson, I promise to continue to do my utmost for you, the members.



Overheard Conversation Between Two Engineers

Retired Members Report



Dave Lomakin

This past year has slipped by with continual challenges. I attended on behalf of the Branch the Annual CWU Retired Members Conference in Birmingham. The conference is concerned with debates and decisions on issues, national and

local, that will shape the future years work for retired members committees and the union as a whole. I fared very well in the voting, securing 3rd place, to represent Retired Members at the CWU National Conference.

The voluntary alterations proposed for BT pension recipients gave rise to many enquiries via the union office seeking clarification and where to obtain further advice.

During the year, I was elected to become Chairperson of the CWU South East Region Retired Members Council, which I have served as a committee member since 2009. The committee assesses and progresses pension and retire-

ment issues related to the CWU as well as addressing national issues with attendances with other retirement associations at the TUC headquarters.

The Retired members annual reunion did not take place this year mainly due to finding a suitable venue, budgetary constraints and organizing problems. I am hoping during this coming year to arrange a further reunion but on a smaller scale.

The Christmas diaries to retired members this year had the added bonus of some receiving copies of the branches own yearly calendar, any views of preference as to receiving a diary or calendar, please advise us in the union office.

Political Report

Royal Mail well didn't they do well! Sold it off cheap...oh no they didn't! cried Mr Cable. Oh yes they did said the CWU. David Cameron said Royal Mail was making a loss when privatised this was a lie as it made £403,000,000 profit in 2012-13. But we expect this from these people who think they were born to rule. 74% of the public wanted to keep the Royal Mail where it had been for nearly 500 years, in public hands. The largest owner now is a "hedge fund" with Singapore Government the second largest owner. This is the Country they are selling off not just public services.

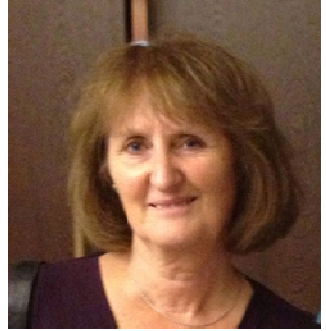
The CWU held many public meetings and petitions against the closures of Hastings, Littlehampton and Uckfield crown post offices in our area. No one listened and they are to go into the back of other local shops in the towns, our members' jobs gone.

This year saw the passing of Margaret Thatcher, but what she did to the Country lives on. The release of the papers from the Miners strike 30 years ago, prove how she lied and manipulated the media and the people. What-

ever we think of Arthur Scargill, he has been proved right in what he said and this was just a vendetta against the largest union, by a Right wing Tory Government, led by Thatcher. The thousands of jobs lost, the families divided and the villages destroyed, still suffering 30 years on!!!

The public are being priced off public transport! We are seeing above inflation rail price rises here in the South East. We have Boris Johnson planning to close every ticket office on the underground network in London and removing safety-trained supervisors from most stations, over 1,000 jobs to go. On a safety issue if there was an emergency, there would be no staff to turn to for help. This is an issue for all of us who visit London, 10% of whom are tourists.

Well they say the Country's doing well. As a Borough



Di Hill

Councillor in Tunbridge Wells I don't see or hear this. Local Authorities are again seeing cuts to their Government grants, public services being cut. The cost of living isn't coming down, energy prices are going up, food is still going up and well if you want to buy a house very expensive. Council/Housing Association rents have now been raised by 30% for new tenants, and the greedy landlords are allowed to do as they please.

Since the 2013 conference, Labour has set the agenda: on the cost of living, energy bills, a living wage, childcare, banking reform, the NHS, phone-hacking, payday lenders, childcare, youth job guarantees, housing, zero-hours contracts, Syria, scrapping the bedroom tax, etc. We are seeing a huge rise in home-



lessness, up 34% around the Country and up 64% in London. The Bedroom tax is seeing people being evicted in many areas, they just can't manage especially the disabled who are really being hit hard through the cuts, services and benefits. House building is at an 89 year low.

Child poverty is up by over 300,000. Over half a million people using Food banks. In education, many free schools are failing, an ill thought through policy by a Government Minister who wants to teach only his view of history. Gove!!!!

The State is now smaller than it was in 1945

In September we saw 50,000 people, many nurses and hospital staff, marching to save the NHS, outside the Conservative Conference in Manchester. Remember what David Cameron said, "I'll cut the deficit not the

NHS". **A worthless promise.** £12 billion of NHS contracts have moved from the taxpayers into the coffers of private Health companies. Circle Health (donations to the Tory party of £1.4 million) now run Hichingbrook Hospital. These are profit making companies, they take from us the taxpayers, to build their mansions and fund their multi-millionaire lifestyles!!

"The NHS will survive as long as there are folks left with the faith to fight for it." Aneurin Bevan on its foundation.

May 22nd we have local elections and Euro elections. I'm sure most of us recognise the importance of having a strong voice in Europe. It makes sense to remain economically but especially for our workers rights. The right to free movement has seen 2.2 million Brits choose to live in



Nye Bevan

Europe. Over 800,000 retired people live in Spain using their hospitals, etc.

Levellers Day Saturday
17th May in Burford, with
Francis O'Grady.

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival
18th- 20th July

Don't forget Use your Vote

dianne.hill1@btinternet.com

Obituary List

Sadly we have to report of the death of two of our retired members this year. Death benefits were paid to both families and in one case helped pay for the funeral costs. Our thoughts are with their families.

Geoffrey Hills
Maurice Brazier

Please make sure all members, irrespective of age, keep us informed of any changes in who you want the benefit paid to.



A Spreadsheet Culture



It is hard in this era of computers and technical data to understand the function of senior managers in a company. In many ways it has not changed over the years, it is to turn a profit, at a reasonable cost to the business, to enable a sustainable business model. So in BT where has it gone wrong? Where have senior managers taken us? It is true to say that competition is stiff and BT are constantly fighting for their market share. But it would seem that BT has lost sight of the Engineering role it has maintained, for over 100 years

In recent history there has been a rush for a Retail “production line” mentality in BT, I suspect, led by managers that have never done a customer facing or technical role, more those that have taken the accountability lead and spend all day looking at spread sheets. It is common in BT these days to hear managers harp on about efficiency and non-efficiency, managers trying to group together non efficient time to make usable time.

WELL WAKE UP BT, you can't take a little bit of time from 10 people and make that a usable piece of time. It doesn't work. This gets worse the more you multi-

ply it with other people. 1 minute of ineffective time by 30,000 people does not make 30,000 minutes of usable time in the real world. **Strange then why managers thinks it does.**

It's an old accountant's trick to try to *push productivity* a spread sheet culture of management, rather than an honest look at the way we work. Management in BT have taken away the honest way people work, they have taken away the way you book your time, there is no real way to judge performance because BT have taken away all the things people book there time to. Stores, VT, Misc, Documentation, Time awaiting task, travel between tasks etc .

BT have also taken away the support functions, field coaches, field managers assistant team leaders in many areas, it would seem that if there is not a measure we can pin against what these people do (i.e. how much money do you make for the business, jobs com-

pleted) then the business does not want them. But still Engineering fills the day of any person doing these roles, with customer complaints, site visits to engineers, assist tasks, coaching visits and in some cases managing the fault/provision queues to help get jobs out (allocating work). Functionality works best when these roles are given the freedom to do their role a SUPPORT role of OM managers

So as a union do we just react against changes in BT and Business that affect our members, or do we create and set an AGENDA of what we would like to see? If you think you have ideas to take us forward, get involved and join our branch committee, attend the odd general meeting for a few evenings a year, make sure you have your say. Enquires contact Dave Kauffman at chair.sec.tw@btinternet.com

Assistant Secretary West

What a 12 months it has been for me personally in the CWU as well as in my working career with BT. This time last year I was still working as part of the Global Services 24x7 team based in Sevenoaks and had just successfully re-negotiated new shift patterns for the 6 shift teams based in Sevenoaks. I had also just completed a "Employment Law" diploma with the CWU which, in time, will benefit the branch and I will be able to use my expertise on behalf of the members. I am currently employed by TS&O, working at BT Tower for BT Sport on another 24 7 team, responsible for the running of all BTs 3 TV channels in the Sport Management Centre.

In April 2013, Chris Power and myself were invited to attend a meeting with BT Global Services management along with the CWU National Team to discuss a re-org for the Sevenoaks site where we were in-

formed that the all of the "Service Assurance" teams based in Sevenoaks would cease and over 100 people would be placed in to the CTTC by the end of the Summer 2013.

This had come as a complete shock to me, because it not only affected our members but I too was part of the team based at Sevenoaks.

The branch officers set about working on how this could be stopped, reviewed, or lessens the impact as much as possible.

BT informed us that they would be letting the teams know later that week so we called an emergency meeting in the building once the shock had sunk in, to judge member reactions and responses. Tony Gilkes, from the NT, came to the meeting which attracted approx. 75 members who were extremely angry and upset that this decision had been made with, what we all thought, little regard for the people.

Within a week we had called 2 meetings and by the end of May, after numerous meetings and discussions with team mem-



Peter Francis

bers, we had permission for a ballot for industrial action from HQ.

With this officially confirmed this brought BT back to the negotiating table and from a position of having over 100 members being forcibly being put in the CTTC, it was negotiated with management that if we called off any proposed action then it was agreed all team members would be given roles in Sevenoaks with nobody forced into the CTTC.

This was a great victory for the CWU and all the members involved in GS Sevenoaks and it went to show that, by sticking together we can change and affect BT policy makers. I



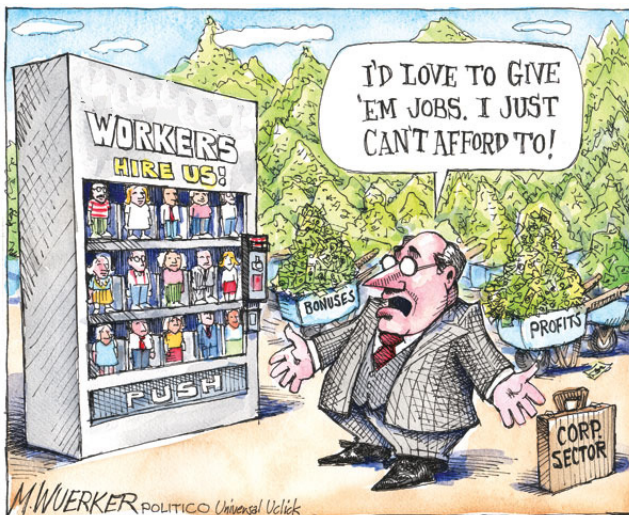
know not everyone has gone onto roles that they may have picked, but at least there is no overhaul of their “work life balance” and pay and pension protection was not required.

Nine months down the line we still have approx. 20 members that are affected by this transition and Chris and I are still working closely with management and HR to ensure our member’s interests are best served.

Personally I have been having meetings with management and HR, at least fortnightly, since the announcement but the whole Service Assurance piece in Sevenoaks should be wrapped up by June 2014 approx., a year after BT initially proposed.

As you can imagine having approx. 100 members affected in one place at the same time has had an enormous impact on the branch and its resources and with me moving from Sevenoaks to the Tower I was unable to assist fully between July and October due to training issues with BT and ensuring I had time to settle in my new role correctly.

I am now fully managing the Sevenoaks site as before but not based on site but



presently I am on site at least one day a week dealing with disciplinary, grievance, personal and BAU meetings with management which now is ramping up again now that members are working under new or different management chains.

Also at Sevenoaks we having an ever growing presence from BT Retail in the form of BTB Customer Solutions, this team manage end to end customer solutions for major blue chip companies in data and voice products. This team is ever growing and expects to be doing the same in 2014.

We have regular BAU meetings with the local management up to Tier 3 level and have managed to have an extremely good working relationship with the managers actively seek-

ing CWU support in any decision that may affect its people. We currently expect this team to carry on growing and expect announcements shortly which should only enhance the team further.

Following an officers meeting, in December, it was agreed that I would also look into TS&O matters especially now I am working for the division. I have only managed to attend one national forum on December 19th and am still finding my feet in this arena, but for any members in the branch who also work for TS&O please do not hesitate to contact me and I will endeavour to help resolve an issue or query you may have.

If you have any queries contact me.

Equality Report – George Hannah

As equality officer for the branch it is within my remit to attend the conferences dealing with minority groups in our union. As this is my first year I have been assisted by Di Hill who attended the women's and LGBT conferences. I was dismayed to have been unable to attend the black workers conference.

The 2013 disability conference was held at the Queen hotel, Chester. There could hardly have been a more majestic venue for this event. This hotel has a long history having been built in 1860 to serve first class railway passengers.

The conference was called to order and we had a short, but heartfelt, welcome from Linda Roy followed by a speech from Billy Hayes explaining how important the work we were doing was, after which we got down to business.

First motion on the pad was from Meridian branch instructing the DAC (Disability advisory committee) to work with all relevant departments to ensure any adverse weather policies, in all companies where we have representation, do not disadvantage

our disabled members. Although the motion was carried it didn't attract a great deal of debate.

The next motion was relevant only to the postal branches as Royal Mail use the health care company ATOS as their OHS provider, this motion took up quite a bit of time and it was recognised that any OHS provider would be employed and paid for by the company using its service and that the union would have little say on who that provider would be, once again the motion was carried.

We then heard from Capital branch that put forward a motion to instruct the DAC to liaise with the T&FS to discuss with BT an end of the policy of putting individuals on the second stage

of the MCC process when there has been no change to that individual's condition. As there was limited time debate was halted there and we had a presentation and Q & A session from Adam Lotun, spokesperson for DPAC (Disabled People against the Cuts).

The conference then broke for lunch which gave the delegates a chance to sit and chat while they ate. After the break there was a presentation from Ruth Stafferton, Liverpool senior research nurse for Cancer Research UK explaining who she was, what her job entailed and where cancer research was heading.

We then went onto the section 2 motions with the most debate being over the issue of motions that are passed at the various equality confer-



Adam Lotun on Breakfast News

ences not being given adequate time for debate at general conference.

I was quite surprised to find that of the 144 branches only 57 had sent representation to this conference. The facilities at the conference venue were, for the most part, excellent.

Unlike some of the other equality issues our union faces, disability can be hidden, you might not know a person suffers from hearing loss until you speak to them

or you can't tell if an individual has diabetes or dyslexia so I believe the work carried out at this conference has a great deal of value in our efforts to represent our members.

I also attended a forum on proportionality, it has been recognised that our branch structures are lacking in representation for women, disabled, LGBT, black and youth workers.

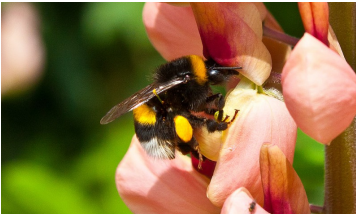
This poses quite a large problem. How do we

encourage any of these workers to become active within our union, what can we do to bring on individuals so there is someone within our branch area with the skills and experience to deal with a member who belongs to one of the above minority groups?

I believe we, as a branch, have a lot of work to do in this area, it will be a challenge but I think it is a journey long overdue and well worth taking.

Digital Photo Competition

The winners of the photo competition was as follows, 1st Paul Welfare, 2nd Graham Button, and 3rd David Green. I'd like to thank all entrants to the competition and look out for the next one, hopefully this year, so keep clicking!



FIRST PRIZE

"The picture was taken in my back garden in Peacehaven and I was sat cross-legged for almost half an hour waiting for a bee, any bee, to come by for lunch. Many bees came along to my lupin bloom but most kept their backs to me until this beauty decided to give me a profile which I gratefully accepted."



SECOND PRIZE

"I wedged myself against the van to steady the shot. I think it was taken at Chiddingly late afternoon as the sun went down. I have done very little after the event processing. Just a little highlight recovery and clarity boost. If anything it was a hurried shot because it was so damn cold."



THIRD PRIZE

"Shot taken *through* bedroom window toward a cherry tree in the front garden last winter. We spend a small fortune on feeding the wild birdlife and have many feeders around the garden, *her indoors* is always on the lookout for a shot and chose this one for the competition."

Branch Secretary Report

Having been a full time Officer of this Branch since 1993, it is with some 20 years plus experience I look back on 2013, and there are several main areas which it is felt merit covering. Recruitment and Organisation, Branch meeting structure, and how we are being negotiated with by Telecoms employers as BT Group, Virgin media and Contractor/Agency employers.

Recruitment & Organisation

BT Group membership, which makes up some 90% of the Branch membership, has been in decline across the whole Union for some years, due to redundancies and leavers from this Company. We finished the year with 992 working members and 112 retired members in addition to that figure. For the first time in 5 years we finished below 1000 working members.

Whilst during 2013 we continued to conduct recruitment drives in the major sites of Sevenoaks Work style, Tunbridge Wells TE and TEC, Brighton Kemp-town and Brighton With-dean, in addition to recruitment days in the Stores Hubs located at Tunbridge

Wells TEC, Brighton West TEC (Hove) and Hastings TEC, these were not as successful as they have been in the past. It seems that a new strategy for recruiting new members in the Branch is needed, and the Officers are considering the best way forward on this. The more members we have the stronger we are.

We have also lost 2 female activists in the Branch over the past months. Dianne Hill will still be involved, although her retirement from BT means that liaising with BT people will not now be top of her list. I wish Dianne well for the future and thank her for her hard work for the CWU as a whole over the last years.

Our other female activist was promoted within the Company and it is good to see her doing really well. Hopefully her Union experiences will keep her in good stead for the future.

It is a real dilemma for the Branch that we don't fully represent the membership at our Union activist meetings. Female,



Chris Power

Youth, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender, Ethnic minorities, are all areas where more activists would be really helpful to the Branch, to reflect the cosmopolitan membership this Branch has. Again, Officers will be considering things the Committee can do to encourage more members to



Recruitment at Withdean

take part at Branch Committee level.

Virgin Media

For Recruitment and Organising in the wider world, we conducted a couple of recruitment mornings outside the Virgin Media Red Shed stores location in Lancing, and we were well received. We gained members but the pressures facing the VM staff, and those Contractor staff that VM employ, makes it difficult to recruit within that environment. During summer 2014 it is felt a concerted effort be made in trying to recruit from the VM Company.

VM continually seem to erode their employees terms and conditions, and this is where the Union can help, but having members really is the key.

BT Group

It is certain to say that negotiations with BT Openreach, both locally and nationally, have been presented with a more determined Industrial Relations approach from the relevant Business units, but in particular BT Openreach.

Openreach has concentrated on service provision, culminating in several implementations of the compulsory overtime allocation option, that is part of the Openreach

employee contract of employment. It is without doubt an option that nobody envisaged the use of, to the extent that BT Openreach utilise it, and is a clear indication of lack of employees in the Branch opinion.

“...Winter Working (issue) ...is still live...”

This then rolls over to the implementation of Winter Working during early autumn 2013, which caused several General meetings to be held, and where the membership at these meetings directed Branch position into opposing any moves toward a 5 day Winter Working attendance. That issue is still “Live” and a ballot expected early 2014.

In Global, one of the largest groups of Global non-management grades within the UK, based at Sevenoaks, were told at the beginning of the year of the massive downsizing and redistribution of the work from Sevenoaks, being moved out to other parts of the UK. This caused massive upset in the way in which it was done, although the Branch succeeded in gaining agreement that a vast majority of members that would be displaced, would be found alternative roles rather than

be placed in a redeployment unit. 5 Union meetings were held during this period, and all were very well attended. The issue continues to some degree.

My National CWU role on the BT Group Supply Chain continues, resulting in me travelling to all parts of the UK to negotiate with senior Supply Chain management continues, and it is good to be involved in the direction of that Business Unit. It is a massive operation, to acquire and place all items that an engineering workforce needs into a local Stores Hub, and I have been involved in finalising Grading for Warehousing, Transport, and Hub operation members. It is true to say, that with an extra 150 new employees into Supply Chain throughout the last year, the future seems encouraging on that division.

General Meetings

During 2013 we held 4 pre-planned General meetings in Tunbridge Wells, Brighton and Sevenoaks, with 4 extra General meetings in Sevenoaks to deal with the GLOBAL Services issues, and an additional 3 in Tunbridge Wells and Brighton to cover the Openreach Winter Working attendance issues. A total of 11 Union



meetings in 2013 - the biggest amount of meetings since I have been an Officer of the Branch.

It is interesting to understand that the pre-planned General Meetings that are advertised at the start of the year in (This) Annual Report are not nearly as well attended as Extraordinary meetings called for that are driven by current issues. To this end, in 2014 there will be less pre-planned meetings, and more issues driven Extraordinary meetings called for as and when issues arise.

Future Meetings can be held when enough members (15) email the Branch requesting a meeting for a specific location. Meetings like this are the best way for the Officers to understand what the members thoughts are on an issue, and the majority position on that issue then becomes Branch policy.

Committee Meetings

This year we have had 4

Committee meetings, which are meetings the next level up from a Branch meeting, and these direct the Officers of the Branch on strategy based upon General meetings debate, but where a decision has not been taken at Branch meeting. It is very

There are quite a few employees that have joined BT over the past 5 or so years, and our Branch Committee is more biased to the over 40s to be perfectly frank, and more youth activists are need.



important that these Committee meetings continue, and the membership of the Committee should really include more Openreach Field engineers, female and members from an ethnic minority background, and also importantly members classed as Youth. (Members under 28yrs)

Please just come along to the Branch AGM at the **AMEX stadium on Wednesday 19th February 19.30 hrs** and have a chat with officers, and suggest you would like to become involved. Really would be a boost for this Branch to get new activist members on Board.

And Finally...

We only remain united as a Union Branch, and as a National Union, by sticking together. Decisions are made at all levels of the Union that many members may not like. We should however, stay united, and strive to change decisions that do not seem fair and right.

Our Branch position may not reflect the National position, please remember that. Ultimately in any National Ballot, the Branch will abide by the decision made.

Please take part in Union meetings whenever you can, and **BECOME AN ACTIVIST**. If you don't like decisions being made,

ask how they can be changed. The old expression which rings so true "United we stand, Divided we fall".

Would like to thank all the Officers and Committee who have had the courage to work with me, as a fellow officer and Committee member.

Chris Power

Just for Fun - Who am I?

Just to prove that Union Reps are not just grumpy people who just shout "No No No!", at managers and have numerous meetings and have lots of rules, but are, in fact, normal people. Well when I say "normal", that's up for debate, but they have outside interests, just like you. So below are three officers with some clues to who they are. Can you guess who they are?



I was born in Kent and as a child I always wanted to join the army and joined the Royal Engineers via the TA for 3 years. I was once a post-man in a previous job. I passed my driving test at 17 and bought a mini but then changed my car to my first VW a beetle and started a lifelong love affair of the VW's. I restore VW's and own a welder (which comes in handy). I belong to a western club and give displays in gunfights and battles. Whilst doing western re-enactment, I met Boy George....Who am I?



I have worked inside, underneath and on top of a nuclear reactor. I once beat the boxer Barry McGuigan (onto a plane going to Belfast). I am an enthusiastic amateur photographer. I started a camera club in my mid twenties. I have been a singer in a number of bands. I once told a colleague my middle initial stood for Saviour and he believed me. Who am I?



I was born in Suffolk and have been a long suffering Norwich fan. When I was little I wanted to be a fireman, but ended up being a printer. I am fascinated in history unlike my children who role their eyes at me when I mention it. At weekends I do archery, and specialise in the longbow. I also do medieval re-enactments and the odd pirate show. My son accused me of dissing Prince Edward at his DofE Gold award. Who am I?

Answers at Bottom of Page 25

Assist Secretary East - Steve Taylor

As a man who wears many union hats, one of my jobs that I enjoyed was that of branch editor. This involves the creation of this publication and the maintenance of the website. However, it's time to pass on the torch to someone else to edit the annual review. I have tried to make the publication beyond its original confines of an officer's report and to be of some interest to all, by adding some humour and being informative. Should you have any views on how you would like to see next year's report, please contact Chris Power with your ideas.

packaging and printing. Worth every penny!

During the last year I completed the Advanced Union Skills course, the first to do so in the branch in its current form. Was it any use? Although a lot of it I had already learnt "on the job" and from Chris and the old Chair Dennis Noble, some of the activities were fascinating. I came back from the meeting all excited with lots of new ideas in regards to getting more youth involved and ways to combat union busting techniques. One of the highlights was attempting to use my new

Brian Healey, all you need to know is that you should be glad he's on our side.

At the beginning of the year, I was invited up to BT Centre, to see for myself, the roll out of the new BT values of "Meritocracy". I sat and listened to the higher echelons of BT, admitting that they had got it wrong in the past, the first act to disarm a hostile audience (did I mention I went on the advanced course?) and how they were addressing the situation. Well the long and short is they want positive reinforcement of the values rather than negative, i.e. "How can we improve your work?" and not "you're rubbish!" This should be rolled out to all of BT departments by the end of this year, so we sit and wait with huge anticipation.

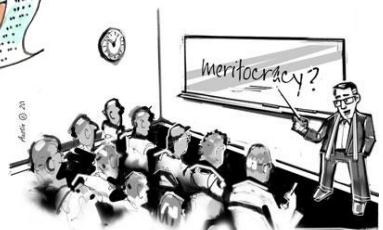
At an officers meeting, we discussed the leads for disciplines (performance & attendance etc.) and I was allocated Hastings and

Having fun as the editor



For information, the total cost of the publication last year cost £1.40 per member, which included postage,

negotiation technique against head offices Brian Healey. For those of you who don't know



"Progress often masquerades as trouble."

Eastbourne areas. I must say that since then I have had only one case, so all you people in Hastings & Eastbourne must lead exemplary working lives.....keep it up!

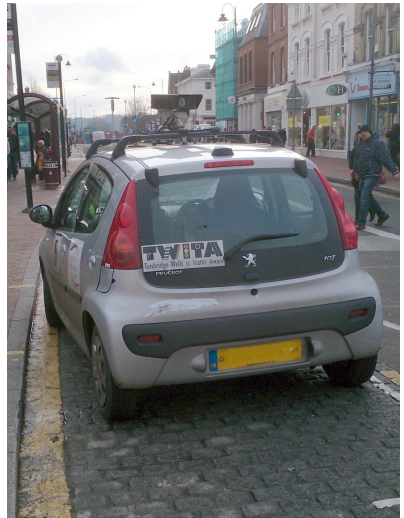
The sleepy, pastoral and conforming vision of the Tunbridge Wells engineer has finally been dispelled. On November 6th, we held a meeting in Tunbridge Wells and faced an agitated workforce, wound up by the proposed winter working patterns that were being forced by Openreach. I can say I have never been prouder, to see you all stand up and with one voice and say, **"No, enough!"** I am sure there will be other times when the business needs, will inflict more onto your family and home, which will need a similar response.

Also in Tunbridge Wells, and engineer was dismissed from the company because of a photograph was taken of them parked on the pavement. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has acquired a car with a camera attached to it (similar to the Google map Car) in which they take photographs of any misdeemeanour. The car is often scene loitering in restricted areas, taking photos of motorist driving in restricted areas, but it also goes around looking for people

parking incorrectly or on the pavements etc. The council have spent a lot of money on this car and equipment and they have to recoup the outlay, so expect no quarter! The employee that was dismissed, on safety grounds, and has had an appeal hearing and we are waiting the result.

In SMC, the grading issue, which I believe should have been agreed nearly two years ago, is almost agreed. In Tunbridge Wells, all of the number portability work has gone offshore to India except for escalations, and other digital work has replaced it. In Brighton the DCoE has seen a few management changes, but they have an alarming amount of acoustic shocks received from the IP system they use. This was passed up to head office, but as I saw no resolution I have begun to poke people into action myself. (See my report on Acoustic shock on page 24)

Along with my branch roles I have two regional roles in BT Estates and Supply Chain. Sometimes its interesting when the two overlap. Last year, the Hastings Stores roof leaked so badly it brought parts of the office



Tunbridge Wells Camera Car

roof down. The operative had to work outside the office for many months, until I started poking from both directions. I even discussed it at last years conference, when I got up to speak about Estates. In the summer I had a call from the Portsmouth Safety officer asking for help with an unofficial store in Bognor. With dual poking ability we managed to get the building condemned and stopped people using, what could only be called, a dangerous building. The hanging doors were removed and the asbestos riddled building is now waiting for demolition. I just hope the don't expect me to raise and E build to get a replacement building, that's beyond my remit.

Women's Report - Di Hill

I was re-elected as the South East Regional Women's secretary at the AGM in January. This committee meets 4 times a year with every CWU Branch represented we affiliate to many women's organisations. Recently we sent £400 to Eaves for their Christmas appeal, this was to help trafficked girls and women rebuild their lives. Charities that help women who have been beaten, raped, tortured and trafficked are having their funding cut or their work handed over to private companies by this Government.



We are still seeing women at the forefront of the fight against austerity as women are being hit the hardest low pay, part-time work and the soaring cost of childcare. As

the pay gap widens (now at 15%) benefits cut and the rise in the cost of living many women face the daily struggle to keep their families out of poverty. We have seen 581 Sure Start centres closed many in the South East, 90 have been privatised and funding for what's left is down 20%. These were a lifeline to many young Mums with nowhere or no one else to go to for help and advice. Many women are losing their jobs after returning to work from Maternity leave and to fight for their rights with an Employment Tribunal will cost them £1,200. If this "Government" were serious about improving people's lives they would look at improving prospects and conditions at work for women, as it is still mothers who are stuck in low paid jobs.

Bring back the married tax allowance the Tories shout! Budgets have been cut by £11.5 bn but the Tories can find over £500m to promote their "happy family" fantasy. This only applies to men who have a wife at home to cook and clean for them, surely not acceptable in the 21st Century!

The South East Regional

Women's committee sent a delegation to the Match women's Festival, in London to celebrate the 125TH Anniversary of the 1888 strike which saw 1400 women walk out of the East London match factory. This was the beginning of the modern trade union movement.



Bryant and May were wealthy and powerful, with friends in Government, the women were poor "factory girls" mostly Irish but they stood their ground against Management bullying and terrible conditions. In just two weeks they shamed their employers with their revelations of the pay and conditions inside the factory. White phosphorous used in the factory was so toxic it caused vomiting and poisoning they called it

“phossy jaw”, swelling of the face and jawbone with unpleasant smelling abscesses. Their demands were met and they formed the largest female union in the Country.

A year later 1889 saw the Great London Dock Strike drawing inspiration from the East end women who were invited to march behind the dockworkers’ at their Victory parade.

CWU Women’s Conference was in Belfast in November my report is on the branch website.

Over 1,000 women attended the Labour Women’s Forum in Brighton. 33% of Labour MP’s are Women and Ed Miliband is looking to raise this to 50% and we do have some good young Labour women coming through, many in the South East. Only 19% of Tory MP’s are women.

In October I attended the Women of the Year Awards at the Intercontinental hotel

Park Lane nominated to attend by Francis O’Grady, TUC Secretary, an amazing experience, very “posh” hotel!

The campaigning award went to Waris Dirie, the Somali model who works tirelessly for the abolition of female genital mutilation. But for me the highlight was the Dagenham Women who won the award for Achieve-

work was less skilled. The women brought the car plant to a standstill taking their cause to Parliament, Barbara Castle, the secretary of State for Employment under Harold Wilson. This eventually led to the Equal Pay Act 1970, the first such legislation in the World.

From the photo above:
At the very back Dianne



Some of the Dagenham Women 40 Years on

ment, 45 years on. This was the Ford sewing machinists strike in 1968 when the women walked out after being told their pay would be re-graded, 15% less than that of the men saying their

Hill (CWU) and JoAnne Rust (Unison) on the right of the photo is Diana Holland, Assistant General Secretary of UNITE and Labour Party Treasurer.

If you would like to know more or get involved please contact Dianne Hill.
se.women@btinternet.com
07747193133

International Women’s Day
March 8th
Women against Austerity
Conference February 22nd.

*Woman
of the Year*

Union Learning Co-ordinator

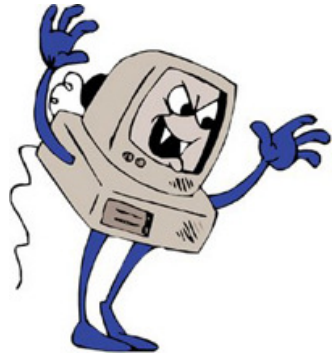
On the education front there it has been a year of mixed fortunes. Last year I put an advert in this publication asking for other union learning reps and had a nil return. Well the offer is still on for this year and if anyone fancies getting involved in the union in a non combative role; just give the union office a call.

During the year I became the Chair of the South East Regional Learning Committee, which helps to promote the South East Central Branch. This year I was asked to go to Nottingham, to the strategy event, in which we discussed the year ahead for education within the CWU. Note that I said CWU and not BT, the education program is open to all members of the CWU so that includes Royal Mail, Virgin Media, PTF, retired members and not just BT.

During the year, this branch has held courses on website creation, excel spreadsheets,

genealogy and digital photography in the Withdean education room. During these events we also opened the doors for anyone to use the laptops in a cyber cafe. Should anyone think they would like some tuition on such simple things like the above, please contact me and I can arrange it for you. Should you need something more specific, I will endeavour to arrange something more bespoke. If you want something more academic, I can signpost you to a local college. I have got the TUC Union Learn reps to look into arranging a discount for any adult education in Kent, but I suspect in the financial climate, if anything the discounts will only be a few percent, if any at all. Sussex has a different set up than Kent in which makes it more difficult, but this will not stop me asking.

Head office, like the TUC, has been asking us to steer the education agenda into the community. I was the



first in the region to try this, when I linked up with BT and the Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council to hold the first event. The event was "Computing for the Terrified", in which I used the BBC First Click literature to show people the basics of computers. The subsequent courses I ran, without any partners, and was asked to deliver the course in a disabled persons house, which raised insurance and security issues which were discussed at the strategic meeting in Nottingham. To enable this course the branch agreed to providing a wireless MiFi which enables up to five pieces of IT equipment to use the internet, but I found that it does go much slower when above three pieces of equipments are used.

Last year's digital photography competition was run in which members or the

KENT ADULT EDUCATION



Steve Taylor Discussing Transferable skills

members' family could enter the photo competition. The idea of this was to expand the reach, to be inclusive, and it seems to have paid dividends. The winners of the competition can be seen on Page 11 but the full results can be seen on the website at www.cwusec.org.uk. There were 5 judges and each of them gave the photos a mark out of 20 and Paul Welfare scored a massive 91 out of a possible 100. Well done! This year, the photos went onto a 2014 branch calendar, which, we gave away at recruitment events.

Back in November 2012, at the ULR national event in York, I raised the question as to why BT does not spon-

sor academic learning (except for those linked to telecommunications). I argued that in academic subject's, people learn transferable skills, in which BT benefits and it would seem only fair that they should contribute in some shape. I suggested that this contribution should be in the form of funding for books, either in full or in part. The lead person from BT wanted to discuss this with me further and I waited for the call. The call never

came, so I chased and chased. The lead person then changed roles and so I chased the replacement. Finally they agreed to meet with us and I got Lee Wake-man, the Policy Assistant to the Head of Education and Training, to meet with the new manager, to put forward my proposal, along with the other agenda items. I have to report that the meeting went well and they are looking into the costs. So this time next year I hope to have something positive to report.

Through the year, the numbers have fallen of people attending the Withead education room, possibly through the inaccessibility of the room, but I have always planned to expand

outwards into other buildings. I have been looking into the option of hiring a room in Sevenoaks, but have yet to find out who to contact in regards to getting internet access. There's no point having a learning cyber cafe without internet! But during the year, Tunbridge Wells telephone exchange, went through the a building optimising program, which reshuffled the offices in the building. The room opposite the union office came spare at the end of last year and with the help of Colin O'Callaghan, from head office, we managed to obtain the room for education purposes.

Although in the early stages of planning I hope to get the room up and running in three months.

On a personal note, I am now on my final course in which, by summer this year, I hope to have a BA (honours) in History.



**Never look down on
someone, unless
you're helping them
up!**

Safety Co-ordinators Report

I would like to give my thanks to all the branches USR's for their hard work through another difficult year, in particular my thanks go to Di Hill for her tireless work on behalf of the safety committee. As most of you will know Di has now left the company and is no longer a USR, she is still a member of the CWU and has some functions within the branch structure. Di has spent many years working within the safety community and is well known and respected for the work she has done over the years. As a token of our appreciation the regional subcommittee presented her with a small gift, some flowers and a card.

I would like to give her my best wishes for the years to come. Good luck Di.



We are, as always, faced with a battle to get even the smallest of things done. It always annoys me that

faults only appear to get repaired when there has been an accident. This past year we have had accidents involving gates,

where the member stumbled on uneven ground, and slips on ladders that had no tread.

One issue that is proving very difficult to get any sort of resolution is the number of acoustic shocks we have been experiencing in our branch area. I have been informed that there is a national issue with acoustic shock, but the company would rather pay compensation than fix the problem.

I am sure that the people suffering these shocks would much rather have no hearing loss as opposed to a few hundred quid. Steve Taylor will have a bit more on this

issue in a separate report (on page 24).

In many of the other cases I have dealt with I have seen



the managers actively look for some way to blame the individual for their accident even down to ignoring what we have agreed during the accident investigation.

I was told, recently, that the decongestion work at Hove exchange was coming to an end as the budget was running out, although the team involved has done a great job in removing old jumpers, very little has been done to address the root cause of the problem.

I would like to say that there has been a sea change in the management's attitude to health and safety but, unfortunately, this is not the case. Regionally the joint safety



across an exchange car park,

I would urge everyone to report anything they see that could be a hazard. All it takes is for someone to call the BTFS number and give the details. The number is 0800223388. Had this been done in some of the cases I have dealt with this year then

very nasty injuries could have been avoided.

2014 promises to be quite an eventful year, we have the winter Olympics, the World Cup, the Commonwealth games and in the autumn the referendum on Scottish independence. It may seem, here in the south east of England, that what happens in Scotland is pretty irrelevant, but that won't stop the media on both sides of the argument, printing all sorts of stories some of which will be mis-interpretation, some misleading and, in a lot of cases, pure lies.

I would urge everyone reading this to look at all that is said and don't believe the astonishing, made up bits of rubbish that have dogged the debate so far.

George Hannah

committee structure has been altered with many of the managers we dealt with having been moved onto other roles and even some of them being left with no job. It is doubtful if any of the new faces we will be meeting will have the knowledge and experience of the ones that have moved on.

Some years ago all the managers were invited to a one day course on safety, part of what was learned on that day was, that the managers get little or no training in safety. It was put clearly to these managers, that they should endeavour to have a joint approach to accident investigation and that is what any interview with the victim of an accident should be called.

Yet, I am constantly told that the manager has conducted a fact finding interview. This may be semantics but there is a perception that a fact finding interview will lead to discipline. As the year progresses I'm sure we will be faced with as many challenges as previous years. Sometimes accidents are caused by something we see on a daily basis, a broken door, a faulty chair or even potholes



Acoustic Shock

There have recently been an alarming amount of acoustic shocks being received by people in Withdean Telephone exchange, and this is being duly investigated by the company. An acoustic shock, to explain for those unaware, is normally a sharp piercing noise down the telephone line which can cause the recipient some distress and even damage their hearing. The hearing damage can come in the form of tinnitus, loss of hearing and sensitivity to loud noises.

Is this a new thing? No, BT has been aware of the problem from many years and after making a quick phone call to the research department of the CWU, they revealed a few headlines in the national papers. Such like... "BT admits damage to health of tele-

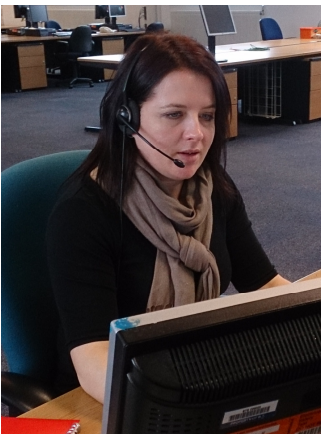
phone operators". "Pay-out for BT operators". "BT damages bill". "BT admits ear damage". "BT operators win damages for ear shocks". One person was reported to have received £93,000. These headlines were from back in the late 1990's, and as a result the CWU ran a campaign in 1999 which was supported by the TUC.

The Health & Safety Executive Says:- "... advice to employers is that acoustic shock incidents should be treated in proportion to the harm that they cause and the risk that they represent in their workplaces. Operators should be trained to recognise such incidents and how to report them. Employers have a duty under RIDDOR to report work-related injuries, including those that result in a person being unable to carry out their normal work for more than three consecutive days. Organisations that operate call centres should follow this advice and keep up to date with developments in this field. HSE welcomes further research to build a better understanding of the types of acoustic shock incidents that lead to symptoms and to raise awareness of procedures to manage risks."

BT does have a process in how it deals with incidents of acoustic shock. One thing that members are probably not aware of is that, after an incidence of noise interference, "the individual **must** be referred to the OHS where the perceived injury is recorded on the report to the AIG and symptoms **continue for 2 hours after the incident, or a period of sick absence occurs following the incident.**"

So what is happening at the moment? The branch has escalated the situation many months ago to the HQ safety team. But after more reports of acoustic shock in the Christmas period, I decided that as a lead role in SMC & DCoE, I could no longer take a passive role by waiting for others.

From speaking to several people it would appear that, BT had been working with a headset manufacturer in order to find a solution, but recently this has been changed and they are now working on a software solution. This solution will suppress the noise level to the agent's ear whilst recording the db spikes/level/time duration etc. This solution is currently being "developed" with the head-



set manufacturer and it is expected that this should be available by the end of 2014.

When questioned about the rumour that BT were prepared to pay out hearing damage claims as it was cheaper than fixing the problem, this was absolutely refuted, and proved with the

report back above. They have also met with the manufacturers again in January 2014.

BT advises that every incident of acoustic shock **MUST** be reported and investigated. Please do not think that nothing is done about the acoustic shocks that are currently being re-

ceived by members in Withdean and report every incident. Should you need any advice in regards to this, either speak to George Hannah or myself.

Your hearing is a precious thing, don't let apathy take it away!

Steve Taylor

Financial Secretary's Report

This is normally the part of the report in which most people skip over, and to be

honest I don't blame you. I take great satisfaction that no one is interested, as that must mean I'm doing ok.

AGM, conference and the new printer bought for the Tunbridge Wells office.



Last year I reported that I would be expecting a dip in funds in the first half of the year. Chris and Dave went over the books during this period and found that everything was spot on. The initial dip was due to the

The committee have allowed me to set up a new account for 2015, solely for the retired members. This would give them some autonomy.

A full report will be given at the AGM.

Who am I? Answers from page 15



Yee-haw Partner, it was our Chair, Dave Kauffman. Managers beware he's mean with that six shooter!



My my Delilah? no it's our safety officer, George Hannah! Music to our ears.



A modern day robin hood? No he's not giving it away, its the financial secretary Steve Taylor.

Meeting Dates 2014-15

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

General Meeting	Wed 21st May 2014	Tunbridge Wells
General Meeting	Wed 10th September 2014	Brighton
AGM	Wed 18th February 2015	Tunbridge Wells

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	Tues 1st April 2014	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tues 1st July 2014	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tues 7th October 2014	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tues 13th January 2015	Uckfield

Dates of all meetings are advertised on the website

South East Central

Current Points of Contact

Branch Secretary :	Chris Power	01273 565771	07850 840581
	cwu.sec.br@btinternet.com		
Branch Chairperson :	David Kauffman	01892 552948	07850 815644
	chair.sec.tw@btinternet.com		
Financial Secretary: (& Asst Sec East & ULR)	Steve Taylor	01892 522948	0791 8147211
	cwu.sec.finsec@btinternet.com		
Branch Safety Co-Ord: (& Equality)	George Hannah		07802 231134
	sec.safety1@btinternet.com		
Women's Officer: (& political)	Di Hill		07747 193133
	dianne.hill1@btinternet.com		
Asst Sec West	Peter Francis		07740 720573
	cwu.sec.assistsec@btinternet.com		
Retired Members Sec	Dave Lomakin		
	via cwu.sec.tw@btinternet.com		

Directions to the AGM

The stadium is alongside the A27, three miles east of its junction with the A23 London-Brighton road. Whether coming from east or west, turn off the A27 at the Falmer/Rottingdean junction next to the universities. Take the B2123 signposted Rottingdean, turning right into Village Way after 200m.

The postcode of the Amex Stadium is BN1 9BL.



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 19th February**, and have a word with Branch Officers



South East Central Branch *Annual General Meeting*



Chandler/BMW suite, 1st floor. Access via the West stand reception doors. Car park available on site, good access to buses and trains.

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

The meeting will include a presentation from our guest CWU National Executive speakers:

Chic McGlynn and Dave Jukes

Who will also take questions (Both deal with Openreach issues, including 'Winter Working' and Compulsory Overtime)

Your Chance To Have Your Say

There will be a buffet provided for members in addition to tea/coffee/biscuits