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Please inform us of change of address or email

We encourage retired members to use your **home** email address for when you give up your work email address. We send out a regular newsletter by email but only an annual newsletter by post.

2. Welcome to "Grey Matters" No. 4, produced by the Western Region of the National Pensioners' Convention. *The full newsletter is an attachment with this email.*

1. October branch meeting:

12.00 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.

Monday 27th October 2014

Kit Leary TUC

will talk about

Building a Vision for the South West & other TUC campaigns

Venue: UCU Office. Labour Party Rooms
26b Clifton Hill, Exeter EX1 2DJ

A buffet lunch will be provided if you let us know a week in advance.

ucu.swest@gmail.com

This newsletter is, in part, that of the East Midlands branch who unselfishly share their expertise with all the Retired Members Branches (RMB). Your contributions for our next newsletter welcome.

Email them to ucu.swest@gmail.com

COMBATTING AGEISM
NPC Western Region Council
October 28th
11am

**Municipal Buildings, Promenade,
Cheltenham**



Come and help us develop a strategy for fighting prejudice and patronising attitudes towards older people

**Speaker: Dorothy Runnicles,
NPC Western Region Committee**

We are affiliated to the Western NPC. If you would like to receive their newsletters directly, email us & we will arrange it.

3. Retired Free Members, update.

Congress 2014 agreed to reinstate those Free Retired Members who had been removed from the membership list. Below is yet another letter to HO asking for information; so far no response... If any of you have heard from HO about your membership please let us know!

Sent to HO 8.9.14.

In June 2013 an Exec decision by NEC, based on General Secretary's report (NEC/747) section 5, was implemented by Matt Waddup to tell Free Retired members to pay subscriptions or lose their free membership status.

The action was taken very quickly and by September 2013 these members were either paying or were denied further membership.

As you may recall, I was not alone in writing to HO about the injustice of this.

In Congress 2014 a motion was proposed and accepted that the situation be reversed.

I am disappointed that there has not been the same speed in reinstating these members.

Has HO contacted them to inform them of the Congress decision and reinstate them in their appropriate Retired Members Branch? If not, can you tell us when you intend to do this?

In Solidarity,

Jo Corke Chair SW RMB

4. Organise Organise Organise.

Two extracts from The Guardian which you may wish to read in full later.

4.1. Zero-Hours contracts

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/30/minimum-wage-poverty-low-pay-reform>

The terrible choices the labour market is forcing people to make explain Britain's contradictions. Millions are taking jobs that no rational person looking to maintain a family let alone build a career would consider. You might think, for instance, that when you were on a zero-hours contract skivvying for a catering operation you could not sink any lower. But consider this account

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/jul/30/zero-hours-contracts-case-studies>

which Louise Brady gave the *Guardian* of her life working in the kitchens of the Tate art galleries. "I felt I had to prove myself all the time," she said.

Only compliant workers who proved themselves worthy by waiting on tables at short notice, coming in when they were ill, buying and washing their own outfits and cleaning up after the Tate's black-tie events in their own time, would get enough shifts to live on. In theory she and her fellow workers could join a union, and confront the Tate's managers. In practice, they were each other's enemies competing for their overlords' favours. She had to comply or her wretched conditions would worsen.

Any friend of Louise would tell them to stuff the Tate and move away from a destructive life. But where to? Another zero-hours contract? Another employer the law allows to behave as if employment protection legislation does not exist? Maybe not as hard as it appears. Most of the worst employers are in service industries, which do not face global competition. Catering at the Tate and social care in Newcastle cannot be

outsourced to India or China. A radical Labour government could tackle them without worrying about companies moving overseas. It could increase the minimum wage and impose better conditions. When Labour first introduced a minimum wage in the 1990s the right boomed terrifying predictions that jobs would vanish and companies go bust. As it was, companies survived by reducing profits and pay differentials. The world did not end. In fact, the world barely noticed.

4.2. Poverty pay isn't inevitable.

Look to the cleaners of New York.



<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/08/poverty-pay-isnt-just-about-economics-new-york>

Who do you think's better paid: a hotel cleaner in London or one in Manhattan? A cleaner on London's Park Lane will almost certainly be on or around the minimum wage, say £6.31 for each hour. Her counterpart (because, let's face it, it's almost always women doing this physically punishing work) on New York's Park Avenue is likely to be on nearly three times as much: an agreed hourly rate of \$28.50, or £17.66. So, what makes the difference between the hotel staff in London and New York? In our capital, between 2% and 4% of all hotel workers are in a trade union. Over the Atlantic, about 70% of New York hotel

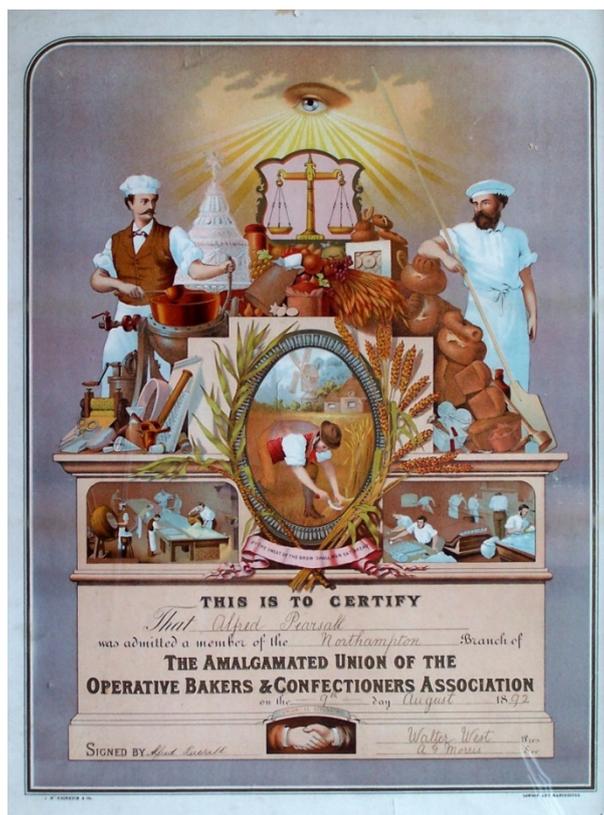
staff are unionised. Offer such high memberships to a public sector union official over here and they'd bite your hand off. And the hotel and motel trades' council has just signed a deal taking a room cleaner's salary up to \$69,000 by 2024.

The lesson from hotel workers there is that a classically disorganised sector can be organised; that the biggest of multinationals can hold to binding local agreements. It takes committed, deft organising, true: but it's possible. One thing ties together good jobs and crap jobs: both are produced not only by economics but by politics too.

5. Working Class Movement Library. Located in Salford, it has a unique collection capturing the stories and struggles of ordinary people's efforts to improve their world.

Introduction to the collection

Working people have always struggled to get their voices heard. The Working Class



Movement Library records over 200 years of organising and campaigning by ordinary men and women. Our collection provides a rich insight into working people's daily lives as well as their thoughts, hopes, fears and the roles they played in the significant events of their time.

Trade unions are groups of workers who have joined together to negotiate with their employers as a group rather than as a series of individuals.

From the 1799 and 1800 Combination Laws, which made it illegal for UK workers to band together to press for shorter hours or more pay, to the present day trade unions have battled to improve workers' rights and circumstances. They have also campaigned on wider issues such as gender, disability and racial equality.

The story of trade unions is at the heart of the Working Class Movement Library's collection.

Trade unions are all about organising people. Our collection reveals the nuts and bolts of how unions operated from the 1820s onwards: rule books, agendas, notices of meetings, minutes, agreements, campaigns, conference reports, leaflets, newsletters, badges and banners can all tell their own story. We also have biographies and histories and memoirs that trace this vital history.

They urgently need support. See the website for more information.

<http://www.wcml.org.uk/contents/>
51, The Crescent, Salford M5 4WX

6. NPC Women's Working Party

We have received notice of this
Event for Women
Saturday 1 November 2014
10.30am to 3pm

An opportunity for women pensioners and working women to get together to network and hear speakers on a variety of topical subjects relating to changes in pension legislation, the crisis in care, fuel poverty, the role of the National Pensioners Convention and much more



Venue: Unite the Union Tony Benn House. Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6AY

There is a charge of £5.00 towards the cost of refreshments including a light lunch. Places are limited so please book early.

Please send your payment and your contact details to:

National Pensioners Convention, Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ

Your cheque or postal order should be made payable to National Pensioners Convention. Please include a SAE if you require a receipt.

Janet Shapiro Chair of NPC WWP

7. UCU Annual Equality Conference

**13th, 14th and 15th November
Conference will be held at
Manchester Conference Centre**

Registration at

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6766>

8. Building a vision for a South West That Works - help us make it happen!

The General Election period presents trade unions with the opportunity to put forward a progressive policy agenda that works for working people and with this in mind, the South West TUC is on the road, putting together what we're calling a *Vision for a South West That Works*. This document will not just tell the story of a region that isn't doing as well as it should, but also the story of how we can make it better.

But in order to put this together, we need your help – to get involved in the process, speak up with your ideas and your experiences, and be a part of the change we need to see.

Roundtable sessions

We are holding a series of roundtable sessions across the region on various different topics that will form the different sections of the final document. These sessions will be your opportunity to come along and speak about your experiences on these issues, and also their opportunity to put forward your ideas. They are open to all trade union members, so please share these dates with others and come along.

TUC: Building a Vision: the programme.

Wednesday 1st October, 4-6pm
PCS South West Regional Office Suite III, First Floor, Quintana Gate, Bartholomew Street,
Exeter EX4 3BH
This session will focus on **transport**.

Saturday 11th October, 2-4pm
Unite, Tony Benn House, Victoria Street, **Bristol**
This session will focus on the **green economy**.

Wednesday 29th October, 4-6pm
Unite, No. 1 Pullman Court, Great Western Road,
Gloucester GL1 3ND
This session will focus on **skills for the future**.

Tuesday 4th November, 4-6pm
Unite, Tolpuddle Martyrs House, 238
Holdenhurst Road, **Bournemouth** BH8 8EG
This session will focus on **public services**.

Wednesday 12th November, 2-4pm
Taunton Rugby Club, Hyde Park, Hyde Lane,
Taunton, Somerset TA2 8BU
This session will focus on **tackling inequality**.

9. Here's a date to remember...

Wednesday 5th November 2014

Lobby of Parliament

Come along and tell your MP about Pensioners' concerns.

The flyer for this NPC event is an attachment with this email.

For more information contact: NPC
Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London
NW1 2EJ Tel: 0207-383-0388
www.npcuk.org

**For more information
please contact ucu.swest@gmail.com
or contact the officers here:**

South West Branch officers and committee

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Membership: ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

10. UCU SW Retired Members Branch

The branch has been underway for nearly 2 years. The aims are diverse, but include bringing together retired members of UCU in the South West, giving advice to 'working' branches on pension and retired members' matters, campaigning on issues relating to retired members and representation to the UCU national congress, National Pensioners Convention, Local TUCs.

Meetings: We hold meetings three times a year. The meetings centre round important issues for UCU pensioners and give a chance to chat to other retired members over a free buffet lunch

Newsletter: A regular newsletter for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses. We welcome articles of this newsletter, so if you have something to share please send it to us.

Email addresses: We encourage retired members to use their home email when you give up your work email address. Please let us have any changes to your home address.

Treasurer: You may recall that we asked for a volunteer to be Treasurer. We are pleased that John Daniell has agreed to be our Treasurer and we now have our own branch bank account. We have arrived!

More information

A lot more information and news can be obtained from these websites. We recommend that you have a browse.

UCU National Website:
<http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention (NPC):
<http://npcuk.org>

We look forward to seeing you at the **branch meeting on 27th October 2014**.

Let us know that you are coming, and we will provide a buffet lunch.

The next newsletter is planned for January 2015. Contributions always welcome.

Jo Corke chair.