

### *Message from your Chairman*

After an extremely damp, although not so cold, winter and spring we emerge optimistic that at the very least the weather will improve now we are in June. Our profession; that of education, continues to be under fire.

Recently I received a letter from an old colleague who, after redundancy from a university, took a position as an A Level specialist Maths teacher at what had been a grammar school. He says "The school has recently attained the status of Academy, and is now closing all its A Level science courses". Too expensive? Universal serious education is essential to a real democracy. Whenever there is an attempt to surreptitiously undermine this, we need to be aware and oppose it.

A more blatant policy is that of trebling course fees for many FE and HE courses; not only does this mitigate against the less well off students, but increases the pressure on our members.

Retired members, yes that's us. Please come to our meetings if you can, but do not forget to support in any way that is appropriate your old college or your university, or your local college and university – or education in general.

Good education needs all the help it can get if it is to survive!!

*Robin King*

### *Newsletter*

Dear Branch Members

Just a reminder that, in future, if you have something that you would like to pass on to members of the branch via the newsletter, could you please email Valerie Schicker at [valerie.brian@btinternet.com](mailto:valerie.brian@btinternet.com) For example, you might like to include a story you have written or a special trip you have been on. Whatever it is, we would love to hear from you.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to produce a Winter/Spring copy of the Newsletter due to various technical difficulties Valerie has been experiencing with her computer. However, since these have now mostly been resolved, an Autumn/

Winter Newsletter is planned and Valerie would be grateful if she could receive any contributions by the end of September.

As the cost of postage is very expensive, please let me have your email address if you haven't done so already and, of course, any changes of email address.

*Grace Everson*

### *Good News?*

In early December last year two news items caught my eye, the first that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was growing and the long awaited recovery was underway, the second that the number of pensioners living in poverty had gone down. At first sight this looked like some early good news for Christmas but as we know first impressions can be misleading so pause for reflection. With my formal knowledge of economics limited to a one year undergraduate course on Economics almost sixty years ago, attempting a discussion on GDP seems a little unwise but the report was accompanied by the news that average earnings were still only rising by less than 1%, which is important in relation to the second news item. Poverty for this statistic is defined as having an income of less than 60% of the median income and with earnings lagging behind inflation for yet another year the median income, in real terms, must be falling. Whereas pensioners' incomes, which are for the most part linked in some way to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), will have remained relatively static in real terms. Consequently, some pensioners will now be classed as being above the poverty line although they are no better off. Indeed, as old people feel the cold more, as one government minister in a blinding flash of insight told us, they are probably worse off as CPI underestimates the effect of inflation on old people. So not good news on pensioners in poverty and, with ordinary working people continuing to suffer despite the recovery, I had to look elsewhere for Christmas cheer. Meanwhile the Government line remains that pensioners

have been protected from the effects of austerity which have been felt elsewhere, we are the ones who have not been "all in it together", and the clear implication is that we will have our chance to do our bit after the next election. Therefore, we need to press for a rational discussion, which is aware of the problems facing the more than six million pensioners living on less than ten thousand pounds a year and does not lead to actions based on slogans such as "Lord Sugar does not need a bus pass" and which also looks carefully at any consequences of the wider changes.

*Lloyd Wilson*

*Paper on The Role of Retired Members -  
Some ideas from the Eastern and Home Counties Branch  
See item 7 on the Agenda*

It seemed to us that the experience and expertise of retired members could be effectively deployed to help colleagues in employment and working full-time with some of the work which is needed for there to be an effective union, representing and championing members' interests and helping where appropriate with some of the myriad tasks which are the legitimate business of our union.

We have time and long experience working in the education sector to contribute. What we may not have is energy and up-to-date knowledge of current practice.

If we can help, we are willing to make the effort and see how we get on.

As a starter, those of us who are willing to volunteer could be put in touch with their nearest UCU branch. A meeting could be organised with branch members to explore the possibilities of those things they might value some help with. Head Office should also maintain a list/register of such retired members, with a list of those (verified) qualifications and experience which the contributor is willing to offer and which might be helpful, locally, regionally or possibly nationally.

Possible areas of help which spring to mind include :

Helping to fight UCU campaigns  
Joining marches  
Helping local branches with routine administration, secretarial and office work and awareness raising  
Leaving a legacy to UCU  
Making donations to help with the work  
Meetings with the media – preparing news releases, leaflets, speaking on radio or tv and  
Correspondence in local newspapers, after vetting by union officers  
Leading historically informed debates on contentious or controversial issues  
Cultivating distinguished fellow-pensioners to persuade them to contribute nationally – eg Professors D Whitfield, A Pollack and P Sika  
Becoming 'first responders' to provide help in medical crises in a college  
Covering for posts where the Union has not been able to recruit an up-to-date officer, especially members with business/management, legal and social service qualifications  
Helping members who are faced with employer bullying/tribunals, etc

While doing this work we could keep the Union informed on matters concerning/affecting pensioners

We could also expect a quid pro quo in a louder voice in Union affairs and campaigns.

*Tony Mitchell*

*The EU and the NHS: how the EU is making the privatisation of the NHS permanent*

There is grave concern that actions by the European Parliament in the form of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) could open the floodgates for private healthcare providers in the USA to bid for contracts in the NHS, made possible by the Health and Social Care Act, which enforces competitive tendering. To learn more and to lobby your MEP to ensure the NHS is free of these pernicious laws, please use Google to find Benedict Cooper's New Statesman Blog and/or read Linda Kaucher's article on the Chartist website.

*Extracted from Ann Donlan's piece E.Mid.NL.2/14*

*Dangers to be aware of when using social media*

UCU has had to deal with a number of cases recently relating to problems caused by members posting comments on social media. Whilst the use of Twitter is clearly public, some members are being caught out by the fact that other forms of media, such as Facebook, are not as private as they think regardless of the privacy settings they might have. Members need to remember that all it takes is for one "friend" to print off, or copy and paste a post on, for example Facebook, and it stops being private. The simple rule is not to mention anything related to your work and if you have identified your past or present workplace on your page, then be careful about anything that an employer might use to claim that you are bringing them into dispute.

It may seem obvious but people do get caught out by this and employers are becoming more savvy about taking action against members for posts on social media. If in doubt don't write it down and make sure that you warn any colleagues of the potential dangers too.

*Lydia Richards*

*Information available from Age UK*

Age UK have produced four leaflets that you may find helpful.

These are entitled:

- Help with legal advice
- Powers of attorney
- Wills and estate planning
- How to be an executor

and can be obtained by contacting Age UK on 0800 169 65 65 (8am to 7pm) or [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

*Other useful websites for retired members:*

68 is too late  
[www.68istoolate.org.uk](http://www.68istoolate.org.uk)

The National Pensioners Convention  
[npcuk.org](http://npcuk.org)

UCU National Website  
[ucu.org.uk](http://ucu.org.uk)

On line campaigning

[38degrees.org.uk](http://38degrees.org.uk)

[change.org](http://change.org)

## Obituaries

### Cecil Gleaves 1.4.24 - 29.3.14

Born and bred in Willingham, Cecil's musical talent showed at an early age, playing the hymns in school assemblies and playing the organ in church when just 17. Post-school his studies were Geography related, resulting in an M.A. in 1951 and his becoming a College Lecturer in Geography (Bedford, Stevenage, Westminster). His studies had been previously interrupted by the War and his serving in the Royal Signals (India and the Far East) as a Wireless Operator. His life revolving around music and the theatre, he even found a way of tuning into the Light Programme so that he could listen to dance bands! Indeed, his extensive musical knowledge was often called upon by the BBC, various musical buffs, critics and celebrities. After retirement Cecil returned to Willingham and lectured for the WEA and U3A, as well as doing some voluntary work for Age Concern and Cambridge Arts/Youth Theatre. Through his love and knowledge of music he enriched the lives of many people and was referred to by Paul Barnes, the BBC Presenter, as 'The Professor'. Described as 'delightfully eccentric', loved by many, he will be sadly missed.

Provided by Mr. and Mrs. Steward

*N.B. Due to some loss of data it is possible that a death which has been notified is not recorded here. If this is the case, please let us know and it will be included in the next Newsletter.*

If you received this newsletter by post and have an email address please could you provide your email address to [pensions@ucu.org.uk](mailto:pensions@ucu.org.uk) with your membership number on the envelope, or your name and address. This will reduce the cost of postage and the administration of sending paper copies via the post. Thank you

If you wish to attend the Eastern and Home Counties Retired Members' Branch contact Grace Everson by:  
email [grace.everson@phonecoop.coop](mailto:grace.everson@phonecoop.coop)  
Telephone: 01223 208915  
Address: 189 Ermine Way, Arrington, Cambridgeshire, SG8 0AY

#### Branch Officers:

Chair: Robin King [rubecularex@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rubecularex@yahoo.co.uk)  
Vice Chair: John Rose: [john.rose@talktalk.com](mailto:john.rose@talktalk.com)  
Minute Sec: Lloyd Wilson [Wilson.l13@sky.com](mailto:Wilson.l13@sky.com)  
Secretary & Treasurer: Grace Everson (as above)

Items for the Newsletter should go to Valerie Schicker:  
[valerie.brian@btinternet.com](mailto:valerie.brian@btinternet.com)

## NEXT BRANCH MEETING

UCU EASTERN AND HOME COUNTIES RETIRED MEMBERS' BRANCH

BRANCH MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 2014 AT 1330 – 1600 hours  
AT MICHAELHOUSE CENTRE, ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH,  
TRINITY STREET, CAMBRIDGE CB2 1SU

(PLEASE NOTE CHANGED MEETING TIME)

## A G E N D A

1. Attendance
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last meeting 12 March 2014
4. Matters arising  
Email of support sent to Lambeth College.
5. Reports  
SERTUC Seminar 16 April 2014  
Cambridge Trades Council meeting  
21 May 2014  
NPC Eastern Region  
16 April 2014  
UCU Eastern Region meeting  
26 April 2014
6. Resignation of Branch Treasurer
7. Tony Mitchell's paper on Role of Retired Members - attached in the body of this Newsletter
8. Report of Congress
9. Joe Gluza – update on Union.  
(We might also have a speaker on International Affairs but have not had confirmation as yet.)
10. Change of branch rules
10. Any other business

There is a café in the church with good food. You will be able to claim some expenses.

Please let me know if you are able to attend or not.  
Grace Everson, Branch Secretary  
Phone 01223 208915