

We send out three or four newsletters a year – so if you have anything you wish to include just let us know. The address is at the end of the newsletter

Rally to Mark 10 Years of Concessionary Travel.

On 6th September members of the Yorkshire and Humberside Pensioners Convention organised a rally in York to celebrate the 10th anniversary of concessionary travel. Many members of UCU YHRMB were involved in the event which seemed to be enjoyed by everyone.

The rally was a chance for people to speak about their own personal experiences of using the travel pass and people came from all over this huge region to do just that.

Some people spoke of the travel pass enabling them to take part in voluntary work which would otherwise be out of the question because of the prohibitive costs of travel. There were also those who bemoaned the fact that



they hardly used their passes because the bus services in their particular areas were so infrequent and unreliable. This was a chance for everyone to be heard.

Guest speakers included Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central, who expressed her enthusiasm and support for the rally as soon as she heard that it was going to take place. She assured us all of The Labour Party's commitment to keeping the concessions we already enjoy and of widening the availability of free travel as a way of reversing the worrying and costly trend towards increased car usage.

We were very lucky with the weather (always a factor with an outdoor event such as this one) and we were also lucky to have the support of UNISON retired



members who organised and paid for refreshments which were laid on throughout the day at the nearby Methodist Hall.

We didn't have an accurate count of how many people came to support but it was certainly a good turnout and as many people as possible made their way to York on buses or other forms of public transport – sometimes finding that this was not as easy as it should have been.

There have been a number of local celebrations of this 10th

anniversary in various parts of the country so it was good to see a rally in our region as well. Our thanks go especially to Fran Postlethwaite who took on most of the work of organising the event.



This next article comes from an NPC newsletter – and the irony of including it in this, a digital-only publication, is not lost on me!

The digital divide hurts those who are not online

Nearly 4 million pensioners are routinely ripped off because they don't use the internet, according to new research from money saving experts.

Official figures show that 4 in 5 of those who don't have access to the internet are aged over 65 - equal to 3.8 million of a total of 4.8 million in that age-group. They face a raft of penalties designed to push customers to internet deals for essential services because these are cheaper for big companies to run.

For example, phone companies make millions a year by charging up to £2.50 a time to send out paper statements. Some telecom firms force homeowners to pay for broadband if they want a phone line – even if they don't own a computer or tablet, and all 6 major energy firms impose fees of up to £94 for paying bills by cheque.

British Gas has even prevented customers who don't use the internet from getting its best energy tariff, while savers are deprived of £500 a year in interest because the best deals are online.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: “Older consumers without access to the internet are being punished, and this has got to stop.”

The latest figures show that 3.8 million people aged 65 and over have never used the internet. Almost all adults aged 16 to 24 years were recent internet users (99.2%), in contrast with 38.7% of adults aged 75 years and over.

News from UCU

{Having been on a zero hours contract for 10 years until I retired, I was pleased to see this.}

UCU welcomes move from NCG to tackle insecure contracts

The University and College Union (UCU) has today (Thursday, Sept 6th) welcomed a commitment from NCG to provide more security of employment in its colleges. The unions say staff without permanent contracts are unable to plan their lives as they don't know how many hours they will work or what they may earn on a monthly basis.

Under the new plans, casual contracts will be restricted to eight weeks and after two years staff will be given a permanent contract. NCG has six colleges across England and will roll out the plan initially at its two Newcastle sites.

UCU says moving staff from zero-hours style contracts to permanent ones in two years could transform people's lives. [Research from the University and College Union](#) (UCU) in 2015 found that staff on casual contracts have struggled make ends meet.

Over half of survey respondents (56%) working in further education said that they had struggled to pay household bills. Around two-fifths (39%) had had problems keeping up with mortgage or rent commitments and three in 10 (29%) said they had had difficulties putting food on the table. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said: 'We are delighted with this new approach from NCG. This added level of security can be life changing for staff. Some of the most vulnerable staff will go from not knowing what they might be earning each month to being able to better plan their life.'



Yorkshire and Humberside Retired Members Branch

Next Branch Meeting Sept 18th at 1pm.

49 St Paul's Street
Leeds
LS1 2TE

Contact us via the newsletter editor:
doreenmagill@dsl.pipex.com