

Southern

Winter 2003

Industry News

TO BE IN EUROPE



NHS MEMBERS MEET HEALTH MINISTER



TAKING THE LEAD
ON DISABILITY ISSUES

LEARNING
REPS IN THE
COCKPIT



SUPPORTING
CARERS AT THE
WORKPLACE





JUANITA ILLINGWORTH REGIONAL LEARNING ORGANISER

How fast can a year go?

It's so hard to believe that I have been in the southern region for that time already.

What an interesting journey getting to this stage. Starting off as an active union member three years ago, then becoming a rep, and then with a lot of thought deciding I really wanted to work for the union full-time.

The workplaces I have been to are highlights throughout the year. Being able to have a look inside the Concorde (special thanks to Dave Moore) seeing a section of a missile (scary) though I never quite mastered NHS site visits (thanks to an over-active imagination and a weak stomach). Such variety; it's amazing.

I finally got to grips with southern England geography. This meant that for recent meetings I would still manage to get lost, but usually within a five mile radius of the meeting. Progress indeed!

Looking back, I am fascinated how a variety of experiences have led to opportunities. How lucky I have been to be able to do something that I care about passionately. To feel so proud of all the Learning Reps in the region – of not only what has been done, but what can and will be done by them.

The first Learning Rep I recruited in the region was Isabel Butcher at the RSPCA, who wrote to me and the union to say:

"Thank you so very much for recruiting me to be a learning rep – I think it did give me the inspiration to go and get myself booked on my BA (hons) course – which I start part-time this Thursday."

How wonderful that we as a union can provide the support that provides life-changing opportunities to members like Isabel. Members who are bound to repay that support through their contribution to our movement and to society.

It is weird to be leaving this exciting job to return to Australia – but again, being a union official opened up further doors.

Recently, when I returned to Australia for my father's funeral, I was able to utilise the organisational skills I have developed as my sister Roslind and I worked hard to have everything in place for dad.

Before retiring, our father was a member of the Police Union. This meant that we had support from the police chaplain. I remember thinking – there is so much more to being a member of a union – it's about support. It's about that extra something.

It's funny how things work out. Had I have shied away from being a rep, I wouldn't have had the industrial relations exposure and experience which

within the union, by going to conference, by finding out as much as I could, and developing skills to make me a successful candidate for an Amicus vacancy.

Being the Learning Organiser for the region has provided so many opportunities and personal learning curves. I will be remaining involved in the Union movement.

My philosophy is to believe that anything is possible; just find a way to achieve it. It's been fun meeting people from so many backgrounds working so hard for their colleagues.

Even socially when asked "who do you work for?" it's been fun seeing the surprise (most times) when saying "I work for a trade union". During my interview I said that I saw the role of



LEARNING REP, BILL KEARNS AND JUANITA HAVE A LOOK AT CONCORDE BEFORE ITS FINAL JOURNEY

determined that I had the passion to be active in the trade union movement. I thrived on being involved in negotiations, recruitment, consultation meetings, and working for a win-win situation.

This led on to becoming more active

Learning Organiser to be a positive, proactive and contemporary image of the union. And that we have!

I've met a lot of wonderful people this past year, and, if I've met you, then you are one of those! Thank you.



PAUL MATZ
REGIONAL TREASURER

Representing, Supporting, Campaigning

Welcome to the final edition of *Southern Industry News*, to be produced under the Amicus-msf logo.

The MSF Southern Regional Council has had a consistent and proud reputation of being progressive but always pragmatic.

Of being radical but always realistic. Of promoting diversity and equal opportunities but always being in the mainstream of the trade union movement.

Of campaigning for social justice but always recognising that the priority for our union is to represent and support members at the workplace.

These are the values that our region has promoted within the union and outside. Because for trade unionists we believe there is no other way forward.

We have also promoted partnerships and innovation both within and without.

Southern Industry News is an excellent example of that approach. It relies on contributions from our full-time officers, and on active members in our region and beyond.

Another innovation has been our partnerships in recent years with the voluntary sector, first with Shelter and more recently with Carers UK.

These partnerships have been about raising the profile of the union in an important sector with massive recruitment potential, about putting policies into practice, and about supporting members in ways not traditionally reached by the union.

Our partnership with Labour has manifested itself in many ways, but most consistently in support for the many Labour MEPs, MPs, councils and councillors throughout the region, who do an excellent job representing their constituents, fighting injustice and poverty, promoting fairness and equality.

We share these values and have never been tempted to join the siren voices on left and right, who at union conferences and other events have sometimes caused such disruption through personal attacks, shouts of sell-out and general negativity, that we

have wondered about their motivation.

This edition of *Southern Industry News* has quite a 'political' feel to it with a look forward to next year's Euro elections from Peter Skinner MEP, and a report on Labour's recent conference from Brian Wood.

But as always we hear from our regional officers about many of the industrial developments on their 'patches' and also have interesting contributions about disability champions and the needs of working carers.

With copy also about internal union issues and the next potential merger, this edition is jampacked as always. I hope you enjoy it.

We look forward to the future with optimism and vigour, and in the belief that our new union has the potential and resources to support members as never before, whether in manufacturing or health, finance or airways, or indeed in any sector of the UK economy.

Let's make Amicus a union that truly takes the best features from both MSF and the AEEU.



Celebrate the achievements of MSF and the birth of Amicus

Brian Wood, Southern Regional President, invites you to join him at the final event to be organised by the Amicus-msf southern region

Cigala 54 Lamb's Conduit Street London WC1N 3LW
1-4pm Saturday 13 December 2003

Special guests:

Mel Read MEP (former ASTMS NEC member)

David Triesman Labour Party General Secretary (tbc)

Bill Walsh Assistant General Secretary

Places are strictly limited so please apply as soon as possible. Lunch and refreshments provided.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with normal regional council policy.

I would like to attend the celebration event on Saturday 13 December

I would like to bring a guest who is not a Amicus-msf member, and enclose a cheque for £30 made payable to Amicus-msf

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Please return to Paul Matz, 11 Tannington Terrace, Gillespie Road, London N5 1LE.



DAVID HOULISTON
SOUTHERN NEC MEMBER

Back to the future

As we approach the end of MSF and the birth of Amicus, I would like to give my view of the future development for our new union.

The concept of Amicus was based on a new approach to trade unionism with the full time officers and lay members working as a team to develop a coherent, viable, working industrial structure.

This type of teamwork can only be built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect that has been cemented in many years of sharing and resolving difficulties. Respect is earned not given.

Unfortunately although this respect undoubtedly exists between the current MSF National Executive Council (NEC) and the union's Senior Management team (SMT), and I am sure likewise on the AEEU side, the two unions have yet to have the opportunity to share experiences and build up the level of relationships that will be necessary for the future well being of our union.

The election of a new Amicus NEC will change all this and bring together many people, who will be both political and industrial strangers to each other, but who will be expected to lead our union for the next three years and beyond.

What is the future for Amicus? The new NEC will be predominately from manufacturing, but the rising membership will be in the service sector.

It is in the interests of the public sector to have a vibrant, manufacturing sector to help fund our welfare state,

but until the current decline of this sector is arrested, Amicus will be dependent on a growing service sector to keep the union solvent and viable.

The likely merger next year with Unifi after a thirty-year courtship by ASTMS, MSF and Amicus will undoubtedly change the balance on the NEC but must not be viewed as a threat, but as an opportunity. In order to survive in what is becoming an increasingly competitive market, Amicus will need to look to the past for its future, at least in the short to medium term.

Clive Jenkins's philosophy remains as sound today as it was thirty years ago.

Clive politicised the non-political and made many more aware of the potential of trade unions. Targetting middle management, the one group that saw no need for a trade union. After all they were articulate, well educated, bright and "safe".

Clive showed that this would not protect them and in the 60s and 70s middle managers joined the union in large numbers for support and advice against their employers.

Along came Thatcher in 1979, with market forces, it was management's right to manage and short-term gain was the name of the game. Once more many middle managers felt no need for protection.

Today the belief that managers would be sacrosanct and safe from market forces, as they are the bosses lies in tatters, as recent job losses in the finance sector and manufacturing have shown. The needs of this group, as they have always been, are exactly the same as the rest of the workforce.

After 18 years of Thatcherism and feeling secure, this group now needs the very support many of them spurned in 1979, throughout the 80s and the 90s.

But support from whom? Middle management was mainly a group that voted for and supported Thatcher that believed there was no such thing as society, that trade unions were too powerful and spoke of the need to roll back the nanny state.

It is certainly ironic that these same people are now the unsuspecting victims of Thatcher's vindictive employment laws, seeing their occupational pensions reduced by lack of legislation to control market forces and many of whom now need or will need on retirement the support of the state to survive.

The pendulum has turned full circle and Clive's philosophy is once more prevalent and relevant. The future for any trade union lies in maintaining and building its membership base.

Amicus will need to run extremely fast, simply to replace the current losses in our manufacturing membership and there will no time for internal squabbles or point scoring.

It is essential the new NEC and SMT develop the spirit and team working that was envisaged in the original project. Amicus cannot afford the luxury of the war between political factions that marred the first five years of MSF.

The purpose of our union is to support our members' hopes and aspirations and that will only be maintained and developed if differences are buried quickly.

I know that in my own field, the health sector, membership is booming, with new representatives elected every week and training events packed to capacity. Some professional bodies that would not give MSF the time of day, four years ago are now knocking at our door.

By merger, association agreements, partnership working, direct recruitment, the opportunities are there for Amicus to be the trade union voice for 150,000 health service professionals.

The NHS team is in place to play its part in building Amicus, by not re-inventing the wheel to recruit new members, but by going back to the future.

4



DAVID HOULISTON, SPEECH THERAPIST, JENNI KAY, AND CPHVA MEMBER, JANET DOWNIE, MEET SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH, DR JOHN REID



JANE LEWIS
AMICUS RULES COMMISSION

Amicus rules OK!

At long last we are nearing the implementation of the new Amicus rule book! For the past 20 months I have had the privilege of serving on the Amicus Rules Commission, set up to draft the rules for the new union, and what a job it was!

The Commission consisted of 20 members, 10 from each union. On the MSF side, the 10 were made up of 4 members elected by conference, and 6 NEC members. The AEEU side included 10 NEC members.

From the outset we decided that our deliberations would be conducted in private whilst the majority of the work was done, so as to avoid negotiation by the many instead of the few!

We also decided to operate on a consensus basis, and have used a pairing system, so that members could vote only if their 'pair' was present. I don't recall us ever having a vote, so I guess that means we've been successful!

As I'm sure everyone knows, the new Rule Book had a difficult birth. The Commission were very conscious that

they were trying to combine and take the best elements from two different cultures, as well as trying to come up with something new where appropriate.

Both sides had their 'lines in the sand', and both had to shift position on occasion. Fortunately, our discussions were conducted in a spirit of constructive negotiation, so the process was easier than it could otherwise have been.

I've been an active trade union representative and workplace negotiator for three and half thousand members for the past 10 years and so I was especially interested in ensuring that Amicus has a structure that maximises the chances of a representative leadership at all levels.

I believe we've achieved that by:

- Combining the best of MSF's regional structures, and AEEU's industrial structures
- Focusing the main activities of the new union on workplace representatives
- Protecting and strengthening sectoral autonomy

- Improved accountability – sectors will have direct representation on the NEC
- Preserving and improving the MSF equalities structures

Branch and regional funding was one of the most difficult issues we had to deal with, our two cultures having radically different views on this subject. After much painful deliberation, we came up with a method of funding which will be new to both predecessor organisations, will mean that funds don't accumulate unused, and access to money should be as easy as it ever was.

The members of the Rules Commission were braced for lots of questions and constructive criticism, and were all very relieved when the new rule book was accepted by the Rules Conference this summer. It becomes effective on 1 January 2004, and then we'll find out how user friendly it is! Fingers crossed.

I'll be very glad if I never see another rule book, ever.

Jane Lewis can be contacted on ☎ 0161 832 8686 or at janensi@ourplace27.freemove.co.uk



IAN TEMPLEMAN
AMICUS REP AT THE ROYAL SUN ALLIANCE

Finance sector staff **deserve** a **united** trade **union** organisation

It looks increasingly likely that Unifi will be joining up with Amicus next year, though of course there is still some way to go before members are asked to give their final seal of approval.

When I first became an active trade unionist some twenty-two years ago there was an unseemly war taking place between ASTMS and BIFU. The main, but by no means the only area of conflict was at the Midland Bank where ASTMS

(an Amicus predecessor union) and BIFU (Unifi's predecessor) fought a pitched battle for members and influence.

However, over the past ten years the relationship between the two unions has gradually improved; in no small part propelled by mergers and acquisitions and the gradual breakdown of the distinctions between banking and insurance.

Today Amicus and Unifi co-operate, indeed work well together, within

companies such as the Royal Sun Alliance and AXA. Collaboration is increasingly beneficial in relations with the Financial Services Authority on training and development and other employment matters.

The same goes for dealings with trade associations in the finance sector, the Treasury, the Department of Trade & Industry and the consumer lobby. The purchase of Churchill for £1.2 billion by

the Royal Bank of Scotland is bound to lead to further joint activity.

Increasingly it is the accepted view of representatives and members in both unions that we need to create a flexible finance sector union federation for the future generations of finance sector workers. The best practice of Unifi and Amicus employment traditions should be preserved and enhanced.

It is said that merger plans between the two unions failed in the 1980's for three reasons: political differences, the inbuilt conservatism of some trade union structures and the arrogance of the general secretaries at that time.

I am currently the senior seconded representative at Royal Sun Alliance. I lead Amicus's work in this company with 6,500 members and a network of effective union representatives.

I have extensive experience in the representation of members, both in individual cases and collectively, where I find time after time that our interests coincide with those of UNIFI members.

I don't believe the failure of previous negotiations can be repeated or tolerated. The prospect of UNIFI becoming part of AMICUS and thereby the establishment of a single finance sector union formation is too important for that.

We need to end divided representation of staff interests in this hugely important sector of the UK economy. I was delighted to attend the 2003 Unifi conference which overwhelmingly passed a motion saying:

"This Annual Conference recognises the continual need to end divided staff representation within the Finance Industry and warmly congratulates the NEC for its decision to hold exclusive talks with AMICUS on the possibility of a merger.... conference acknowledges that this is only the first stage in a complex process but urges the Unifi NEC to pursue the talks with vigour."

Good words; I hope they become more than that.

Amicus disability champions

Amicus has yet again taken the lead in the area of equalities and diversity. As chair of the union's Disability Employment Rights National Advisory Committee (DERNAC), Judy Box is making the case for statutory rights for Equality Representatives along the lines of those achieved for industrial and learning representatives.

DERNAC developed the concept of Equality Representatives through their £50,000 Disability Champions at Work project earlier this year. A Disability Champion is a representative who focuses on issues affecting disabled people at work, enabling them to reach their full potential through changed employment practices and adjustments, and also challenges and changes attitudes in the workplace.



JUDY BOX

With the project already exceeding its initial target of 50 Disability Champions, it is now looking to recruit more so that all employers that recognise Amicus are proactive on this issue. The project has run a series of seminars to introduce the concept to current representatives and members who would be interested in taking up this rewarding role on behalf of their colleagues.

The next seminar, run jointly with Scope, a leading charity in this area, is being held on 14 November in Bristol, with dates yet to be arranged for events at Manchester, Cambridge and Hull.

Everyone who signs up to be a Disability Champion will receive comprehensive training, examining ways of overcoming the barriers to



DISABILITY CHAMPIONS ARE ALREADY IMPROVING PROSPECTS FOR MEMBERS AT THE WORKPLACE

employment and the law, interspersed with activities including auditing and negotiating with management and researching different disabilities and possible adjustments.

The Two Tick system of assessment of employers (which has been undermined by some companies as a minimalist standard) is used in the project to extend employers compliance with the voluntary elements of the scheme and is therefore covered rigorously.

Judy is actively encouraging a wide range of members to become a Disability Champion, especially at workplaces where no champion is yet in place. As she says "This project is making a tangible difference in the workplace. Already we are receiving reports of companies reviewing their policies and practices, and of adjustments being made by employers to enable and assist members".

As well as advocating statutory rights to time off as a Disability Champion, Judy is also campaigning in Amicus to see this extended to all Equality Representatives, including the 150 Equal Pay reps that the union has trained.

In a similar way, Equal Pay reps focus on a single equality issue - that is to close the gender gap in pay - where women receive an average of 19% less in their pay packet than their male counterparts

As Judy points out with passion and commitment these areas of work show the potential of our union to improve the quality of life for many members.

European Parliament visit to Strasbourg organised by Euro MPs

Funding available for 12 members to receive grants of up to £150 each.

Strasbourg
15–19 December
Cost £235, single room supplement £80.

Grants are conditional on delegates not seeking any additional funding from the union.

To apply for a grant contact Brian Wood on
☎ 01622 200348 or at
brianthegooner@hotmail.com

Europe – our future – regional women's day

Saturday 15 November

Richard Huish College, Taunton

Open to all women members and supporters of the Labour Party the event includes contributions from

■ Mary Honeyball MEP

■ Harriet Eisner
Amicus-msf International officer

■ Isabel Owen
Regional director for Britain in Europe

Expenses will be paid by the Southern regional council, and workshops at the event will be held on

■ European Enlargement

■ Europe and caring for your health

■ Using Europe to promote work-life balance issues

Further information from Alison Dean on ☎ 01273 737161 or at
alison.dean@sysxha.nhs.uk



PETER SKINNER MEP

Amicus and Labour: working together in Europe

We in the labour movement have a lot to be proud of in Europe. Many aspects of employment legislation which have contributed to make British jobs safer, healthier, and better paid originated at European level.

The Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, for example, famously rejected by Thatcher and then adopted soon after Labour took control in 1997, included provisions for a minimum wage, collective bargaining, protection for disabled workers, and many other key aspects of social policy which many now take for granted.

Indeed, since I was first elected as an MEP in 1994, I have been fortunate to have been involved in many achievements to improve working conditions for UK employees.

The Information and Consultation Directive, as discussed by Digby Jacks in the last issue of Southern Industry News, should ensure a fairer, more open dialogue between employers and employees. The Working Time Directive guarantees the majority of British workers a 48 hour maximum working week.

Back in 1999, the European Union introduced a full ban on the use of asbestos, minimising the future risk to our workforce from this cancer-causing material. Furthermore, my colleagues and I work closely with the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work to press for legislation making British workplaces safer.

One example is last year's European Health & Safety Week, which highlighted the dangers of stress in the workplace. This year's event focuses on hazardous substances, and includes a series of events designed to flag up the subject.

And now we can look to the future. On 1 May next year, the European Union will expand to take in 10 new members. With enlargement come

both significant economic and social benefits, but it also brings new challenges. The EU's population will immediately increase by 104 million, and it will become the largest single economic area in the world.

The trade union movement will, I believe, have a powerful role to play in this transition. Many former Soviet bloc countries are still sceptical of the active role trades unions can play; Poland is a notable exception, of course.

However, with the acceptance of EU social policy as part of the terms of entrance, I believe many accession states will be looking towards the UK trade union movement, and Amicus in particular, as a demonstration of how effective a constructive working relationship between trades unions and government can be.

As we approach the European Parliament elections in June 2004, it is vital that the strong links between unions and the Party continue to exist at every level. Let us not forget that the Tories are the real enemy. They continue to try and block legislation which will help our members. They tried, under Thatcher, to crush and batter the UK trade union movement at every opportunity.

The Conservatives may have become a joke to many people but their ability in the south-east in particular, to mobilise their core vote means they are still a firm threat. At the last European elections in 1999, they secured five of the the 11 seats up for grabs. Nationally, they doubled their representation from 18 to 36. True, a low turnout didn't help and we need to ensure that more trade unionists understand the benefits of electing Labour MEPs next June.

By working together; on the doorstep, in Westminster, and in the European Parliament – we can achieve great things.



BRIAN WOOD
REGIONAL PRESIDENT

Labour Party Conference 2003

MANUFACTURING, HEALTH AND PENSIONS WERE THE CAMPAIGNING THEMES OF THE JOINT AMICUS DELEGATION TO THE 2003 LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE IN BOURNEMOUTH.

The highpoint of the week for our delegation was the march organised by Amicus to promote manufacturing in the UK. It was sensibly focussed not at attacking our government, but to remind them that the manufacturing sector needs their support.

Members from many workplaces threatened with closure rallied to hear Derek Simpson speak in a local park, then march in an orderly fashion past the conference centre. Many non-Amicus delegates afterwards remarked to me how well organised and effective they thought it had been.

On the same day Amicus moved one of the only five contemporary motions now permitted at conference, calling on Government to enhance and develop its manufacturing strategy.

All this did not escape Gordon Brown's attention as in his speech he specifically referred to the need to look at procurement rules, to enable British manufacturers to benefit from the placement of government orders with foreign companies, in the same way that foreign governments place their orders. Thus creating a level playing field to protect British jobs.

Amicus delegates also contributed strongly to the motion rejecting foundation hospitals. Mutual support from other trade unions resulted in the motion being carried against the wishes of the platform.

Then, on the final day of conference, Roger Lyons seconded the composite motion on occupational pensions, which called for many safeguards for pension schemes. Roger had been in the news

for his call for a more constructive relationship with government than some union leaders appear to want, but he was well received and the motion was agreed by conference.

I was selected for the job of teller, and with fourteen card votes in total, I had some work to do other than just listen to the speeches and rhetoric. Another acquired job (I can't say no), was that, with Anna Murphy, I agreed to produce the union's conference report, which will be published in the future.

Having been to the Labour Party Conference many times, it was a particular honour to attend conference as a delegate from my own trade union this year. I felt proud to represent the considerations of nearly a million members of Amicus.

I was also able to renew acquaintance with MSF members and start new ones with AEEU members. Next year we will be there as just one delegation, not as two sections. Apart from the period when the rally and march was in progress members of the delegation were noticeably conscientious in their attendance during the debates.

Of course the other great thing about Labour Party conference is the enormous number and variety of fringe meetings. I was spoilt for choice and attended many meetings of personal interest concerned with my role as a local councillor.

At these I met many members and fellow councillors, some of whom were police authority members like myself and was congratulated about the appointment made by the Kent Police Authority (which I serve on) of the first black Chief Constable, just two days before Conference, that made the headlines. I was proud to have



LONGTIME MSF OFFICER, MUFF SOURANI, WHO IS RETURNING FROM EXILE TO HELP THE REBUILDING OF IRAQ



ROGER LYONS, AMICUS JOINT GENERAL SECRETARY "IF WE KEEP TELLING PEOPLE THAT LABOUR IS BETRAYING THEM, WHY SHOULD THEY VOTE FOR US? IT IS A SIMPLISTIC AND UNTRUE MESSAGE, AND AS TRADE UNIONISTS WE SHOULD ADD TO LABOUR'S APPEAL, NOR DETRACT FROM IT."

played a part in making history.

Amicus held a social event at which Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Ian McCartney attended. Also present was Peter Skinner MEP who had addressed the most recent Southern Regional Council meeting, before dashing off to Brussels to fulfil work commitments. Peter commented on how he enjoyed



JOHN CARUANA
REGIONAL POLITICAL OFFICER

To be in Europe

addressing fellow trade unionists and how much he values their views.

The conference also saw the launch of the Labour Academy, which will create under one umbrella the education wing of the party. This has to be a smart move as we gear up towards the next general election and take on the opposition parties. I signed up for information on their training.

Perhaps the only down side to Conference is the security, which unfortunately has proved necessary since before Labour came to power. Group 4 whose employees are GMB members provided this along with police from at least five police forces.

We live in a world of troubled times, as we were reminded by the speech made by President Karzai of Afghanistan and by the presentation to Muff Sourani who is returning to Iraq from exile after working for Amicus in the UK for many years.

I think it's fair to say that both Government and the Labour Party ended the week in a stronger position and better shape than it had started.

For all the prior talk of spin and manoeuvring the debate both in the conference hall and on the fringe was real and constructive as government ministers took the opportunity to listen to delegates, and rank and file members considered the hard decisions that power brings.

Contrasted with the Conservative Party conference that followed it was revealing that there was more than twice the time allocated to debate by Labour, and yet far fewer real divisions.

With the 2004 event being held in Brighton many Amicus members in the south-east will have the opportunity to attend Labour Party Conference, and I can strongly recommend it as a positive, stimulating and enjoyable experience.

The coach departed from Heathrow with pick up points in Reigate, Maidstone and Dover. The sea crossing to France has been made in the past by many enlisted young men who watched the disappearance of the white cliffs over the horizon for the last time. As war dead their remains now rest in the many cemeteries in Europe.

As our vehicle moved towards Brussels one wonders what was the point of it all. For those who served in the 'Great War' perhaps it was a consolation to believe that it was a war to end wars. Yet twenty years later another war followed this time with more civilian casualties.

It took the vision of two statesmen, Conrad Adenauer, a German, and Robert Schumann, a Frenchman, for a Europe to emerge where disagreements were to be settled differently. The European Coal and Steel Community and the existence of the Benelux States formed the basis of a Common Market which is known as the Treaty of Rome, agreed by six member states in 1957.

Since then nine other countries have enlarged what is now known as the EC. In 2004 another ten will be joining, taking the total to twenty five. Who would have believed that twenty years ago the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain would come down ending the Cold War and some of those states previously

trapped within it will be making up part of the enlarged community.

My visit to the European Parliament in Brussels started with a welcome by Mark Watts, later to be joined by his fellow MEP from the south-east, Peter Skinner.

We were then led into the Parliament Chamber where a headphone gave everyone a choice of interpreter. The session that morning was on the Middle East and the part that Europe was playing in bringing peace to that area.

Later we joined Mark and Peter where they spoke about the work they do and the role of the Parliament in Europe and the rest of the world. When Europe speaks with one voice the world listens. It is showing a democratic way and hope where there is a conflict.

The enlargement in 2004 means that millions of Europeans will enjoy rights which they did not have under undemocratic governments. It is a challenge and an exciting time for the Labour MEPs in our region.

On the return journey through a land of white crosses I could not help but think that at long last Europeans have found a way of talking and not warring. Perhaps a war against bigotry and division is still being fought. The enemy is sadly still present in the form of racism and the anti-Europe right wing politics still found in the Daily Mail and elsewhere.



MEP'S, MARK WATTS (LEFT) AND PETER SKINNER, JOIN JOHN CARUANA DURING HIS VISIT TO BRUSSELS

ALISON DEAN, EMILY HOLZHAUSEN AND MADELEINE STARR DISCUSS HOW CARERS AND WORK CAN BE PUT ON THE UNION'S AGENDA



CARERS CONTRIBUTE SO MUCH TO THOSE THEY LOOK AFTER; THEY ALSO DESERVE A FAIR DEAL AT THE WORKPLACE

The Amicus-msf southern region and Carers UK have been working together for the past three years to look at how members caring for an ill, disabled or frail relative or friend are supported in the workplace, and what the union can do to help.

This innovative collaboration has already seen some positive benefits, and has been much welcomed by the Amicus members at Carers UK.

Within the UK there are six million carers, of whom nearly four million juggle care with paid work. This means that one person in seven in a typical workplace will have some caring responsibilities.

AN ISSUE WHICH AFFECTS US ALL

Latest census statistics show that nearly 400,000 people combine full time work with caring for 20 hours or more, and of these 200,000 are caring for 50 hours or more!

Being a carer is an issue which affects us all. *It Could Be You*, a report published by Carers UK in 2001, reports that three in five people will have caring responsibilities at some stage of their lives, that the peak age for caring, currently 45-64, will start to reduce, and that the number of carers will substantially increase over the next three decades.

This trend will coincide with a need for a further two million people in the workforce, many of whom will be older and have increasingly complex responsibilities outside work. If the economy wants people to work, it will have to support them to do so.

The survey of Southern Region members, asking them if they had caring responsibilities, how these affected them at work, and how well their employers supported them are summarised below, and will be launched, in the form of a briefing for workplace representatives, and a Parliamentary reception for Amicus MPs in the new year.

The survey has been followed up by a number of activities designed to ensure that this challenging issue is put firmly on the union's agenda. The first was a day school for Southern Region reps, followed by a presentation to a Southern Regional Council meeting.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Around four out of ten respondents had significant caring responsibilities – caring for 20 hours or more per week – on top of their jobs. Caring meant that nearly one in four had changed their working hours in order to fit round their caring responsibilities, one in five had reduced their working hours and one in four changed to part-time work.

STRESS AND WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Balancing their work and caring roles can have a number of negative effects on the life of carers:

- 40% said that caring had a negative impact on the way that they worked:
- a similar number felt that caring led to reduced social contact with work colleagues.
- 75% of respondents reported increased stress

CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND FINANCIAL IMPACT

One in five respondents felt that their chances of promotion were harmed by the fact that they cared and worked, and that caring had affected their ability to learn new skills and train. A quarter felt that their pension would be affected.

ATTITUDE OF LINE MANAGER

The survey highlighted the fact that the attitude of line managers is very important in helping a working carer to balance caring and working roles.

Respondents to the survey generally felt that managers were sympathetic (67%) and only 6% said their boss was definitely not helpful. However, 33% of respondents specifically referred to a difficulty in taking time off.



ROY SMITH
REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICER

EMPLOYER PROVISION

Only a quarter of respondents to the survey said that their employers provided details of carers' policy in handbooks and other materials, whilst 60% said that they definitely did not.

Provisions such as carers' leave or compassionate leave are essential if carers are able to continue in work, whilst caring effectively. Over half the respondents said that they have been offered emergency leave and 67% are given compassionate leave.

However, only 25% were allowed paid carers leave and no employer was said to have offered matched leave or long-term care insurance of an employee benefit.

UNION SUPPORT

The survey also highlighted areas where Amicus can lead the way in supporting members who are carers, with hardly any respondents recalling any previous information being received about carers issues from Amicus or any other union.

Since the start of our partnership, a substantial national project, Action for Carers and Employment (ACE) has been formed. ACE is exploring the issues facing carers who work or want to work and seeking integrated solutions to some of the barriers they face.

Partners include Government departments, employers and employers' organisations and unions, and it is hoped that Amicus-msf might join, and help develop guidance to workplace representatives supporting members with caring responsibilities, as well as promoting the issues at policy level.

The Amicus-msf southern region is seeking national union support to make this suggestion a reality which, together with our work with Carers UK, can improve working lives for people with caring responsibilities, and be a step towards equal opportunities for a massive section of the population who contribute so much to the lives of people who need their support.

Madeleine Starr can be contacted on ☎ 020 7566 7607 or at madelein@ukcarers.org

Final weekend school a big success

On a sunny Saturday in September, 32 delegates, guests and speakers gathered at the beautiful surroundings of Chilworth Manor Hotel, just outside Southampton, for the final Amicus-msf southern regional school.

In the best traditions of our union the weekend school was about campaigning, about influencing people and events, about communications skills, and about winning elections and being able to implement policies that benefit our members.

Our first guest speaker was Dan Smith from the North Thames region. Dan was followed by Colin Vane, joint London/Southern NEC member, who spoke about his 10 years on the NEC informatively and amusingly.

Next up was Dave Houlston, Southern Region NEC member and NHS Sector member, again with 10 years on the NEC. True to form Dave spoke in his usual forthright manner, stressing that being prepared to stand up for what is right for the membership can sometimes lead to you not being

popular with some people. Naturally this came a great surprise to me, as I had always thought of our David as being that cuddly bear from the north of the UK who everyone loved.

Our final speaker, Olivia Roche, Ireland NEC member spoke with passion about the merger and the new rulebook, and about how legislation that exists in Ireland affects the union's interface with its membership. Olivia also gave tribute to those Irish trade unionists who literally put their lives at risk by bravely working for lasting peace in Ireland.

Could I class this last southern region weekend event as an outstanding success and one to be remembered? My answer is a definite yes, reflecting excellent preparation from course organisers, Brian Wood and Anne Mellor, a brilliant venue and an event within budget.

Feedback indicated delegates felt the weekend was enjoyable and stimulating, and departed with knowledge and developed skills that can only benefit our union and our members.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the union's education programme these past thirteen years.



CHILWORTH MANOR HOTEL – VENUE FOR THE FINAL MSF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL WEEKEND SCHOOL

Roy Smith can be contacted on ☎ 01784 459438 or at roysmith1@totalise.co.uk



TERRY EDWARDS
REGIONAL OFFICER

Manufacturing Report

The manufacturing sector in the region has shown signs of stabilising although we still have some redundancy programmes to be completed. We are now seeing recruitment taking place in new companies where redundant members have changed employers, it is hoped that this will lead to new recognition agreements in the future. Below is a summary of the activity in the Region as regards to the Manufacturing Sector that covers some of the notable problems your Officials have been involved in:

DELPHI DIESELS, GILLINGHAM

An industrial action ballot involving Amicus-MSF, Amicus-AEEU and the GMB was called off when an improved pay offer was received. Members accepted the offer, which is a two-year deal of 2.9% this year, and between 2.5 - 4.5% in year two, together with a 0.5% merit payment for staff.

MEGGER (FORMERLY AVO), DOVER

A failure to agree was lodged over this year's pay offer, and the planned performance related element. Members were concerned at the subjective nature of how the latter would be allocated, but subsequently voted to reluctantly accept.

VOSPER THORNYCROFT

The move of the company from Southampton to Portsmouth is nearly complete and health and safety problems are being resolved. The main item for negotiation is the flexibility with Fleet Services Limited (part owned by VT) who also work at the same location.

APW

APW announced a redundancy of 190 employees at its Chandlers Ford site, over half of those employed. Extensive discussions are taking place as the management want to change the methods used previously. Other sites of APW in other regions are also affected.

FBH HELICOPTERS, MIDDLE WALLOP

The company's initial offer of a 0% increase was increased to 2.5%, and they then proposed a three year deal, 3% for 2003, RPI + 0.25% for both 2004 and 2005, plus a proposal for a shorter working week. This latest offer has been rejected by members and the next meeting will involve ACAS.

PIRELLI CABLES LIMITED, EASTLEIGH

Pirelli made an offer of a 2.6% increase in pay but members have rejected this. A counter proposal has been put to the company and a works conference is to be held.

AEROSTRUCTURES, HAMBLE

The Aerostructures pension scheme is part of that controlled by Smiths Industries, which is experiencing funding problems. Consequently Smiths have proposed increases in members contributions but members have rejected the proposals and a works conference is being arranged.

BEAGLE AIRCRAFT, CHRISTCHURCH

Beagle is also part of the Smiths Industries Group, has the same pension issues and

in addition Beagle has asked members to delay any pay increase for six months. Members have rejected this proposal and a works conference is being arranged.

B-N GROUP, BEMBRIDGE, ISLE OF WIGHT

The B-N Group went into liquidation 18 months ago and a number of members were made redundant. The receiver sold the company as a going concern with 21 employees transferring to the new employer and the company has since taken on about 40 of the redundant employees but on reduced terms & conditions of employment.

The new management wants to harmonise and meetings are taking place to try to reach new acceptable terms and conditions of employment.

IBM, PORTSMOUTH

IBM is attempting to force through changes to employee's conditions of employment that will change the payment rates for unsociable hours working and could mean some of our members losing over £400 per month.

The problem affects other UK locations, but management has refused to discuss the matter at national level. Instead the company has advised employees to accept the changes or be dismissed. This issue continues.

BAE SYSTEMS

The Waterlooville site of BAE was one of the sites effected by the redundancies that were announced by BAE nationally. Problems arose when during consultations the company initially would not release full details of



SARAH CARPENTER
REGIONAL OFFICER

the employees affected. The problem was resolved but discussions are continuing to ensure that in future full information will be given. We have also secured a number of successful appeals against selection, demonstrating the benefits of being well organised.

ALENIA MARCONI SYSTEMS

The organising project at AMS continues to increase our membership. The project has been reviewed and modified, and it is hoped that this project can be transferred to other sites, hence discussions on a national forum are under way.

BAE NAVAL SYSTEMS

We have agreed with Amicus-AEEU to hold a joint organising project at the Waterlooville site. The project was delayed for a short time as result of the redundancies but the project will now go ahead.

NEG MICON ROTORS LTD

This company produces the large turbine blades for the electric wind generators and can be expected to be a growing business. At present there are over 300 employees; the members we have at present were employed following their redundancy from GKN Westlands and these members have started recruiting some of their colleagues.

NHS Report

This report includes work undertaken in the NHS by all of the region's officers who work in the sector.

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

We continue to arrange meetings to discuss with both members and non-members developments around Agenda for Change. Recently these have included the pharmacy department at the Royal Sussex Hospital at Brighton and at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital. We are setting up a programme across the region in the new year to continue this work.

EAST KENT HEALTH VISITOR ASSISTANTS

Following on from meetings where we spoke to the health visitor assistants about their new job descriptions, we now have a meeting with the local management to try and move this issue forward.

EAST SUSSEX HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Work is ongoing to address pay and grade differentials between phlebotomists and other MLAs across the trust. A formal grievance has been taking place, and we have now reached stage 3 (an appeal to the trust board).

SURREY & SUSSEX STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

A meeting has been held to negotiate a recognition agreement. Amicus and Unison are the unions involved.

KENT AND MEDWAY STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

Using the experience gained from being an early implementer, the project lead from West Kent trust has been seconded

to the SHA to assist them with the roll out for Agenda for Change. As part of this a 'stakeholder' group, involving all union full time officers will be set up.

MAIDSTONE & TUNBRIDGE WELLS NHS TRUST

After almost three years of pressure agreement has finally been reached on a satisfactory harmonisation of on call rates across the trust.

PATHOLOGY FORUM, EAST KENT HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Following representations made by Amicus, the pathology management agreed to formalise the consultation arrangements across the three sites by setting up a forum. Membership will consist of three staff from each site (and we are working hard to ensure that these are union members, who we can then encourage to become reps!) as well as heads of departments, an HR representative and myself.

WEST KENT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NHS TRUST

This trust is an Agenda for Change early implementer and we are continuing to ensure that we are raising our profile and recruiting new members. Recently we met with a group of art therapists in the trust and a meeting for members in psychology has also been held. Reps from the trust attended a national study day for mental health early implementers.

REPRESENTATIVES TRAINING

With funding from the regional council, the second of three NHS training events was held. Nearly 50 reps came along to a day focusing on the Knowledge and Skills Framework, which is a major part of Agenda for Change.



KEVIN EGAN
REGIONAL OFFICER



Voluntary Sector Report

RSPCA

Members voted marginally against industrial action by 51%. On the question of industrial action short of a strike, the proposal was supported by a majority of 65%. The ballot return was around 60%, and meetings of the lay leadership are now being held to define the form of action to be taken.

This ballot has attracted some very favourable media interest, which has provided Amicus with a platform more generally to address the voluntary sector. It is clear that there are structural challenges in the sector which need to be addressed by the union, and that we must be able to adapt to changes in the management practises in our key industries.

There has also been significant membership growth as a result of our ballot. The ballot result is extremely useful tactically, and will undoubtedly provide an opportunity to re-open discussions with the management.

Throughout the process members were concerned about the potential harm which may be caused to animals during the periods of any strike action, and this is reflected in the ballot result. We need to consider this message for the wider voluntary sector, many of whom would take a similar position.

The job now is to bring this period of industrial strife in the RSPCA to a conclusion. We will need to develop a negotiating and consultation procedure which involves the union at the appropriate time and allows access to those who are making decisions.

Airports and Civil Air Transport Report

SKELETONS IN THE CUPBOARD

I guess many of us have events from our past which we would rather forget and keep quiet about, especially if it relates to a criminal charge, a court hearing and a guilty verdict. However minor the offence, with the sentence served and/or the fine paid we move on with our lives.

The years go by and then your earlier indiscretion comes back into the public domain and as a direct result your contract of employment is terminated and you have no right of appeal. Harsh you might think – depends on the offence?

We all support legislation that protects the vulnerable from those who seek to exploit those in their care and from time to time I have ensured fair treatment for members dismissed for having misused their powers or whose conduct was such that criminal proceedings followed.

On occasions I have subsequently found out that they had a history that they had a history that placed those in their care at risk. That's why criminal record checks for staff whose employment charges them with the responsibility for the vulnerable should also command our support.

Likewise, in these difficult times, measures introduced to help in minimising the risk to air passengers and air transport workers from terrorist attack is welcomed. As part of the worldwide campaign against international terrorism the government has introduced new legislation, The Aviation Security Act.

The Act includes a requirement for all "airside workers" to undergo criminal record checks before August 2004. The purpose of this new requirement is to hinder terrorist activity by disqualifying individuals or by removing linkages with crime.

The checks will show all convictions which are "unspent" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

and in the event that the employee has an unspent conviction which meets the disqualifying criteria the airside pass is withdrawn.

This means that the employee can no longer carry out the task for which they were employed and may lead to dismissal. The disqualifying criteria include serious offences and some not so serious and range from terrorism offences to evasion of liability offences (Customs & Excise). This matters not however as both offences meet the disqualifying criteria for the pass to be withdrawn.

There is an ongoing dialogue with the Department for Transport where Amicus have registered concerns about the application and fairness of the Act.

One example is that the checks are limited to offences committed in the UK. Employees who have committed offences in a foreign jurisdiction would escape discovery and remain employed.

The Act became law in July and the first dismissal has been handed down – here are the headlines:–

- Member has been employed at the airport for over eight years.
- Committed a minor offence two years ago. Received a small fine.
- Employer fully aware of the offence. Remained employed.
- Checks undertaken in September 2003. Airside pass withdrawn.
- Suspended. Then dismissed.
- Reason for dismissal – breach of Aviation Security Act.
- Appeal pending (but what grounds?).
- Chances of new employment? Not good.

So well meaning and necessary legislation has claimed its first "victim". I am not sure that by removing our member from their place of work and leaving them unemployed will do much to advance the fight against terrorism. Are you?

We are on the case.

BARRY JONES
REGIONAL OFFICER



DIGBY JACKS
REGIONAL OFFICER

REFUGEE LEGAL CENTRE

Members at Dover are involved in a national dispute with the other three RLC sites over the management's wish to break the link with local authority pay in terms of the annual cost of living pay rise. We have exhausted the grievance procedure and will be meeting with ACAS in November to try and resolve this issue.

ARTS COUNCIL SOUTH EAST

Following on from the reorganisation of the Arts Council, South East Arts and Southern Arts have merged. They are now based in Brighton, but due to their historical positions they have two unions representing staff - Amicus and Unison. Staff are considering having one union representing them, and to this end both unions are presenting their case.

CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Work progresses on the development of policies with CRI. Efforts to develop a learning agreement are moving ahead positively, and all staff of the organisation are being written to in an effort to identify learning representatives.

TRAINING FOR REPRESENTATIVES

A mailing has been sent to members inviting them to attend a regional voluntary sector training event in Bournemouth on 10/11 November. Any members from the sector interested in attending should contact Barry Jones at the e-mail address below.

Barry Jones can be contacted on
☎ 07798 531020 or at
barry.jones@amicus-m.org

Finance Sector Report

LEGAL & GENERAL

At L&G the union is currently running campaigns on stress and on the outcome of the pay round. Partnership campaigning is also important in this company, with Partnership In Action Groups established across the company and a Partnership Day is planned for 7 November.

This will coincide with a joint presentation that the company and the Union are making to the Department of Trade and Industry about their proposals for regulations concerning the Information and Consultation Directive. A similar submission will be made to the DTI regarding the consultation exercise on age discrimination.

LIVERPOOL VICTORIA

Slow progress at Liverpool Victoria in Bournemouth, mainly on individual casework. The employer is reluctant to establish a long-term relationship with the union, whilst at the same time wanting to establish a commercial

affinity relationship with the Union even though recognition is tenuous.

AMERICAN EXPRESS

We have continued our recruitment drive at AMEX and membership is increasing. Joint activities are planned with the University of Sussex Students' Union and other campus trade unions, including advice surgeries and an awareness day. There will also be an Amicus stall during fresher's week.

NORWICH UNION

At Norwich Union Healthcare there are a number of internal company and Union matters that need to be addressed. The matters are being worked on with due diligence.

FRIENDS PROVIDENT

At Friends Provident a recruitment and organising plan theming pensions and employee contributions is in place. We are aiming to expand the bargaining unit to also include managers.

Digby Jacks can be contacted on ☎ 020 8947 4441 or at digby.jacks@amicus-m.org

AMICUS CRITICISES TORY PLANS TO AXE FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKING

The Conservative Party ran into a storm of protest after it announced that it would repeal newly won rights to maternity and paternity leave.

Tim Yeo, Shadow spokesperson for Trade and Industry told the Tory annual conference in Blackpool that a Conservative Government would introduce sunset clauses to the Employment Regulations Act 1999 and the Employment Act 2000.

The clauses would allow for the legislation to be repealed if unscrupulous employers tried to prove that time off for mum's and dad's was damaging job creation.

There was outrage amongst trade unions and the Commission for Equal

Opportunities. Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that the plans would "take British business back into the dark ages".

Rachael Maskill, Head of Equalities for Amicus, told the Financial Times that:

"By trying to rescind family friendly policies the Conservatives have consigned themselves to the electoral dustbin. It's not just that they have lost touch with voters, they wouldn't recognise them in the street."

"It seems from their reaction at the Tory conference that many businesses agree with us and the Department of Trade & Industry that good work life balance policies and practices improve productivity and the economy, and make life better for millions."

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