

## Stress

We are seriously concerned at the number of BT members who are currently off, or have been off, with work related stress. We are now advising members to ensure they record this with our solicitors to seek legal redress as well as using company processes.

## Tolpuddle 17- 18th July

This year's Tolpuddle Rally includes the traditional march of banners on Sunday 18th. All members family and friends welcome. There will be stalls, beer tents, food, children's area and much more! So come along and enjoy the fun and join other members on the Sunday rally.



## Members off sick

The branch Welfare Officer, Steve Miller, can visit sick members and bring a gift, so if you now of someone off work please let us know. We can then arrange for the Welfare Officer to call with a gift. All contact is confidential. Steve can be contacted on 07791 956551

## Bournemouth Pride

This year Bournemouth Pride is Saturday 10th July, so join us and enjoy a day at the seaside. The parade theme is the wild west, to be followed by music and entertainment, more details at [www.bournefree.co.uk](http://www.bournefree.co.uk) or contact [cwusolent@btinternet.com](mailto:cwusolent@btinternet.com) if interested in taking part.



## Moving Home Soon?

Members are reminded that in order for us to keep you up to date with relevant information it is important that you inform us of any change in your details, including house moves, change of employers etc.

# The Messenger

## Solent Branch

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 25th February 2010

At CWU's Elstead Hotel  
Knyveton Road, Bournemouth  
starts 7.30pm followed by free  
buffet .

Guest Speaker:

Billy Hayes General Secretary  
Gold Badge presentation to Lee  
Wakeman

*Reasonable travel costs will be paid, car share where possible. If you require wheelchair access or have any difficulty in attending please let us know. A large print version of this newsletter is available on request. Views expressed in The Messenger are not necessarily those of Solent Branch or the CWU.*

COMMUNICATION  
WORKERS UNION

## **AGM 2010**

**ELSTEAD Hotel, Knyveton Road, Bournemouth**

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks and Minutes Silence
2. Consideration of Minutes of 26th February 2009
3. Matters Arising and notice of Any Other Business
4. Chairperson's Report
5. Auditor's Report
6. Financial Secretary's Report
7. Secretary's Report
8. Amendments to Branch Bye-Laws (see below)
9. Election of the following posts: Chairperson; Secretary; Financial Secretary; Equal Opportunities Officer; Political Officer; Asst Sec. Branch; Asst Sec. Clerical; Branch Health & Safety Coordinator; Asst Sec Engineering; Assistant Sec. Postal Technical Services; Asst Sec Admin & Organising; Assistant Secretary Legal & Medical; Asst Sec T&FSE; Deputy Chair; Romec Rep (West); Romec Rep (East); 1 Royal Mail Processing Rep per Mail Centre; Women's Officers; Youth Officer; Retired Member's Secretary; Committee (up to 50); Conference Delegates/Observers/ Reserve; Auditors; Welfare Visitors; Welfare Fund Trustee; Delegates to Constituency Labour Parties; Delegates to Trades Union Councils; Union Safety Reps, Union Learning Centre Coordinator; Union Learning Reps. Branch Trustees
10. Honoraria
11. Any Other Business pertinent to the AGM
12. Presentation of Awards to members
13. Presentation of Gold Badge to Lee Wakeman
14. CWU Guest:- Billy Hayes General Secretary
15. BenSoc MEGADRAW

### **Proposed Amendments to Branch Bye-Laws**

None received

## **BRANCH SECRETARY'S REPORT**

This year management in Openreach have finally starting dismissing people for under performance. We cannot discuss personal cases but this is the final proof of just how low BT managements treatment of its workforce has got.

We have raised this with head office and the appeals process is under way but we take this so seriously that we have sought legal advice as to whether we can ballot our members as a branch to take action against this harsh management style so many of our members across BT are now facing. We will keep members informed but we require personal email addresses of all members if you have not already done so.

Members should be aware that we will be advising you of any special meetings to give us the permission to ballot should we get the legal advice that we can.

From January 2009 to date we have dealt with over 200 individual cases in BT alone, nearly 50 discipline attendance and grievance cases and more than 90 performance cases. Of those more than 150 cases were in Openreach. That does not include informal issues, legal and medical cases, or those in other companies. Despite this BT have announced their intention to review the facilities provided to the union. This is likely to see further cuts in the time allowed to deal with members and further restrictions on our contact with you, what we can say and do during work time and via work emails and notices and meetings.

### **Members Awards**

The AGM will see the presentation of a Gold Badge to Lee Wakeman, former branch officer in recognition of all his hard work on behalf of the members. All members welcome.

We will also be recognising those lay members who have made an outstanding contribution in helping the branch in 2009. Please come along and show your support to those members and the union.

## Solent District Benevolent Society SUPERDRAW RESULTS

### January Draw

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	£100.00	AN Sinfield
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	£50.00	S Holmes
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	£50.00	JA Davey
4 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	AJ Keeping
5 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	AJ Keeping
6 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	SN Trim
7 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	BC Sullivan
8 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	BM Tucker
9 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	KA Loader
10 <sup>th</sup> Prize	£20.00	AC Allen



**The MEGADRAW, with prizes up to £500 will be made at the Branch AGM on February so come along, enjoy the AGM, the free buffet and the chance to win! Win! Win!**

The Society was formed to provide grants/loans to members and their family who face financial difficulties. Funds are raised by offering “shares” at a cost of £1.08 per month or £12 a year by Standing Order or cheque. The “shareholder” has their shares entered in the monthly “SUPERDRAW”. If you would like further information on becoming a “shareholder” please contact the branch office. **It is members responsibility to inform us of any change of address. PLEASE NOTE:** All correspondence should be addressed to: Solent District Benevolent Society Secretary, c/o CWU Office, Winton TE, Wycliffe Road, Bournemouth BH9 1JP

### Solent District Benevolent Society AGM

The Society AGM will take place prior to the branch AGM on 25th February, at 6.30pm the MEGADRAW with prizes up to £500 will be made during the buffet afterwards. Anyone who gets a form to us before the AGM will be entered in the MEGADRAW.

### CWU Executive Elections

Nominations for Executive and NEC elections will be sought in March. In order for members to have their say we will publish the list of names via email and on the branch website for your comments and recommendations on who members believe the branch should nominate and support.

## Learning Centre Report

### Winton

I have a meeting with Dorset Adult Education on the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb to arrange further courses. I will keep the Branch advised and advertise to the membership the courses as they become available.

### Nursling

A Digital Photography course is now underway although it has had some disruption due to the weather and the tutor being ill. I will shortly be meeting with Southampton City College to discuss future possible courses.

### Information, Advice and Guidance

Members should be aware that Lead ULR, Dave Thompson, is now fully qualified to provide Information, Advice and Guidance on learning. Any members wishing to take advantage of this service can get more information or arrange to meet with Dave through the normal Branch number (01202 511022) or directly through the Branch Learning Number (01202 525376) or by e-mailing [learning@cwusolent.org](mailto:learning@cwusolent.org).

This service is free, impartial, and confidential. Dave would also like to hear feedback on any learning issues or courses you would like to see run. To keep up with the latest on everything to do with your Branch, check our website [www.cwusolent.org](http://www.cwusolent.org) where you will find up to date information on forthcoming courses and the Information, Advice and Guidance service.

### BT Operate

In BT Operate field engineering talks on attendance patterns in the southwest near completion but there remains no agreed change to attendance patterns at this time. National talks are currently not going well and there is a threat from the company that they may impose changes if agreement is not reached nationally.

### Monteray

Our members have been attending 1 2 1's with their managers to discuss changes of contract. Advice has been given to them from head office, via the branch and we await further news.

## Retired Members Report

As everyone will be aware all political parties are now competing as to who can make the most acceptable cuts in expenditure. This invariably means cuts in public spending which in turn means an attack on the living conditions of working people. This aspect of course does not apply to the bankers, but that is capitalism, and if the polls are correct the UK will elect a Conservative government that will make even greater cuts in public spending than any other party.

To this end the National Pensioners Convention is organising along with the TUC a March and Rally in defence of the Welfare State and Public Services. The March and Rally is to be held in London on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010 assembling in Temple Place at 12 noon and marching to Trafalgar Square. This Rally will in effect indicate to the political classes that the workers will defend not only the Welfare State, but defend our public services.

Public Services and the Welfare State are of particular importance to both workers and pensioners in the South West. Not only does this region have a high percentage of pensioners, but over a million workers rely on Public Services for their livelihood. One in four employees in the South West are either employed in or rely on the public services.

In numbers this equates to 957,949 directly employed and a further 390,700 working for private firms dependant on public sector contracts or spin offs. It is argued by the South West TUC that for every pound invested in the public sector through direct employment and procurement of supplies, a further 64p is generated in the local economy. It therefore follows that any cuts in public spending will directly affect local shopkeepers and markets.

The current economic downturn if a Conservative Government is elected could also have dire consequences for pensioners. For example, the free bus passes could be an area that could be targeted.

At present around £1 billion pounds is already available to local authorities to spend on the scheme. It is a scheme that is very much used by pensioners and has opened up the availability, especially for women on very low pensions living in rural areas of being able to meet up with friends, as well as shop in their local market town. There is a chance that this funding could well be subjected to means testing, something we must not only guard against, but make our feelings known.

Of real concern however is the situation where the utilities that provide our heating are taking real advantage of the cold winter and in real terms ripping people off with unacceptable tariffs. Of course again that is capitalism, and until the public utilities are taken back under public ownership I doubt if anything will change. But I have real concerns as to the consequences for pensioners given the cold spell we have just been subjected to. Between December 2008 to March 2009 an estimated 36,700 older people died of cold related illnesses compared to the 25,300 the previous winter. Of course those over 80 years of age get a supplementary cold weather payment, but given the cost of heating, many pensioners simply are afraid to use their heating appliances. To that effect, and given the rip off nature of our energy suppliers, the NPC is campaigning to raise the heating allowance to £500. If we can support the banks to the tune of billions of pounds, finance wars and provide MP.s with huge allowances, we can easily provide out pensioners with the means of simply being able to keep warm.

I would conclude by reminding the Solent Branch Retired Members section, we did organise a day out for them last year when we visited the Cotswolds and the CWU Education Centre at Alvescot. If you would like the section to organise another day out, could you advise the Branch and I am sure that we could come to some arrangement.

**Nick Nicholls.**

*Retired Members Secretary.*