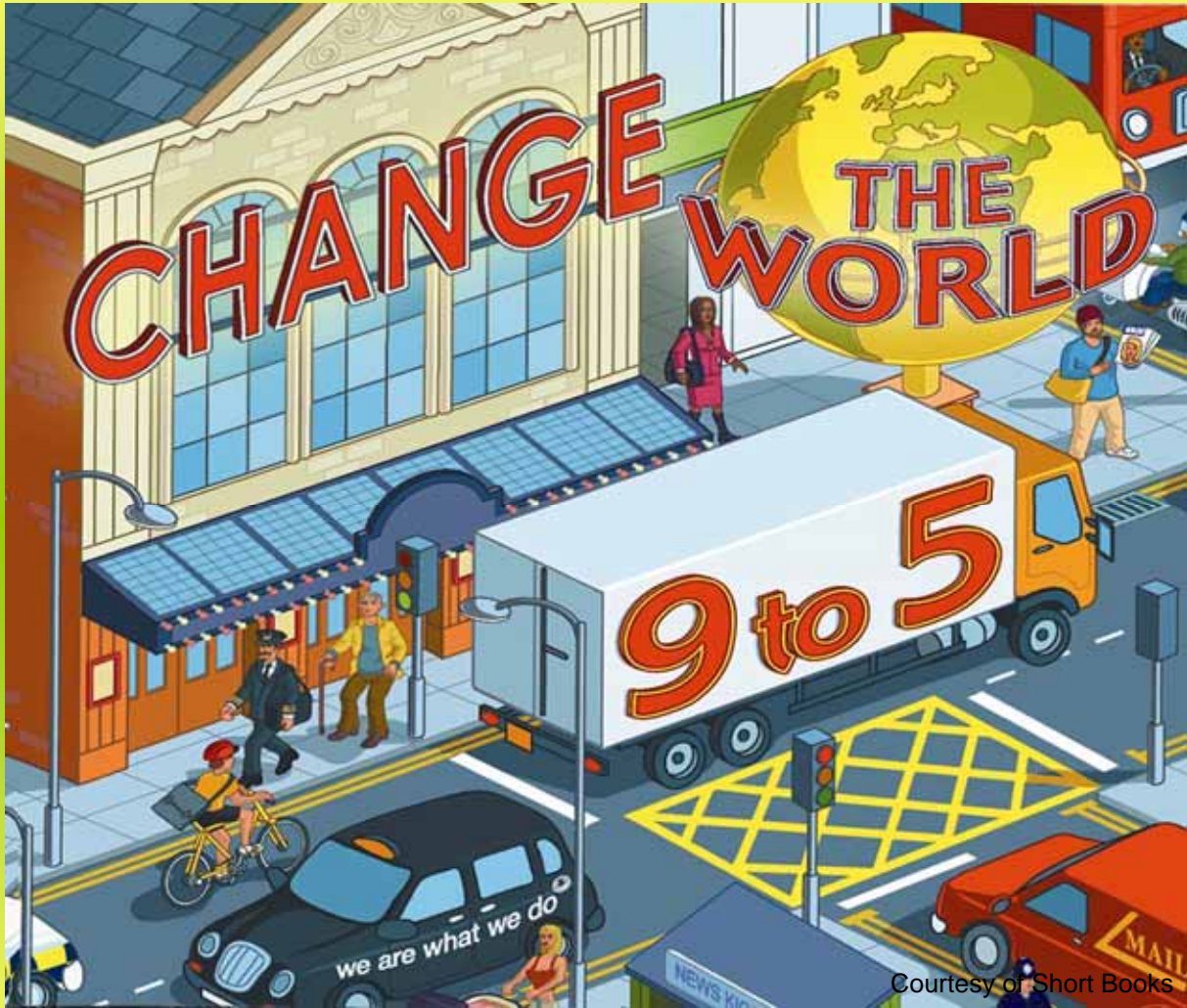


SAVING THE PLANET



Courtesy of Short Books

IS IT 24/7 OR JUST 9 TO 5?

Branch AGM Friday 9 March,
Shrewsbury

North Staffs Section AGM Wednesday 28
February, Hanley

Latest on Pay, BT Directories and CSCs



Editorial

With a New Year comes the usual planning and build up to the Annual General Meetings. As last year we have a North Staffs Section AGM which is being held in Reardon's at Hanley on **Wednesday 28 February** and a branch AGM at the Prince Rupert Hotel in Shrewsbury on **Friday 9 March**.

Branch AGM
7:30PM
Friday 9 March 2007
Prince Rupert Hotel, Shrewsbury

North Staffs Section AGM
8:00PM
Wednesday 28 February 2007
Reardon's, Hanley

Once again we have invited Jeannie Drake, Deputy General Secretary of the CWU to be our guest speaker in Shrewsbury. For those who haven't heard Jeannie speak before it's well worth it, her breadth of knowledge and the clarity and simplicity with which she puts her arguments across makes her a popular and respected speaker.

If you are interested in going to either AGM it would be helpful if you could let us know beforehand so that we can make sure that enough food is available but if you just want to turn up on the night feel free, you will be more than welcome. We always like to encourage as many members to attend as possible so if you have any difficulties such as travel or childcare let us know and we'll see what we can do to help out.

The old year ended with a bang, unfortunately John Turnbull (Branch Chairperson) suffered an accident which has left him nursing a broken and very painful arm. We have therefore had to limp along covering John's workload as best we can, so apologies if any members feel that we haven't got back to you as fast as we usually do but we have had to prioritise. Lisa Weston and Mick Price have been providing more assistance but it's proved impossible to make up for John's experience and know how and we wish him all a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him back at work soon.

With the publication of the Stern report environmental issues are now very much at forefront of the political and personal agenda. No longer is the colour green the preserve of one political party, ultimately we will all need to get with the program or face the climatic consequences. As a union we take our responsibilities seriously and we will be looking to encourage and develop environmental representatives. As a start this edition of the *intercom* has been printed on paper made from wood from sustainable forests and in future we will be looking at all aspects of the work we do from an environmental perspective.

Finally, last year was the busiest to date with a massive increase in personal cases, we don't expect the New Year to be any different but with your support and the new activists that are being trained we hope to be well equipped to deal with anything the future brings.

Happy New Year.

Dave Tee

Stress is fast becoming the biggest Health and Safety issue. 61% of Union Safety Reps are reporting it as their most pressing concern at work. If you work for an employer with more than a 1000 employees then you will suffer even greater levels of stress. Why then don't employers take stress more seriously when time off for stress costs UK businesses £3.7 billion a year?

Safety Figures released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which show a decline in those being injured or made ill at work have been cautiously welcomed by the CWU. Dave

Joyce the union's National Officer on Safety was however critical of the HSE in failing to bring sufficient prosecutions against employers. He pointed out that employers are now less likely to be prosecuted and convicted of safety crimes and that under reporting is on the increase, what is needed is an effective Corporate Manslaughter Act as a deterrent.

Driving at Work is the most dangerous activity that many of us do, in recognition of this the CWU has updated the Driving section of the website, it's well worth a look. www.cwu.org



RESULT !!!!

Last month's wordsearch, despite a typographical error was the most popular so far, with a record number of members entering. We need to apologise for the mistake with the entry date, but despite this we had enough correct entries to warrant the branch purchase of a hat for drawing purposes. We are therefore pleased to announce that the winner of the last branch competition is:

**Jayne Stennett
Oswestry**

The prize which is again a selection of much sought after CWU goodies will be making it's way to Jayne over the next few weeks.

I'm afraid that there won't be a competition this month but for those devoted followers who enter every time, the branch competition will return in April's edition.

Union Learning Prize Draw

Last year Jacky Morrey conducted a Union Learning survey of members in Telecom House, Hanley. All those who completed the



forms were entered into a prize draw. The survey received a massive response and eventually Shirley Carrick (pictured above), Andrew Harding and Julie Baylay were pulled out of the branch hat and received Xmas hampers. The survey has proved invaluable in identifying learners for the Learning Xchange in Hanley with 2 courses now running.

PAY ROUND

Since the beginning of the new millennium the pay of top company directors has increased dramatically. For every £100 they earned in the year 2000, they now earn £205! Ordinary employees by comparison have only had an increase of £6 for every £100 earned.

Pay in the city is increasing 17 times faster than average pay and if City bonuses had been shared among every one at work in the UK we could all have had a Christmas bonus of £350!

Not only is pay failing to keep pace with the top earners but inflation is currently rising, at last count it stood at 4.1%, the Bank of England are likely to raise interest rates further to peg inflation back but in the meantime until pay deals are settled real earnings are sliding.

One final thing to consider before we discuss the pay claims for the various employers we represent is the fact that in Britain we put in £23 billion pounds of

unpaid overtime every year, unpaid overtime covers a multitude of sins, starting work before your shift, finishing after your shift and checking your emails in your own time. All of which should be paid for but often aren't.

To bring you up to date with the various pay claims, we have submitted a 7% claim to BT, a 6% claim to o2, a 6% increase for Computacenter members and another 6% claim for Hewlett Packard. We will keep you informed of developments as negotiations progress.

The same cannot be said for the huge number of Manpower members in the Customer Service Centres in Shrewsbury and Hanley who do not receive a pay rise with the same regularity as other members. Rest assured we will continue to raise the issue of pay with Manpower in both sites as it is clearly unacceptable that members face a real cut in earnings when the pay of top company directors continues to rise!!



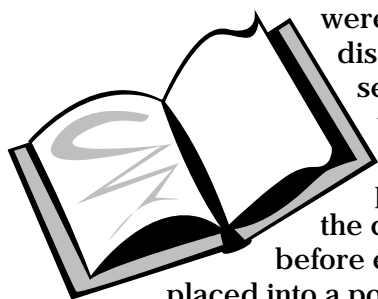
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BT Directories

Just like a number 7 bus nothing happens for ages then 3 turn up at once! In the past we have been pretty lucky within BT Directories (BTD) with no major changes since Gordian back in the 90's however 3 main changes are taking place within BTD at the moment which will have a significant impact on our members.

Firstly in Shrewsbury 12 members from Core Data are moving permanently to the Core Data Team to the Classified Team. We



we were involved in the discussions regarding the selection process to ensure that this was carried out in the fairest way possible, giving members the chance to volunteer before everyone's names were placed into a pot.

In addition to this and to make the transition easier we are proud to have negotiated a Flexible Working Hours Agreement with local management in an area that has always previously worked fixed hours. This was not only to benefit members that were moving across but to bring a new work life balance for the people already there.

Moving on to Stoke, due to the recent ruling by BT Group, 7 members were transferred over to BT Directory Solutions (which is part of BT Wholesale). The first 7 people to move over were chosen because of their expertise.

As the roll out of WLR3 continues over the coming months/years, more people will migrate over to BT Directory Solutions (BTDS). Exact numbers are still unknown at this time, a selection process will be agreed and we are making every effort to ensure that there are no changes to our members existing terms and conditions.

Last but not least we are still waiting for the final Ofcom determination. The outcome of this will shape the future and structure of the directories industry as a whole.

Clearly there are many challenges ahead and we will ensure that we continue to be involved in any further changes. For all members moving into these new work areas, or those still working within BTD it is vital that for us to represent you that we are kept fully informed of any issues or concerns that may arise.

Lisa Weston

BT CSCs

Leading the Way

We all knew that the "ground breaking" agreement on off shoring (BT/Agency ratios will be 90/10 by the end of 2007) would mean nothing without the endemic problems of management style being addressed. On 6 December all the CWU reps were called to London to meet Duncan Ingram, Charlie McKay (BTIR), Dave Hill (Command Centre) and Dave Earlham to hear what was being proposed.

At the outset it was made clear that all existing BT Group policies such as sick would remain unchanged, what was significant was how they would be applied. A common theme throughout would be a practical approach to issues at work, a supportive culture, training for managers, clear communications, ownership of decisions and the creation of a "respect agenda".

BT and the CWU then made joint presentations on 'Leadership Style', 'Raising Contribution' and 'Achieving the Balance'. Each section was split into various working parties which will work jointly with BT. In particular 'Achieving the Balance' will review all leave processes, flexi, special, casual and annual, along with duty swaps, attendance changes and effectively the work of the

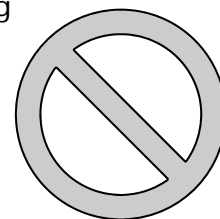


'Command Centre' (now to be renamed the **National Resource Centre**)

The cynics out there will be screaming "we've been here before" and they would be right but we owe it to all members to approach the above discussions in good faith.

Please be clear however that we are not fools, we have no misconceptions that all these initiatives are aimed at improving productivity and effectively getting more from less, improvements might be in processes or moral but the intention is the same

The key to the future is that members will have to fully understand the agreements and help the union to police them. Old habits die hard and without your help any gains will be short term only.



Dave Tee

CHANGE THE WORLD

9 to 5

Time to don the cape and pants and save the world!

An article appeared in the *Devonshire Express & Echo* featuring a dear elderly lady pushing a wheelbarrow full of tomatoes. The lady stated that she didn't care if it was global warming, it was the best bumper crop she'd ever had. Other press articles have suggested that the UK will soon produce better wine than that of France and Australia and have a climate like that of Portugal.

Most scientists now agree that the world is getting warmer (the last 5 winters being the warmest on record) and most believe the world's cleverest animals, humans, are the cause of it. Yet does it really matter if our grandchildren only see snow on Christmas cards, or if polar bears become extinct and some countries change to desert?

The reality is that global warming causes extreme weather, we have already seen increased flooding and gales in the UK. Globally people will not stand still and watch their homes flood or their families starve. They will migrate, in their millions, to better climates such as the UK.

Food and water shortages will only increase the likelihood of wars. There are many who say there is no point in saving energy in the UK while countries like America, China and India continue to pollute and waste resources, yet unless we put our own house in order we are unable to point the finger at others, whether they be our employer, the government, or another country. Saving energy means that at least

you will be able to look future generations in the eye and say 'I tried' and saving energy will help you save money to help finance a major project like building

an ark for your family and pets.

CHANGE THE WORLD 9 to 5 (published by **SHORT BOOKS**) isn't simply about saving energy but gives a selection of handy tips to make your working life that little bit better. For instance: be nice to temps, thank people for their work and be polite on emails, using

a signature such as 'sorry this wasn't a face to face conversation'. Other suggestions are about saving energy (the planet) and many are just as useful at home as at work:

Idea 58 - Pull the plug on mobile phone chargers

If left plugged in, or when the phone is charged the charger just keeps on going. They are only doing their job 5% of the time leaving 95% of energy wasted.



55 - Use a biro from start to finish

A plastic pen in landfill will still be there in 50,000 years, so look after you biro. Daily worldwide sales figures of biros exceed 14 million..

52 - Recycle wastepaper

An old chestnut but did you know that every year the UK needs a forest the size of Wales to meet its demand for paper.

69 - Shut down your computer properly (including standby)

One computer left on daily results in the emission of 1,500 pounds of carbon dioxide in a year. It would take between 100 to 500 trees to absorb that amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

72 - Lose the plastic cup

Vending machines dispense 3 billion cups per year in the UK. Add another 3 billion from other sources and we're using 24,000 tonnes of polystyrene annually.

There are many more handy tips in this user-friendly book including sharing it with others (the book has its own circulation sheet). It can be borrowed from the office or you may want to buy your own copy and pass on the message, creating more planet-saving superheroes. As a branch we will continue to look at ways of saving energy, such as using more recycled products and increasing our use of conference calls. **Any excuse to wear our underpants over our trousers!**

John Turnbull



Secretary's Column

Firstly may I pass on belated good wishes for the New Year. 2007 promises to be another difficult year for CWU members - whoever they are employed by. In the coming year there will be difficult debates with BT at both national and local level.

They have already used *BT Today* to influence the pay debate - you can't have increases in pay and money paid into the pension fund they say.

The pay debate is not the only difficult issue we face, in Global Services the NEC are negotiating on Global Sourcing, in Openreach there are discussions on Attendance Patterns, Grading and Resourcing. Payphones are under continual pressure because we all use mobiles and Wholesale have 21CN and their financial pressures.

None of this is new, over the years the union has faced difficult issues and we continually draw a 'line in the sand' which if crossed will bring the full Herculean might of the union crashing down on employer. Privatisation, Liberalisation, Compulsory Redundancy, Pensions have all previously been such issues.

Currently it would seem all efforts must be made to keep BT together and prevent Openreach being split off.

The repeats of 70's and 80's telly on Sky shows how we have developed culturally. The telecoms industry is no different having moved on just the same, the days of leaving customers out of service for days will no longer be accepted by Openreach's customers or their End Users.

What Mrs Jones of Acacia Avenue tolerated will not be accepted by Tiscali, Carphone Warehouse *et al* and where Mrs Jones could not be bothered to claim under the Customer Guarantee Scheme they will; and when they complain they

have a much louder voice in Ofcomm than she ever did.

So when Steve Robertson (Chief Executive) and Openreach were put on their very own PiP by Ofcomm for the abysmal level of service on offer, the union understood the reasoning behind the remedies brought in to minimise the service crisis, - because they silence the "split up BT" critics.



"Who would invest in 21CN, Carphone Warehouse?"

The advancement of our industry is not only political; the installation of the 21st Century Network will be just one driver for a whole range of products and services on offer to customers. With services like TV on demand End Users will not want to wait days if they can't watch their programmes because their broadband is down, they will want it repaired on demand, which has just as much of an impact on us as the reduced staffing requirements will.

We are already starting to feel the effect in Global and Network Ops with their latest Attendance Patterns and Openreach with new contracts.

This brings challenges and opportunities, the challenge of retaining pay and conditions; the opportunity of recruitment to cope with demand and the chance also to negotiate innovative agreements that bring about the much vaunted 'work life balance'.

Keeping Openreach within BT is important for all, it keeps redeployment opportunities for members from any division who

wish or need to re-skill. Also we have seen the pay of O2 members eroded since being split from BT, but the principle concern for many is regarding the pension fund and that is not just Openreach members but everyone - Group, Global, Wholesale *et al*. Would such a split benefit the industry or society, no? Who would invest the billions required for a 21st century network—the likes of Carphone Warehouse, I think not! So it is in everyone's best interest to be kept as a single entity.

Difficult discussions set against a rapidly changing backdrop, but that does not mean the union accepts blindly all BT has to offer—certainly not.

It is not just the industrial areas where we find pressure being applied. It would also seem from many of the individual cases that come through the office that BT has a much harder heart than in the past.

BT is in negotiation on a new Sick Absence policy - which as you can guess will be harsher than the previous processes; Ditto Performance Management; Ditto new contracts in Openreach.

What we should all expect as members is that in these difficult debates our aspirations are taken into account - whether that is Pay, Grading or Attendance Patterns.

There is an obligation on us as members during these debates to make our voice heard in the workplace - whether that be in CARE surveys or at Team Briefings. Let them know what you think of all these issues—*tell them what you tell us!*

I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGMs next month.



Simon Edwards

BRANCH NOMINATIONS / MOTIONS

| Office | Current | Nomination |
|---|---|------------|
| Branch Chair | John Turnbull | |
| Branch Secretary | Simon Edwards | |
| Vice Chair | Dave Tee | |
| Financial Secretary | Chris Charles | |
| Assistant Secretary (North Staffs) | Dave Tee | |
| Assistant Secretary (Whittington House) | Jill Ashbee | |
| Health & Safety Coordinator (BT) | John Turnbull | |
| Political Officer | Simon Edwards | |
| Equal Opportunities Officer | Sharon Davies | |
| Equal Opportunities Deputy | Jacky Morrey | |
| Auditors | Ken Bright, Roger Higgins | |
| Retired Members Secretary | Ray Parker | |
| Clerical Constituency Chair | Lisa Weston | |
| Clerical Constituency Secretary | Dave Tee | |
| Engineering Constituency Chair | Mick Price | |
| Engineering Constituency Secretary | Simon Edwards | |
| Manpower Rep | Angela Reilly | |
| Union Learning Co-ordinator | Jacky Morrey | |
| Union Learning Reps | Dave Tee, Sharon Davies, Shelley Bates, Sally Williams, Dave Tildesley, Jacky Morrey, Pauline Tee | |
| Conference Delegates/Observers (Cler) x 4 | | |
| Conference Delegates/Observers (Eng) x 4 | | |
| Committee Member | List available from Branch Office | |
| Union Safety Reps | List available from Branch Office | |
| Motions | | |

To stand as a Branch Officer, individuals must have served 12 months on the Branch or Constituency Committee.

All nominations / motions must reach the Branch Office **no later than midday 23 February 2007**. Please return nominations by post to CWU Office, Room 2.08, Telephone Exchange, Town Walls, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TY, by e-mail to branch@cwumidwales.org.uk or by fax to 01743 275618

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Dave Tee – Assistant Secretary
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Mick Price – Engineering Chair
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Sharon Davies – Equality & Diversity
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Jacky Morrey – Union Learning
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Lisa Weston – Clerical Chair
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Jill Ashbee – Assistant Secretary
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Ray Parker – Retired Members Officer
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Member Services

Moving House



If you don't tell us - nobody else will! If you want to receive ballot papers and other publications such as The Voice make sure you let us know your current address.

Death Benefit

It is important that members Death Benefit nomination is kept up to date, as we have to pay the £583.00 Death Benefit to whoever is down as the member's nominee. If you've forgotten or don't know contact any branch office.

Legal Advice

The CWU operate a National Advice Line on:-

0800 804 6674

Harassment Hotline

The CWU operate a hotline for members who need advice or bullying and harassment on-

0800 107 1909

2007 CWU Diary

All fully paid up Branch members should have received a diary either at work or by post, if you haven't, contact us in the Office and we will rectify that for you.

Lanyards, Pens and Desk Calendars

The Branch has a number of lanyards and pens left if you want one let us know. The new 2007 desk calendars are also available.

Personal Attack Alarms / Countdown Card

We have a number of mini Personal Attack Alarms along with the latest Countdown shopping discount cards.

Wills

The Branch has a deal in force with a couple of local firms in Shropshire. You contact the solicitor for an appointment, explaining you are a CWU member. The branch will pay the cost of a simple will for members, who at the same time can get a simple equal and opposite will done for their partner, at a discounted rate which they pay for themselves. Just contact the Branch for details. We are currently in discussions to extend the scheme across other areas of the branch.

