ESSEX POSTIES TAKE ON SNOWDONIA
IN AID OF MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Agenda for Growth
Leaving ‘NO ROOM’ for Management Hidden Agenda’s

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...
Unionline
Your New Union Law Firm...

Essex Amalgamated Branch
Communication Workers Union
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The editorial content expressed within this publication are views of individual CWU members and does not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or Communication Workers Union at both local and national level.

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If you have any comments or contributions you would like to raise, or wish to give us feedback regarding this publication, please talk to your local representative, or you can write/e-mail to:

comments@cwuessex.org

Branch Editor, CWU Essex Amal, 21 Short Street, Southend on Sea, Essex. SS1 1AA
You will see from the various articles that Royal Mail and the CWU nationally are moving at pace with the “Agenda for growth” agreement. No doubt many of our members would have received joint presentations, particularly in Delivery, from both Royal Mail and the CWU. Mediators will soon be available to deal with early flash points in Industrial Relations and then the scene will then be complete for a new relationship with our employer.

This trend looks certain to continue, however as your Branch Secretary I am seriously sceptical that certain “old management” style budget/target driven dictat is alive and kicking, seemingly driven by senior regional Royal Mail directors. The problem we have is that when this dictat is given to your local DOM or manager they are duty bound to initiate it as they are often in fear of their own job.

The only way to build up trust between two parties is for transparency of approach, adherence to National agreements and a relationship of equals and not subordinates. There can be no room in any successful business where there is not a common aim between Management and Union, or to put it bluntly if one party has a hidden agenda trust and relationships will inevitably break down. As we go to print, your respective Area CWU officials are taking up this extremely serious issue.

Change is not exclusive to our employer. Due to a change in the law on how Personal Injury cases are dealt with the CWU have now set up our own law firm called Union Line. This is a joint venture with the GMB Union where all services are still FREE OF CHARGE to our members. This does however mean that we lose our old solicitor firm Simpson Millar who have been working with this Branch for over 40 years and have now been replaced by Edwards Duthie Solicitors in Ilford.

I must place on record my sincere thanks to Simpson Millar who have worked tirelessly for many years winning often difficult cases for our members.

John Hunt
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IF YOU HAVE AN ACCIDENT IN OR OUT OF WORK AND SOMEONE IS TO BLAME PLEASE ASK YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR AN LS3 FORM AND YOUR UNION WILL TAKE IT UP
Rail, Maritime & Transport union leader Bob Crow died at the age of 52, passing away on the 11th March 2014.

Bob has been one of the most successful union leaders in terms of securing jobs and pay for his members. Under his leadership the RMT’s membership increased by 20,000 to 80,000.

Born in East London, June 1961, to a working class family, he left school at age 16 and joined London Transport where he became involved in union politics.

Through many years of being an activist within his Union, Bob was elected General Secretary of the RMT in 2002.

Despite his great work as a trade union leader, he faced immense media scrutiny but always had a snap answer to awkward questions.

On his death, tributes were made from both the right and left of the political spectrum:

Former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone led tributes to Mr Crow saying he fought for his members despite being demonised by the right wing press.

TUC Secretary General Frances O'Grady called him: "An outstanding trade unionist, who tirelessly fought for his members, his industry and the wider trade union movement".

Conservative Mayor of London Boris Johnson stated: "I'm shocked. Bob Crow was a fighter and a man of character... Whatever our political differences, and there were many, this is tragic news... Bob fought tirelessly for his beliefs and for his members.

Bob will be remembered as a great man for many reasons.
The CWU was the organisation above all others that brought about the Dangerous Dog Law changes, having run a titanic campaign for seven years, during which time 30,000 Postal and Telecommunication workers have been attacked and bitten by dogs with two members nearly losing their lives in vicious maulings.

The CWU's high profile "Bite-Back" campaign, supported by animal welfare charities, police, unions, employers, vets, medics, dog trainers, dog wardens etc first won changes in Scotland followed by Northern Ireland and today's changes for England and Wales, the largest part of the UK now ensures the whole nation has a new, far tougher dog control regime in place to protect not only our members but also children and ordinary members of the public.

This is a historic day for our members who have suffered by the thousand with dog bites for years and at the same time had fun poked at them with jokes about dogs chasing and biting the Postman when in reality it is anything but a joke.

With a huge loophole in the law finally closing, it means at long last, the past immunity from prosecution for private property attacks, enjoyed by irresponsible and negligent dog owners now disappears and new far tougher penalties and prison sentences, rising from 2-years to 14-years maximum come into force with new Control Orders and Compulsory Micro-chipping. All the things the CWU has fought for so long.

The campaign focus now shifts to effective, consistent enforcement and public awareness. The Union along with Royal Mail are now running a nationwide Dog Awareness Week from June 30th to July 4th with the new law changes being a big part of the national awareness campaign, full of events and communications to the UK's 29 Million addresses!

This week is supported by RSPCA, Dogs Trust, Blue Cross, PDSA, Battersea Dogs Home, Guide Dogs For the Blind, British Vets Association and many other organisations."
The CWU in partnership with the GMB Union, have now joined to create a wholly owned Trade Union law firm (known as Unionline).

This is NOT a trade Union merger but is the creation of a Trade Union law firm owned and managed by two independent Trade Unions.

Over recent years there have been significant changes in the way the legal profession operates. The Government has introduced various pieces of legislation that has deregulated the legal profession with the view of opening up the legal market to new organisations.

Previously, only qualified lawyers could own and operate a law firm. This is no longer the case. This has seen a revolution in the way legal provision is administered within the UK.

These significant changes have lead the CWU to re-examine the way it provides legal services, in order to ensure we maintain the level of service to our members, whilst at the same time, making maximum use of its financial resource. We have concluded the best way to maintain provision of legal services is via its own independent law firm.

We have worked closely with our GMB counterparts in developing the first Trade Union law firm, which is managed by senior representatives of the CWU and GMB unions and overseen by our respective Union Trustees.

All law firms have to be licensed by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) who set down strict operating and compliance regulations which have to be met, and which govern both its financial and legal operation.

This requires professionally qualified personnel to be engaged within the law firm. In order to be compliant with the SRA we have entered into an agreement with a third party law firm, PM Law, who will provide the necessary regulatory and compliance expertise in return for a management fee.

PM Law will therefore be involved in the management of Unionline but hold no ownership rights.

Once claims have been assessed by Unionline qualified staff, members' claims will then be passed on to our existing panel firms on a solicitor agent basis. They will then process these claims in the normal way. Once a claim reaches a conclusion our members will receive 100% of the compensation obtained on their behalf and the panel firm and Unionline will share the legal costs recovered from the defendants. Any surplus revenue will then be paid to the respective Unions, which can then be used for the benefit of the whole of the Union membership.

The creation of the first wholly owned Trade Union law firm, in partnership with the GMB, is an exciting and challenging opportunity which both Unions are convinced is the best way forward for the future provision of legal services.

Unionline Freephone Helpline: 0300 300 0303

Unionline Website: http://www.unionline.co.uk
In this era of austerity, under-employment, zero hours contracts and poverty wages there is extreme pressure on working people to do more for less and with fewer protections.

Over the last 18 months we have embarked on a very ambitious project to ensure that our structures and rules are inclusive and proportional.

We have carried out research into our membership and data, showing how proportionate we are. We know, for instance 15% of members are from ethnic minorities. The proportion of women is increasing and will continue in the future. We also know that part-time work is an increasing feature, twice as likely to be women under 30 years than fulltime members. This data tells us the industry and workplace is changing and that we need to maintain our relevance to all our members.

The CWU are pushing forward with the proportionality programme under the leadership of General Secretary, Billy Hayes. The more relevant and engaged our under-represented members are with union structures the better governance there will be for our organisation.

"As the CWU we can be proud of our achievements," said general secretary Billy Hayes: "but we must never flinch from addressing our shortcomings or failures. We can do better in ensuring the movement of women and black members in the leadership of our union. This is true for national and local arrangements."

Proportionality is not going to undermine the rights of our members to elect their chosen representatives. Nor is it going to undermine the employment rights of any employee of the CWU. It is about making sure every CWU member is confident that the union represents them, and their concerns.

Proportionality is one measure of how equal and how relevant we are as an organisation. Do we look like the workforce we aim to represent? For instance, if more women are coming into employment in the workplace and we are not seeing an increase in women members and activists that indicates a potential problem and if around a third of our members are working part-time but we have very small numbers of part-time reps that may be a cause for concern. It’s also about making sure that we are utilising all the talents of our members and not unwittingly or deliberately excluding any group from taking part.

The CWU is a very democratic organisation and when we consider proportionality we must also consider how we can achieve an acceptable balance between remaining a strongly membership led union and becoming more inclusive and accessible. These two factors are not mutually exclusive but the concept of members voting for the person that they wish to represent them is a fundamental value of the CWU that should be upheld.

What is certain is proportionality delivers a fairer union for all members. It is both a guarantee of equality, and our future, in a changing workplace.
Although there can be no doubt, the three year deal on pay and protections and our terms and conditions was a ground breaking deal. A deal that has given us protection for the foreseeable future. We cannot get complacent.

We must remember that Royal Mail did not give us anything out of the goodness of their hearts. We achieved the agreement by standing together and sending a clear message to the employer. A message that we would not sit back and see our hard fought terms and conditions ripped up, just so the shareholder can receive an increased dividend.
It appears that Royal Mail now want to work with the CWU. I welcome this change of heart from the business, but I remain unconvinced that their new attitude is genuine. The cynic in me looks at what is currently going on in the managerial grades and makes me ask if we have got the same to come.

Whilst I have no sympathy with the management, as they have never supported us in our disputes with Royal Mail. In fact, many managers have reveled in crossing our picket lines. Watching them heading into panic mode as to whether they will have a job, does make you wonder why Royal Mail have attacked managerial grades, whilst at the same time seemingly changing their stance towards postal staff?

There is an obvious answer, and that is; at this time the managerial grades are an easy target, an easy way to generate savings to keep the shareholders happy.

My concern is not that savings are being made off the back of the managerial grades, it could be argued, that management in the past has escaped a vast amount of savings to be generated in the business. But what happens when these savings have been made and there are no more dividends to be paid out off the back of these savings?

Sadly, there is only one place to go to make further savings, and that is to attack the terms and conditions of postal workers. This is why we need to be using our time, while we are protected by the national agreement, to plan for the future. Whilst we should be embracing the new environment we are working in, we should also be fully focused on what the future holds.

We as a union, need to ensure that, in the future, when attacks on postal workers come, we are in a position to respond, quickly and in the correct manner. This involves having reps fully trained and involved in how the union works, a membership that is fully informed of all issues and again ‘having a say’ in the electing and running of the Union.

If we plan correctly and keep everyone fully involved, there is no reason why we shouldn’t be able to not only protect our current terms and conditions, but also enhance and build on them. We must plan for the future, because one thing is for sure - Royal Mail are already doing just that!

"If we do not make sure we are ready for any potential battle with the employer we have in the future, all the good we achieved in the last national agreement would have been a waste of time."

CWU Chelmsford Rep, Vince Thurnell

www.cwuessex.org
We thought it would be a good idea to have a quick photo opportunity before we start the expedition. Just incase some of us didn’t make it back.

Snowdon has six main routes to the summit, some steeper than others. We decided to head up the Ranger Path. This is one of the easier routes starting at the Snowdon Ranger Inn. The path is named after a long time mountain guide, John Morton, who built the Inn early in the 1800’s. The Inn is now a Youth Hostel, and

**THE ‘RED BARROWS’ TAKE ON SNOWDON**

It was an early sunny 6am start at the Royal Mail building on Sunday 8th June. Everyone helped to load the vehicles with the necessary climbing equipment, pipes, HCT’s needed for the endeavor to the top of Mt Snowdon.

The journey was full of spirit throughout the England and Wales convoy. We did start to get a little bit concerned when Shaun’s trusty Sat Nav couldn’t find our arranged starting point up the mountain. The whole mission could have been a failure before it began.

Finally arriving at the foot of Mount Snowdon just before 1pm, everyone was gagging to stretch his or her legs before the perilous task of climbing over 1000 meters (3,560ft) of hills, cliffs and rocky terrain to the summit of the mountain. The weather though had other ideas, deciding to work against us as cloud started to draw in.

If you’re moderately fit, climbing Snowdon can be a great adventure on a nice day. However, trying to attempt to push and carry Royal Mail HCT’s and the rest of our equipment while hiking to the summit in deteriorating cold and rainy conditions could well turn out to be the hardest fund raising activity we have attempted.

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the path starts at the Llyn Cwellyn Park (Postcode LL547YS) near the hostel.

The first part of our climb was a slow winding path, until we reached the first crest. Then everything started to get bumpy and wasn’t long before the first HCT broke under the strain of rockier terrain.

From this point forward we decided to mount poles to the HCT’s and carry them the rest of the way to the summit - all 2000ft of the remaining distance! I think we have now honestly inadvertently become expert advisors on stress and breaking point limits of HCT equipment.

With no more pushing of HCT’s, a rockier terrain and a steeper gradient, the storm was now brewing over the peak of the mountain. We were heading into darker clouds with little visibility. A compass would have really come in handy at this point.

We could all hear the mountain train hooting in the distance, a sign that we were making progress and getting closer to the top, but the weather conditions meant we couldn’t see much ahead.

Were we all going in the right direction? Or were we going round in circles through the cloud? Only time would tell.

The views from the summit of Mount Snowdon are spectacular. People say you can see areas as far as England, Scotland and Ireland on a clear day. Sadly those spectacular views would elude us on our climbing day.

The strain was beginning to show on some of the group. We took it in turns to carry the HCT’s over rocks and cliff edges. Richard Wood and Gary Pugsley pulled out an outstanding job taking most of the pain as the weight of HCT’s locked to metal poles starting digging into everyone’s shoulders.

Continued...
Jason, our first aider, was kept busy applying bandages to knee’s, ankles and feet as we progressed both up and down.

Then we finally saw the railway line through the clouds, giving us the track to follow to the top of the mountain.

As we neared the peak, we met other climbers along the way, all conglomerating from different routes up the mountain, or from the train, all of which could not believe their eyes when they saw the posties carrying HCT’s to the top.

We joked telling people that we have to do this daily to empty the postbox at the top, but it was all in good spirit and kept us all going.

Finally reaching the summit we all posed for photos, while other surprised climbers were giving us money for MacMillan. We took it all in and had a break. Sadly cloud cover was becoming too heavy and we couldn’t take in the amazing views Snowdon usually has to offer.

After a short break we started our descent back down, which proved an even more dangerous task than we estimated.

Along with our aches, pains, blisters and bruises, we had to carry every piece of equipment back down the mountain. Trying to find our footing when carrying HCT’s made it all the more difficult, but everyone soldiered on with a promise of a pint at the bottom.

Once we got below the cloud cover, we managed to stop and take in the full slender of the National Park and the route to the bottom.

All in all, it took us 5 hours to climb to the top and descend back down with all equipment in hand. I believe we have set a world first. I’d be amazed if anyone wants to attempt this challenge again!

Our thanks go out to all the girls and boys who’ve never failed a challenge. Last year we walked the distance from Southend MPU, along the Thames coast and under the M25 to London’s Tower Bridge. We’ve now toped that with the Snowdon Challenge. Now watch this space for the next ‘Red Barrows’ challenge.
The first thing you’ll notice when visiting Snowdonia are the mountains and hills, but also 700km’s of rivers flow into spectacular valleys as well as 100’s of lakes of varying shapes and sizes. Snowdonia’s mountains were formed over 450 million years ago. It is home to some of the oldest rocks in Britain. Since they were formed, water, volcanoes, ice ages and the effect of man has all played a part in how the mountains of today came into existence.

During the last Ice Age, Snowdonia’s mountains were carved out by large glaciers. Over time, these glaciers thawed and made their way to the sea, leaving a glacial terrain with water filled valleys and lakes.

Scientists from all over the world come to Snowdonia to study the landscape. Today, it’s not only natural processes which effect the shape of the landscape. Man has considerably impacted the terrain. Trees were felled for farming land, roads built and now Snowdonia is a popular location for walkers and climbers.
As we approach another World Cup final competition I remember back to our great win over Germany in the 1966 World Cup final - yes, we made it to the final. We had plenty of faith and belief in the World Cup squad and we trusted them all the way. Then, only a year later I was working for the General Post Office (GPO).

Many years on, we've had a few World Cup's where my faith and belief was sparked, but these days my faith and belief in what is now Royal Mail has been radically eroded. Even more so with the last couple of agreements introduced.

Whilst we have definitely benefited in part and for a short period of time, Royal Mail still have their own interpretations on these agreements.

The Agenda for Growth Agreement contained many bold statements. Some of which we believed was a new beginning and would provide the us with an unprecedented degree of access to influence the direction and decision making within the company.

Having attended recent Union meetings and listening to many reps in the division, it seems we are back to the same old Royal Mail tactics. Take the Summer Staff Resourcing agreement; already we have seen Royal Mail dictating how they see they plan to implement this agreement. They have produced from their bottom drawer graphs and budgetary targets with no input from the CWU what so ever. This joint initiative was for the local CWU Rep and Manager to work out how best to deal with absorption throughout the summer period, apparently not according to Royal Mail.

I'm not actually surprised the current regional management are already dictating to local management, of what they want. I just wished that they would do exactly what it says on the agreement and work together. Perhaps then we all might have a bit more faith and belief.

As the World Cup draws to an end, with another four year wait till the next World Cup and hopefully an improved performance from the England team. I wonder how we will all be working in 2018? Will we still have full time contracts, will we be delivering 6 days a week, will we be one company and what exactly will we be delivering? I wonder indeed!!
In recent weeks the Postal Executive has been discussing, in detail, the growing threat of direct delivery competition and the CWU response. These issues are also the subject of continuing high-level discussions with Royal Mail through the Growth Forum and structures contained within the new National Agreement.

Although the threat of competition is not new, the extent and intensity of cherry picking competition in both the letters and parcels market is growing and this is becoming increasingly clear to CWU members.

TNT has a strategy, well underway and much publicised, to deliver by 2017 to 42.3% of total UK addresses in only 8.3% of the total UK geography. Furthermore, Amazon has stepped up their direct delivery approach, targeting pretty much the same high density areas. These developments are likely to impact on Royal Mail’s forecast for growth and will increasingly feature in future discussions with the company.

Although turning back the tide of competition is virtually impossible, we can minimise the impact of it by developing more focused industrial and political strategies to protect CWU members’ jobs, terms and conditions and safeguard the future of the USO.

Industrially, it will be the successful deployment of the Agenda for Growth Agreement, in the way envisaged by both parties, which will help fight back against competition and also deliver future growth. Sustaining the legal protections, achieving industrial stability, CWU influencing the strategic direction of the company and dealing with difficult issues such as efficiency and flexibility, are interdependent on each other and represent our collective responsibility to deploy the agreement.

Politically, the union will want to stop the remaining 30% of Royal Mail being privatised. However, when it comes to the immediate and main threat to the future of UK postal services we must now significantly raise the profile of regulation and competition issues.

To achieve this CWU need to persuade the Regulator and politicians that to maintain the Universal Service early intervention by the Regulator on End-to-End competition is essential. To bring to the attention of politicians the low level of employment standards being utilised by competitors within the postal sector (letters and parcels). To lift employment standards across the sector and by pursuing appropriate legislation.

These are broad themes for the campaign and will need to be supported by a greater understanding across the whole of the union of the threat posed by unfair competition.
Well, England are already out of the competition with a dismal opening performance, but with the country still in World Cup fever, here’s a little footie crossword to help your addiction along a little.

Across:
2 Losing finalists in 1974 and 1978
6 The host nation of the first World Cup
8 One of the losing semi-finalists in 2002 World Cup
13 The only person to have scored a hat trick in a World Cup final. Geoff ___
14 Brazil beat which host nation 5-2 in 1958 to win the World Cup?
16 Cameroon and which other African nation reached the quarter-final of the World Cup – the furthest an African team has made?
17 A North African nation who has never appeared at a World Cup finals?
18 Sent off in the 2006 final?
19 First person to win the World Cup as a player and a manager?
20 Juste Fontaine scored the most goals in one World Cup than anyone else. Which country is he from?

Down:
1 Eusebio starred for which country in 1966?
3 Germany beat which country 8-0 in 2002 finals?
4 Host nation of 2010 World Cup
5 Three players from which London club played on the England World Cup winning team of 1966?
7 Host city of the 2002 World Cup final
9 Which country hosted the 1954 World Cup?
10 1966 World Cup final stadium name.
11 This country has played in all World Cup finals
12 World Cup winners in 1978
15 The number of countries to have won the World Cup.