



EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the autumn edition of Backnumber and we hope you enjoy reading it. As there will not be another edition before the festive season we take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As usual at this time of year we reflect on those for whom the season is not necessarily so Merry as loved ones are mourned or cause concern because of their health and we wish everyone comfort if not joy.



In this edition we feature a WW1 poem from George S Cubitt, father of David Cubitt ex County Secretary's Department and we cover issues as diverse as Verity Gibson's piece on scams, David Button reports on Police Community Support Officers and your editor reports on National Retired Members Conference, held this year in Llandudno. We give you fair warning that in the next edition will be a poem from the pen of John Vaughan as well as a piece from Chris Paine on the joys of life in Wolverhampton (yes, you read that correctly!).

We are also announcing that it is our intention to produce a supplement in the final edition of next year which will commemorate the ending of WW1, much as we did in summer of 2014 to commemorate the start of the hostilities. If any of you have family stories, or tales from friends of the period leading up to the end of the War and the armistice we would be very pleased to hear from you.

There are a number of big issues facing us at the moment and locally, possibly the biggest is the intention of Norfolk Constabulary to delete the posts of 153 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and replace them with 81 new Police Officers. UNISON is mounting a large national campaign on this as, at the time of writing, Norfolk is the only Constabulary which intends to do this. There is a major event taking place in Norwich North Constituency, targeting

(continued overleaf)

Our 2018 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** will be at 10.30 am [refreshments from 10 am] on **Wednesday, February 14th** at the Sports and Social Club, County Hall.

There will be **Guest Speakers** including **Adrian Hoare** who will give a brief illustrated talk on **Robert Kett**.

There will be a **prize quiz** and after the meeting a **free buffet lunch** will be provided.

Activities

WINTER WEDNESDAY TALKS On **January 24th** [10 am for 10.30] at the Sports and Social Club at County Hall. **Alex Woodall** will give an illustrated talk about the current **Russia Exhibition** at The Sainsbury Centre. For your diary, on Feb. 28th Grant Young will present the **Cambridge Archives** and on March 28th Charlotte Patten speaks about **Victorian Rural Women** [to be confirmed].

WHIST afternoons continue at 2pm on the third Thursday afternoon of each month at the S & S Club.

TABLE TENNIS continues from 9.30 to 12 noon every Monday morning.

All these activities are free of charge. Why not join in?

We welcome colleagues who have recently retired

We wish you all a long, happy, healthy and rewarding retirement. Do come along and join in the Section's activities, you will find a warm welcome.

If you received this edition of Backnumber by post and you have an e-mail address, please let us know by sending a message to our e-mail address on the back page.

EDITOR'S NOTES (continued from front page) Chloe Smith, on 2nd December. By the time you get this edition of Backnumber it will have taken place but the campaign will be continuing so, as David Button's article advises, do get involved and make your views known.

Nationally we also have the "Pay Up Now" Campaign. There's a petition you can sign which at the time of writing has 145,000 signatures and will be debated in Parliament on 4 December. The petition will be there for longer than that and we urge you to sign it, contact your local MP and also watch the satirical film produced by UNISON - "A pat on the back" which exposes the Government's hypocrisy towards public sector workers.

The Retired Members Committee will once again (it's an annual event, sadly) be participating in the consultation on cuts to the budget for 2018. There will be further cuts over the next 2 years and frankly we do not know what future there is for our Council. There are all sorts of ideas for the future and all of them, in one way or another, involve mergers of councils and changing the role to one of commissioning rather than doing. Whilst mergers may well be inevitable (see the joint work of Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies or the East Anglia wide Ambulance Service as examples) there can be no case, in the view of Backnumber, for reducing Local Government to a commissioning role and leaving the "doing" to the private and voluntary sectors. With such vast cuts in expenditure soon it will be impossible for the County Council to fund even basic services and those who will suffer the most will be vulnerable people - children, disabled, ill and elderly people being the prime sufferers.

Somehow, this has to stop. Backnumber has no magic formula but Government really must return to funding Local Authorities to provide as well as to commission vital services. Whilst the government prattles on about the strength of the economy and the employment market, the first being largely myth and from no evidence base at all and the second "boosted" by poorly paid and insecure jobs, the resources available to our communities become less by the year. If we're not careful, soon there will be nothing left and only the young of today will be left to count the cost. Is that really what we want to bequeath of future generations?

As ever views, comments, letters etc to porterjames172@gmail.com or to the UNISON Office at County Hall.

FRIENDS AGAINST SCAMS

Did you know that:

Scams cost the British Economy £5-10 Billion a year. Scams are a criminal Offence.

The average age of people scammed is 75+. 53% of people aged 65+ have been targeted by scammers but anyone can be the victim of a scam and many of us have been. Once scammers have your personal details these are sold on to other criminals. The most common scams are by mail, phone, online and doorstep.

Scammers target people who are on their own and lonely, vulnerable and socially isolated. Only 5% of scams are reported as crimes because victims fell ashamed of being duped. In some of the worst cases people have lost the whole of their life savings, paid vast amounts of money to doorstepping workers- £160,000 for a £6,000 job, made regular payments to scam lotteries. Often lonely people rely on contact from scammers by phone or letter as their 'friends', the only contact they have with outside world. In one case a person was receiving 30 letters and 10 telephone calls daily.

What can be done to protect us from scammers? Norfolk County Council Trading Standards have joined a national scheme to raise awareness of scamming called FRIENDS AGAINST SCAMMING. You can contribute to action against scamming and the misery it causes by taking a short awareness course online or attending a course organised locally. It will enable you to lookout for the signs of scamming for yourself, and anyone you know who might be vulnerable. You can get more information from tradingstandards@norfolk.gov.uk and subscribe to Trading Standards weekly scam alerts www.norfolk.gov.uk/scams. You can get advice about scams from Citizens Advice tel.03454 04 05 06

TRY SOMETHING NEW

'They say' that doing something new helps to prevent memory loss and dementia. Quite by chance last Saturday I came across Jazz Record Requests at 4.00 p.m. on Radio 3 followed by Jazz Line-up. As an addict of Radio, Radio 3 is not my usual listening station and I was surprised to hear two hours devoted to Jazz. It was brilliant, not only for reminders of Jazz greats like Jelly Roll Morton and Chris Barber, but lots of background information about the featured artists. Whether you favour Modern or Trad' Jazz why not give it a listen? You can make requests as well. Have you tried anything new recently? Why not share with Backnumber Readers ?

Verity Gibson

REPORT ON NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE.

Conference was held this year in Llandudno but sadly there was little time to avail myself of the delights e.g. the Great Orme Tramway and nature reserve. There was, of course, time to find suitable places to eat and drink and for those who may travel to this far away shore I can recommend the Cottage Loaf and the Albert for both food and drink.

On day 1 of Conference I attended the Panel Debate on Brexit which was most informative. Speakers were Alison Roach from Unison, Jane Thomas representing the Repeal Bill Alliance and Calver Meadows from British in Europe. All speakers professed to be Brexit neutral because they see that that is where we are. Particularly interesting points from Alison were that 68% of UNISON membership voted Remain and that we have 80,000 members who are EU Citizens. Our priority is to protect them and to protect the rest of us from attacks on Employment and other Civil rights.

Jane Thomas spoke of the serious issues contained within the EU Withdrawal Bill such as the so called Henry VIII powers and the lack of scrutiny time particularly in the Commons. It comes to something when someone like Jane, who's organisation is called Unlock Democracy is having to rely on the House of Lords to ensure proper scrutiny of this Bill.

Calver Meadows, who represents British people in Europe told us of the advocacy campaign within the EU which also links to Eu Citizens in UK and the great fears for the future. 80% of Britons living in Europe are working and 60% did not have a vote as they have lived away from UK for 15 years. Her organisation is involved in all the debriefings from the negotiations and she was clear that Davis and his people are absolutely out of their depth which does not spell good news for anyone. She also described Freedom of Movement as precious and that, as she saw it, it was being stolen from us.

From the questions asked I would judge the large majority of this well attended meeting were Remainers and it was interesting that the one questioner who clearly was not a Remainer was passionate in her belief that there should be a referendum on the result of the negotiations with the option to Remain being available.

Conference itself was well managed and provided some stimulating debate. An interesting motion from North West Region looked to the use of pool funding, now required from pension schemes, to be used to build Social care establishments which should be run by Local Authorities and staffed by people who are paid on nationally agreed conditions, negotiated by Unison. Two motions go forward to National Delegate Conference and I voted for this one and also for one on Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

For the first time in my memory we had 2 motions on the agenda. One on bus passes, which arose from an article written by Pat Bond for Back-number and called for the age of



eligibility to be harmonised at 60 and for bus passes to be valid throughout the UK was carried but only after some robust debate on how much this should involve those living in the devolved administrations. We also accepted an amendment about giving travel allowances to those living in areas with little or no bus service. Our other motion, which was composited with others from Devon and South West Region on state pension entitlements for those living in the EU after Brexit and which also called on uprating for those living in all parts of the world, was also carried.

I also had a lovely 2 hours just after the end of conference having tea with Bernard Pickering and his wife Mary. Bernard will be remembered fondly by those of you working at Seeborn House in the 1970s and early '80s. He is now 97 and lives in Llandudno and asked to be remembered to all who knew him. He is still very lively and has views about our present government (and indeed Brexit) which do not conform to those of our own dear Daily Mail.

Jim Porter

WW1 POEM BY GEORGE S CUBITT FATHER OF DAVID CUBITT EX COUNTY SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT. GEORGE S CUBITT SERVED IN WW1 IN THE ROYAL BUCKS HUSSARS.

The men I rode with, knee to knee,
Are mostly back on English ground,
But some again have crossed the sea,
Because no place for them was found,
God prosper them, where'er there be,
The men I rode with, knee to knee!

The men who rode along with me,
Are working at their jobs again,
And some are jolly farmers free,
And some must catch the City train,
God have you in his memory,
The men who rode along with me!



The men who fought along with me,
Are some of them in Paradise,
No earthly trumpets sound for ye,
Who fought the fight and earned the prize!
God keep you in his company,
Who rode and messed and fought with me!

NORFOLK POLICING SCANDAL

Norfolk Constabulary has decided that all 153 Police Community Support Officers, most of them Unison members, will lose their jobs next year. This service will no longer exist in our county. We shall lose much of the already scarce, visible police presence.

PCSOs were introduced 15 years ago as a less expensive way to combat low level crime and anti-social behaviour, including parking and cycling offences. Part of Safer Neighbourhood schemes, they work with schools and young people in local communities. They get to know local people and keep an eye on vulnerable people. Or at least they do now but not next year.

This decision is driven entirely by the Government's demand for budget cuts.

Please make your opposition to this action known to Norfolk Communities Committee via margaret.dewsbury.clltr@norfolk.gov.uk, contact your local councillors and your MP. You can help get this decision reversed.

I LIKE THE TAX MAN

I recently received a letter from the Tax Man, telling me that my wife had transferred £1,150 of her tax allowance to me and that I would be receiving a cheque for over £230 within the next 14 days.

This was a tax rebate for the year 2016-2017. My tax codes for this year have been amended to allow me a similar sum for 2017-2018. (You can apply for the current year and the previous year.) My wife filled in the form and it was 5 months before I received the letter and another two weeks before the cheque arrived.

Marriage Allowance lets you transfer £1,150 of your Personal Allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner - if they earn more than you. This reduces their tax by up to £230 in the tax year (6 April to 5 April the next year). To benefit as a couple, you (as the lower earner) must have an income of £11,500 or less.

Contact HMRC on their website <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance>

The form is easy to fill in but must be done by the husband, wife or civil partner who has an income of £11,500 or less.

This applies to Working and Retired people.
Thank you Mr Taxman.

Paul Tyrrell. Secretary Norfolk Police UNISON Retired Members.



WHERE TO FIND US

If you have letters, comments or issues about **Backnumber**, please e-mail the Editor Jim Porter at porterjames172@gmail.com

or contact the Unison Branch Office at County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH. Phone 01603 222384
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