

EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the spring edition of *Backnumber* which we hope you enjoy reading.

We hope you will get this before the local elections taking place on 3rd May and we encourage all members to use their vote. *Backnumber* does not have a policy of recommending how you might vote. It seems pertinent to point out, though, that Local Government is going through a major funding crisis and the root of the problem lies with our national government. They have insisted on cutting central funding, year on year, since 2010 and there is an intention that this will cease in 2020/21. Councils will retain 75% of Business Rate but this still leaves them with no choice but to impose increases in Council Tax much of which goes to fund Adult Social Care which, even with those increases, remains in a complete mess. It should be said that even Tory councils are appalled at these turns of events most especially Surrey and of course Northamptonshire which faces abolition. So, we would argue that the Tory Party nationally is no friend of Local Government and although some Tory Councils are despairing, many just accept the position and get on doing the government's dirty work for them.



If you follow social media you may be aware that some anti Brexit organisations are urging people to vote only for anti Brexit parties and shun Conservative and Labour, who they see as pro Brexit. This is intended as a wake up call, particularly to Labour, to change their approach. The problem with this is that you may get a Council that is not to your liking and which may be difficult to shift.

So our recommendation is to vote for those candidates who are clear that they support the proper development of Local Government and its services in order to give our communities the best possible chance to prosper.

Activities

WINTER WEDNESDAY TALKS

Our very popular Winter Wednesday Talks take a break now until the Autumn, so the next date to look forward to is Wednesday October 24th, and then on the fourth Wednesday of November, January, February and March. This season we have enjoyed some really excellent speakers on a wide range of topics.

Every Monday morning from 9.30 am a group of members meets at NCC Sports & Social Club at County Hall for **table tennis** and a natter over a cuppa. Other activities [short mat bowls, pool, darts] are available if there is sufficient interest.

Every month on the **third Thursday** at 2pm there is a friendly afternoon of **whist**, also at the Sports & Social club.

For both of these activities, more members and their guests will be most welcome. Why not give it a try?

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

All these events take place at the NCC Sports and Social Club.

“Do not grow old, no matter how long you live”.

Albert Einstein

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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM, on 14th February was well attended and was a great success, at least according to informal feedback.

Speakers were Chris Jenkinson, UNISON's Eastern Regional Secretary, John Ward, Chair of the County Council, Jonathan Dunning, Branch Secretary and Adrian Hoare talking about Robert Kett.

Chris Jenkinson reminded us of UNISON's victory in the Courts in 2017 on free access to Employment Tribunals. He also said that although membership is increasing revenue is reducing because higher paid members are retiring to be replaced by lower paid ones.

John Ward spoke about his year as Chair and had the distinction of being the only one to address us twice as he came last year as the then Chair was ill.



Jonathan Dunning was most passionate on the issue of Councillors awarding themselves an 11% rise whilst our members receive increases less than the rate of inflation and expressed deep concern about the future direction of the County Council under the current administration.

Adrian Hoare's illustrated talk on Robert Kett was informative and entertaining and made the point that what appeared to be a Peasants Revolt was in fact led by a member of what today might be described as the middle classes. As many of you will know, it came to a very sticky end!

Letters views etc to porterjames172@gmail.com or to Unison Office, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH.



CROYDE BAY

If you are planning a holiday in the UK this year then what better than our own Unison's Croyde Bay in North Devon? The scenery here is stunning with stark craggy cliffs above sandy coves- ideal for the smugglers in times gone by-, beaches which are famous for surfing and coastal walks on the headlands above. For those who are less mobile there is plenty to see and do in the area. Barnstaple and Ifracombe are near and the once flooded villages of Lynton and Lynmouth on Exmoor a little further. Not far way you can explore the steep cobbled village of Clovelly or take a longer trip across Dartmoor to Plymouth.

Croyde Bay was originally purchased by NALGO in 1930 for the benefit of their members to give them a break from the turbulent times of the Great Depression. Run as a traditional Holiday camp with games and competitions members were able to enjoy the seaside with their families. This was interrupted by the Second World War when NALGO moved their staff from the head office in London to Croyde Bay. They were based there until 1943 when the US Army commandeered the site as well as others in the local area to practice manoeuvres for the D-Day landings on Saunton beach/Braunton Burrows. You can still see re-enactments as well as find US military memorabilia there today in the museums.

After the war holidays resumed and over the years improvements were made to the older chalets with new self- catering cottages and a hotel built in 2011. Today Croyde Bay is a thriving Holiday Centre with a range of accommodation options, a surf school, Conference facilities and activities to suit people of all ages including an indoor swimming pool and evening entertainment. This year some of the remaining older chalets are being developed into luxury 3 and 4 bed accommodation.

We stayed in a 2 bedroom self- catering cottage, one of 12 set round a grassy square. It had good facilities and a comfortable living area. One of the good things about Croyde is that you opt in or out of meals and facilities as you wish. It's near the beach and on a bus route if you don't want to drive to the village pub.

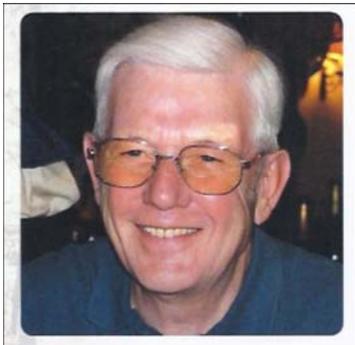
The only down side is the distance from Norfolk to Devon. It's a long way by road or train. The advice is not to travel on Friday or Saturday (Croyde does not have set days for change-over) and avoid the major routes if you are prepared to take a little longer via the scenic roads. We were lucky to just avoid a major incident on the M5 on the way there and a pleasant journey back along the A303 via Stonehenge. On the positive side members get a 15% discount on the advertised prices.

Lots more information on www.croydeunison.co.uk Tel. 01271 890 890

REMEMBERING DAVID ST. QUINTIN 13/7/37 TO 22/2/18

Many retired members will have been saddened to learn that David died on 22nd February 2018.

Whilst David's extensive work for Unison and the Sports and Social Club has already been acknowledged in a previous article - this is my personal appreciation of 'a life well lived'.



At David's funeral service, David Storey spoke of the quiet calm that David presented at NALGO, and later UNISON, Branch executive meetings; this was also my first impression of him. I grew to know David initially at Annual Conferences and later during some happy but also testing times in his life.

His usually tranquil manner belied his sharp analytical mind, as he preferred to use wit and humour rather than aggression to oppose any proposition he disagreed with. I was much in awe of David's ability to deconstruct complex issues to make his point. An example of this was during a discussion at the Sports and Social club management committee where further investment in the building was being questioned on the basis the building was only temporary, David drily observed; '...but all buildings are temporary, a building does not last for ever - the real issue is does the building meet our needs now and for the foreseeable future?'

The improvements were subsequently agreed, and the Sports and Social Club remains in that same (temporary) building today, a fitting memorial.

David's ability to get to the point and make you laugh was one of the things I will best remember him for.

As a quantity surveyor, precision was a key requirement of his profession and to some his manner could appear pedantic, although a wry smile and a twinkle in the eye could usually be discerned if you looked closely enough... I learnt to watch out for 'that look' to avoid being the subject of his wind ups.

When David met his late wife, Jenny Carter, he entered one of the happier periods of his life. David met Jen when visiting family in Wales and as their relationship grew she moved to Norwich, where she trained to become a social worker. Becoming not only a colleague of mine but also a friend.

After David retired he pursued his hobby of ornithology with great enthusiasm and even took a course at UEA – A serious bird-watcher!

Like so many retired members of Unison, David continued to serve his community and amongst many other tasks he undertook, was the editor of his local parish magazine for a considerable period of time.

David's last years were far from easy because of two debilitating illnesses which left him very physically disabled and dependent on others for his care. He also experienced the excruciating loss of a son and his beloved wife Jen in the year prior to his own passing. David is survived by a son and daughter and many grandchildren who did everything possible to support him in his final years.

David was a decent man who gave great amounts of his life to supporting the needs of others. So, if you are in the Sports and Social club and see his picture in the bar - raise a glass to this good old Norfolk boy, who, even if you never knew him, worked on your behalf for so many years.

Alan Cabbage

THE PEPPERMINT BOYS.

Many of us who grew up in and around Norwich in the 1940s and 50s will have recognised, and perhaps defined, other young people by their school uniforms. For girls, The High School, Notre Dame, the Blyth and Lonsdale House come to mind and for boys, Norwich School, C.N.S. and, perhaps less familiar, Bracondale, a private school close to the present site of County Hall. Its pupils were known as "The Peppermint Boys" because of the white ring round their caps.



Bracondale School closed in the early 1990s but left a contribution to WW1 history. Some 44 of these "Peppermint Boys" were killed, mostly on The Western Front. Many had joined The Norfolk Regiment but others served in a variety of different regiments. Four joined the Royal Flying Corps. One of those, Capt D. Cunnell, had shot down the notorious "Red" Baron von Richthofen.

Another, David Glen was shot down and killed in December 1915 and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for acts of outstanding bravery. He was 19 when he was killed. Lt. William Miles was 24 when he died in training at Reading in July 1918. Even younger was Flight Lt. Meyer Levine who was killed in a collision while training over Lincolnshire, aged just 18, in May 1918.



David Glen's crashed plane.

Astonishingly, 8,000 of the 14,000 pilots who flew during the Great War were killed in training.

ERIC PROCTER

Eric has retired from the Committee now aged 92.

Eric joined West Riding CC in May 1949 and became a Dept Rep and member of their B and O committee from 1951 to 1955. He was a Dept Rep/Steward in NCC Trading Standards from 1967 to 1980 and a member of the Welfare Committee. He took over as B & O Committee Secretary following Bernard Day in 1970 and took over as Death Benefit Scheme Secretary following Ralph Gayton, and became a Trustee when it became a Friendly Society. He was a member of Retired Members Committee 1995 to 2018.



He did Military Service from Nov 1942 to April 1949 and was a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Engineers serving in Europe and Africa. He was awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division) New Years Honours List 1949.

More recently he was awarded the French Legion D'Honneur at a ceremony in the Assembly Rooms (see *Backnumber* passim). This was for services during the Normandy Landings.



Eric has had a most active and impressive life and has only given up the Retired Members Committee to concentrate on other things!

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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