

Link Up

The Voice of the York & District Trades Union Council



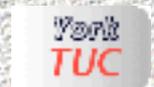
**Live music,
don't let it die!**

Health & safety - Stress - page 8

New LRD Guide - women's health problems - page 9

Car parking charges - page 5

Pensions - pages 10 & 11



Comment

NOTICE

If your branch wants the Trades Union Council to assist in anyway, phone one of the numbers on the back page.

Link Up welcomes any articles from affiliated branches. The articles should be not more than 300 words. the editor reserves the right to shorten articles because of space. Articles should be submitted by the branch secretary and on official paper.

Some of the information in *Link Up* is drawn from documents and information from the following sources:

Labour Research Department
78 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8HF
Tel: 020 7928 3649 for details of their subscriptions.

Trades Union Congress
Web site
www.tuc.org.uk

Welcome to the first issue of 2004. As will see from the list of contents we have covered a wide range of issues. We are pleased to welcome a guest article from the Musicians' Union, a long time affiliate to York TUC.

This edition also covers the health and safety and local matters, such as car parking charges.

Industrial base gets smaller

During the compilation of this edition, Kraft announced that they are to close the Terrys factory. Over that past decade York has seen the closure of the carriage works and will see the departure of the current occupiers Thrall in June. Donnelley's, who bought Ben Johnson, has moved to Starbeck.

York's manufacturing base is

shrinking because of global capitalism and inept political policies.

The land available for commercial/ industrial development is being used for housing. This may seem a good idea, but prices in York are now out of reach for York people, and the additional housing stock will not meet residents needs.

The high housing prices are affecting York's ability to attract workers, particularly in the health service. YTUC's concerns were raised with Hugh Bayley last year, unfortunately the government has refused to award York special status.

Tim Short
Editor

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Link Up is published three or four times a year and is available through TUC affiliated branches, a small number of copies can be obtained from public libraries in and around York.

Trade union members of affiliated branches are welcome to attend delegate meetings, provided that they make themselves known to the President or Secretary before the start of the meeting.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday in each month at the TGWU offices, Nunnery Lane, York. Meetings start at 19.30 hours.

Cover photo supplied by
Ron Burnett

Evens for Yorkshire Assembly

Hugh Bayley's survey reveals people are evenly divided

Public opinion evenly balanced on the establishment of a Yorkshire Parliament. That was the outcome of a canvass conducted by York's MP, Hugh Bayley over the Christmas period.

The last issue of *Link Up*, reported that Hugh Bayley wanted to hear from his constituents their views on the establishment of a Yorkshire Parliament. At the time of the survey he had not formed an opinion.

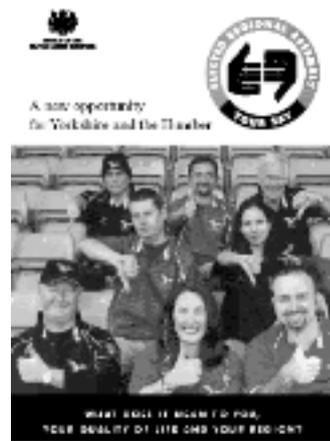
Hugh Bayley's preliminary soundings have produced no firm conclusions. What it did show, however, was that there was a lack of understanding of the impact such an assembly would have on the Yorkshire region.

YTUC sent out to its affiliated

union branches leaflets produced by the government spelling out how members of the assembly would be elected and the impact on existing tiers of government.

As reported in the last issue of *Link Up*, YTUC has yet to make up its mind on the need for a Regional Assembly. The Regional TUC has for a number of years supported the establishment of regional government for Yorkshire and actively campaigned for the setting up of the Regional Development Agency.

The government intends to hold a referendum in the Autumn and will proceed to hold elections if more than 50% of those who voted are in favour.



Government leaflet similar to the one sent out by YTUC

TUC Events

Pensions Demo

London

19 June

page 10

Railway Safety Conference

London

25 June

Page 7

YTUC on Regional EC

A member of YTUC has secured a seat on the TUC Regional Executive Committee.

Peter Holley, who is the President of York Trades Union Council has been elected to the Executive Committee of the Regional TUC. Peter secured this place as a delegate from the North Yorkshire County Association of Trades Union Councils (NYCATUC) to which YTUC sends delegates.

The NYCATUC represents trades union councils within the North Yorkshire County Council area.

2003 another successful year

says YTUC Secretary



York and District Trades Union Council, YTUC, had another successful year in 2003.

The secretary, Martin Wilson reported that the increase in attendance had enabled delegates to discuss common problems and solutions.

YTUC was not just a “talking shop’ but was a platform for unions to share their problems and experiences with other unions in different industries.

The Trades Union Council is a means for TUC affiliated unions to represent the trades union movement in the wider commu-

nity. YTUC is actively undertaking this role reaffirming its intention to send representatives to:

- North Yorkshire County Association of Trades Councils;
- City of York Council Economic Development Unit meetings;
- York Industrial Chaplaincy;
- York Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Age Concern.

The AGM saw the following officers re-elected:

- President - Peter Holley

- Vice President - John Keeper
- Secretary - Martin Wilson
- Assistant Secretary - Jane Wilson
- Treasurer - Tim Short.

Contact details for TYUC can be found on the back page.

YTUC signs up to Unity

York Trades Union Council has signed up against racism by signing a statement of support for York Unity.

York Unity is a community group created to campaign against the recent rise in BNP activity in York in the run up to the Euro elections in June, and to drive home the importance of getting people out to vote.

It was publicly launched on 16th February at a public meeting attended by around 80 people. A

statement of support at the time was signed by York Trades Union Council, MP's Hugh Bayley & John Grogan, 12 local councillors, four MEP's, David Hope (Archbishop of York), Paul Jagger (Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Secretary), Paul Mackney (General Secretary of NATFHE), as well as local campaign groups, trade unions and religious leaders. A full list of signatories can be found at the website at www.yorkunity.org.uk.

At the meeting it was decided

to affiliate to the national Unite Against Fascism campaign, backed by all major trade unions.

In Yorkshire, Trades Councils are leading the fight against fascism in what is one of the BNP's key targets. They require only 12% of the vote to gain an MEP in the region due to proportional representation, there is a real risk that this could happen due to voter apathy, with less than 25% UK of the electorate voting in the last Euro elections.

York to join the web

York Trades Union Council is in the process of setting up a web site. The site is in an advanced stage of development.

The world wide web is proving to be an invaluable source for the Trade Union movement, allowing activists across the UK and world to connect with each other and share experiences. It also allows representatives to gain easy access to essential legal, health & safety and equality resources, with the TUC leading the way on such initiatives.

The launch of York TUC's website will allow trade unionists in the York region to keep abreast of what is happening in workplaces in the region and to observe what a valuable role York TUC plays in the York community.

It is intended that the site will display the current and past editions of Link Up and have a potted history of YTUC, although this might take some time.

York TUC will be joining several other trades union councils which have their own sites, including Birmingham, Calderdale, and Dundee.



York TUC web site - An impression how it may look

New Charges Anger Unions



York & District Trades Union Council delegates came out totally against City of York Council's new car parking charges that can only be described as an additional tax on York people.

Delegates felt that the new charges would have a detrimental effect on the commercial life of the City and could result in a loss of jobs.

YTUC maintains that York's resi-

dents are already suffering because of the poor bus service serving the City in the evenings & on Sundays, and the approximate 9% rise in Council Tax. These new charges, YTUC say, are an extra burden on York people.

The new charges have been applied where free parking was previously available, this has resulted in fewer York people entering the City on weekday evenings. Protests by traders, residents and churchgoers, however, have forced the Council to

make some concessions.

YTUC has decided to add its voice to that of other groups protesting against the new charges.

YTUC says that the Council needs to look again at this tax on York motorists and clearly if they ever wish to be re-elected they should review how they treat York residents and motorists.

Live Music – Are the Days Numbered ?

Ron Burnett, Musicians' Union, says that new law threatens live music

“Listen, we’ve just had this fabulous patio built and we’re having an grand opening party next Sunday afternoon. Do you and some of your mates want to get a band together to play a bit of music ? There’ll be loads to drink and I know you really enjoy playing.”

After fighting the two-in-a-bar law for many years, musicians are now facing even worse news, that the law is to be changed to none-in-a-bar.

Do plumbers get invitations like that ?

“I’ve just bought a new sink and shower cubicle. Do you and some mates want to come round, have a few drinks, and fit them?”

Or health workers –“We’re

having a bit of a do on Saturday, why don’t you drop in? My invalid mother needs a bath and I know how much you love nursing.”

The above are occupational hazards, outside the influence of the Musicians’ Union. Where the MU is invaluable is in the hard facts of law, insurance liability cover, reclamation of fees from shady clients and generally fighting for the rights and livelihood of musicians.

One of the Union’s campaigns near to the hearts of York members is fighting the *two-in-a-bar* rule. This anomalous law deems that up to two musicians/singers can perform in a pub, but if another joins in the licensee can be liable to fines of up to £20,000 or a jail sentence.

To legalise the performance of live music, local councils issue Public Entertainment Licenses (PEL). Since these can be a good source of revenue, many councils have hiked the fees for PELs to high levels, enough to discourage the average small pub, club or restaurant. As a result, most

stick at just two musicians.

The anomaly is that discos and wide-screen TV can pack the crowds into pubs, so the health and safety argument does not wash. After fighting the *two-in-a-bar* law for many years, musicians are now facing even worse news, that the law is to be changed to *none-in-a-bar*. If a new Bill goes through parliament, every live music performance will have to be covered by a PEL and the provision of a pianist in a restaurant could become a criminal offence.

Link Up readers will know that we are blessed with a great deal of live music in pubs, most of it at York’s favourite price - no entry charge. This also enhances the city’s reputation as a prime tourist destination. If the Bill goes through it will greatly affect the work opportunities of musicians, to say nothing of the enjoyment of the public.

York MP Hugh Bayley has asked questions in the house to put the case of the MU, but to no avail. If you would like to add your voice to the protest, write to Mr Bayley at the Labour Party, 59 Holgate Road, York.

Ron Burnett (centre) with the Mardi Gras Band playing in the Coppergate Centre



Photo : Ron Burnett

Railway Safety debate is a distraction

TUC says transferring railway safety will not solve the real problems

The TUC is organizing a conference on 25 June in Central London on the future of railway safety.

The TUC says that press speculation that the regulation of rail safety is to be removed from the HSC/E and transferred to the Department of Transport or the Office of the Rail Regulator would be a major victory for those who want to reduce railway standards.

The reorganization of railway safety is currently being considered by the DoT as part of the Rail Review. The TUC broadly welcomes the review but is extremely concerned over the safety aspects. The TUC maintains that there is no evidence that transferring safety from the HSE would be an improvement. It sees that the safety debate is a distraction from the underlying real problem which is a lack of basic

cost controls.

The TUC is urging people to write to their MP to express concern at the press reports that rail safety may be compromised.

Conference on the future of railway safety - 25 June Central London, Speakers will include TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber and Bill Callaghan, Chair, Health and Safety Commission.

Stress yes - compo no, says advisory body

The body that advises ministers on the occupational diseases that should qualify for government industrial injuries payouts has said stress should not be added to the list of 'prescribed' industrial diseases.

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) said it was unable to 'identify circumstances in which it recommends extending the schedule of prescription to include adverse health outcomes ascribed to stress at work,' but added it was a major problem and it would 'continue to keep the topic under review.'

TUC is disappointed that the IIAC was not able to prescribe stress related illnesses at this stage

IIAC did accept the case for payments for victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but only in very limited circumstances, saying 'the relevant incident should be a traumatic, single event that is, or could be reasonably perceived to be, severely life-threatening or with the potential to cause serious injury to the individual or others present at the time' and 'an event outside the realms of normal human experience.'

TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson, who is a member of IIAC, said TUC 'is disappointed that it was not able to prescribe stress related illnesses at this stage because of the way the scheme operates, however we recognise the need to keep this under review.' He added: 'We welcome the fact that IIAC has produced a report that recognises the causes and extent

of this illness so clearly and welcome its strong recommendations on prevention.'

*Source : TUC TUC Risks 148 20
March 2004*

COMPOSITION OF THE INDUSTRIAL INJURIES ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Council currently consists of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of State. There are eight Independent members made up of doctors, scientists and solicitors, who are experienced in the fields of occupational medicine, epidemiology, toxicology and occupational health law. There are eight members representing employers and employees, currently all are from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Members representing employees are from the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Legislation requires an equal number of representatives from employers and employees.

LEGALITY

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) is a statutory body established under the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act 1946, which came into effect on 4 July 1948. It provides independent advice to the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions on matters relating to the industrial injuries benefit scheme.

THE COUNCIL'S REMIT

The statutory provisions governing the Council's work are set out in Section 171 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. The Council has three roles:

- To advise on the prescription of diseases.
- To advise on matters referred to it by the Secretary of State.
- To advise on any other matter relating to industrial injuries benefit or its administration.

The Council is a non-executive body and has no power or authority to become involved in individual cases or in the decision-making process.

IIAC meets a minimum of 4 times each year.

New forum is food for thought

The bakers' union BFAWU has backed a new HSE forum for the food and drink manufacturing sector.

BFAWU national president Ronnie Draper said is hoped this new forum will be 'a prime mover and shaker in delivering new health and safety strategies' as well as advice and guidance on reducing occupational illness and injuries. The forum is made up of representatives from across the whole food and drink industry, including the four major unions operating within the sector, BFAWU, Usdaw, GMB and TGWU.

Speaking after the inaugural meeting of the forum, Ronnie Draper said his union was 'pleased to be a part of the new forum and we will continue to drive forward the policies that our members need to remain safe and healthy in their working environment.'

Source : TUC Risks 152

Temporary worker law takes effect



A new law regulating the behaviour of employment agencies will prevent them ripping off vulnerable workers, says the government.

The Conduct Regulations for Employment Agencies Regulations came into force on 6 April. New measures include a duty on employment agencies to obtain information on any health and safety risks known to the hirer and the steps taken to prevent or control those risks.

The Department of Trade and Industry says the new measures will protect more than half a million people working through 17,000 agencies and employment businesses across Great Britain. The rules will be enforced by the DTI's Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate,

which currently receives around 10,000 enquiries a year through its telephone helpline. The DTI made 1,500 inspections last year. The maximum penalty for breaking the regulations is a £5,000 fine for each offence and a maximum ban of 10 years.

The TUC has warned that the new regulations fall far short of those sought by Europe in a directive being blocked by the UK and other governments.

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said: 'The new regulations will not stop agency workers being treated as third class citizens. The government has bent over backwards to the wishes of employers and agency owners, instead of acting to protect the group of workers most open to abuse from unscrupulous employers and rogue agencies.'

Source : TUC

Guide points to women's health and safety problems

The Labour Research Department (LRD), the independent trade union research company, has released a new health and safety guide, *Women's health and safety*.

The guide is aimed at health and safety reps to help them, to quote LRD, be "gender sensitive".

LRD states that women face particular health and safety risks at work, some of which are because they are women and have particu-

lar needs relating to for example pregnancy, the menopause and breast and cervical cancers.

Women in teaching, nursing and office work can suffer stress and musculoskeletal disorders.

LRD says that workplace equipment and tasks are often designed for the male body shape and size, with insufficient attention paid to the hazards affecting women. It quotes the relative legislation that would help reps to tackle any problems.

As with all LRD guides, it is peppered with pointers as to where to get more information. It also quotes union opinion and actions, for example on stress, the guide gives brief details of the CWU dispute with BT concerning stress in BT Call Centres.

The guide, *Women's health and safety*, costs £3.95 or, less if your organization is affiliated to LRD, and for bulk orders. It is available from: LRD, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London. SE1 8HF.

TUC to hold pensions demo

The TUC is to hold a national 'Pay up for Pensions' demonstration in London on Saturday 19 June.

Trade unionists, pensioners, workers who have lost out in recent pension collapses and others concerned about their pension prospects will take to the streets to call for a new deal for pensions. The demonstration has the full support of the National Pensioners' Convention.

The TUC is calling for:

- the basic state pension to be linked to earnings to provide a secure foundation on which everyone can build a pension
- a new occupational pensions settlement based on compulsory contributions from employers and employees (with special arrangements for the low paid)
- urgent action to help women who face much lower pensions in retirement including making it much easier for women who take career breaks to build up a full state pension
- compensation for those who have lost out in recent occupational pension fund collapses who will not be covered by the new Pensions Protection Fund
- more choice on retirement, not higher retirement ages.

TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** said, 'This government has done many good things

for pensions. There has been help for the poorest, and the new Pensions Protection Fund to protect those still in work.

'Yet politicians of all parties

politicians of all parties
have yet to appreciate the
depth of our pensions
crisis

have yet to appreciate the depth of our pensions crisis and are avoiding the really radical action that is needed if large numbers of today's workers are not to face poverty in retirement. Fewer and fewer are members of good traditional occupational schemes, and pensions misselling, growing student debt and the high cost of housing have put people off making alternative arrangements.

'That is why we are taking to the streets and inviting anyone to join us who agrees that it's time to pay up for pensions.'

The demonstration will assemble at noon on 19 June on the Embankment, by Temple tube station and march to Trafalgar Square where a rally will be held. Latest information on the demonstration will be available at:

[www.tuc.org.uk/
payupforpensions](http://www.tuc.org.uk/payupforpensions)

TUC
**Pensions
demo**
19 June
London

**York TUC your
Local TUC**



Womens' pension gap will widen

warns TUC

The TUC says that **urgent action is needed to ensure that today's and tomorrow's women pensioners can have a decent income in retirement.**

That is the conclusion of their report, "Women and Pensions" that was issued in March. "If action is not taken, the inequality in the private pension system will continue to grow.", says the TUC.

The Report says that the problem of women not having an adequate pension is not only because they are not saving enough and have broken work records, but also they are earning less than men.

The TUC concludes that there are several reasons why women are losing out. Some are related to the nature of their employment and are more likely to work for employers who do not have pension schemes. In addition, fewer women than men belong to occupational pension schemes.

Family life is another important factor. As women tend to take more time out of the labour market, they have less time to build up pension rights.

The government has said

that it would examine ways in which National Insurance cover could be extended to include more women. The replacement of State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) by State Second Pension (S2P) aims to address some of the problems faced by women who spend time out of the labour market.

The TUC believes that everyone should be able to retire on a decent income and one that allows full participation in society. There are several options that the TUC would like to see taken up by the government, see panel.

The TUC intends to keep a close eye on government action for the improvement of pension provision as it says that it intends to publish further assessments of the situation over the coming months.

Source : TUC

What the TUC wants the government to do.

- **Abolish the 25% rule that stops people with less than 10 year contributions getting any state pension;**
- **Allow backdating of NI contributions beyond the 6 year limit;**
- **Compulsory employer contributions to all workers pension schemes;**
- **Furthering the role of state second pension so that it includes those below the Lower Earnings Level and those who have children up to the age of 16 or 19 in full-time education.**

Image courtesy . www.javajane.co.uk

Women are main Bank Holiday losers

Nearly three million workers - two-thirds of them women - may have faced a pay cut because their employer refused to pay them for the Easter bank holidays.

A TUC analysis of official statistics shows that 2.7 million workers were not paid for the Easter Monday bank holiday last year. This is because it is legal in the UK for employers to treat bank holidays as a normal working day and send workers home without pay *if the workplace is closed.* (Editor's italics)

Of those who lost out, 1.7

million were women and one million were men.

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said: 'Most people probably assume that they have a right to a day off with full pay, but they do not. It's about time the government gave workers proper holiday rights, and gave us enough bank holidays to bring us up to the European average.'

The TUC is campaigning for more working time rights and better work life balance in the UK.

Source : TUC - Changing Times - No 38



Brendan Barber, TUC General Secretary, "It's about time the government gave workers proper holiday rights"

Minimum Wage defied doom-mongers

Says Barber

Commenting on the announcement in March that the National Minimum Wage is set to rise from £4.50 to £4.85 in October, and that from the autumn there is to be a £3 National Minimum Wage for 16 and 17 year olds, TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** said: 'The National Minimum Wage success story has defied the doom-mongers who said it would cost millions of jobs. Since it was launched five years ago the number of people benefiting from the Minimum Wage has at least doubled and employment has reached record levels.

'Unions will be pleased that their campaign for a minimum hourly rate for young people is going to pay-off for 50,000 low paid teenagers. This will cut out the worst examples of wage exploitation, and the £3 introductory rate should mean that more significant increases can take place in future years.'

At the same time, the Government also announced that the rate for 18-21 year olds is to rise from £3.80 to £4.10.

Link Up is published by the York and District Trades Union Council.

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The views expressed in Link Up are not necessarily those of the York and District Trades Union Council.