

NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | www.usdaw.org.uk | January/February 2012



ORGANISING AWARDS 2011

Everyone was a winner at the National Organising Awards on a night when reps were centre stage

■ Activist in depth

Midlands division's Matthew Jones talks about his role as a busy health and safety rep

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■ Recruitment drive

Hard working reps continue to make Usdaw the fastest growing union in the UK with more than 410,000 members

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■ News

Ex-Woolworths staff in £67m payout after Usdaw wins legal claim

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Campaigns work

General secretary John Hannett's comment



Welcome to the first issue of 2012 *Network*, thank you for being a rep or activist with Usdaw and congratulations on being part of a fast-growing, dynamic organisation whose aim is to improve workers' lives and win for members.

This year will put further pressure on our members and present severe tests of our organising and recruitment strategy. It's clear we are teetering on the brink of another recession – the second in three years. These are challenging times and we will need all of our resilience to meet these challenges in all of the sectors we operate in.

Spotlight Day

Once again our annual Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day on March 21 will focus on the key issues faced by our members – changes in hours and cuts to in-work benefits. It's important reps play as full a part as they can in this event and our latest range of new publications will help our activists get the message across. Our campaigns really do energise the union, raise its profile and show to members, and particularly non-members, that the union speaks up on all of the important issues of the day. There's a four page feature on the Spotlight Day in this issue and I would urge all reps to get involved in whatever way they can.

Marge Carey

We were all left deeply saddened by the news of our former president and divisional officer Marge Carey's death in January. Marge had a major influence particularly in Usdaw but also in the trade union and labour movement. She undoubtedly led the way, and helped open the doors, for the many women trade unionists in Usdaw who were inspired by her fantastic example and followed her into the movement both industrially and politically. She never lost sight of her roots and always put the members first.

Even when she was suffering from Motor Neurone Disease (MND) she still found the strength and determination to raise money for the MND charity.

This was typical of Marge – always a fighter whether that was for workers' rights, which she was passionate about, or for worthwhile causes.

I worked with Marge for a number of years and her commitment to members was total. She was a long-serving and loyal servant to Usdaw and she will be missed by many people not only in Usdaw but in the wider trade union and labour movement.

“Our campaigns really do energise the union, raise its profile and show to members that the union speaks up on all of the important issues of the day”

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IN BRIEF

■ **Recession may have arrived already**

The UK may have slipped back into recession, according to an economic think tank.

It said gross domestic product shrank in the final quarter of last year and would contract again in the current three-month period. It also predicted unemployment would rise by a further 300,000 to just below three million people.

■ **Unemployment hits the young hardest**

UK unemployment rose by 118,000 in the three months to November to 2.685 million, official figures showed in January. The number of young people without a job rose to 1.043 million in the three months to November, taking the unemployment rate in the 16-24 year-old age group to 22.3 per cent. The Office for National Statistics said the unemployment rate also rose to 8.4 per cent from 8.3 per cent, the highest since January 1996. The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in December rose by 1,200 to 1.6 million.

■ **Internet sales dent high street revenue**

Shoppers spent nearly £8bn online in December, up 16.5 per cent on the previous year despite difficult high street trading over the festive period. In all £68bn was spent online in the UK in 2011, a 16 per cent increase on 2010. Online shopping now accounts for 17 per cent of the retail market and experts expect this to grow as the rise in mobile commerce via smartphones and tablets increases.

Justice at last for Woolworths staff

UNION WINS LEGAL PAYOUT

Usdaw has won compensation worth up to a massive £67.8 million for over 24,000 former employees of Woolworths made redundant when the firm collapsed at the end of 2008.

The iconic high street retailer went into administration on 27 November 2008 and by early January 2009 the administrators had closed all of Woolworths stores, offices and distribution centres and made nearly 30,000 people redundant in the process.

Usdaw made a claim on behalf of its members for a Protective Award after the administrators failed in their legal duty to consult with the union before making redundancies.

After many months of legal wrangling, the employment tribunal finally heard the case involving members employed in England, Scotland and Wales in late November 2011.

In a judgement released in January, the employment tribunal in London found that the administrators had failed in



their legal obligations to consult with Usdaw and awarded its members compensation of 60 days pay, capped at £400 a week, the maximum payable in these circumstances.

Unfortunately, as occurred in a similar case involving former employees of Ethel Austin, the compensation award excludes all former employees who happened to work in smaller stores where fewer than 20 redundancies were made. This means around 3,000 employees who worked in 199 of the 814 stores covered by the judgement may never receive compensation.

Usdaw has already made a separate and successful claim for its members formerly

employed by Woolworths in Northern Ireland. As no employees in Northern Ireland worked in stores with less than 20 staff, all former employees received compensation of 60 days pay.

General Secretary John Hannett said: "My delight at the award for the vast majority of our members is tempered by the clear injustice that workers in smaller stores will miss out.

"Usdaw thinks the UK's current interpretation of the law on collective redundancies is both unfair and possibly a breach of the European Directive which seeks to protect workers in large scale redundancy situations."

www.usdaw.org.uk/news

Peacocks falls into administration

Clothing retailer Peacocks has entered administration after attempts by the company to restructure its £240 million debts finally failed.

The company, which employs nearly 10,000 people, will now be run by administrators from KPMG who have said they are 'actively seeking a buyer for the business as a going concern' and stressed that for the time being all stores will continue to operate as usual. However, KPMG immediately announced 249 redundancies at the company's HQ in Cardiff.

General secretary John Hannett said: "This is devastating news for the workers at Peacocks and for the South Wales economy and it's potentially further grim news for high streets across the UK.

"However, there remains a strong possibility that most of the business could be saved and we have spoken to the administrators to urge them to keep Peacocks trading for as long as possible in order to allow sufficient time for a buyer to be found.

"While we hope it won't be

necessary, we have also reminded the administrators of their legal duty to consult with workers and their reps before making any large scale redundancies and they have assured us they will do this before making any further announcements. Should they fail to do so, we will take appropriate action to protect our members' interests.

"We are in the process of contacting all our members at Peacocks to offer them advice and support, but I'd also advise them to contact their local Usdaw office as soon as

LATEST REPORT SHOWS HIGH LEVELS OF ABUSE

WORRYING TREND FOR STAFF

The number of reported incidents of verbal abuse, threats and violence against shopworkers rose by 83 per cent in 2011, claims a new report.

The statistics, which exclude the August riots, were revealed by employers' group the British Retail Consortium (BRC) in its annual survey of retail crime published in January.

While the increase in threats and abuse rocketed, the total number of physical assaults against shopworkers fell by 62.8 per cent and the total number of incidents remains on a downward trend.

Despite this year's increase, the BRC says the total number of incidents against shopworkers has fallen in the past seven years.

The BRC attributes part of this year's overall increase to staff being encouraged to report all threats and incidents of verbal abuse, although the report also highlights the fact that retailers themselves still continue to report less than half of all incidents of shoplifting to the police.

The BRC's survey also details the human cost of the riots and the appalling levels of violence and fear of violence faced by shopworkers in August. In total more than 5,000 crimes were committed, including 1,860 incidents of arson and criminal damage, 1,649 burglaries, 141 incidents of disorder, 366 incidents of violence against the person and five fatalities.

General secretary John Hannett said: "The huge leap in reported incidents of verbal abuse and threats against

shopworkers is extremely worrying and shows why we need to continue to work closely with the BRC, employers, police and other agencies to reduce all incidents of shop crime, create safer workplaces and ensure offenders are brought to justice.

"While the reduction in the number of assaults and continuing downward trend in the total number of incidents is welcome news, our own

survey figures indicate there continues to be a significant problem of under-reporting and that these figures remain the tip of a very large iceberg.

"Failure to report incidents is driven by the myth that shop crime is 'victimless' and a belief shared by many shopworkers and their employers that little if any effective action will be taken against perpetrators. Shop crime is never victimless and suffering abuse, threats and violence should never be regarded as part of the job.

"Shopworkers need to have real confidence that their employers, the police and the courts will support them, particularly when so many incidents result from staff themselves having to uphold the law by for example refusing under-age sales or tackling shoplifters.

"The Government must also ensure the police and courts have the resources to treat retail crime seriously. It's clear to everyone that the Tory-led Coalition's 20 per cent cut to police budgets and the predicted loss of 16,000 frontline police officers and 1,800 PCSOs represent a real threat to the safety of shopworkers."

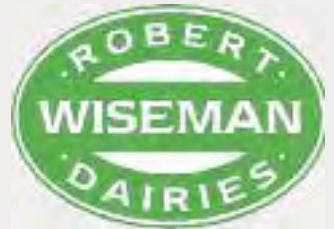


R Wiseman Dairies sold

Usdaw is set to hold meetings with Robert Wiseman Dairies, the UK's biggest milk producer, after it announced it had accepted an offer from German multi-national Müller Dairy in a cash deal worth £280m.

National officer John Gorle said: "Wiseman's has kept Usdaw fully informed about the offer from Müller and we are keen to discuss any potential impact the proposed acquisition may have for our members.

"Müller does not currently have any milk production facilities in the UK so there does not appear to be any immediate threat of



rationalisation. With the current management team remaining in place it is highly likely to be business as usual at least in the short to medium term."

The company said the business will continue to trade using the Robert Wiseman name and distinctive black and white brand identity.

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IN BRIEF

■ **Festive hangover for high street chain**

Home Retail Group, the owner of Argos and Homebase, has reported that sales fell at both companies over the Christmas period.

The group said there would be a number of Argos store closures in the remainder of the financial year as leases reached their expiry date.

■ **Past Times could be retail history**

Struggling gift retailer Past Times appointed administrators in January despite closing 47 of its 98 stores immediately after Christmas which saw around 400 job losses.

■ **Special survey for trade unionists**

The Labour Research Department (LRD) is carrying out a survey on trade unions, greening the workplace and climate change. We hope the survey will provide a useful picture of progress on trade union action on environment/climate change in the workplace and the role of the trade union movement in this vital area.

We would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire as soon as possible. It should take about 10 minutes. Visit: www.lrd.org.uk/surveys/greenwork/

■ **Former president Marge Carey**

As *Network* went to press Usdaw was saddened to hear of the news of former president and divisional officer Marge Carey's death.

A full obituary will appear in the spring issue of *arena* and the March/April issue of *Network*.

Jubilee may not be time to party

NO GUARANTEE FOR STAFF

Udaw is calling on employers to increase annual leave entitlement by an extra day in recognition of the additional bank holiday created by the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The spring bank holiday in late May has been moved to Monday, 4 June 2012 and the additional Jubilee bank holiday will be on Tuesday, 5 June 2012.

However Usdaw is warning staff that although the prime minister announced that there will be an additional public

holiday for the Diamond Jubilee, David Cameron has not implemented any increase in the statutory holiday entitlement that would give all workers a basic legal right to an extra day off.

As June 5 has been declared a public holiday, many people will assume that they will be entitled to an additional day's paid leave. However, this may not be the case.

Employers are in the process of announcing their plans for the Diamond Jubilee, but as there is no legal obligation to give staff an additional paid day off there may be a range of

approaches.

In the absence of a right to an extra day's leave, employees' entitlement to any additional paid time off will depend on employers' policies, any agreements negotiated by the trade union and what is stated in contracts of employment and staff handbooks.

General secretary John Hannett said: "We want to see all workers given the option of paid time off on the day, or premium pay for volunteering to work on June 5, or the option to take time off in lieu later in the year."

Primark NI members in vote to strike

MEMBERS OPPOSE PAY FREEZE

Udaw members at Primark in Northern Ireland have overwhelmingly voted for industrial action in protest at the company's attempt to impose a pay freeze for the second year running.

Members voted 93 per cent to 7 per cent in favour of taking industrial action. Usdaw reps at the company will now meet to decide on the form and timing of any industrial action, which could start sometime in February.



Primark, owned by Associated British Foods, posted excellent figures for last year but still wants to impose a pay freeze



Check out this latest offer

Udaw Insurance is offering Usdaw members 25% off Home Insurance. What's more, you will also receive a year's free Home Emergency Cover, which normally costs £48, to help solve problems like blocked drains or burst pipes

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STAFF AXED AND STORES TO CLOSE

TRAVEL FIRM JOB LOSSES

Members were left devastated in December when the Joint Venture (JV) between Thomas Cook retail and the Co-op Group and Midlands Co-operative Society's travel businesses confirmed plans to close 115 high street stores, putting up to 661 jobs at risk.

The proposals follow the completion of the joint venture's review of its UK store network that commenced immediately after it formally started operations in October. Usdaw has been told that the stores earmarked for closure have been selected on the basis of lease expiry dates, financial performance,

proximity to other stores and the profile of their customer catchment area.

The proposals are subject to a statutory 90 day consultation period and no closures or redundancies are expected before 17 March this year.

National officer Sharon Ainsworth said: "We've always known that the creation of the JV was likely to lead to some rationalisation and job losses but have reluctantly accepted this because we remain convinced the JV provides the best way to secure the long term future of the Co-op's travel businesses.

"Thomas Cook is fully consulting with Usdaw and our key priority will be to keep the

number of compulsory redundancies to an absolute minimum. Hopefully there will be opportunities for redeployment and we'll be trying to maximise these and do everything else we can to support and represent our members through this very difficult time.

"There is never a good time to be told your job is at risk but to hear just before Christmas is particularly devastating."

The combined group had 1,240 stores in October 2011. The proposed closures threaten 60 stores from Thomas Cook/Going Places, 47 stores from the Co-op Group and eight stores from the Midlands Co-op.

Unilever staff in pensions battle

Ushaw has accused Unilever of 'breathhtaking complacency' in its approach to the escalating pension dispute at the company following its announcement it was to close the final salary scheme.

The accusation follows strikes at Port Sunlight and Leeds as part of a 12 day rolling programme of action involving unions at all 12 UK sites. "Unilever's continuing intransigence and refusal to return to the negotiating table, shows a breathtaking complacency in its approach to the dispute," said national officer David Johnson.



Members took action in December and January

IN BRIEF

2012 Forthcoming events for your diary

February

11-12 February
National Political Conference

March

10-11 March
Eastern, Scottish, South Wales & Western Divisional Conferences

17-18 March
North Eastern Divisional Conference

21 March
Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day

April

22-25 April
Annual Delegate Meeting

June

23-24 June
North West Divisional Conference

18-24 June
Membership Week

September

01-08 September
First Series Summer School

10-13 September
TUC Conference

15-22 September
Second Series Summer School

30 September - 04 October
Labour Party Annual Conference

October
13-14 October
Retail Trades Conference

November

03-04 November
National Youth Weekend
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FIGHTING FOR YOU

General secretary John Hannett considers the impact of the last 12 months and looks forward to this year and pledges that Usdaw will be leading the fight to defend its members' rights



Q Is the faltering economy the union's biggest challenge?

A Last year was very tough and it looks like this year will be just as bad if not tougher.

Don't forget the recession started in 2008 and while it 'statistically' ended in 2009 we haven't really come out of it yet by any means. In fact here we are four years later and some economists are already saying we are back in recession.

It's fair to say our members won't notice the difference because they have had such a battering during this time. It's far more important to refer to the real-life experiences of ordinary working people than statistics to gauge whether we are in recession or not.

In terms of our working lives, there's nothing worse than being made redundant. The financial and emotional strain it puts on individuals and their families is immense. Thousands of our members have had to endure this over the last few years.

But we can't throw the towel in, we have to continue to argue and fight for our members wherever they are and whatever challenge they face.

Q Being in a union is all about getting improved terms and conditions, in the light of the economic situation, can Usdaw make progress here?

A It's clear negotiations in this economic climate are difficult. No one is achieving inflation or anywhere near inflation deals – in fact many workers are facing pay freezes, particularly in the public sector.

However, we are achieving pay awards for our members of around 2.5 per cent which is slightly above average settlements across the private sector, and well above settlements in the whole of the economy that reflect the public sector wage freeze.

And we have also achieved a long standing policy of the union by successfully abolishing youth rates in many of the retailers we have agreements with – Tesco in 2010 and last year in the Co-op.

I know that negotiations and relationships with employers have been tough. National officers know only too well about the difficult

circumstances our members are working under as the employers adapt to the economic circumstances by cutting costs, often in terms of cuts in jobs and/or hours.

We've also had a successful outcome in respect of our claim for a protective award for 600 members in Life and Style who were made redundant without consultation. You will also have seen the £67m protective award we won for ex-Woolworths employees. A great achievement but one which ultimately highlights the unfairness of the UK's employment protection laws.

Q Despite all of the economic difficulties Usdaw continues to buck the trend of declining union membership. How do you explain this?

A A number of important factors but first and foremost it's through the hard work and dedication of our reps and officials.

Our membership currently stands at 410,491 and we are the fastest growing union in the UK and I'm proud of that.

We recruited 76,500 members last year, growing our membership by 11,552 with comparative growth over the last 12 months standing at 13,000. And we have continued to increase our density in all of the Big 4 (Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and the Co-op). Density in Tesco is now over 60 per cent and growing.

Secondly we have a recruitment and organising strategy which puts the reps at the centre of everything we do. We have our own Academy set-up, which is repaying the investment we committed to it by training the next generation of reps and officials and making sure they get the support they need. I know our reps are amongst the best trained reps in the trade union movement and I'm determined we maintain that high standard.

In addition to Academy1&2, which engages, develops and motivates our best activists we have also increased our number of stand-down rep hours. Both groups of reps have done a great job and recruited an impressive 32,000 members so far this year.

We have also provided reps with access to more than 5,000 training places/courses covering core and specialist training. Quantity of members is important but so is the



“We have put strong foundations in place, so we can begin this year confident and determined to improve our support to reps and the service we deliver to our membership”



quality of our reps. By having a strategy we know where our strength and weaknesses are and we can work on that and take the union forward. In the private sector, where we operate, only 15 per cent of the workforce is in membership, so it's clear the potential for us to grow is massive.

Q Legal assistance, especially personal injury, has always been an important part of union protection, is this more important now than ever?

A Yes, it's a vital part of how we look after members. There are too many horror stories out there about non-union members who went to a 'No Win No Fee' outfit and lost out badly.

I'm delighted to report, yet again, that our FirstCall Usdaw service, the direct claims line, continues to deliver for our members with 5,261 new personal injury cases and we have recovered nearly £18 million in compensation for our members last year. We've also supported 1,213 members with employment cases recovering over £3.7 million in compensation. That's more than £21.7m in total – a fantastic achievement.

Q Years ago members would go to branch meetings to keep in touch, that hasn't been happening for a long time, how do we get round this?

A Communications are vital and we've made significant progress over the years, standing still was

never an option. We all know the advances in technology give us the opportunity to communicate in many ways which has reduced the impact of people not being able to get to branch meetings because of say, family commitments.

Developments with our communications review continue to focus on electronic facilities and communications. We have issued regular e-newsletters to our reps and members plus e-postcards on issues such as pensions, home study and online learning.

This does work, for example we have had an excellent response to emails we sent out to encourage members to respond once again to the Government's latest Red Tape Challenge on employment rights. Thousands of members clicked onto the website with so many posting comments that Usdaw became a comment tag.

And we launched a digital version of *Arena* last year giving members, and potential members, the chance to keep informed of what the union is doing, whether they're travelling on the train, tube, bus or at home.

Q Is Usdaw still the 'Campaigning Union'?

A Without a doubt and it's our campaigns which have helped us raise our profile, address members' issues, attract new members and make the employers and politicians sit up

and listen to what we have to say. We have delivered a number of successful campaigns last year. In particular our Freedom From Fear Respect Week in November and Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day in March. Our Membership Weeks were successful once again resulting in an additional 6,000 new members. Lifelong Learning, incorporating checkout learning, also continues to change members' lives for the better.

We have continued to develop our e-campaigning particularly as part of Protecting Vulnerable Workers backed up with a strong internet presence. On Sunday Trading where our call to action resulted in the Government's Red Tape Challenge website crashing within forty minutes of our email being dispatched. We have also repeated this success with the attack on workers' rights with thousands of members responding to emails on the National Minimum Wage, unfair dismissal, flexible working and maternity leave.

We also launched our Safe

Journeys campaign and in addition hundreds of activists have also turned out for Gay Pride events and the March For The Alternative demonstrations across the UK.

So both traditional and electronic campaign techniques have paid off for us this year and engaged our reps and members. We have successfully trialled Facebook and Twitter as part of our campaign tactics and have a presence on You Tube for the first time.

Q Looking ahead, what's on the horizon for Usdaw?

A The current economic situation and a Government hostile to ordinary working people creates new and massive challenges for Usdaw. But we won't shrink from these and because we have put strong foundations in place, in terms of modernising the union, how it works, how it manages itself, developing our organising strategy, we can begin this year confidently and more determined to improve both our support to reps and the service we deliver to our membership.

Labour leader Ed Miliband and general secretary John Hannett



DRIVING THE DEBATE

Usdaw has a significant number of members in the transport sector and the annual conference allows activists to air their views and keep up-to-date with developments

Drivers could come under increasing risk of crime after the Tory-led Coalition cut the funding for the national agency for reducing truck crime – Truckpol – general secretary John Hannett told the transport conference.

“Last year, the home office cut all funding for Truckpol even though there was a 59 per cent increase in truck crime during 2010,” he said. “And while



General secretary John Hannett

Truckpol had secured funding to continue until April of this year, after that there are no guarantees. Compare that with the fact that prior to the last election, Usdaw received a commitment from Labour to increase the number of safe truck stops.

“Nevertheless, we have continued to lobby for drivers’ safety based on the evidence and experience of our members, and we need your experience of safety issues to guide our campaign. So, if you have not already, please take the time to fill out a copy of the drivers’ safety survey and please pass them round the membership at your site.

“We know that there are over 40,000 truck crimes in the UK every year. We know that Usdaw members are out on the road every day with valuable loads and no security. But without our members’ experiences to bring these figures to life, these crimes become just statistics. So, please complete the drivers’ safety survey. Because the more information we have the stronger the case we can make.

“It’s clear we are in turbulent economic times with no respite in sight.

The Coalition Government’s agenda is making things even more difficult for hard working people like you, our members and their families. They have attacked benefits, eroded tax credits and cut public services.

“But this approach is not working, the economy is not growing. Instead inflation has rocketed, job security has plummeted, wages have not kept pace with inflation, and unemployment is at a near 20 year high.

“Negotiations in this economic climate are difficult. Few agreements are

“ There are over 40,000 truck crimes in the UK every year yet the Government is cutting police numbers ”

achieving inflation, or anywhere near inflation deals, in fact many workers are facing pay freezes – particularly in the public sector. However, Usdaw has achieved settlements of around 2.5 per cent, which is in line with, if not above, average settlements across the economy.

“Usdaw has approximately twenty thousand members in Road Transport – a sector which is vital to every part of the economy. Given the importance of road transport it is essential that this sector is unionised. Transport is key to many other trades where Usdaw organises and therefore it is a very important area for us. And thanks to hard working reps we are reaping success across the sector. It will be a tough year in 2012 but with the support of our activists we can meet those challenges.”

Applause for Tony



National officer Irene Radigan led the tributes to executive council member Tony Threlfall who chaired his final conference as he will stand down in April.

“Tony has worked hard for many years for the transport section from being a divisional transport committee member to becoming chair, along with a committed representative on the executive council,” she said.

“Tony has overseen a great improvement to the quality of the conference, and has also pushed the agenda of the sector, ensuring that these distinct issues were understood across the union.

“Also many thanks to Tony for his many years of service as convenor at the Littlewoods Shaw site, where he consistently delivered a professional service for the membership.”



Delegates and officials at the 2011 Transport conference held in Blackpool



MP blasts Government's transport policies

The Tory-led Coalition is asleep at the wheel as far as its transport and economic policies are concerned, Labour's shadow transport secretary Maria Eagle told delegates.

"Government spending on roads is down 18 per cent and the VAT rise on fuel alone has caused real hardship to families and businesses," she said.

"As drivers you will be already feeling the Government's economic short-sightedness when you're out on the road as local authorities struggle to fix almost £13 billion of repairs. The Government has allocated £200 million. We all know



that leaving roads in a poor state costs haulage and delivery companies additional repairs to their fleets with similar costs incurred by motorists in general.

"Safety is also being compromised. Too many drivers are behind the wheel for too many hours putting themselves and other road-users at risk. We need to make safety a top priority and stamp out exploitation of drivers. Funding for road safety has also been cut by 40 per cent since the election and with cuts to the police force this will have further implications for union members.

Already we have seen a rise in the number of people killed on the roads.

"Labour is currently reviewing its transport policies and we are looking at a number of options to improve safety.

"It's important we continue to work with Usdaw to minimise the damage done by the Government in the transport sector."

Workshops

Delegates broke up into work groups to discuss the pressing issues in the sector. The following were identified:

- Overloading continues to be a serious issue, with drivers often forced to take overloaded vehicles out onto the road.
- Self-employed foreign drivers working outside of the legal system with no adequate provisions to fine and prosecute these individuals at the moment.
- A lack of professional standards within the 3.5 tonne (van driver) sector.
- The worry that there aren't enough Traffic Commissioners (TC).

Looking ahead delegates agreed Usdaw should:

- Lobby Government for more public awareness of driver issues e.g. 40 mph limit on A roads, the turning circle needed by HGVs and the problem of cyclists undertaking HGVs.
- Utilise the website to promote relevant news items within the sector, and promote the role of TC.
- Negotiate training and time for daily vehicle checks.

Traffic commissioner shares her expertise

Conference also heard from Beverley Bell (pictured, right, centre) North West Traffic Commissioner who has responsibility for the licensing of the operators of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and of buses and coaches (Public Service Vehicles or PSVs).

Traffic commissioners are also responsible for the registration of local bus services, the granting of vocational licences and for taking action against drivers of HGVs and PSVs.

She explained her role and how the

department deals with problems caused by companies and individuals who do not follow the legal requirements within the sector. More information at:

www.dft.gov.uk/topics/tpm/



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 www.usdaw.org.uk/offers

Unisaver: The union no longer offers the Unisaver savings product as advertised on the member services pages of previous Networks.

Any members who have taken out a policy with Unisaver will not be affected by this change and existing policies will carry on as normal. If you have any queries please contact **Coventry Assurance Society** on 024 7622 3683.

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*Money back may differ on NHS dental plans in Scotland and Northern Ireland

THE CO-OPERATIVE FUNERALCARE

Our caring staff are on hand to give you individual support, care and reassurance when it matters most. Usdaw members and their families are entitled to a £25 discount on our funeral plans and 10% discount on professional services fees on funeral arrangements.

Visit www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk for your nearest Co-operative Funeralcare or call 0800 083 6301

Terms and conditions: 10% discount applies to Funeral Director professional services fees only (as detailed on the price list and estimate form provided at the time of arranging a funeral) and excludes discounts on supplementary services, coffin/casket selection, additional services and payments made on your behalf (e.g. clergy, doctors fees, crematorium/burial charges). 10% discount is not applicable on funeral plans. Both offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers valid to Usdaw members and their families until 31 December 2012. All offers are not retrospective. Our business terms and conditions apply. This does not affect your statutory rights.

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*Our lines are open 8am-8pm weekdays and 9am-12noon Saturdays. Calls may be recorded and/or monitored. Calls from landline phones are free however mobile providers may charge. Britannia is the trading name of the Co-operative Bank plc.



TAX REFUND SERVICE

Over 94,000 members have used this service and so far received tax refunds in excess of **£3.2million**. Refunds average **£160.51** each!

To find out if you are due a refund, go to www.taxrebates.com/ref/usdaw, call the application information line 0845 058 2288 or send a SAE for an application form to:

The Tax Refund Co. 43-47 Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3DG.

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- Save ££££s
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- Convenience
- Nationwide delivery

Part exchange welcome Finance available



To enquire online visit: www.usdawdrive.co.uk or call 0845 122 6916

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Usdaw and Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) are to continue their successful service providing debt advice and solutions for all Usdaw members.

CCCS provides free and immediate telephone debt advice to individuals and families in times of financial distress. In addition to its unique online counselling service, **Debt Remedy**, CCCS offers a free telephone counselling service available Monday to Friday.

If you are an individual struggling to repay your debts use the CCCS Debt Remedy online assessment of your financial circumstances: <http://www.cccs.co.uk/usdaw>

Telephone debt counselling
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Mon to Fri 8:00am-8:00pm



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Visit the following Usdaw websites for more information:

Fitness First: www.usdaw.org.uk/fitnessfirst
LA Fitness: www.usdaw.org.uk/lafitness
Nuffield Health: www.usdaw.org.uk/nuffield



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

Midlands division's **Matthew Jones** answers our questions on his experiences as a rep



“ I do find it funny how many times I get asked to deal with a first aid call – I'm a health and safety rep not a first aider! ”

FACT FILE & TRIVIA

FAST FACTS

- **Age** 27
- **Employer** Tesco
- **Occupation** Checkouts team leader
- **Lives** Worcester
- **Union positions** Health and safety rep
- **Branch** Worcestershire Area Tesco E94
- **Usdaw Activist** For about two years

MY FAVOURITE...

- **Book..** The Harry Potter series
- **TV programme..** All versions of C.S.I and N.C.I.S and Stargate

TRIVIA

- **The last film I saw was...** At the cinema would have been Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2. Great film based on a great series of books. JK Rowling has done so much to get youngsters reading again. On DVD it would be Cowboys & Aliens. A strange but good film.
- **In my spare time...** I like Gaming/TV/Films/Internet (In particular Facebook). Occasionally helping the local Salvation Army.

Want to be the next activist in-depth?



network@usdaw.org.uk

Why did you become an Usdaw rep?

I wanted to make a difference in my store with regards to health and safety. To protect people from bad practices and wrong decisions.

What's the best thing about being a rep?

Seeing the difference you can make to people's everyday life.

...and the worst?

People thinking that anything health and safety is my responsibility, when in fact it is the responsibility of everyone to comply with health & safety laws.

If you spot something and can do something about it then do so. Don't wait to see a rep and tell them about it.

We are here to make sure that laws are complied with, and that managers do what is asked of them instead of ignoring it until they get a claim.

And I do find it funny how many times I get asked to deal with a first aid call (I'm a health and safety rep not a first aider).

Is recruitment easy at your workplace?

Recruitment is quite hard in our store as we have a lot of younger staff members that are in college and don't see themselves staying long enough to join, or they are on temporary contracts and think there wouldn't be much point.

Our older staff members have either been in and left or have never joined and think that they haven't needed us so far so why bother. Trying to change these viewpoints that the union has no relevance to them is quite a hard challenge.

What are the most important issues for your members?

The cold – as the heating and air conditioning keeps playing up. Also an awful lot of us are complaining about the state of our uniform and how hard it is to get replacements because of budget restrictions. Yet they still want us to look good! If the company want us to wear this uniform then they should make it available.

What is the best moment you've had as a rep?

Winning the divisional health and safety rep nomination and going up to Manchester for the awards night was great. Meeting the other divisional winners and finding out who won the national awards was a really good experience.

How would you improve Usdaw?

I think it could engage its youth more. I have seen movement in this area and was once asked to be on the Midlands youth committee, but I felt I couldn't provide the attention it deserved.

I did notice at the awards night that the Scottish youth were well represented and it seems from what I heard they much deserved the award they received. They seem to be doing the right things to engage and work with young members and I wish them much success with their future endeavours.

What's next for you?

The recognition that the awards night gave us has re-energised me to do more with the union and for our members and I hope to get stuck back in and fight the corner for health and safety in my store.

Safety in numbers for reps

Informal get-togethers provide a great opportunity for reps to learn more about the union in a friendly and relaxed setting. They also encourage activists to network and learn from each other



Morrisons reps, Southern division



Co-op reps, Southern division



Morrisons reps, South Wales and Western division



Tesco reps, North Western division



For more info visit:
www.usdaw.org.uk/training

Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Co-op reps, North Eastern division



Morrisons reps, Scottish division

SPOTLIGHT DAY TO HELP YOU COPE WITH CHANGES IN HOURS

Having your hours changed can have a devastating impact on members' income that's why the Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day is tackling the issue head on – 21 March 2012

Members are seeing the biggest shake up in their working hours for years as companies respond to the recession and shifting trading patterns.

When hours are changed this can cause severe problems for members in terms of the knock-on effect on working tax credits, childcare arrangements and household income.

This year's Spotlight Day will provide reps with the vital information they need to help members deal with these situations.

A comprehensive campaign pack is being sent out to all reps including a survey form which can be used to gauge exactly what's happening to members in workplaces across the UK.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Our members are telling us loud and



clear that companies are constantly reviewing their working patterns and this is having a massive impact. That's why on March 21 all of our attention will be focused on raising this issue among members, reps and employers.

"We know there are big changes to tax credits in April this year and

it's important everyone knows about these. Again we have provided essential advice to our reps as part of the campaign mailing.

"The recession has brought huge pressures on working people. Companies are looking to reduce costs wherever they can and too often it's our members who are feeling the brunt of that.

"I would urge all reps to tackle this issue head on, get involved on Spotlight Day and once again show that Usdaw is out there fighting for its members on the important issues of the day."

What you can do:

- Set up a stall on the day at your workplace
- If you haven't done this before liaise with your local official for help
- Speak to your line manager about time off to run the stall
- Display all the new materials on your stall & noticeboard
- Hand out the leaflets to members and non-members
- Use the survey form to find out more about your members' needs
- Invite your local MP if possible



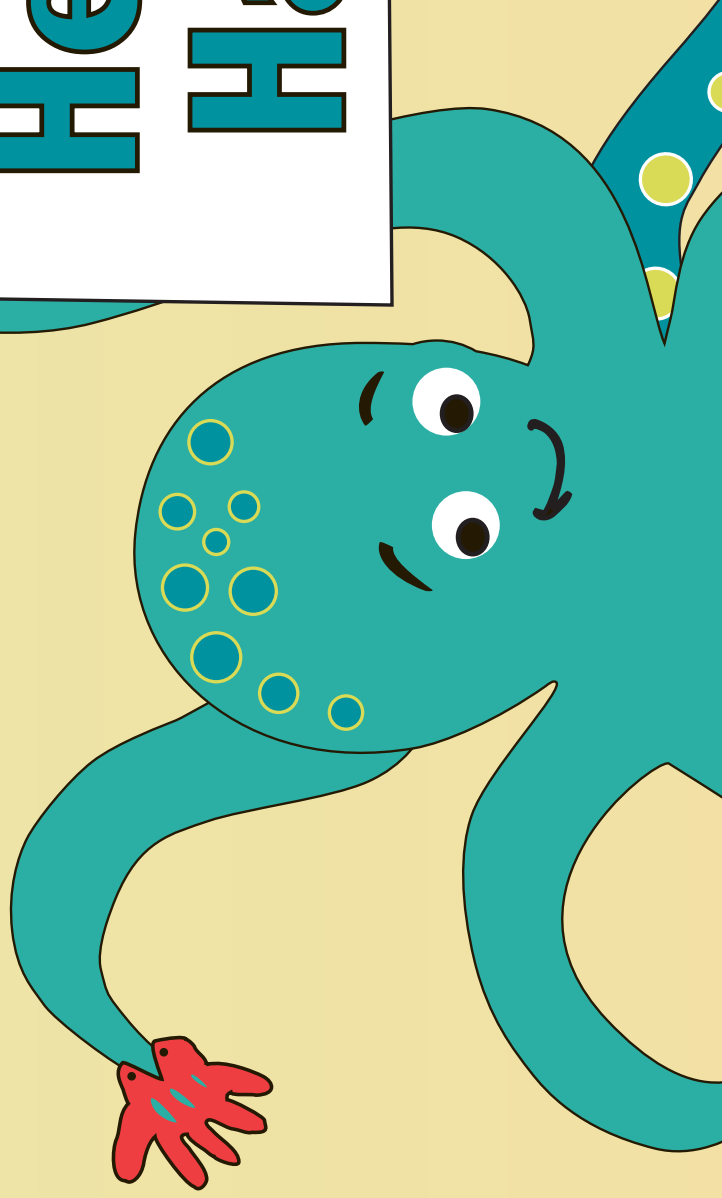
Usdaw – Campaigning for better rights

Tax Credits and Benefits are changing ...

Usdaw
*Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers*
www.usdaw.org.uk

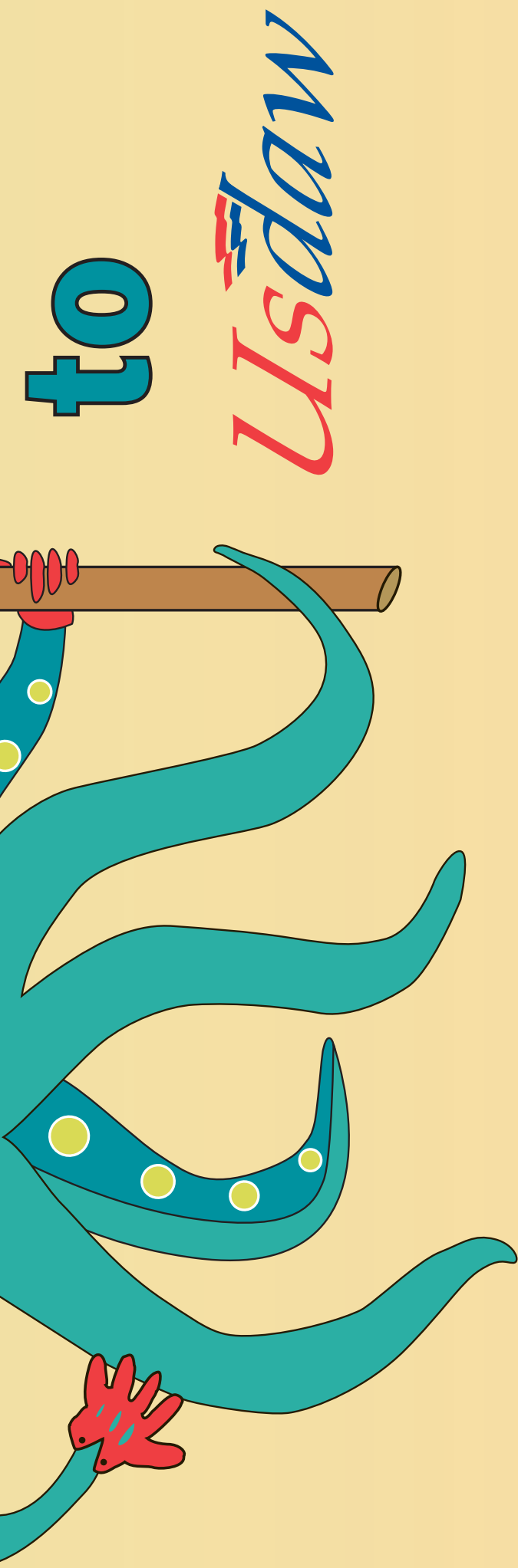


**Need a
Helping
Hand?**



Talk

**PLEASE
DISPLAY ON YOUR
UNION NOTICEBOARD**



If you are worried about what this means for your family's finances or you need advice about your hours of work you can talk to Usdaw.

Helpline: 0845 60 60 640**

website: www.usdaw.org.uk

email: parentsandcarers@usdaw.org.uk

Scan the code with your smartphone to view the latest campaign resources on your mobile*



www.usdaw.org.uk/helpinghand

*to scan the code, download a QR reader app from your app store. A charge may be applied by your network provider.

**calls charged at local rates

Poster HH

January 2012

Improving workers' lives – Winning for members

Published by Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ

HELP IS AT HAND



Dealing with changes in hours is difficult and often employers ignore that this can have serious implications for our members' income and family circumstances

When employers want to change working hours reps should consider the following key points:

- **Has there been proper consultation?** This doesn't mean a 'take it or leave it' attitude from the employer but meaningful discussions about all of the options. Reps should accompany members during these discussions.
- **Has the business case for changing the members' hours been properly**

explained? Reps will want to be sure that there is a genuine business need for the change.

- **Is there an agreement covering how hours changes should be handled?** Reps are advised to check with their area organiser to find out whether a process has been agreed nationally or locally with the union and the company as to how changes in hours should be handled.
- **Have other options been considered?** Is there an alternative, could it be

temporary, could extra hours be covered by overtime, is the change reasonable?

- **Is the member disabled?** If so, the company will need to take into account the member's rights under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Is the member pregnant or a new mother?** If the member is being asked to change her hours there are important health and safety issues to consider.
- **Is the member a parent or carer?** Members who are

parents or carers have the right to have their family and caring commitments taken into account when decisions about new hours are being made.

- **What will be the impact of the change on the members' overall income?** Will members lose out, say with in-work benefits which may make them substantially worse off should their hours be cut?
- All of these points are detailed in the campaign materials.

What you will achieve:

- Show members that Usdaw is campaigning on an issue important to them
- Lobby your MP for action to help make the workplace fairer
- Recruit new members

More at:
equalities@usdaw.org.uk

Campaign materials available

- Need a Helping Hand? Support for reps when hours are being changed (leaflet 386)
- Worried About Money? Benefit and Money Advice (leaflet 385)
- Rep's Action Plan
- Postcards & Pledge Cards
- Stickers and balloons

RAISE USDAW'S PROFILE

- Campaigns do work, but only if the reps get involved and bring it to life on the shop/factory or depot floor.
- You can order additional material from your local office or from the stationery department.
- Contact **Network** if you are running an event, we may send a photographer.



Everyone's a winner at glittering event

Reps from across the UK took centre stage at the annual National Organising Awards in January – a unique event among UK trade unions which puts activists first, second and third

Celebrating the hard-work, commitment and dedication of the union's activists saw some of the best reps assemble at a top Manchester hotel in January for the annual awards night – Usdaw's very own Oscars.

Master of ceremonies **John Hannett** led the tributes to the divisional nominees who were competing for eight national awards at the sparkling event now in its seventh year and unique among British trade unions.

"Udaw is the fastest growing union in the UK because we have a strategy for growth and the reps to deliver for our members despite all of the economic turmoil we've seen over the last few years," he said.

"Everyone in the room tonight is a winner but they also represent the thousands of reps who can't be here but who continue to do a great job, probably during the most difficult times we've seen in almost 100 years.

"The fact that we now have around 410,000 members is even more remarkable given that in our sectors we have to recruit at least 70,000 new members every year just to stand still. This night represents Usdaw as an organisation saying a massive 'thank you' to its army of reps.

"Ours is a success story and one which can continue, I believe, to see us reach the half million mark in the not too distant future. This will be possible because we have put supporting our reps as central to our organising strategy, led so successfully by deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis. I'm confident if we continue to do that, invest in our activists and promote our Academy – another massive Usdaw success – we will continue to grow."



And the winner is . . .

Winner of the Most Promising New Activist award was **Denise McCusker** a machine operator at the Tayto Crisp factory in Corby. The 44 year-old became a rep last March when the company was facing closure and despite all of the difficulties significantly built up the membership.

"I was shocked but very pleased to win the national award," she

(above)
National
winners
celebrate at
the
Udaw
Organising
Awards

said. "It was a very well organised event and I couldn't fault anything about it. All of the reps were very friendly and even though it was my first time I didn't feel awkward at all."

Cavaghan and Gray's **Carol Gill**, 57, won the Union Learning Rep award after she and her team relaunched the on-site learning

(Continued on page 20)

REPS SPARKLE IN 20

(Continued from page 19)

centre. "This was great news for our factory in Carlisle," she said. "We have encouraged hundreds of members to get back into learning and it's really benefited them and raised the union's profile."

"Our team had a great night. There was just the right amount of people there and we were impressed by the professionalism of it all."

The Individual Recruitment award was shared by **Patrick Gyamfi**, from Argos in North Finchley, and Tesco's **Ellen Jane Shaw** from Stoke-on-Trent. "What a fantastic night," said Patrick, 45. "This showed me that as reps we are not alone and the evening gave us a chance to connect with others from across the UK."

It was second time lucky for Ellen Jane who was nominated for the same award last year. "Everyone's a winner in the room so it was extra special to win the national award," said the 54 year-old. "I've done Academy1&2 and have been on stand-down since November and travelled around the North West division signing up new members."

Sainsbury's rep and

lifelong union supporter **Ann Lloyd** won the Individual Organising award. "I was so proud to win," said the recently retired 66 year-old.

"I'm still very busy doing stand-down and representing people. I went to the first Awards Night in January 2006 and thought it was very good then, it's even better now."

"The union has been a big part of my life and I'm dedicated to it. It keeps me active and I'll keep doing it as long as I can, not only in my store in Tamworth but other stores too."

The Health and Safety award also had two winners with Tesco reps **Sam Rougé-Pledge** and **Peter Ammundsen** taking the honours. "I'm not used to being in the limelight," said Sam, 41, a counter assistant at the Stroud store. "I prefer to keep a low profile but I had a brilliant night. I've also had great support from other reps and officials who have encouraged me to get more involved. I've just finished my safety diploma and I'm looking to progress further in the coming months."

The Equalities award was won by Tesco assistant **Rob Bell** who was left 'stunned' by the news. "I didn't expect

it all," said the 50 year-old from Bury in Greater Manchester. "This was my first time at the awards night and, even though my daughter and wife had been previously, it was even better than I expected. The night makes the reps feel really special and important and that was a good feeling. I was honoured to have won, especially so given the calibre of the other candidates, and I have been inundated with congratulations from everyone at the store."

The Campaigns award went to the Scottish division's youth committee – a first for the young Scots team. Tesco general assistant and youth activist **Dex Millar**, 25, said: "This gave us a fantastic high and will spur us on to do even more this year. It's a great night and is a fantastic way to reward the reps."

The Team Recruitment and Organising award went to the Tesco Extra reps at the Swindon store. Unfortunately none of the winners could

make it to the ceremony, so divisional chair Su Patel accepted the award on their behalf. **Adam Blake**, one of the team, said: "We were shocked to hear we had won, we certainly didn't expect it, but we're delighted."



Midlands Division (E)

Back row (l-r): Matthew Jones, Robert Shrimpton, Gary Holz, David Mason, Jenny Salisbury and Patricia Radford
Front row (l-r): Gavin Dadley, Denise McCusker, Anthony Beeby, Donna Lindsay, Ann Lloyd and Pollie Simpson
Inset: Barbara McAllister



North Eastern Division (F)

Back row (l-r): Joanne Thomas, Mike Dixon, Malcolm Colbeck, Dave Fitzsimmons and Carl Frewin
Front row (l-r): Rehana Kosar, Cathy Godfrey, Pat Fitzgerald, Shirley Bimson, Carol Gill, Karen Malloy and Jason Selkirk.
Inset: (l-r): Leanne Ewings and Maureen Clough



Scottish Division (G)

Back row (l-r): Lawrence Wason, Ca Robert McQuade McLeary, Rona Mo Stewart Forrest
Front row (l-r): Susan Coutts, Isabel Stewart Forrest, Shona Wilson, Val Ritchie and Violet

11



South Wales and Western Division (A)
 Back row (l-r): Barbara Wilson, Maureen Williams, Nick Ireland, Dennis Stinchcombe and Mike Walker
 Front row (l-r): Christopher Piles, Maria McAndrew, Sam Rougé-Pledge, Alicia Oldfield, Terry Cummings and Tracey Lowther



Eastern Division (C)
 Back row (l-r): Gary Renwick, Phil Waite, Mehmood Ibrahim, Dave McCrossen and Patrick Gyamfi
 Front row (l-r): Barry Dickinson, Barbara Woolford, Anthea Motch, Richard Groves, Yaw Poku, Simon Vincent and Paul Terry

Roll of Honour national winners in gold (divisions in brackets)

Individual Organising

Tracey Lowther (A)
 Richard Groves (C)
Ann Lloyd (E)
 Leanne Ewings (F)
 Paulene Watson (G)
 Edwina Fairbrass (H)
 Christopher Henders (K)

Equalities Rep

Peter Charles Bond (A)
 Paul Terry (C)
 Donna Lindsay (E)
 Martin Hutchinson (F)
 Julie Hollywood (G)
 Anas Ghaffar (H)
Robert Bell (K)

Team Recruitment and Organising

Tesco Reps Port Talbot (A)
 United Biscuits Reps Harlesden (C)
 Weetabix Reps Burton Latimer and Corby (E)
 Cavaghan & Gray Reps Carlisle (F)
 Tesco Reps Forfar (G)
Tesco Extra Reps Swindon (H)
 Iceland Distribution Reps Warrington (K)

Most Promising New Activist

Kate Murphy (A)
 Gary Renwick (C)
Denise McCusker (E)
 Rehana Kosar (F)
 Rona Montgomery (G)
 Carl Chamberlain (H)
 Carole Dempsey (K)

Individual Recruitment

Kenneth Kenny (A)
Patrick Gyamfi (C)
 David Mason (E)
 Ann Jukes (F)
 Caroline Williamson (G)
 Carol Barrett (H)
Ellen Jane Shaw (K)

Health and Safety Rep

Sam Rougé-Pledge (A)
 Barry Dickinson (C)
 Matthew Jones (E)
 Maureen Clough (F)
 Robert McQuade McLeary (G)
 Janet Harris (H)
Peter Ammundsen (K)

Union Learning Rep

Alicia Oldfield (A)
 Phil Waite (C)
 Mark Halfpenny (E)
Carol Gill (F)
 Shona Wilson (G)
 Peter Chalklin (H)
 Kevin Sheldon (K)

Campaigns

Terry Cummings (A)
 Anthea Motch (C)
 Pollie Simpson, Jenny Salisbury and Joshua Halliwell (E)
 Tesco Teesport Reps F109 (F)
Scottish Youth Committee (G)
 Maura Winchester & Sandra Crowhurst (H)
 NI Asda (K)



Caroline Williamson,
 Montgomery, Fiona Macintosh and
 Fyfe, Dex Millar, Paulene Watson,
 Simpson



Southern Division (H)
 Back row (l-r): Peter Chalklin, Sandra Crowhurst and Jim Carty
 Front row (l-r): Carol Barrett, Edwina Fairbrass, Maura Winchester, Sue Merrell and Su Patel



North West Division (K)
 Back row (l-r): Robert Bell, Mike Aylward, Nigel Matthews, Dave Gill, Stephen Turner and Craig Nicholas Thomas.
 Front row (l-r): Peter Ammundsen, Mandy Owens, Christopher Henders, Ellen Jane Shaw, Carole Dempsey, Jan Jervis and Kevin Sheldon

Organising Awards Gallery



(l-r): Philip Jennings, John Hannett, Paddy Lillis and Jeff Broome

Special guest Philip Jennings, general secretary of global organisation UNI (Union Network International) presented Usdaw with an award for crashing through the 400,000 membership mark last year. "I've seen unions around the world copy what Usdaw is doing and just like Usdaw they are growing too. Congratulations to everyone in Usdaw who is making it all happen and you should shout it from the roof tops. Yours is a fantastic union and you deserve success."



More pictures from the awards can be seen online at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery

Pictured left: Rehana Kosar was the lucky winner of a trip to Nyon, Switzerland the HQ of the prize sponsors – the global UNI

Reps submit 97 ADM propositions

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Wages, working hours and the economy will dominate the debate at this year's Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM), which will be held at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool from April 22-25.

Ninety seven propositions have made it on to the Preliminary Agenda, which was sent out to branch secretaries in late January and is now subject to amendments by branches. Any amendments accepted will be included on the Interim Agenda which is scheduled to be sent out in March.

Transport, health and safety, the NHS, housing, Freedom From Fear and criminal justice will also feature heavily.

General secretary John Hannett said: "The ADM is the union's annual parliament and is the biggest event in the

union's calendar. It provides reps with a unique opportunity to shape union policy. It's an open, democratic forum, which encourages all reps to speak up.

"For the first time in many years the executive council will not be seeking a subscriptions increase. This is in recognition of the difficulties our members face in the current economic climate. I'm pleased this is the case and it's also a reflection on the way the union's finances have been managed over the years that we are in a strong enough position to be able to do this."

There will also be timetabled debates on supporting reps, equalities, pensions and politics. These will be supported by executive council statements.



The Empress Ballroom at the Winter Gardens provides the venue for ADM

Job losses at manufacturing site

Nestlé has announced its intention to close its coffee factory at Hayes in Middlesex putting 230 jobs at risk.

The company has unveiled a £200 million plan to extend its Nescafé factory in Tutbury, Derbyshire, a move that will create 125 new jobs there, but will eventually lead to coffee production being moved from Hayes to the newly extended site in 2014.

In a statement to staff, Nestlé said it was not feasible to redevelop the Hayes site to create the manufacturing facility it needs, but added it hoped as many employees as possible would remain with the company.

National officer John Gorle said: "This is absolutely devastating news for our members, not all of whom would be able to move to

Derbyshire even if the option was a remotely practical possibility for them.

"Usdaw will be making sure a robust consultation process is put in place so that we can examine Nestlé's business case in detail and explore every possible alternative to closure.

"We will be doing everything we can to represent and support our members through this very difficult period."

The award-winning learning centre at McVitie's in Manchester pulled off a major coup last year when top author Andy McNab called in on the reps to promote the Six Book Challenge. The former SAS man, who still has to conceal his identity 20 years after leaving the forces, said: "Reading changed my life so I'm delighted to support the efforts of the ULRs to promote literacy in the workplace."



(l-r) Sharon Louth, Jonathan Waterhouse, Andy McNab, Paddy Lillis, and Julia Baldwin

OBITUARY



Union mourns sad loss of 'remarkable' Gordon Hilliar

Tributes have been paid to one of Usdaw's longest serving members Gordon Hilliar, 97, who died late last year after 81 years in union membership.

Gordon was born in 1914 and started his working life at the local Bristol Co-op and joined Usdaw's predecessor union the National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks (NUSAW&C) soon after.

He served in the army during WWII and spent time in North Africa and Italy. Gordon returned to the wages department after the war and stayed at the Co-op all his working life.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Very few people could boast 81 years' membership and Gordon's was a remarkable achievement.

"I remember presenting Gordon with a long service award for 50 years' membership of Usdaw, which merged with the NUSAW&C in 1947, a few years ago.

"I know he was a popular and well-known figure in his locality and our condolences go out to his family and the many friends he made while in union membership."

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Becoming a new rep can seem a daunting task but Usdaw knows it is important to support new reps as much as possible with training courses and face-to-face support from officials

Carrie uses Respect Week to get involved

New rep Carrie Barrett (pictured, second left) ran her first campaign in November during Respect Week in the Surrey Quays shopping centre in Greater London.

"It was a great learning experience for me and the team of reps," said 47 year-old Carrie who works for Tesco Extra and has been a rep for five months. "I was quite nervous beforehand but once I got started it felt amazing and everything just flowed. I feel much better in my role as a rep because of the experience.

"I was really pleased with

the response from customers, we collected more than 400 signatures on our petition to stop police cuts and we got the message across about underage sales.

"The help and support I've had from my area organiser Robert Donnelly and deputy divisional officer Sue Merrell gave me the confidence to organise the event.

"I approached the centre manager and explained about the Freedom From Fear campaign and asked permission to run a stall in the centre so that we could get the maximum exposure with the public and other shop workers.

"He was really supportive and joined in on the day and is happy for us to run more campaigns in the future.

"I even enlisted the help of my daughter Melissa who was keen to get involved and even keener to do it again."



Non-members weaken Usdaw – Explain why they should join

I can look after myself why do I need the union?

✓ You've got a problem. You raise it with management but they won't listen and tell you to go away. What would you do next? If you were facing the sack, who would represent you? Would you know your contractual and statutory rights? Could you afford a solicitor if you needed to go to court? Strength of character and personality count for very little when you're faced with the power of management's resources and you stand on your own, without union backing.

Times are hard how can I afford the subs?

✓ Your union subs are less than the cost of a bus ride or a drink in a pub each week. You wouldn't drive your car without insurance or leave your house uninsured, so think of union subs as insurance at work. You get a free legal service for you and your family. If you lost your job because you didn't have professional representation at work, the consequences would be far worse than a burglary or a bump in the car.

I get all the same benefits anyway so why should I join?

✓ No you don't! True, you get the same terms and conditions that the union negotiates for its members. But you wouldn't be entitled to union advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal costs if you had a serious problem or accident at work. Anyway, are you happy for your work colleagues to pay their Usdaw subscriptions and for you to benefit while paying nothing? And remember, every person who doesn't join, weakens the union and reduces the chances of getting a good deal at work for everyone.

I'm part-time and only work a few hours, why should I join?

✓ One in three Usdaw members work part-time. Most retailers and many other companies are dependant on the contribution of their part-time staff, so your job is just as important as the next person's. Over the years, Usdaw has achieved equality of terms and conditions with

full-timers for it's part-time members. Part-timers can get all the same benefits from the union as full-timers. Can part-time staff afford to be left alone and isolated to face a problem at work any more than full-timers can?



In conversation . . .

Network turns the spotlight on Eastern's new rep Tony Budden

Why did you become a rep?

There was a vacancy and I was asked to stand. It's clear an effective union is not only good for the employees but also good for the company. I want to be part of that.

What's your background?

I studied anthropology at university as a mature student. It gave me a very strong appreciation of other people's point of view. I've had many varied jobs so I have a good perspective when dealing with others. I've been a manager too and so I understand the pressures they're under, which makes communication much easier.

What union activities have you been involved in?

Most of my activity has been around the 'nuts and bolts' of being a rep. Representing

members, solving problems at work, sharing with the other reps during our monthly meetings.

Training has been helpful, listening to other people's experiences and their approach to problems at work.

We recently held a Freedom From Fear event in our store, and I found it extremely useful – I had time to speak in depth to a lot of people about the union, and our store manager was very supportive.

What's it like in your store?

Membership is around 55 per cent but we are working hard to increase this week on week. We have a good working relationship with all the managers in store.

At the moment I'm still learning and developing my own 'style', but I'm pleased to be at the point where if I don't know the answer to a question or a problem then I know where to go to get it.

Who do you go to for support?

Loads of people! The reps in store are usually my first port of call, but I'm also in contact with other reps in the area whose advice has been invaluable. My area organiser has been extremely supportive, and my line manager is someone I can talk to in a 'no nonsense' way. Above all, my partner Jane is my moral compass – if I'm in doubt about what is right in a given situation she always points me in the right direction.

What are the highs and lows of being a rep?

Highs – helping people and making sure they're treated fairly and with respect. For me, the best way to achieve this is to spot and deal with problems before they escalate. Lows – are the times you feel you're banging your head against a brick wall. Solving a rather simple problem can take a lot of time and effort.



Profile
Age: 46 Branch: C97
Employer: Tesco Extra, Beccles
Job: Back door/warehouse
Union position: Rep, eight months

What's next for Tony Budden?

I'm working on some ideas for the new year to get local members to meet and socialise, and get more involved in the union, whether they work for Tesco, Morrisons, the Co-op or whoever. We can all gain from sharing with and supporting each other, and doing this at a very basic grass roots level can make a huge difference to members.

Campaign wins public and political support

Bradford South MP Gerry Sutcliffe (second left) gave his support to the Freedom From Fear campaign when he joined new rep Karen Upton (third left) and the team at the Tesco store in Queensbury in the North East division.

"It was great to be able to show the public and our members in store how far the Freedom From Fear campaign has come and that we have the backing of our local MP and of course the Labour Party too," said 48 year-old Karen who has been a rep for a year.

"We also had area organiser Mark Todd along to support and help us out. We all enjoyed being involved and working together as a team to get the important messages of the campaign across to staff and customers.

"It didn't take us long to build up a good rapport with customers who found the 'guess the age' scratch cards very useful. They demonstrated how difficult it is to tell how old someone is. And to prove the point – approximately 90 per cent of them failed on at least one!"



ACADEMY ALL STARS

Last year's Academy gave activists six months at the sharp end of recruiting and organising. This was combined with first-class training and the support and advice of a local area organiser

Team work promotes Freedom From Fear

Academy organiser William Waite was on hand to guide Co-op rep Frances Everett through her first Freedom From Fear event at her store in South Oxhey in Hertfordshire in December last year.

"It's great to have the opportunity to use the skills I've learned to help reps like Frances grow and develop," said 43 year-old William who works for Tesco Extra in Watford.

"We worked really well together preparing for the day and we were all fired up to make sure we got the campaign's message across clearly to customers and staff, despite the -5 temperatures outside!

"And I think the 200

signatures on the petition is proof that the day went very well indeed.

"We raised the profile of the union in the local community and we had the help and support of the duty manager, all the staff and local parish councillors. We even had our own Freedom From Fear slot on the South Oxhey Labour website.

"We haven't done a campaign like

this before, it's the first of many I hope, it was a huge success.

"I had a fantastic six months with the Academy, it's been the best experience ever for me."

Frances added: "Our customers

were right behind us when we told them about the issues and the abuse some shopworkers get on a daily basis."



William (second right) and Frances (first left) with their campaigning team

Academy experience benefits in-store reps

When senior rep Trisha Elder completed her six months with the union's organising Academy last year she headed straight back to work at the Tesco store in Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria to pass on the benefits of her knowledge and experience.

Colleague Nat Welham was one of the in-store reps to benefit. "We were pleased when Trisha came back," said the 39 year-old kiosk worker.

"I've been a rep for a year and a union learning rep for six months and for half that time Trisha, who has been the senior rep in the store for six years, has been on

secondment with the Academy so I know we are going to learn from her.

"One of the first in-store events we worked on was Respect Day last November. I've never helped to run and organise a union campaign day before so Trisha's input was invaluable.

"We worked together before the event to make sure we'd covered everything, so it would run like clockwork, and I'm happy to say the preparation paid off and it went very well indeed. I'm already preparing for our next campaign event."



(l-r) Nat and Trisha raise awareness of the difficulty with identifying a customer's age

WORKING TOGETHER WITH MANAGEMENT

Organising your workplace effectively is a lot easier with the co-operation of your company and will lead to respect from and a professional working relationship with management. Use the following tips:

Copy management in on union communications

As a matter of courtesy let management know what literature the union is circulating at the workplace.

Stick to the procedures

Grievance and disciplinary procedures are designed so everyone knows where they stand and issues can be dealt with effectively. Don't expect to sort the problems out by accosting a member of management informally when they are busy with something else.

Keep up a regular dialogue

Arrange a regular meeting with your management so that reps can keep them in touch with what they see as issues in the workplace and, similarly, management can keep the union informed of issues in the business.

Share information

Try and develop a culture of shared information with your management. If there is a management briefing document relevant to the issue you are dealing with, ask for a copy. If possible, arrange to receive relevant management materials automatically.

Always be courteous

Some issues that you have to deal with as reps can be very emotive. But it rarely works to your advantage to lose your temper. If people around you are losing their heads, you will serve the members more effectively by keeping your cool.

Make the most of induction facilities

Virtually all recognition agreements with employers give reps the right to talk to new members of staff at their induction session. It is vital that we make the most of this important facility by making sure that:

- We know about every induction session.
- We ensure that a rep attends and has all the relevant materials.
- All new starters are approached, as soon as possible, to join Usdaw.

A very rewarding experience for Jon

Academy organiser Jon McEwan brought lifelong learning opportunities to the Burton-on-Trent Tesco store and was amazed by the results.

"It was a very successful day, I signed up two new learning reps, 43 people filled in surveys and 38 signed up for IT and English courses," said Jon, who was on secondment to the union from KP Snacks, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, part of United Biscuits.

"I visited the store and arranged my first team meeting with the reps to explain the Check Out Learning campaign to them.

"I spoke to the store personnel manager and explained what would happen, and she was very supportive. This was a great help and allowed me to speak to staff across the site.

"On the day, which ran from 9am to 9pm, I had help from store rep Matthew Allen and Midlands lifelong learning project worker Neil Chapman.

"I also invited tutor Sharon

Wilson along from South Nottingham College to explain what courses were available.

Rep Matthew Allen said: "It was a fun day for all. Everyone was helpful and friendly. There was lots of information about the courses and lots of freebies and giveaways for staff."

Rebecca Brady, one of two new learning reps Jon recruited on the day said: "I really think this will help our store. I've wanted to get involved with Usdaw for ages but didn't know how, this was a great opportunity."

Jon was very appreciative of the support he was given. "I'd like to thank Usdaw, my coach, area organiser Ed Leach and my general manager Howard Sander for giving me the opportunity to progress through the Academy.

"It was another great experience for me and an excellent learning curve. It gave me the chance to push myself and put my skills to the test. It wasn't easy but it was a very rewarding six months. I'd do it all again."



Jon on the shopfloor taking the union's message to members

IN NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP BY DIVISION FOR WEEK ENDED: 21 JANUARY 2012

South Wales & Western	47,673
Eastern.....	59,407
Midlands.....	55,786
North Eastern	56,138
Scottish	43,973
Southern	55,051
North West	92,463
TOTAL.....	410,491



Fight for your safety

The TUC is calling on unions and safety campaigners to mount a day of action to defend health and safety on International Workers' Memorial Day in April

The TUC wants unions to work together with other campaigners to make 28 April a national day of action to protect health and safety.

"There has never been a more worrying time for health and safety," explained head of health and safety at the TUC, Hugh Robertson. "For almost

40 years there has been a political consensus around the importance of regulations that protect all workers. That however has begun to fall apart.

"It is not just the stupid statements we get like the prime minister blaming health and safety for damaging our 'social fabric' and paving the

way for the riots. What matters most is what they are actually doing and the effect it is having.

"Political interference, cuts and the overall deregulatory agenda mean the HSE will lose much of its effectiveness and will suffer long term damage, while unions will find it much more difficult to operate.

"This is not necessarily a deliberate plan by the Government to destroy the health and safety system. It is instead a by-product of a more general anti-worker, pro-business, anti-public sector agenda, and comes from a lack of understanding of the workplace and occupational disease."

SAFETY AXES

- In the past 18 months there have been two reviews of health and safety law. Despite the overall conclusion that there is no evidence that it is a burden on business, changes are already being introduced such as the extension of the reporting requirement from three days to seven days under accident reporting regulations.
- The HSE has been instructed by the minister to reduce proactive inspection by at least a third. Local Authorities are also being advised to cut inspections by 65,000 a year.
- The HSE faces cuts in public funding of 35 per cent over the next three years, having already been weakened by previous restrictions.
- They have been forced to close their telephone Infoline and face restrictions on public information campaigns and production of guidance to help well-intentioned employers comply with the law.
- Despite the conclusion from their own reports that there is no evidence of a 'compensation culture', they are also proposing changes to the legal system which will make it more expensive and difficult for workers to make legitimate claims for work-related injuries and diseases.

Day of Action – 28 April 2012

This year International Workers' Memorial Day falls on a Saturday so the TUC is calling for more high profile local events in addition to workplace events to get the message across to the public, to local MPs and to local councils.

In the run-up to 28 April, TUC will be holding regional events to bring activists together and will produce leaflets to use at local events, explaining the damage that is being done.

A major part of the campaign will be a call to lobby MPs in the run-up to the day of action. Most MPs hold surgeries on Fridays so the aim is to make them very busy on Friday 27 April.

In support of the campaign Usdaw will be

asking members to lobby local councillors in addition to MPs as Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing health and safety for the vast majority of Usdaw members.

Ushaw's own leaflets for Workers' Memorial Day will be available to reps from early March and will be designed for use in the workplace or at local events.



Get involved locally and help spread the message

Find out about the TUC events in your area and attend if possible.

■ Find out about local events being organised by Trades Councils, other unions or local Hazards campaigners and join in on the day if you can.

■ Use the TUC and Usdaw materials in your workplace to raise awareness and encourage members to get involved in lobbying MPs and local councillors who can be found at:
www.theyworkforyou.com/mp
www.writetothem.com

■ For more information visit:
www.hazards.org/wmd/callforaction.htm

More details of how you can get involved will be in the next edition of *Network*, with regular updates on: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety



Government ignore its safety report

MAKING THE LAWS

There is 'no evidence for radically altering current health and safety legislation' a new report has said.

Furthermore, 'this overwhelming view was expressed by a wide range of stakeholders including groups that represent employers.'

The report was produced by Professor Lofstedt who published his findings of his investigation into health and safety regulation in November. His narrow remit had been to find ways of reducing the current law.

In addition, he reported that there is evidence that work-related ill health and injury is itself a considerable burden on business (as well as a cost to society more generally) and that the regulatory regime offers vital protection to employees and the public.

Despite this health and safety minister Chris Grayling's response was to announce plans to reduce regulations by half by 2014.

Usdaw expressed concern that the report's conclusion that health and safety law is 'broadly right' was being ignored by the Government's continued attack

on 'health and safety red tape'.

Usdaw also shared the TUC's concern about a recommendation to exempt some self-employed workers from health and safety duties and pointed out that the HSE would need more resources if it was to take a more directive role

in Local Authority enforcement of health and safety.

Copies of the Lofstedt report 'Reclaiming Health and Safety for All' and the minister's response are on the DWP website:

www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/health-and-safety/



IN BRIEF

Store prosecuted for overcrowded stockroom

Discount retailer Poundstretcher was prosecuted in November, over a failure to improve the Wheatley Hall Road store in Doncaster, after a council inspection.

The inspection found a store room overstocked, leaving aisles, walkways and a fire exit obstructed. An improvement notice was served on Poundstretcher to remove stock and ensure clear walkways and fire exits.

A follow-up inspection revealed fire exits were clear, but aisles were still overstocked, breaching the notice. The firm pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £42,650.

Two firms fined for forklift death

Two companies have been fined a collective total of £100,000 following the death of an employee.

Martin Denton had been sent to repair an overhead crane at a factory in Macclesfield and was being lifted in a metal container on a forklift truck. The container slipped from the raised forks, falling four metres to the ground.

The father-of-three from Rotherham suffered head injuries and died later the same day. The container was not designed to carry people but the company used it as standard practice.

Both Mr Denton's company and their customer were prosecuted for criminal breaches of health and safety legislation.

Workplace rights enforcement

Enforcing Basic Workplace Rights, a new guide from the TUC, raises awareness of basic rights at work amidst concerns that thousands of workers across the UK are being exploited by unscrupulous employers.

The guide is aimed at union officials and reps and outlines the role that the UK's four main statutory enforcement agencies (below) play in enforcing basic workplace rights:

- The HMRC National Minimum Wage enforcement team,
- The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate,
- The Gangmasters Licensing Authority and

- The Health and Safety Executive

It also outlines the powers of enforcement officers and what sanctions employers can face for breaking employment law.

There is also information about the Government's pay and work rights helpline, a confidential helpline which provides help and advice on basic employment rights and also a single point of entry for those wanting to access the statutory enforcement agencies.

Visit: www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/177/enforcingbasicworkplacerright.s.doc

Bakers at risk

Bakers are at one of the highest risks of developing occupational asthma, says the HSE. The main cause of asthma for bakers is exposure to flour dust and to enzymes used in flour improvers with workers in bakeries, flour mills and kitchens most at risk.

Unfortunately, even though HSE is aware of the risk, the advice fails to point out that many other food manufacturing workers can be at risk if they work on processes where flour dust gets into the air, e.g. the manufacture of cereal and ready-meal products. www.hse.gov.uk/asthma/bakers.htm

Email Doug Russell on healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

or visit the website: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

Network Editor, Usdaw,
188 Wilmslow Road,
Manchester M14 6LJ

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk ↘

LADIES FIRST

Women of 2011

Well what can I say? It was the most amazing day ever!

It seems a long time ago now that the letter arrived telling me I had been chosen as one of the Women of the Year and was going to be honoured.

I arrived at the Park Lane hotel and was greeted by the doorman who escorted me to a room where I was given a glass of champagne. Anyone who knows me, knows I don't drink but I thought it would be rude not to! I was then escorted to another room where there were several people waiting who all looked familiar. I then realised who they were – Lorraine Kelly, Barbara Knox, Esther Rantzen, Floella Benjamin and Lulu!

The dinner host was Sandi Toksvig, who was very witty as you'd expect and the food was out of this world.

Lulu was given a lifetime achievement award, Nawar El Saadawi an Egyptian, received the society award. Katie Piper, who had acid thrown in her face, won an award for her extraordinary courage. Six medical forces women were honoured for the work they do every day, and one of Lorraine Kelly's viewers also won an award.

I felt very humbled to be in a room full of women who do such wonderful things every day of their lives. I spoke to Floella Benjamin for quite a while about our work.

The icing on the cake for me was meeting Hetty Bower, the last suffragette at 106, what a wonderful woman. This closed the day beautifully.

HAYLEY PICKES

North Yorkshire Tesco F12

STAR LETTER

RECOVERY SHOT

Recession remedy

This recession will be with us for a long time, so we are going to need new ideas to get us out of it.

We, as the working people of this country, have enormous power, which seems untapped. We are all consumers and can control where we spend our money, which supermarkets, insurance, pensions, utility companies etc, to use. All of our day-to-day spending could be re-directed for the benefit of the 'majority', if we only controlled or owned these companies or industries.

For example, who better to trust with insurance and private pensions than our unions, this new wealth could then be put to good use. We could move into the banking industry, and next could be union owned supermarkets and even farms; controlling the basic things in life first, so we never starve at least.

If we directed our resources into our own union or a new corporation that's not over legislated by the Government, then we could eventually control everything reducing prices universally even eradicating inflation.

It would be like a form of socialist self 'nationalisation' buying back basic industries to benefit the working class, without government interaction.

It could be the beginning of a new form of government - the 'majority' running the country at last. What do you think, is it possible? Eventually, we could organise health care and education directly ourselves, just as the rich do for themselves, no longer dependant solely on the Government of the day.

NICHOLAS GALE

Bournemouth & South Dorset H9

£50 UP FOR GRABS!

Write to the editor of Network and you could win £50 if your letter is chosen as the star letter.

This issue's winner is
Nicholas Gale

NEW RECRUITS

Stand-down debut

A big thank you and well done to reps Norka Perez and Michelangelo Giuliano on their first ever stand-down activity outside their own Sainsbury's store in Chiswick, London during the Eastern division Sainsbury's Membership Week last year.

ADRIAN GRABARSKI

Area organiser, London office



Loyal members celebrate clocking up a total of 200 y



Congratulations to Andrew Everson, Peter Connolly and Mike Glover (pictured l-r) from Usdaw central office, who were recently presented with their 30 years' membership certificates by general secretary John Hannett.



Alison Roberts (left) and Christine Bowring (right) from Tesco Metro Portslade celebrate 30 years membership with store rep Elizabeth Peacock and area organiser Kieron Murphy.

WORKING WONDERS

Reps teamwork results in learning possibilities

Three days were spent promoting Usdaw at the Tesco bank in Newcastle last year along with our Academy organiser, reps, health and safety reps, our learning project worker and solicitors from Beecham and Peacock.

We recruited 49 new members and as a result of the interest shown in learning we are going to talk to the company about our lifelong learning campaign.

JAYNE SHOTTON
Area organiser, Newcastle office



BOXING CLEVER

Fight for your rights

The annual Usdaw sponsored amateur boxing tournament held at the Beverley Road Social Club in Hull took place in November. The Hull F118 branch support a show every year to support the union's Parents and Carers campaign.

Pictured presenting trophies to the contestants is area organiser Mark Todd.

GARRY GIBSON
Area
organiser,
Leeds office



OBITUARY

A Goode man missed

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of John Goode (pictured), who up until his retirement, was the training officer for the North Eastern division.

I still remember with great fondness my very first training course with Littlewoods. This coincided with John Goode's very first training course with Usdaw and I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that in the early years it was John's ability to enthuse and share information that kept someone like myself, with a disastrous educational background, interested.

It is easy to say but in my case I actually do believe he was one of the major reasons that I revisited education and embarked on a career with Usdaw.

At his funeral which I was privileged to attend it was said that John, through his role as a trainer and an educator, touched the lives of so many people and in a lot of cases made them challenge their own pre-conceptions and prejudices and I for one will miss our conversations, although I always did a lot more listening than I did talking.

I know John will be greatly missed and on behalf of everyone who knew him pass our condolences to his wife Sadie and the rest of his family and friends.

GEORGE CAIN
Area organiser,
North Eastern
division



More Respect



Pictures top to bottom: Rehana Kosar and Nazish Jamil with AO Mark Todd at Sunrise Radio, Gemma Gregory and Jackie Lewis at Tesco Neath Abbey, Norma Watkins at Morrisons Neath, Sainsbury's Watchmore Park near Camberly and Tesco St Rollox with MP Anas Sawar MP

Years of Usdaw membership



Here is Fred Mills receiving his 50 years' membership certificate from Sainsbury's convenor John Pearce. Fred joined Usdaw in 1961, and took over as the financial secretary of the old Wigan branch D124 in 1983. He retired from the distribution centre last

USE YOUR CAMPAIGN PACK TO GET INVOLVED IN THE NEXT

Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day

All reps will receive campaign packs for the Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day.

Make sure you're ready for your campaign event. Get your orders in as soon as possible using the order form in your pack.

You can also visit:

www.usdaw.org.uk/helpinghand
to download the campaign materials.

Wednesday 21 March

