

unionsouthwest

e-newsletter of the South West TUC

April 2011

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All Together for Public Services

Marched for the Alternative

Over 100 coaches, trains and cars took thousands of people from the South West to the massive demonstration in London on 26th March. Some 2,500 people arrived at the assembly point in Thames River cruisers. Some went up the night before, others started their journey in Cornwall at 3am.

The South West TUC had the task of organising the team of stewards at the head of the march.

Many people who joined the protest were not trade union activists or even members. The march brought together a wide coalition of interests against the cuts, an alliance that the TUC is now keen to build upon.

Check out www.tuc.org.uk for more videos and images. Photos from Andrew Waitchison [here](#)

After the march party

Philosophy Football's film of the Party after the March for the Alternative is [here](#). It features live performances from DanleSac vs Scroobius Pip, Josie Long, Rod Laver and Maddy Carty, plus contributions reflecting on what the protest meant to them by TUC Deputy General-Secretary Frances O'Grady, Maurice Glasman, Heather Wakefield and Zoe Williams.

Also now available a video diary of the march itself [here](#)

Brendan Barber sets out alternative to cuts

Speaking at the Bristol Business School, TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** set out his vision for how the UK economy can get back on its feet and move from austerity to prosperity.

Brendan Barber explained to the University of the West of England audience that deep and rapid spending cuts are not the solution to the UK's economic problems. What is needed are policies that produce growth and jobs. This calls for a complete rebalancing of the economy, reform of the financial system, boosting manufacturing and higher wages for ordinary workers.

Brendan said: "The government's decision to cut £81 billion from public spending over the next four years will have a devastating impact on the services that millions of people rely on – among them frontline services such as the NHS, schools and the police.

"Some 3,300 NHS jobs are being lost in the South West, including those of doctors and nurses. Around 10,500 local authority jobs are being cut, with 340 going at Bristol City Council alone. Social care in Devon is facing a £7.5 million cut. And the regional flood defence budget is being trimmed by 16 per cent.

"As well as decimating services, these cuts also risk undermining the economy. An anaemic, jobless recovery looks like the best we can hope for.

"The idea that the private sector will automatically step in and fill the void appears to be wishful thinking. TUC research suggests it could take the private sector 14 years to create enough jobs to get employment back to pre-recession levels.

"For workers, spending cuts, a weak economy and rising joblessness add up to a pretty unpleasant cocktail. The combination of cuts, tax and benefit changes and rising inflation adds up to the biggest attack on living standards in almost a century."

Dorchester Youth Volunteering gets cut

A pioneering youth volunteering project in Dorchester has had its funding cut. The news is evidence of the damage being done by government measures. Local MP Oliver Letwin is one of the architects of the so-called big society. Story [here](#)

Benefit Cuts Hurt - Protest

Third National Day of Protest against Benefit Cuts

Thursday 14th April 12.00 - 5.00pm

Government Buildings, Flowers Hill, Bristol, BS4 5LA

[South West TUC Annual Conference](#)

John and Joanne elected

John Drake was re-elected as Chair of the South West TUC. John is Regional Secretary of the South West Fire Brigade Union.

Joanne Kaye, the new UNISON Regional Secretary was elected as Vice-Chair.

Cuts dominate the debates

Motions carried included a call for a public transportation system that places people before profit, a proposal for a session at Tolpuddle on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa and support for Trades Union Councils. Motions were also passed calling for unity and campaigning amongst South West unions against the cuts after the 26th March National TUC Demonstration.

The South West TUC Executive will now consider the proposals including: a conference of affiliates and representatives of users of publicly funded services and the welfare state, trades union councils and campaign groups to establish a broad alliance against the cuts in the South West; a lobby of all MPs in the Region to make the case that there is an alternative to cuts on the basis of TUC policy and a regional rally.

First female TUC Head of economics

Nicola Smith, the new Head of Economic and Social Affairs at the TUC, spoke to the conference. She joined the TUC in March 2007 as the Senior Policy Officer responsible for the TUC's Commission on Vulnerable Employment.

Nicola Smith said: "With the government's attempt at deficit reduction set to make things even worse, the TUC has a vital role to play in making the case for a real economic alternative, where working people no longer have to pick up the tab for crises of poorly regulated casino capitalism and receive a fair share from the proceeds of growth."

TUC 60 Second Ad winners

The South West TUC annual Conference was shown a few of the winners of this year's competition that encourages the making of TV-style adverts to promote trade unions on the web. This year's brief was the impact of the spending cuts.

Winner

[Bringing the Cuts Home](#) – Steve Price

Runners-up

[The Cuts Game](#) - Heidi Hasbruk, Katya Nasim and Matthew Gutton

[A novel solution](#) - Malfunctioning Robots

Highly commended

[Just One Cut](#) - Ben Furber

[We're all in it together](#) - Agitator Studios (Ross and Helen Bull)

Green Project report

The Conference received the final report of the three-year South West TUC Green Workplaces Project. A slideshow of photographs gave a flavour of the huge range of events and workplace activities that the project has inspired. The network of Green Reps will continue to receive information and the education courses will still be offered but it was the end of an innovative project to change environmental behaviour through trade unions.

Thanks to all those involved: Lu White, Andy Moss, Beth Callinan, Keith Hatch, Paul Adams and Frances Robertson.

Paul Noon, Prospect General Secretary and joint chair of the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee, reminded delegates that climate change was still at the heart of the trade union agenda.

NHS is not for sale

The South West TUC Annual Conference had a discussion on the NHS reforms.

Sean Cusack spoke on behalf of the British Medical Association, the first time the doctors' union had addressed the TUC event. He summarised the government's proposals and the BMA opposition to the scale and pace of reforms. He called for co-operation not competition.

Joanne Kaye, spoke for the first time as the new Regional Secretary for South West UNISON, and gave a passionate account of the damage that will be done to the NHS if the Bill goes ahead.

The session ended with a showing of the [Andrew Lansley Rap](#) by **NxtGenUK**

Thanks and best wishes

The Annual Conference said farewell to several delegates who have played a key role in the life of the South West TUC. Ian Ducat, UNISON, Jon Gray, UNISON, Paul Dunn, Equality South West and Rosie McGregor were presented with gifts on their retirement. Thanks also went to Jackie Longworth, Prospect who was not present and Quin Tallon, Cheltenham Trades Union Council.

Bournemouth and Poole Anti-Cuts Coalition

March and Rally

PUBLIC HEALTH NOT PRIVATE WEALTH

Defend the NHS

Saturday 16 April

Assemble 11.30am in access road to Kingland Crescent /entrance to Dolphin Centre for a march to Poole Quay.

sign up for mailing list at: info@bpacc.net www.bpacc.net

SOUTH WEST

twitter [@bpaccdotnet](#)

All Together for Skills

Unionlearn South West Conference

Tuesday 24th May 2011 10.30am-3pm

Amada House, Bristol BS1 4BQ

The conference will be a practical mix of speakers and workshops with the emphasis on sustaining union work on skills and learning. The keynote speaker will be Tom Wilson, unionlearn Director.

See www.unionlearn.org.uk/southwest for more details and registration

Regional Rep Awards 2011

A trade union panel is currently trying to judge over 100 nominations for the first South West TUC Reps Awards. The categories are union rep, union learning, health and safety, equalities, environment and campaigns.

After three hours of scoring, John Drake, South West TUC Chair, said “We’ve got some ace people on our side”.

Award event

Evening of Tuesday 24th May, Bristol

Contact **Marie Hughes**, Regional Education Officer, for further details

mhughes@tuc.org.uk

South West TUC courses for reps

All the TUC Education course information running right through to March 2012 is now online at www.unionlearn.org.uk/southwest

New equality duty comes into force

The new public sector equality duty, now in force, should ensure public sector organisations pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all of the protected characteristics.

For the first time, public sector bodies will be required to demonstrate equality across all strands, including age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. This builds on the existing duties relating to disability, gender and race, and improves the coverage in relation to gender reassignment.

For more information on the new laws, click [here](#)

Intercom News

The latest Intercom Newsletter for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in the south west peninsular is now available for reading on its website. Have a look at www.intercomtrust.org.uk/bulletins, and click on the link to the March-April 2011 Newsletter.

Double-track go-ahead

The Government has announced the go-ahead for the doubling of the 12.5-mile single track between Swindon in Wiltshire and Kemble in Gloucestershire. The £45 million scheme on a line operated by First Great Western should be completed by Spring 2014.

First Great Western said the investment was "fantastic news" and would improve punctuality and reliability on the route as well as boost the chances of improving the London to Cheltenham Spa services via Kemble to hourly all-day services once new inter-city express trains are available in 2016.

International Workers Memorial Day

28th April 2011

The theme for International Workers Memorial Day this year will be to highlight the crucial role played by trade unions, strong regulation and effective enforcement in securing safer workplaces.

The TUC will be using the day to campaign against the cuts in HSE and local authority funding and enforcement activity.

May Day

The first May Day, in 1886, was called by the Second International of Socialist Parties to demonstrate against a gross miscarriage of justice leading to the execution of four innocent anarchists in the USA. It spread around the world as part of the campaign for the 8-hour-day. It has come to represent an international celebration of working people and trades unions and a symbol of fellowship, peace and resistance.

Dorchester May Day Festival

1st May from 12 noon in the Borough Gardens, Dorchester

A family event, with music, refreshments and stalls (a donation towards costs), but also a serious day, promoting trade union membership and resistance to the cuts. E-mail t.nicholls826@btinternet.com if you want to take part or bring a stall.

Plymouth May Day Festival

Organised by Plymouth Trades Council and Plymouth Fightback Against the Cuts Trade Unions for a Sustainable Future/Campaigning to Stop the Cuts

Saturday 30th April, 11am until 6.00pm

SOUTH WEST

**May Day Procession: 12 midday,
Plymouth Guildhall, Armada Way
Rally in the Roland Levinsky Building, Plymouth University, at 1pm
with John McDonnell MP**
Campaign stalls, music and film
Travel details: www.plymouth.ac.uk/travel
Contact details: www.plymouth-tuc.org.uk or Tel: 01752 298834

Yeovil May Day celebrations

**Friday 29 April
Yeovil Labour Club**

The Skimmity Hitchers, Thomas and the Mocks Ups and DJ Dappa Dan joining forces to put on a night to remember. The event will not only celebrate May Day, but raise funds for campaigns across the area that support public services and oppose the damaging cuts that all people across the region face at the moment.

Viv Willis from Yeovil TUC said: "Not only have we two great bands and a DJ, but we have a number of inspiring speakers to highlight the issues we all face. Following last year's success we are really looking forward to another great night."

Doors 7 p.m. tickets £6 adv. / £8 on the door or at the bar of Yeovil Labour Club.
For more info and tickets contact Viv Willis vivianvjw@aol.com or 07855 320041
www.yeoviltuc.org.uk

LEP News

A new local enterprise partnership for Devon, Plymouth, Exeter, Torbay and Somerset has been approved by Minister for Business, Mark Prisk, and Decentralisation Minister, Greg Clark.

The Heart of the South West partnership proposal was agreed after separate bids from Devon and Somerset were turned down.

Local enterprise partnerships bring together local business and civic leaders, working to support their local economy. ~~West of England around the Bristol area and Cornwall and~~ the Isles of Scilly have been approved. Gloucestershire has submitted a bid to cover the county and Swindon is expected to follow suit soon.

CWU flag going to the top of the world

Ed Buckingham is about to embark on a fund-raising challenge, to climb the highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest. Ed, who has been a CWU member for 20 years, will be taking a CWU flag with him and when he reaches the top he intends to have his photo taken to show the CWU flag and Ed, conquering the world.

His chosen charity for this event is the British Heart Foundation.

To donate to his campaign go to <http://www.justgiving.com/Ed-Buckingham>

In the Dark?

The Usdaw Supporting Parents and Carers Campaign seeks to improve the lives of workers with either parental or caring responsibilities. Around 75% of Usdaw members are either parents or carers (or both) and the Union is for more rights like extended paid maternity leave and adoptive leave, new rights for carers, the right to request flexible working and an increase in the earnings threshold for Carers Allowance.

Levellers Day

Saturday, 14th May 2011, 10.30 to 5.30pm

Warwick Hall Garden, Church Green, Burford, Oxfordshire

Further information: www.levellers.org.uk

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival programme launched

The programme for this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 15-17 July has been launched. The weekend wristbands and camping tags are now on sale.

The packed programme includes Tolpuddle favourites such as Rob Johnson, Tony Benn and Billy Bragg as well as global musicians such as the Warsaw Village Band. Tolpuddle likes to get performers on their way up and Dizraeli and the Small Gods will surprise and impress the Sunday crowd as well as newcomers Ahab who are playing on the Saturday evening.

Weekenders who take up the new admission offer will be able to enjoy three theatrical performances. *Fighting the Cuts* is the latest offer by Banner Theatre and children from Theatretrain will make a welcome return when they perform *Protest, from a Spark to a Flame* on the Main Stage on Saturday. Some 30 trade unionists from Tasmania will perform a folk opera about the life of Tolpuddle Martyr, George Loveless during his transportation in Van Diemen's Land.

Speakers will include Brendan Barber, TUC, Michael Leahy, Community General Secretary and TUC President, Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Len McCluskey, Unite General Secretary, Cath Speight, Unite Agricultural Officer and Mary Creagh, Shadow Environment Minister.

Lots of kids' stuff, stalls, comedy, poetry and discussion groups add to the vibrant mix. www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk for the latest news and information.

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If you have news that you want to share with the trade union movement in the South West - let the South West TUC know about it.

SOUTH WEST

If you want your name taken off this list please let me know. Please pass on to others in your contact list. If you have received this indirectly and want to be added to the South West TUC list please let the South West TUC Office know on ncostley@tuc.org.uk.

Nigel Costley

South West TUC Regional Secretary

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