

## Working together in the Norwich region

Welcome to our quarterly branch newsletter. Recent events within the GMB have seen our Regional Secretary, Paul Kenny, appointed as Acting General Secretary for the GMB. Ed Blissett takes over as Regional Secretary and we wish him well. I recently attended the Burston Strike School Rally where Paul Kenny, Tony Benn and others gave rallying speeches to like minded trade unionists. Paul offered assurances about a possible union merger (see below). Our membership is growing at branch and regional level as our union continues to offer professional legal support and health and safety advice. A large feature of this quarterly newsletter is an update on the retired members section (see over). Branch will pay the £25 life time membership fee if you are retiring from employment and have been a GMB member for 20 or more years.

If you have any queries about branch, or issues in this newsletter please contact me via e-mail: [secretary@norwichgmb.com](mailto:secretary@norwichgmb.com) or call **07979 684494** – Best wishes, **Steve Moore - N24 Branch Secretary**

### GMB Union Learning – Available to members and their family



There are many employers and union members that have little or no knowledge of what a Union Learning Project represents, so a new web site is promoting Lifelong Learning and gives an insight into the activities of the project. The aim of any learning project is to improve people's lives and to give opportunities to all, especially those that may not have achieved their full potential. All of the courses within the project will have had in some way an impact on social and employment skills.

If you would like further information on support for your learning interests call Steve Walker, our GMB Union Project Co-ordinator 07905635023 or visit [www.gmbunion-eastlearning.org](http://www.gmbunion-eastlearning.org)

### Progress report on talks on a 'new union'

#### Message from Paul Kenny

The joint working party of GMB, TGWU and Amicus activists and officers met in Brighton on 29 September. This was the third meeting of the working group. The importance of establishing certain facts for the CEC, which must be done by December, has been made clear and has been agreed to make every effort to meet this timetable.

The basic issues which must be addressed are:

- what a 'new union' actually brings to members
- structure of lay member democracy
- regional and industrial autonomy
- financial position (due diligence)

Paul wishes to make it clear that no agreement of any sort has been reached on any issue except one: in the event that our Executive, then Congress and then the members decide that the GMB will participate in a "new union" then no compulsory redundancies would ensue. This does not signify any agreement or merger. He stresses, please do not presume this guarantee is proof that the merger must be "on". He will let everyone know once the work is done over the next 8-10 weeks by which time the CEC will hopefully make some preliminary decisions on whether a new union brings benefits to our members.

### New GMB Travel Insurance for 2005/6

#### Holiday Insurance Scheme – affordable annual travel insurance for you and your family

	European	Worldwide
Members only	£42	£52
Members & partners	£56	£72
Members & family	£75	£93

For full details call free 0800 915 9093

#### Recent Branch Donations

- Corporate Crime Update subscription £40
- SITRAP Appeal - Costa Rica £25
- Cuba Si Raffle (win will be donated) £10
- Burston School Rally Entertainment £50

#### Membership Information

Membership levels have risen again this quarter. Our branch now has approximately 1600 members. Many of our new members have joined us from the recently recognised Anglian Windows section.

#### Detail Changes

If you are moving home, or you believe we have outdated details, please let your branch secretary know. Without them it can be difficult to process legal claims or pass on information that may be relevant to you and your workplace.

# Retired members section update

## What do Retired members want from the Branch?

Those of you who are retired will know that our Branch is trying to set up a Retired Members Section. We want to provide a better service for retired members, like more social activities and help on retirement and welfare issues. Those who attended the social evening in April agreed that as a first step we should check that our membership address list was up-to-date. We then sent out a letter and questionnaire to all retired members. The purpose of that was to get a better idea of what retired members themselves want from the Branch. The response was very good as far as questionnaires go -some 38%.Thank you to all who replied - either by post, e-mail or telephone.

A fair number would like us to mount the occasional social evening or outing, perhaps once or twice a year. We will start to think about how we might do that in the coming months. A smaller number would welcome special interest groups like music, local history or wildlife events for example. This too is something the Branch will look at. The greatest number of you felt that a regular slot in the Branch Newsletter would be welcome, and that issues like pensions and welfare benefits should be included.

A great number of you told us that your own health or that of your spouse prevented you from attending social events. Some of you would be able to attend if help could be given with transport. Please let us know if any of you would be willing to offer a lift to members in that position. With one or two returned envelopes, it seems likely that our address list is still not totally accurate. It is really important that you let us know if you change your address. Also, if you know personally of any retired member who has changed their address in the recent past, please check with them that they are receiving our letters etc.

We will include a Retired Members column in the next edition of the Newsletter. As well as providing you with information we hope that you will contribute to it by sending in letters or short articles on issues you think would be of interest. We will try to include where space permits, otherwise we will respond individually or maybe include it in a later edition. You should write or e-mail the branch secretary, or telephone 07979 684494

## How can you help?

A number of our Retired Members, as well as those still employed, might appreciate help from a Branch Welfare Officer. At the Branch meeting held in September it was agreed that we should try to offer some sort of welfare service. A volunteer for this service would be very much appreciated. If you would like to help us with this, please contact the branch secretary.

Terry and Ann-Marie would also appreciate any help, particularly from Retired Members **or those about to retire** with organising some of the social activities mentioned above. Please contact Terry on 01692 406486 or 07767 886701 if you can spend a little time on this.

## Special Offer - Free learning opportunities for retired members!

One of the great things about being retired is having the time to learn to do things that you're interested in. Now you can do this free of charge by contacting our Learning officer Steve Walker on 07905 635023 or visit the new learning website at: [www.gmbunion-eastlearning.org](http://www.gmbunion-eastlearning.org)

All the best, Ann-Marie Simpson & Terry Nokes

## Union Archive

A great suggestion has been put to branch that we archive some photos and stories from your sections. These can be included on an archive section of the website or maybe you have a story you'd like to recall in this newsletter. All material will be returned once archived. Contact the branch secretary with anything you may wish to share.

Please have your say...

**Next Branch Meeting:**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2005, 7:30pm,  
Angel Gardens PH, Norwich**