

Norfolk News

**Newsletter of the Norfolk Division
of the
National Union of Teachers**

Issue 25

Spring 2006



Editorial

We hope this will be the first edition of the Newsletter which will be displayed on the new website for Norfolk NUT. Plans at present suggest that the site will come on line in February. Members will then be able to access all the latest local information as well as linking to the national NUT.

Tony Mulgrew brings you the latest news on local and national issues, with the Education White Paper currently causing concern and workforce re-modelling still in the headlines. Peter Ayers writes about the importance of checking that your NUT membership is up-to-date: support and help provided by the NUT is available only to paid-up members.

Contributions for the Newsletter are always welcome. You could write an article, express an opinion or send in a classroom quip. They can be faxed, posted or emailed – details are on the back cover. I await your contributions!

Linda Brown

Hello Young Teachers wherever you are!

Are you interested in meeting other young teachers in Norfolk?

Would you like to find out more about the Union?

Seen the article in The Teacher about the young teachers' conference and want to get involved?

Contact Kendra at

thesocialnuts@yahoo.co.uk

Don't be afraid! Look forward to hearing from you!

Is Your Membership Up To Date?

You will be able to obtain benefits of union membership only if you are a paid-up member of the Union. One of these benefits is obtaining confidential advice and support from your Local Association or Division Secretary or Regional Office. Help can only be given to paid-up members. You will know whether you are a paid-up member because you will have recently received your 2006 Certificate of Membership and NUT Membership Card. If you have not received this by now it is likely that your membership has lapsed. If you are in this position, believing that you are a member, then you will need to investigate. You can contact the Union's Record and Subscription Services at headquarters by phoning 0845 300 1666 at local rate charge between 9.00 and 17.00 on Monday to Friday. You will need to know your membership number.

Some members contact a Local Association Secretary, having recently changed schools, but do not inform Record and Subscription Services of this change and so will not be recorded as a member of that Local Association. As far as the Local Association Secretary is aware, they are not union members. If you have changed schools and do not remember having informed the Union about this, please could I ask you to look at both your 2006 Certificate of Membership and NUT Membership Card to ensure that these are up-to-date. The two pieces of information that I would like you to look at are ***Establishment Title*** (where you work) and ***Local Association*** (where you can get local help from). These will both be on your Membership Certificate, but your workplace will not appear on your Membership Card. If you are not sure what your Local Association should be then you may wish to check that yours is the same as other members in your workplace. There are five local associations in Norfolk:

- Breckland and South Norfolk (1517)
- Broadland (1509)
- Dereham and Fakenham (1508)
- Downham Market (1507)
- Norwich and District (1515)

If you work in Norfolk and you do not belong to one of these associations, then your membership is not up-to-date. Please contact Record and Subscription Services to have your details amended. It would be a pity if you could not get help locally because you were not recognised as a union member.

Peter Ayers



Divisional Secretary's Update

from **Tony Mulgrew**

The ongoing issues in Norfolk are: the development of the Children's Services agenda, the everlasting overhaul of the Pupil Access and Support services, 16 – 19 education, updating guidance to schools in relation to changes in legislation, and, of course, Workforce Re-modelling. As well as these, there is increasing casework resulting from what can only be described as poor management, causing unnecessary stress to staff at all levels. We are trying to persuade Norfolk Children's Services to take a more proactive role to ensure that they and schools carry out their duty to protect the health and well-being of the people who work in the County's schools.

Workforce Re-modelling

Many schools seem to have lost sight of the original aim of this – to improve the work / life balance of teachers by reducing their workload. To achieve this all schools should have set up a change team, consisting of representatives of everyone who works in the school. This team should look at how the school operates and make suggestions as to how things could be improved. Instead of this, many schools have tried to replace the administrative tasks with other work.

The latest aspects of re-modelling, this year, have been PPA and TLRPs.

For most primary teachers PPA has been a step into the unknown and, at first, some felt uncomfortable when leaving their new class in September. The NUT has been fighting for many years for non-contact time for primary teachers. Where schools have been able to provide this using qualified teachers, colleagues have found it to be of immense benefit. However, in many schools the NUT's original prediction was right – that it would result in people without teaching qualifications being put in charge of whole classes. Many of our NUT heads have been put in an impossible position by having to timetable PPA time without having sufficient money in their budget to pay for the teachers they want to employ. Some creative solutions have been found but many are simply unsustainable.

Secondary schools have been used to non-contact time. In the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document there is a 'no detriment' clause. It states, 'The 10% guaranteed PPA time is a minimum figure. Any teacher who is already in receipt of more than this amount of time specifically for PPA should not have his/her existing allocation reduced to 10%'. Unfortunately, Norfolk is interpreting this in its narrowest sense – that it only applies if your non-contact time was specified as PPA prior to September, 2005. Of course, we do not agree and would like to hear of schools which are following this line.

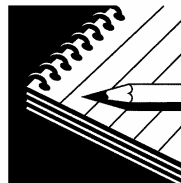
TLRPs have caused endless work since May. I arranged a series of meetings to alert teachers before and after the summer holiday. Attendance was generally poor. It was not until individuals saw how they were going to be affected that teachers started to react. Whilst there has been some good practice and effective consultation in some schools, too many other heads have not given sufficient information to allow proper consultation to take place. How can teachers in a school compare the old MA structure with the new TLRP model if they do not have clear job descriptions for the old posts and also for the new posts? How can you see which posts are suitable for slotting in and which are 'new' posts? Unfortunately, Children's Services personnel do not see the need for such clarity. One side effect is that teachers have now started to talk to each other and have identified other areas of concern which they wish to address.

We have carried out one indicative ballot for strike action and two more are arranged. The first ballot was positive and so that school is now engaged in the final round of voting.

Redundancies

This time of year always brings the news of potential job losses. So far I have attended meetings in five first schools and one high school. Others are in the pipeline. There is a Norfolk Staffing Adjustment Policy, which has been agreed with the professional associations. As soon as you are aware of possible redundancies in your school you must let me know and I will send you a copy and arrange to meet with the members who might be affected. Voluntary options are always sought to avoid the need to go to the stressful compulsory stage, so early notice is helpful.

Division Secretary's Report (*continued*)



Pensions

Many teachers will have received invitations to a Pensions' Forum on Thursday, 9th February. If you were not invited or were unable to attend you can contact Tracy Isaac at Teachers' Provident Society Ltd, Deansleigh Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7DT (tel 01202 435000 or e-mail www.teachers-group.co.uk).

There have been recent changes which will affect members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. They will come into effect on 6th April, 2006. Further details will be published in The Teacher. You can also visit the TP website www.teacherspensions.co.uk for the latest information.

Norfolk website

I had hoped to have this active by Christmas, but because of pressure of work and my lack of knowledge there have been delays. I promise that it will be available by the end of February. You will be able to access it at www.norfolknut.org.uk . It will have the latest local news and links to the National Union and other useful sources of information.



SEN review

There will be major changes to the way SEN provision is to be organised in the County. Some services will continue to be managed and delivered centrally but most will be devolved to five area bodies. There will be consultation on these changes. As these will affect schools it is important that all schools

get involved in the consultation and feed back their views. This consultation will be for twelve weeks in April, May and June.

At the time of writing, teachers, support staff, parents, governors etc etc in the Kings Lynn area are engaged in consultation in relation to the closure of Alderman Jackson and The Ethel Tipple Schools. They will be replaced by a new complex needs school on the site of The Ethel Tipple School, which will have places for all the pupils of the two existing schools.

Health and Wellbeing

I am concerned at the number of teachers who are off work with stress related illnesses. There may be many causes, but in some schools I feel they can be directly related to poor management. There are also many other teachers who are surviving from Monday till Friday only with the help of medication. Schools have a duty of care for the health and wellbeing of all staff, headteachers included. I get calls from members who are struggling, but who do not want anything done. I have to respect their wishes but we must take steps to improve the situation. The first step is full knowledge of the size of the problem, so please do not suffer in silence. If you do not wish to speak to me – and I will guarantee to respect confidences – contact an appropriate confidential helpline.



What else is on the horizon?

Children's Centres and Extended Schools would seem to be the future. We have been told that these should not cause 'significant' changes to teachers' terms and conditions. There will be consultation – hopefully more meaningful than the TLRP consultation in many schools – and I do urge all teachers to get involved. The Extended Schools Prospectus clearly states that there is no expectation that teachers will be required to deliver extended services. The NUT is concerned, however, about the impact of the initiative on teachers' working hours and conditions with regard to the organisation and management of extended school provision.

The Education White Paper has received a lot of publicity in the last few weeks. The proposals in it, if not drastically changed, will set school against school. The main concerns are selection, Trust Schools and the role of the local authority.

I would ask all NUT members in Norfolk to read 'A Good Local School for Every Child', which has been sent to every school, and then to write to their MPs asking them to support the 'Alternative White Paper'. If this white paper goes through unaltered it will seriously damage your terms and conditions of employment and also your pay. Latest information can be found at www.teachers.org.uk.

Tony Mulgrew



Jim Taylor reports on Health and Safety Issues

On Tuesday, 25th October I attended the **Officer level (Corporate) Health and Safety Group** meeting. The Group had not met since the departure of the last Health and Safety Manager in 2004. The meeting was chaired by Paul Bradbury, the new manager, and attended by union representatives from most NCC departments, including County Hall staff, Fire Brigade Operations, Libraries and Museums.

The meeting reviewed its own terms of reference and examined the 2005/06 Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report and Action Plan. Other documents considered were the Corporate Stress Management Policy and Corporate Organisation and Responsibilities Policy. We were given an update on the Corporate Wellbeing Programme and it was interesting to note that John Nicholls has been seconded to the Corporate Group in order to share "Education Department" experience.

It was useful to share Health and Safety issues with other departments, and to note that the issues were broadly similar across the board.

At a meeting of the **Children's Services Health and Safety Committee** on November 8th our terms of reference were amended and Stuart Cordy gave a presentation on Electronic Communications. Incident statistics and the under reporting of incidents were discussed. These matters are ongoing. I introduced the following items: HSE Safety Representatives Charter, use of mobile phone cameras in schools, Somerset Escalation Procedure and malicious accusations against staff.

It is expected that officers will respond to these items at the next meeting as Paul Commins was not able to be present. I then gave a report on the Officer Level Corporate Health and Safety meeting as I was the only person present to have attended. The meeting elected Jim Taylor and Dave Lambert (Unions) to be our representatives on the officer level group.

The meeting received MI sheets covering: Secondary PE and School Sport, Health and Safety Monitoring Programme, Firework Safety Campaign.

On 13th December I attended the Officer Level Group Health and Safety Meeting. The meeting considered: Work at Height, Personal Protective Equipment, the Corporate H & S Report and Plan, and the Departmental and Corporate Plan.

Under any other business, members raised the following: Construction Design and Management Regulations, malicious accusations against staff, smoking on sites and HSE Safety Reps Charter.

Violence at Work

This is a growing problem in many schools. I have recently been working with the other teacher unions and Children's Services officers on updating guidance for schools. The new document should arrive in schools by the end of March, 2006. It will form part of your school's Health and Safety Manual.

Please ask for a hard copy to be placed on your staffroom noticeboard and then for it to be on the agenda for a staff meeting or to be considered on an inset day. It is important that you know what the policy and procedures are for your establishment.

The National Union of Teachers takes a serious view of any incident of violence against its members. The County Council 'recognises its statutory obligations to provide a safe working environment and safe working practices for all its staff.'

The definition of work-related violence is 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work'.

Violence covers many areas, including:

- Physical attack by a person or an animal belonging to a person
- Threatening behaviour or abusive language
- Rude gestures, innuendo
- Sexual or racial harassment or bullying
- Damage to staff property, e.g. car or personal effects

Your school needs to consider how it will deal with any of the above and this must be clear to all staff. This will overlap with the school behaviour policy and both should be considered together.

Tony Mulgrew



NUT Regional Office

The staff at Regional Office are now well established in their new premises at Kentford. Hilary Buckby has been appointed as Regional Secretary. She has been an officer in the Eastern Regional Office since 2001.

Keith Bunting is now Regional Officer. He writes:

Hello. I am Keith Bunting, recently appointed as Eastern Regional Officer, although some of you may already have met me as I have held the post temporarily since September, 2004. My role includes advising members, promoting the Union, recruiting members and tutoring national training programmes. Currently I have specific responsibility for Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. I have just put a deposit on a house in Newmarket and hope to be moving in soon.

I was born and raised in Ilford, Essex, but have spent most of my adult life in Leamington Spa. I am married to a teacher - we met at college! We have two children, both in their 20s.

I taught for over 25 years mainly in Secondary Schools in Warwick and Normanton, West Riding. In March, 2000 I was elected Divisional Secretary of Warwickshire NUT, a role which I combined with supply teaching (one day a week). As a supply teacher I worked in Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools. As a Divisional Secretary I particularly developed our work in promoting the interests of supply teachers, establishing Union Learning Representatives, in health and safety, professional development and the NUT's general interests.

I have been Chair of Governors at Mid-Warwickshire College of FE and Ridgeway Special School. I coached football teams and still support (from a distance) West Ham United and Union Deportivo Oliva. Good food and wine are both a passive and active passion for me (and real beer).

I enjoy cooking - experimental style. My love of music continues and my interests range from early Mod music to house music. I am an hispanophile and during my time as a teacher I organised numerous student exchanges to Spain. In the past four years I have organised three study visits for teachers to schools in the La Safor area of Valencia. I hope to see as many of you as possible at meetings or social functions.



Musical Train Journey

Members who joined the train from Dereham and Wymondham stations for the welcome event for newly qualified teachers were treated to musical entertainment as they travelled the line. Peter Ayers on piano accordion was joined by Fred and Linda Brown playing guitar and concertina and Simon Hallett on the penny whistle. Food and drink were provided and new members had the chance to chat to established members. Glenys Shepherd, our Executive Member, was there as well as Tony Mulgrew, the Divisional Secretary. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and we look forward to repeating the experience.

Government White Paper, Education 14-19

The Government wants to keep GCSE and A levels while the Union and Tomlinson want a complete revamp of the exam structure in these years, hoping to catch and retain the disaffected. While the Government doesn't mind school sponsors from Industry and other sources, the Union seeks for properly resourced public education. The Government sees the system driven by parents, even though few know what they want or what is best for their child. Community schools would be replaced with Trusts and Academies and, of course, streaming and banding would play a part.

The aim is to stretch the able but what does that mean? The White Paper is based on highly selective research and one that sees the public sector as a monolith. It is important to defeat the ideology of the White Paper, so we must work with both parents and the local community.

The NUT proposals can be found in the booklet 'Bringing Down the 14-19 Barriers' which is based on our research and on the Tomlinson Report. The aim is to provide a ladder of achievement for all with a number of career routes off it. The Union recommends a 10 year lead-in to this reform as there are so many initiatives coming on-stream in 2008. Population growth is seen to peak in 2006 and then to decline until 2020. Union proposals include Diploma entry level 1 for those struggling at GCSE, Diploma 2 intermediate for 14-16 years and Diploma 3 advanced for 16 – 19 years. At each stage there would be Core, Specialist, and Work/Community modules.

Letitia Willins



Martin White reports from the JCC Teachers' Panel

Child Protection Case Conferences

The Panel met Grace Cheese to discuss again the issue of a letter to schools at the end of the summer term requiring headteachers, or designated teachers for child protection, to attend child protection case conferences during holiday periods.

The Panel reiterated the position of each member union that teachers could not be required to work outside of 195 days' directed time, and that it was totally unreasonable that headteachers should be required to work 365 days a year. Therefore, it appeared that the Authority and the unions were heading towards a dispute.

The Panel expressed its concerns that the letter had been reissued despite representations from the unions. Grace Cheese agreed that in the future she would work with the unions and proposed that any future letter would be shared with the Panel before issue.

Term Dates Consultation

Janine Burt consulted with the Panel over proposed holiday dates for 2007/2008. After some discussion, the Panel asked that the Children's Services Management Team consider the Panel's view that holidays at Christmas and Easter should be 2 weeks and that half-term holidays be complete weeks with two weekends. The Panel also favoured terms of equal length not dependant on the date of Easter 2008. This might mean that Good Friday and Easter Monday would not be part of the 'Easter holiday'. The Panel also re-stated its position that the current model of 193 days with three set staff development days should continue.

SEN Review

Members of the Panel are fully involved with the SEN Review at various levels. There was debate about the consultation over the new complex needs school in King's Lynn.

Complaints Procedure

Ninette Taylor, Education Advice Officer, visited the Panel to consult over the revised Complaints Procedure. Panel members raised a number of issues and we await the amended version in the future.

Personnel Issues

Bob Hedley is a regular visitor to the Panel. A number of issues such as the introduction of TLRs and Workforce Remodelling are frequently discussed with problems aired. The positive working relationship between the NUT, the NASUWT and ATL with Education Personnel is clear to see and this shared understanding is to the benefit of all our members.



Glenys Shepherd

reports from the National Executive

Staff Restructuring

A big thank you to all the school reps and local officers who have worked so hard on members' behalf to limit the damage of the change from Management Allowances to Teaching and Learning Responsibilities.

The work goes on as many schools did not stick to the Government timetable.

White Paper

The NUT is now campaigning hard against the Government's White Paper which attacks state education as we know it. The NUT is against the expansion of some schools at the expense of others. Children who are already disadvantaged would be at the sharp end of damaging competition between schools. The NUT wants a good local school for every child.

The Chapter on behaviour, however, is welcomed. We have been involved on the steering group behind this and the NUT is behind the call for teachers' right to discipline pupils by virtue of their being a teacher. This must be made clear in law and given publicity.

It is election time again. Please participate in your Union by using your vote.



Ray Russell

Thumbs down for today's Pensioners?

Below is an abbreviated version of the press release issued by the National Pensioners' Convention following the publication of the Turner Report on pensions at the end of November, 2005.

After three years of deliberations, Lord Turner's Pensions Commission totally ignores the needs of today's eleven million older people, the so-called offer being calculated at just £1.36 per week more in five years' time.

In his 1000 page report, Lord Turner makes only three recommendations that would affect today's pensioners:

1. Linking the basic state pension to earnings in 2010
2. Keeping the means tested pension credit and freezing the payments for those with modest savings
3. Paying an increased state pension to those aged 75 and over without saying when it should be introduced.

The National Pensioners' Convention points out that Lord Turner's omission to recommend an immediate raising of the basic state pension and to delay linking it to earnings until 2010 is offering today's pensioners a mere £1.36 a week more than they will receive under the present system. Today's full basic state pension is £82.05 a week. If it rises by the Government's minimum increase of 2.5% it would reach £90.25 in 2008. The difference between increasing it in 2010 by prices, 2.5% (or £2.25), and earnings, 4% (or £3.61), is just £1.36 per week.

"Lord Turner may talk about not wanting to engage in fairy tale economics, but his recommendations for today's pensioners look like they've been written by the Brothers Grimm."

So, as the report stands, today's pensioners are left out in the cold but may benefit by an extra £1.36 per week if they can manage to live for five more years. This is outrageous at a time when one in five older people live below the official poverty line and the majority of them are women.

As the NPC states, "Pensioners want the basic state pension raised immediately to the level of the means-tested Pension Credit of £109.65 per week and then linked to earnings for it to be meaningful. It is in the interests of the entire population that these modest improvements are met and paid for out of the national insurance fund and its healthy surplus of £34.6 billion." **Ray Russell**

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Meets with Leaders of the NPC

The leaders of the National Pensioners' Convention, Britain's largest pensioner organisation, met with John Hutton, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 28th November. The Minister said he understood there was a need for the government to do something for today's 11 million pensioners as part of the pensions review following the publication of the Turner Report. The NPC had already expressed concern that the Pensions Commission might not include any recommendations that would benefit existing pensioners. Although the Secretary of State did not offer any formal agreement, he is said to have understood that it was necessary to increase the basic state pension and restore the link with earnings in order to secure a real consensus on pension reform that includes today's pensioners. He acknowledged that the NPC would need to be included in any consultation following the publication of the Pensions Commission Report.

Having been invited, in company with many other people, to make possible points for inclusion by the NPC in the talks, I saw fit to respond by pointing out that we had but recently celebrated the 60th anniversary of the ending of World War II, during which many of today's older pensioners served in the armed forces and countless others assisted with the war effort on the home front. Similarly, in the immediate post-war years, tens of thousands of others among today's pensioners served king and country in helping to establish and secure the peace around the world, not forgetting those who were required to serve in Britain's coalmines. All of these people, during their subsequent working lives, had made a significant contribution to the long-term economic growth and prosperity of the nation so that Britain today is the fourth richest country in the world – but we haven't got the fourth best state pension scheme. I then advocated that the NPC should reveal how Britain compared adversely with other Western European countries in terms of the percentage of the GDP spent on pensions and the even worse comparison between our state pension when expressed as a percentage of average earnings and relevant figures for other developed countries.

Ray Russell

Local Association events from around the County

West Norfolk and Downham & District Association

8th Feb	Downham Market High School
22nd March	Ethel Tipple
24th May	Downham Market High School
19th June	Downham and District Annual Dinner

West Norfolk Retired Teachers' Club

Meetings are held at the West Norfolk Professional Development Centre, Kilham Way, King's Lynn, unless otherwise indicated. Meetings start with coffee from 10.00am; talks start at 10.30 and we are usually finished by noon. Membership fee is £10 per year, or you can just come along to your first meeting free to see how you like it.

21st February	Walter Blaney - Around Britain
21st March	The Forum - Norwich - Transport to be arranged.
18th April	Edward Cross - Farming the Organic Way
16th May	Abbey Farm, Flitcham, with Edward Cross Transport to be arranged.
20th June	Jenny Sparks - It's a Donkey's Life
11th July	Summer Supper and Raffle To be arranged.

For further details contact Mary Cook (see back page).

South Norfolk and Breckland, Broadland, and Norwich and District Associations

For details of meetings please contact the relevant local secretary (see back cover)

Dereham and Fakenham Association

Thurs, 9th March AGM The Phoenix Hotel, Dereham
7:30pm

Food and refreshments provided. You can order a meal from the bar menu.

Thurs, 13th July 7.30 Summer term Representatives meeting.
Barbeque at Burchett House

Contact Tony Mulgrew for further details.

Norwich Retired Teachers' Association

Meetings on Wednesdays at 10.00am at the Christchurch
Centre, Magdalen Road, Norwich.

8th March Vivian Kimm - Village Signs

12th April AGM

10th May Michael Learner - The Wonderful World
of the Honeybee

For further details ring Janis Tyrer 01603 451636.

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Child Protection

This must remain as the highest priority. Does your school have a designated child protection person and a deputy? Do all the staff know who these are? Is their training updated every two years and all staff every three years? Does your school have clear procedures which allow the child protection person to take **immediate action** when informed of an incident?

In the last few years schools have received a letter asking them to inform County of the availability of the child protection person during the summer holidays. This has caused unnecessary anxiety for CP teachers. Let me make it clear. There is no obligation on any CP teacher to attend case conferences during their holidays. If a case conference is called in holiday time, and you are aware of it in advance, preparing a report will suffice. An officer from the County can then present that report.

Tony Mulgrew

Letitia Willins reports on Education Issues

Learning to Behave – a charter for schools

This is beginning to have some influence within education circles thanks to the Steering Committee report which follows the same lines. The NUT believes that within schools there should be protection from disruption, and there should be proper provision for all. Any pupil behaviour which disrupts or affects the learning of others and impedes the maintenance of health, safety and discipline is unacceptable. Teachers, support staff and pupils have been failed if they do not feel confident that they are protected from physical and verbal threat. Reasonable disciplinary actions should be beyond legal challenge. The right to high quality education means that teachers should be able to teach and that pupils should be able to learn. The NUT Charter covers the whole school community – teachers, children, parents, governors etc. School policies on Bullying and Racism should be seen to be implemented. KS3 curriculum needs revision if it is to meet the needs of the pupils. There must be training for teachers on pupil behaviour, eg. the CPD programme. There should be further training in restraint techniques and young parents need parenting training.

Pride Conference LGBT – November 2005

This was the usual mixture of talks, discussion groups and question and answer sessions. There was an impassioned plea to drop the title Pride and use LGBT instead. The FA is tackling Homophobia as it has tackled racism. Homophobic bullying is seen as a direct consequence of carefully engineered ignorance. So all incidents should be challenged and recorded. Those who are LGBT and are unacknowledged or bullied have low self esteem and poor scholastic and life chances. There should be positive teaching on the issues of LGBT from the age of 11 years approx and in the Secondary phase Citizenship offers an ideal slot for further explorations.

“Everyone is an insider. There are no outsiders – whatever their beliefs, whatever, their colour, gender or sexuality.” (Desmond Tutu 2004).

There is a conference on 4th February in London – Putting LGBT into Education. February is also LGBT month – what are we doing in Norfolk schools? www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

Classroom Quips

'I'd like a little word with you later, please,' said the teacher to a child. By way of a joke, the T.A. raised her hand and said that 'miniscule' was a good little word!

'What does miniscule mean?' the teacher asked the class.

A young child at the front showed an eagerness to respond.

'Yes?'

'It's like us, Miss. A very little school.'

Collected by Fred Brown

Thanks once again to Ray Russell, for the following. He wins the chocolates or wine for all his contributions!

A young colleague saw that a child in her class of five year olds was walking very badly. She stopped him and said, "John, can't you see, you've got your shoes on the wrong feet?"

And so John looked down enquiringly at his shoes and then up again at his teacher in great puzzlement. "But I haven't got any other feet," he replied.

The teacher had talked to his class at some length about famous voyages of discovery including that of Sir Francis Drake when he circumnavigated the world. The children were then invited to write down their versions of what they had been told.

One nine year old girl wrote, 'Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world using a forty foot cutter.'

In accordance with family religious beliefs and their membership of a certain church, the children had been withdrawn from all aspects of religious education at schools and were not even allowed to participate in Christmas activities. However, after falling out with the elders of the church, the family left the sect to which they had belonged and the mother wrote a note to the head teacher as follows.

'In future, it will be all right for my children to attend your morning act of worship and the class scripture lessons, and I would like them to do this as we are having nothing further to do with religion.'

Have you got a favourite classroom quip? Send it in for the next issue. You could win a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates.

Contact Numbers around the County

Editor: Linda Brown 01603 872762
Email: beck@weston278.freemove.co.uk
Beck House, Lyng Road,
Weston Longville, Norwich, NR9 5LP

County Secretary: Tony Mulgrew 01362 637292
Email: norfolknut@aol.com

Breckland and South Norfolk: Pete Eldridge 01953 850890
Email: norfolknut@hotmail.com

Broadland: Peter Ayers 01603 713565
Email: peter.ayers@tesco.net

Dereham & Fakenham: Tony Mulgrew 01362 637292
Email: dandfnut@aol.com

Norwich and District: Letitia Willins 01263 512447

**West Norfolk
and Downham Market:** Mary Cook 01553 829030
Email: vmcook2000@yahoo.com

Teacher Support Network: Letitia Willins 01263 512447

Young Teachers: Kendra Deacon socialnuts@yahoo.co.uk

Retired Teachers: Ray Russell 01485 540522

NUT Regional Office: Hilary Bucky 01638 555300
Email: eastern@nut.org.uk (Fax) 01638 555330

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