



Editorial

by Linda Brown

This newsletter features in its centre section some of the local association secretaries who give up their time to organise and run local activities. They are often the first people to offer support and help when members are in trouble. We have details of some of the local activities and would be delighted to see any of you joining in. Meetings invariably offer some form of refreshment and a chance to talk to other colleagues in a relaxed situation.

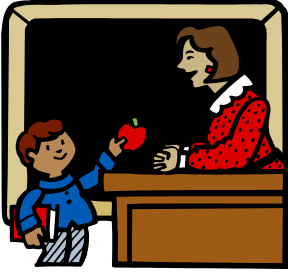
We have updates on re-organisation and on the campaign to get rid of SATs, together with reports from the retired section and from the Executive and JCC. If you are in your fourth or fifth year of teaching you will be interested in the bursaries now available from the DfEE and those with wanderlust will enjoy reading about a school in Australia.

I am always delighted to receive articles or information for the Newsletter. Please send letters, contributions, ideas or comments to Linda Brown, Beck House, Lyng Road, Weston Longville, Norwich, NR9 5LP. Tel/fax: 01603 872762.

Email: [beck@weston278.freemove.co.uk](mailto:beck@weston278.freemove.co.uk)

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NUT, either locally or nationally.

## A letter to Teachers



At the beginning of the summer holidays teachers in the Diocese of Hallam received a wonderful letter of thanks from Frank McDermott, the Schools' Advisor. I quote briefly from the copy sent me by a member, to inspire all teachers in Norfolk!

*"Contrary to the negative media message, we really do value how you teach our children to love, forgive, to laugh and to grow. We really don't want you just to concentrate on academic achievement and value for money.....*

*So, teacher, thank you for all you have done this year despite the pressure. Thank you for making our children feel good about themselves. Thank you for your words of encouragement, your smile, your humour, your empathy and your enthusiasm.....*

*We are worried that you may think teaching has become a thankless task....Yet despite these worries we know we are richly blessed with many good teachers working in so many good, effective and improving schools...."*

### **Norwich Retired Teachers' Association**

Norwich Retired Teachers' Association welcomes all retired teachers, friends and partners to their monthly meetings. We meet at 10.00am on the second Wednesday of the month at the Christchurch Centre, Magdalen Road, Norwich.

We have a variety of talks and activities throughout the year and provide the opportunity to maintain links with former colleagues and keep abreast with NUT affairs. Our winter programme includes talks about Gressenhall Work House and the Burston School Strike, and a Christmas lunch.

Details from Miss J. M. Tyrer, 53A Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR44 6LA .  
Tel.01603 451636



**Karen Reynolds came to teach in Norfolk, on exchange from her school in Victoria.**

***Here are a few of her impressions.***

I work at a primary school in Victoria set in a community whose main industries are sheep farming and vineyards. Unemployment is high and holidays are few and far between. In England I am working in a small village school where many parents are employed in professional vocations and holidays abroad are common.

Whilst teacher expectations and student achievement are remarkably similar in England and Victoria, there are some differences! In my school in Victoria:

- No one needs to buzz to be let in!
- Schools do not provide dinners (sometimes a parents' club provides meals, or a large school has a take-away).
- The computer/student ratio is at least 1:5, there is free internet connection for schools 24hours a day, each student has a secure email address and there is a substantial subsidy towards the lease of lap-top computers for teachers.
- Although we have a testing procedure called the Achievement Improvement Monitor, it is nowhere near as rigorous, imposing or stressful as the SATs.
- Schools have reviews, rather than inspections, and these are conducted by the principal, a couple of teachers and one school councillor (governor). Rarely are teachers observed by outside personnel and rarely are stress levels unhealthily high.

*More observations from Karen in the next issue.*

## **School Re-organisation**

*Peter Ayers puts his view on the current position.*

Earlier in the year Norfolk County Council carried out a consultation on the possibility of reorganising schools in the Eastern area. Although it was stated that a decision had not already been made to go ahead with reorganisation, the majority of people who responded to the invitation were left wondering why the County Council did indeed decide to proceed. They put forward no clear educational reasons for the changes and gave no reason why they ignored the overwhelming responses from the public that there should be no change.

If the County Council had already decided to ignore public opinion, money could have been saved if this costly exercise had not been undertaken.

Secondary schools in the Great Yarmouth area are completely full and the reorganisation plans will expand the size of all these schools. Do you remember when the County Council decided to close two secondary schools in Gorleston because there were spare places that would never be needed? St Edmund's Secondary and Claydon High have now been pulled down and yet we now have plans to rebuild all of our secondary schools. Perhaps someone from Norfolk County Council could explain the logic of this.

The cost of all this building will be paid by central government; this is due to reach £7billion by 2005/6, of which £1.2 billion will be channelled through the Private Finance Initiative, which is opposed by the NUT, the other TUC affiliated unions and the Institute for Public Policy Research – the government's favourite think-tank. You may recall the Union's slogan "Education is for children, not for profit."



## **Report from the Joint Consultative Committee**

Summer Term Up-date

**Code of Good Practice for Governors' Visits to Classrooms.** This is now in schools. It has been the result of several meetings and re-writings. We wish to do a review after one year, so let us know if there are any difficulties.

### **Six-Term Year**

The many difficulties with these proposals have been explained at length. Nevertheless, the LEA has approved the principle. This has not been a national consultation, so it is unclear what the outcomes will be. Norfolk does not intend to implement it unless there is national agreement.

### **Training in the Holidays**

We were concerned that schools were being consulted on the possibility of training in the summer holidays. We raised our objections. Apparently the LEA found that there was little positive response and the idea was not pursued this year.

### **Workload**

Norfolk Education Plan includes a commitment to teacher retention. A joint LEA/JCC working group has been set up which has in its remit the formulation of guidelines to support schools in reducing workload.



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***Pete Eldridge, Divisional Secretary,  
reports on the  
Position regarding the  
Upper Pay Spine 2***

Did you go through the threshold in September 2000? If you did, then you are entitled to go up to point 2 on the Upper Pay Spine.

Below is the position as the main teacher associations see it and what you should do.

- 1.** The biggest issue is the interpretation of the phrase “substantial and sustained”. The Unions and, to some extent, the STRB believe that this should be in the context of the threshold criteria. We do not believe there should be new criteria. Equally, there should not be any form filling, or collection of evidence, required for you to progress to UPS2. The only reasonable position is that the head may wish to confirm your eligibility to proceed.
- 2.** If the head does want to impose anything, please contact us as soon as possible.
- 3.** If the head decides not to recommend you for UPS2 you should contact the union immediately so that we can pursue your case. The union is of the opinion that you should only be refused progression to UPS2, if your performance has dropped below threshold standards and, if this is the case, you should have been made aware of any problems before now and been given the opportunity to put things right.

Please contact me on 01953 850890 or email [norolfknut@hotmail.com](mailto:norolfknut@hotmail.com) or contact regional office on 01368 664538 email [eastern@nut.org.uk](mailto:eastern@nut.org.uk)

*Peter Ayers – Broadland  
Association Secretary*

Peter has been a trade unionist for 42 years, first with NUBE in 1960 then from 1964 with the NUT. He has been secretary of the Broadland Association since 1984 and has attended most Annual Conferences since that date. .

He began his teaching career in a junior school in Basildon in 1967, later working as Deputy Head in two Norfolk primary schools. In 1984 he joined the central music service. Since 1994 he has worked part-time, enabling him to spend more time writing and arranging music for Norvic Concordia, one of the country's leading accordion ensembles.

*Mary Cook – West Norfolk  
and Downham Market  
Association Secretary*

Mary has recently retired from St. Clements High School where she taught maths for 21 years. She has been secretary of West Norfolk

Association for nine years and, because the two associations run in tandem, of Downham and District for the last four years. She has been mainly concerned with administrative work, though there has been some case work. She has represented the local association at conference every year since becoming secretary. She is also a member of the Divisional Council and was president of Norfolk Division for the year 2000. In 2001 and 2002 she acted as a substitute on the JCC.

*Tony Mulgrew - Dereham  
and Fakenham Association*

After working in insurance and the retail trade, Tony trained as a teacher at Keswick Hall, Norwich in 1978. He worked in Middle Schools until 2002, when he decided to become a supply teacher. Tony joined the Breckland Association of the NUT in his first

year in teaching, later becoming secretary. He then moved to Dereham and District Association, which later merged with Fakenham and Wells. Currently, Tony is secretary and treasurer of the D & F and is one of the local officers trained to respond to the concerns of NUT members in schools throughout Norfolk.

*Letitia Willins - Norwich and District Secretary and also the  
Teacher Support Network Secretary for the Division*

Letitia sends us details of the Befriending Service now offered by the Teacher Support Network. This offers help to both retired teachers and lecturers to alleviate the loneliness and isolation that many feel. It is a fact of life that as we get older our families move away, and increasing frailty often restricts our ability to get out and about so often.

We are looking to serving and retired teachers and lecturers to give up one hour every two weeks to visit a retired colleague in their own home. By spending an hour over coffee with a retired colleague you could help bring lost self-esteem, self-worth and confidence back into the life of someone who may feel isolated from society.

For more details contact Letitia (see back cover).



## **Scrap the SATs! - by Patrick Yarker**

At Conference, NUT delegates voted to instruct the Executive to “canvass and act upon members’ opinions on re-instating the SATs boycott”. Since then the union has produced welcome material on its website arguing against National Curriculum testing, but as yet no canvass of members has taken place. In order to remind the Executive of the strength of feeling in the profession and among the public on this issue, NUT members around the country have been collecting signatures on the NUT-produced “Not Good for Children” petition.

The arguments against National Curriculum testing are strong; against testing at seven they are overwhelming. Schoolchildren in England are the most tested in Europe, and are tested earlier and more often than almost any other children in the world. The tests they undergo are not useful. 90% of primary school teachers, according to a recent TES survey, are opposed to Key Stage 1 tests. The tests place children under the kind of pressure which many are beginning to find intolerable. There is evidence of anxiety-related problems appearing in children ahead of KS1 SATs. Teachers find themselves compelled to “teach to the test”, aware that SATs have a double function. Presented to the public as vital for the assessment of students, the covert function of SATs is to enable the ranking of schools into so-called League Tables. Parents are thereby misled into believing they have objective information about how well their child’s school is performing. Our schools’ positions in the league table weigh heavily on us as teachers, and we find ourselves funnelled into test-preparation as distinct from teaching. SATs drive the education offered to students in Year 9 and below and narrow it so that the needs and interests of the people we are charged with educating

are increasingly neglected. SATs have spearheaded the drive by central government to re-structure both what is taught in schools and how it is taught, and consequently to remove our autonomy and judgement as skilled professionals. For many students the effects of SATs resonate throughout their

entire time at school. SATs (and Baseline Assessment) contribute to the labelling of students from the start. A colleague told me of overhearing a child worried that she would “get a nothing in my SATs, and then I’d be a nothing.” And under Baseline Assessment it is indeed possible to “get a nothing”...



With these kinds of pressures on pupils, many of whom are very young, it wasn't surprising that activists from the NUT and the Socialist Alliance collected almost fifty signatures for a petition in Norwich in less than an hour. Parents queued up to sign. Many said their children were losing heart and interest at school as a direct result of preparation for KS1 SATs. The abolition of National Curriculum testing, beginning with KS1 SATs, is something which would command massive popular support. The signed petitions we collected have been sent to Hamilton House. More are needed. Download the petition from the NUT website and use it in the staffroom and among parents and carers at the start or end of the school day, or contact me for a copy or to help on the next Norwich petitioning. The more names we collect, the more the NUT Executive will feel encouraged to act on the decision of Conference and canvass members over SATs. We need again a boycott of Key Stage testing. As my Year 8 Tutor group put it, making the posters we used on the stall, “Scrap the SATs!”.

*For more information: NUT website: [www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk)*

*Or contact Patrick Yarker 01362 862826: [patyarker@aol.com](mailto:patyarker@aol.com)*



### Special Executive Meeting

This meeting was called in order to consider submissions to the School Teachers' Review Body. There will be a joint submission with the other unions.

This sets out the case linking recruitment difficulties with relatively low pay. Attention is drawn to issues of equal opportunities, the age profile of the profession and London allowances.

There will be an additional submission from the NUT setting out our full position against performance related pay and threshold arrangements.

The NUT is also submitting a supporting statement to the STRB entitled "The Vision of the Teaching Profession in the Medium Term." Improved working conditions, improved salaries, better facilities, lower class ratios and relevant professional training are emphasised.

### TUC Executive

This meeting is to discuss the Union's position on the motions to be debated. The vast majority are always supported. This year the NUT submitted motions on "Teachers' Excessive Workload" and "Foundations for Lifelong Learning", criticising the government's 14 – 19 proposals.

The Executive agreed a response to the consultation on Local Government Finance Formula Grant Distribution. This is a very thorough, detailed response. It includes opposition to Schools' Forums having power to determine policy on delegation or retention centrally of services.

## **Broadland Local Association NUT**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October – 8pm**  
**The Star Hotel, 24 The Quay, Great Yarmouth**  
***Welcome Function for all new teachers and Association Members***
- **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November – 8pm**  
**The Ship Inn, Tan Lane, Caister-on-Sea**  
***General Meeting***
- **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2003 – 8pm**  
**The Ship Inn, Tan Lane, Caister-on-Sea**  
***Annual General Meeting***

Contact Peter Ayers for more details (see back cover)

Two successful recruitment sessions were held for students embarking on the PGCE at UEA earlier this term. Despite a torrential downpour for the first session, when envelopes were reduced to a soggy mass, large numbers of potential teachers signed up to join the Union.

### **National Pensioners' Convention**

Accompanied by Cliff Metcalf, a one-time Executive member from Berkshire, I represented the Union at this year's Pensioners' Parliament held in Blackpool in May. Over 3000 pensioners joined the traditional march, which took place in gale force winds, before moving to the Winter Gardens ballroom for the keynote speeches. For one session we divided up into three smaller conferences to consider papers on pensions, health and care of the elderly, and subsidised public transport for pensioners. Tony Young, President of the TUC, spoke in a very supportive vein and affirmed TUC backing for the pensions policy of the NPC. Tony Booth also spoke and was both amusing and quite scathing about the government's treatment of pensioners.

### **NUT Conference**

NUT Conference this Easter recognised that the long-term growth in standards of living and the nation's economy owed much to the efforts of those now retired. It called for an immediate review and a significant increase in the basic state retirement benefit and a restoration of the link between pension income and increases in average earnings. It asked for an immediate increase in our public service pension for those whose teacher pensions have been depressed by government incomes policies and who retired prior to the significant salary increases resulting from independent pay reviews.

### **Dereham and Fakenham Association NUT**

#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Mid-Norfolk Railway Trip - 7pm from Dereham**  
***For all NQT's and members of the Association***
- **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November - 7.30pm**  
**Dereham Town Football Club**  
***General Meeting***
- **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2003**  
**Dereham Town Football Club**  
***Annual General Meeting***

Contact Tony Mulgrew for more details (see back cover)



## **A level fiasco**

*Norfolk News would like to hear of your experiences in the latest testing fiasco. Did your students suffer as a result of this year's marking difficulties? Did any of them lose coveted university places? Send in your comments to the editor.*

## **Are you in your fourth or fifth year of teaching? If so, you could be eligible for a bursary.**

The DfES now offers teachers in England in their fourth or fifth year of teaching bursaries of up to £500 to spend on their professional development. The funding is additional to professional development funding delegated to schools as part of the Standards Fund.

If you are qualified, have successfully completed your induction, have not less than three years' and not more than five years' teaching experience and are currently employed full-time or part-time in a school, then you are eligible.

The DfES intends that teachers decide their own professional development needs and the means by which they can be met. It could include classroom observation, purchase of CPD materials, course fees, work-shadowing, visiting key sites abroad, attending workshops or conferences, travel and subsistence costs, or supply cover. This list is not exclusive and the helpline number below can be called to confirm the eligibility of any activity.

Programmes which are advertised as being part of the NUT's Professional Development Programme would be eligible for DfES bursaries – for example, to help with supply costs.

A DfES information pack, which includes an application form, can be obtained by telephoning the DfES helpline on 0845 0390 208; telephoning DfES Publications 0845 602 2262, quoting ref. DfES/0237/2002; or downloading a claim form from [www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursaries](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursaries).



## Silver Threads

The occupational pensions of many older retired colleagues compare very unfavourably with those of teachers retiring today. They fought in, or were part of, the war effort, suffered from depressed salaries after the war, taught larger classes than today and played their part in the economic growth of the country.

They have also lost out in state retirement benefit, which has depreciated in value since the removal of the link with average earnings. Increasingly, our present government has focused attention on league tables in schools, the Health Service and now on police forces. Everyone is expected to improve and do better. Why, then, is the government not pursuing its own policy where pensions are concerned, since Britain is said to be at the foot of the EEC league table?

Members of Parliament have voted themselves an extremely large pay-rise which, of course, will also result in larger pensions, where they apply. Since then, very recently, they have also successfully secured a very significant improvement to their pension arrangements. Of course, they will be making increased contributions on their own behalf but so will we, as tax payers responsible for their employer's contributions.

We have passed appropriate resolutions at various annual conferences. The time is ripe for the Teachers' Superannuation Working Party to try do something to improve the lot of our older retired colleagues. NUT members might well think that now would be a good time to write to their M.P.

*Ray Russell*

## Classroom Quips

*Thanks to Alison Frank for sending me a copy of her book "Small Talk". She wins her choice of wine or chocolates this issue. The following extracts are from her collection.*

Danny: My nanny went to Malta where the maltesers come from.

Teacher: What's on top of the beer that starts with "f"?

Julie: Fluff?

(aged 5)

Child: All things bright and beautiful

(singing) All teachers great and small

Christopher: Do you turn off your pen when you go home at  
(aged 5) night?

Sarah: When we go to Buckingham Palace we're going (aged 5) to  
put my daddy at the back because he's not  
too keen on the people in there.

After a long lecture about using different and interesting words Michelle looked carefully at her picture.

"That's stuff and that's a thing."

Shane: I know what it is now: it's sin (hymn) practice.

(aged 5)

Teacher: Copy your name without looking.

Robert: With my eyes closed?

*Have you got your own favourite classroom quip? Send it in for the next issue.*