



# **Norfolk News**

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

**Issue 17**

**Summer 2003**



Editorial  
by  
Linda Brown

The articles and reports in this newsletter demonstrate how active the members of our Union are, both locally and nationally. The issues which are confronting the teaching profession at present will have a major impact on the way schools develop over the next few years. Tony Mulgrew, from his new position as Divisional Secretary, reports on the way things are moving.

We all know how pressured school life has become, but it is still of vital importance that teachers challenge those things which are not in the best interests of the pupils. My own experience in working with parents' groups throughout the county bears out the conclusions of the NUT survey which showed overwhelming parental opposition to the SAT's. As I write this there are rumours of movement at last at Government level towards some lightening of the burden. Please add your voice to those pressing for change.

Could you help the Union to work for the best interests of members and their schools, by becoming a school representative or correspondent? Association secretaries would welcome your help!

We are delighted to tell you that we have received sponsorship for this issue from Robert Stevens and Co., Solicitors. We would like to encourage you to use their services and tell them where you heard about them when you do! Please see their advert elsewhere in this issue.

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



## **Annual Conference 2003 Harrogate**

Report by  
Peter Ayers  
(Broadland  
Association)

*Some of the Norfolk NUT Conference delegates. Back row: Cameron Newark, David Billingham, Anne Philbin, John Watson, Peter Ayers. Front row: Joan Lea, Ray Russell and Mary Cook.*

The main topics of debate were the desire of the Union to see the end to SAT's and league tables, and the Workload Agreement that the Union had refused to sign. Not only did Education Secretary Charles Clarke refuse to attend our conference but delegates were told by General Secretary Doug McAvoy that any official in the Department for Education and Skills who accepts a meeting with the NUT, plans to meet the NUT or even speaks to the NUT, will first need to obtain permission to do so and then be given guidelines as to how to act. Doug said that this was a disgrace and accused ministers of being sinister, totalitarian and anti-democratic. "It's creeping McCarthyism," Doug said. The reason for this Government attitude is the fact that the NUT, alone amongst teachers' unions, refused to sign the Government's School Workforce Agreement, described in a conference motion as "the most hostile attack ever on the professional status of teaching".

A more recent concern has been the Government failure to provide sufficient funding to all schools and Education Authorities for 2003-04. This was expressed in an Executive Priority Motion calling on the Government to fund the education service fully and, in particular, to remove the excessive workload on teachers.

## **Division Secretary's Update**

My first three months in the job have certainly been a baptism of fire! The main concern, of course, has been the threats to teachers' jobs. I have been informed that over 80 schools face having to make staff redundant. I met Charles Clarke on May 9<sup>th</sup>, to see if he had an explanation for the crisis and perhaps a solution to it, but at the time of writing he is still of the opinion that Norfolk LEA has the necessary funds and ought to get them into schools. The Director of Education has written to schools explaining that all funds are properly allocated and there is no further money County Hall can use at present. This confusion must be ended and schools must have the staffing they need. Please encourage your governors and parents to contact their MP's to make their feelings known. Remember they need your votes!

### **The National Agreement on reforming the workforce**

The first effects of this agreement should be felt in schools in September, 2003. From this date teachers should not be required to undertake any of the 24 administrative and clerical tasks. But who will do them? There is no money in the budgets to employ LSA's. Education Education Education costs Money Money Money.

### **Upper pay spine 2 (UPS2)**

If you passed through the Threshold in 2000 you should by now have received your UPS2 money. If you feel you have not received what you are due contact your school rep. or Local Association secretary.

### **Six-term year**

Norfolk has apparently decided to support a regional approach and produced dates. One of the main aims of the six-term year was to have terms of equal length. The figures produced for 2004/2005 show three terms, each with a half-term break; the term lengths are: autumn – 70 days, spring – 52 days and summer - 68 days. Very equal! Three inset days are nominated, the other two to be decided by schools, with the suggestion that they could be implemented as 'twilight' or weekend sessions.

## **Pupil Access and Support Services.**

These are at present undergoing a major reorganisation. There have been consultation meetings which staff have been able to attend, although my feedback indicates that they did not clarify how the service will continue to operate. It is important that, as the services continue to evolve, staff are fully involved in planning the changes rather than being informed of them. Please keep your representatives informed of the impact of changes.

## **Reorganisation of schools in the Norwich area**

Preliminary meetings are planned for 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June – venues to be decided. Do read the documents and attend the meetings. They will impact on your school and maybe your job! We would ask that all schools adopt the Code, which aims to ensure that all staff are treated fairly. After these meetings there will be further consultations which will be open to all concerned: parents, governors and teachers.

## **Foundation Stage Profiling**

This replaces Baseline Assessments and I have been advised that it is statutory. Some foundation stage teachers feel that this is a case of collecting data for no useful purpose. As I have no personal experience of foundation stage I would welcome the views of other colleagues on this matter.

## **SAT's**

Charles Clarke wants to retain SAT's at 7, 11 and 14. He says he is open to discussion on how they are applied and on how targets are set. He does admit the primary importance of the professional judgement of teachers at KS1, but still wants some external tests. It is up to us to keep up the momentum by talking to the parents of our pupils, writing to our MP's and the local newspapers. We must build the campaign so that this year's KS1 tests will be the last.

I know that the summer holidays seem a long way off, but as this is the last Newsletter of this term, may I wish everyone a more relaxed few weeks and a very restful break.

***Tony Mulgrew***

## **A new National President**

The areas of debate were anticipated by the President, Lesley Auger, in her address at the beginning of Conference.



She was concerned that, in recent OECD PISA research - out of 32 participating countries - our 15-year olds perform above the OECD average in reading, maths, science and literacy; but when it comes to equality and achievement we fall to sixth from the bottom. She says that we should all have in mind the words of the Burns Report in Northern Ireland:

" We have been left in no doubt that the 11-plus transfer tests are socially divisive, damage self-esteem, place unreasonable pressures on pupils, primary teachers and parents, disrupt teaching and learning at an important stage in the primary curriculum and reinforce inequality of opportunity."

These words apply just as much to children in England as they do to children in Northern Ireland. Wales doesn't have grammar schools – and neither should we.

Here are just a few other quotes from the President's address:

"A Treasury report in 1999 concluded that, 'children from disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely to succeed in education'. Yet David Milliband denies that the performance of schools with large numbers of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds will be determined to some extent by their intake."

"David Bell, HM Inspector for Schools, said: 'One of the things that inspectors find is that an excessive or myopic focus on targets can actually narrow and reduce achievement by "crowding out" some of the essentials of effective and broadly-liaised learning. They also find teachers, heads and local authorities, for whom targets are operating more as a threat than a motivator, more as a stick than a carrot.' David Bell sounds very promising. He has said that

he is no government poodle. Thankfully he doesn't have the rottweiler image of a previous incumbent. Perhaps he's actually a St Bernard come to the rescue of a flagging, over-targeted, over-tested education service. He's right – it's well past time that heads and governing bodies took control of what goes on in their schools, for their children in their particular circumstances."

"The Government in its wisdom has said that workload ensuing from the establishment of systems of appraisal for support staff will not fall on the classroom teacher. What I want to know is how do you appraise the work of a classroom assistant if you don't go to the class teacher who has set the work for the classroom assistant and who remains ultimately responsible for the standards of learning of that class of children? If systems of appraisal are going to be carried out properly and effectively, how can this be done without creating more work for the teacher? Answer: it can't!"

"It's a great pity that Charles Clarke won't be here to listen to any of our debates. He's taken his ball away and won't play because we don't like his workforce agreement. But Charles, remember the words of those legendary thinkers Lennon, ..... and McCartney:

'Think of what you're saying,  
You can get it wrong and still you think that it's all right.  
Think of what I'm saying,  
We can work it out and get it straight, or say goodnight.  
Life is very short and there's no time  
For fussing and fighting, my friend.  
I have always thought that it's a crime,  
So I will ask you once again,  
Try to see it my way.  
Only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong.  
While you see it your way,  
There's a chance that we may fall apart before too long.  
We can work it out,  
We can work it out.' "

*Peter Ayers*

## **Now make it happen !**

On so-called 'remodelling' and boycotting all SAT's in 2004, the votes were won at NUT Conference. But that's only the start. Nothing will happen unless we make it happen.

'Re-modelling' means accepting unqualified staff can teach students with no requirement for prior training and qualification. Most teaching assistants do not want to be put in this position and it is vital that NUT members talk with these colleagues (often represented by UNISON) and prevent attempts by management to divide-and-rule. Attempts to use unqualified staff to teach whole classes should be notified to NUT officers at once. NUT members should not hand in short-term planning which enables such "teaching" to take place.

Conference's unanimous decision to ballot for a SAT's 2004 boycott helped the Union catch up with the views of parents and carers on this issue. The Union's own survey shows overwhelming opposition on the ground to SAT's at each Key Stage. Even the Chief Inspector of Schools, according to the TES, agrees the Government's targets for 2004 for primary schools are "counter-productive and unattainable". We must mobilise now to end the over-testing culture in schools. This means taking the NUT's 'Not Good For Children' leaflet and petition (available on the NUT website or from me) into staffrooms and playgrounds so that colleagues, parents and carers can sign up to it. It means winning the argument with heads and governors. Anti-SAT's activity will be taking place wherever NUT members can make it happen. For information about what's being done in Norfolk, and to join the campaign, please contact Norfolk NUT officers or me. If we get together now and do the work, we can end SAT's. For good.

*Patrick Yarker - [patyarker@aol.com](mailto:patyarker@aol.com) - 01362 860826*



**Do you feel strongly about the SAT's?**

**Then come to a Conference at  
South Camden Community School  
on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> June  
from 11.30 – 3.30**

**“Building the SAT's boycott”**

**More details from Jon Berry, sec of Herts NUT on  
[secretary@hertforshirenut.org.uk](mailto:secretary@hertforshirenut.org.uk)**

*If there is sufficient demand a coach could be organised –  
Contact Tony Mulgrew (see back cover)*

**Is nobody willing to be the Union Rep?**

Two teachers were overheard talking.

“She has a formal dress code for the male staff – jackets, collars and ties. Yet the female staff can wear just what they like. She sets the agenda at all staff meetings and doesn't allow us to include any items. We can't do much about it because nobody is willing to be the union rep.. I can't because she doesn't like me. I'm all right, though, because I get good results. It's only results that matter. I shall try to move on somewhere else soon.”

What a pity that teachers are now so brow-beaten that many have forgotten the saying that demonstrates the power of trade unions - “Unity is strength.” It is only when teachers organise, have meetings to discuss issues and formulate policy, that changes can come about.

**Come on now – offer your services to your Local  
Association. Contact numbers on the back cover!**



Ray Russell

Hon. Life Member  
West Norfolk Association  
Norfolk Division Council

Ray has been an active member of the NUT for over fifty years, becoming a student member when he entered college in 1949. As a qualified teacher he quickly became involved in both the social and campaigning aspects of the Union. During his long association with the Union he has served as President, both locally and at county level, a number of times. He played a major role in the discussions and policy development that took place with the Local Government Re-organisation in 1974 and was subsequently elected as secretary of the new NUT Norfolk County Division, a position he retained for twenty two years. During this time he served on the Norfolk teachers' JCC, as well as on a variety of regional committees.

Ray continues to work for the NUT as the secretary of the Retired Members' Sectional Committee which was formed in 2000. He represents the Union regularly at pensioners' regional and national conferences.

Through his work for the Union, Ray has come into contact with many of those making the decisions in the educational world. At local level he worked closely with local education officers and county councillors, whilst on the national scene he met many of the members of parliament and education secretaries. Ray's dedication and commitment to teachers and their best interests has been unswerving.



*Joan Lea*

*JCC Representative  
Member of Norfolk  
Division Council*

Joan was born and raised in Liverpool and joined the NUT as a student member whilst training at Poulton le Fylde near Blackpool. Her teaching career began in Birmingham, moved quickly to Liverpool then into Lincolnshire. It was 1975 when she began working at Diss Junior School, where she stayed until 2000, and it was during this time that she became involved in the South Norfolk Association. She has been President of South Norfolk twice, and was Treasurer for a number of years before it amalgamated with Breckland. She has represented Division on the JCC since 1997.

Her retirement from a permanent teaching position has not resulted in much free time – Joan takes on termly contracts or works as supply in different schools. She continues to play her part in Union activities.

### **Ray's 40<sup>th</sup>**

This year Ray Russell celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup>, which will be a great surprise to all who know him. No, it's not his birthday. Ray first went to Conference in 1956 in Blackpool and this year was his 40<sup>th</sup> Conference! Don't ask him who was President in 1956 or any other year, unless you've an hour to pass! But do ask him about the Easter Bells who were peeling, or is the Easter Belles who were peeling?

Anyhow, **CONGRATULATIONS**, Ray, on such a feat of endurance and also congratulations on your re-election to the Advisory Panel for Retired Teachers.

*TM*



Glenys Shepherd  
National Executive Member  
reports on national issues

### **School Funding**

The well-publicised funding shortages in many Norfolk schools is part of a national crisis. It has become clear that LEA's are not 'holding back' money from schools but that there has been a major Government miscalculation in the real costs of its own agenda.

Short term solutions such as using reserves and capital funding may help this year but they are not sustainable. More money for the National Education Budget from the Chancellor is the only answer.

### **SAT's**

Charles Clarke's announcement on the relaxation of Government targets is welcome in that it opens the door for further dialogue on targets and testing. Campaigning is beginning to have an effect but there is still a long way to go.

### **The Foundation Stage Profile**

This has emerged as a major workload issue. NUT members are protected by the bureaucratic burdens ballot. The profile booklet is not a statutory document. Guidance on protecting members from bureaucratic burdens arising from the foundation stage profile and Key Stage tests has been sent to reps..

### **Footnote**

Thank you to all my NUT and school colleagues who have shown care and kindness during the illness of my mother. The messages, flowers, donations to the Prince of Wales Hospice and the extra work undertaken over the past months are much appreciated.



Peter Ayers  
reports from the JCC

Issues covered: Recent PFI bids, Norfolk LEA Handbook on Outdoor Visits, Staff Redundancies and Working Groups for the ESINET, ICT and Staff Retention. This report concentrates on the PFI issue.

Matthew Rathbone spoke about the **Great Yarmouth** Private Finance Initiative bids. Not all schools had agreed to reorganisation through a PFI contract and the cost of building would not be borne from the LEA's budget if a PFI contract was not accepted by the school. Building is due to take place between 2004 and the end of 2006, with reorganisation taking place from 2005. A bidder would be selected at the cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Regarding the **Norwich** bid: although £176 million PFI money was asked for, the amount allocated was £60 million. As a result the reorganisation could not proceed as intended. It is possible that it would just cover the 11+ transfer solution. As no alternative plan had been prepared, the project would have to start again. A decision would be made in 2004 with reorganisation to begin in September 2007.

Concern was shown that during building programmes much stress was caused to school staff. Arrangements should be put in place for contractors to meet school staff to solve such problems. The only formal communication was between the builder and the head teacher, with no mechanism for Health and Safety issues to be conveyed to the Health and Safety representative.



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**Dereham and Fakenham  
Association Summer  
Barbeque**

**Thurs., 10<sup>th</sup> July  
7.30p.m.**

**All school reps. and  
members welcome**

**Burchett House,  
North Tuddenham**

**Telephone or email Tony  
Mulgrew to confirm  
(see back cover)**

## **Sponsoring this issue!**

***The following comes from Iain Trafford, of Robert Stevens & Co., Solicitors.***

For those of you who are wondering why a firm of solicitors is sponsoring *Norfolk News*, here is a brief explanation.

After 25 years as the head of Norwich based Robert Stevens & Co., founder Robert Stevens has stepped down and I have been fortunate enough to return to Norfolk and take up the reins at this very successful practice. Robert will continue to work with us, in a consultancy role, where his lifetime of experience will no doubt prove to be invaluable. If there is such a thing as a teaching gene, then members of the Traffords most certainly have it. Two of my grandparents were head-teachers, my father is a retired teacher and my mother is a head-teacher in a local primary school. However, despite the fine example set by all of my progenitors, I took a law degree, marking me instantly as the black sheep of the family and probably excluding me from any future inheritance. (In an effort to set matters right I even married a teacher!)

Things haven't worked out too badly. My family has not disowned me (well, not yet anyway) and I've had the opportunity to gain some very valuable experience in the commercial sector where I've made employment law one of my specialisations. Together with the wider family and property law expertise of Robert Stevens & Co., I feel the firm is very well suited to helping educational professionals.

So, I'm happy to offer my services to fellow professionals in the educational sector. If you're selling a house, writing a will or experiencing matrimonial difficulties, Robert Stevens & Co. can offer fast and cost-effective assistance. Feel free to call and discuss your particular requirements. There's no obligation, but if we can help you we'd be delighted to offer you personal service at 'family' rates. Who knows, if I do a good job, maybe my family will eventually forgive me!

## **Public Service Pensioners' Council**

*A report from Ray Russell*

A conference of the Public Service Pensioners' Council, representative of some 30 unions and professional associations, was held at NUT headquarters on 26<sup>th</sup> February to consider the Government's Green Paper on pensions. Despite repeated invitations, the Government declined to be represented and unfortunately the Liberal Democrat pensions' spokesperson had to withdraw at the last minute, leaving Julian Brazier M.P., the Shadow Minister for Work and Employment, as the only parliamentary representative. However, he failed to make the most of this opportunity since he was unable to give his party's views on issues which were raised as the Conservatives have yet to formulate their policy on pensions.

Barry Fawcett, Secretary to the Council, made the speech of the day, tracing the development of occupational pension schemes and the disastrous effect of the legislation brought in by the Thatcher government. Joe Harris, General Secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention, and Michelle Lewis, Pensions Officer of the TUC, also spoke.

It was a privilege to be one of four retired NUT representatives attending the conference. Naturally we were opposed to any worsening of our present occupational scheme and, in particular, the proposal to defer payment of teacher pensions until age 65.

### **National Advisory Committee for Retired Teachers**

Ray Russell would like to thank all retired colleagues who gave him their support in the recent biennial election for 2 representatives from the Eastern Region to serve on this committee from 2003 to 2005. He is pleased to state that he was elected with 57% of all first choice candidate votes at the first stage and the second candidate to be elected was Marion Wilson of Mid-Essex.





*Letitia Willins*

*Secretary*

*Teacher Support Network*

### **Teacher Support Network around the UK**

In recent years the Teacher Support Network (formerly the Teachers' Benevolent Fund) has listened to the specific needs of teachers across the UK and begun to develop regional services.

The good news is that in the last 12 months we have made a difference in the lives of more than 40,000 teachers – that's 60% more than the year before! We've also received fantastic feedback from some of the people we've helped. As one teacher recently said, "The support I received opened a door for me – it wasn't just money that helped me out, it was a new start." It is thanks to the support and generosity of teachers, such as yourself, that this is all possible.

At the Teacher Support Network we are committed to supporting a school's greatest asset – its teachers. On 20<sup>th</sup> May we held a conference in central London entitled, "Retention in Schools: strategies for keeping your staff." This was an opportunity to look at strategies and programmes that nurture and support our teachers, and which ultimately make our schools better places to be.

NUT Local Associations and Divisions make an enormous contribution to the work of the Teacher Support Network. Thank you everyone.

# **West Norfolk and Downham & District Association**

## **Downham and District Annual Dinner**

**The Bell, Denver, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30p.m.**

**£15 including a glass of wine or soft drink**

**Contact Ian Rix on 01366 382011**

**The NUT National President, Lesley Auger, has agreed to attend.**

***Advance notice:*** 17<sup>th</sup> September at Clackclose Primary School in Downham Market., 4.15 p.m.. Membership Meeting followed at 4.30 p.m. by a General Meeting. Everyone welcome.

### **School Representatives and Correspondents**

Recently I wrote to every school with NUT members to try to identify a contact person in each school, either a school representative or a correspondent. Many thanks to those colleagues who replied but I still have gaps in my records. If you are the school rep. or the person who deals with the NUT mail and have not received my letter, or have not had time to reply, please get in touch. You can ring 01553 829030, e-mail [maryook@waitrose.com](mailto:maryook@waitrose.com) or use the sae that was included with the letter. Please don't think that by volunteering to be contact person you will be expected to do more than you do now. Few of us have the time to go to meetings, so it is very important that we have good lines of communication into schools.

**Minutes of Meetings** This year, as an experiment, notices and minutes of meetings are being posted to your home address. What do you think of this? Your feedback would be very welcome. Contact details are given above.

*Mary Cook*

## Classroom Quips

*Last issue's challenge to send in the funniest excuses you've come across prompted this from Ray Russell. He wins the prize which this time is kindly donated by our sponsor, Robert Stevens and Co., Solicitors.*

A member of staff received the following letter from the parent of a child in her class. (N.B. The note is exactly as it was written, Ray says, but the name of the class teacher has been changed.)

Dear Miss Johnson,

Simon still has a bit of vertigo from time to time so I would like you to excuse him from any strenuous activity or really hard work. I really wouldn't burden you with him but I have lost so many days from work this winter through children's illnesses. I think he'll be all right if you ignore him for a couple of days. He says his mind is going too slowly so he can't hear properly.

Yours sincerely, .....

### **And this was overheard in a staffroom...**

A visiting musician went into school to play his violin for the children. He held it up and asked,

"Have any of you seen one of these before?"

A child put up his hand.

"Yes. Our teacher brings one in to school when we have cross-country dancing."

*Have you experienced some funny moments in school recently? Jot them down and post or email them to me. You could win a box of chocolates or bottle of wine!*

# Contact Numbers around the County

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