



Norfolk News

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

Issue 18

Autumn 2003



Editorial

The start of the new school year brought with it fresh evidence from many schools of the cut-backs they were being forced to make in order to keep within their budgets. Despite all their efforts, many schools have been forced to cut jobs, both for teaching staff and for learning support assistants. This sits uneasily with the new government agreement on workload. An increase in class size inevitably means an increase in work, and a cut in the support staff must mean more work for teachers. This newsletter brings you up-to-date with the current position and we would encourage any teachers being adversely affected to contact the union for help and advice.

Also in the news are the effects of the new pension proposals from the government. This is of such importance to all our members that we include a lengthy report from Ray Russell on the topic. At the other end of the scale there is a light-hearted look at the first year of teaching from two of our newly-qualified members, together with a great opportunity for young teachers of a free weekend away from the stresses and strains of the job, to unwind and make new friends.

Hilary Bucky, the new regional officer for our area, is featured on page 10 and there are the regular up-dates from Glenys Shepherd of the National Executive, from the JCC meetings at County Hall and from the Teacher Support Network. There is also a report from the local NUT meeting addressed by Steve Sinnot (Deputy General Secretary) which raises awareness of teaching issues in the wider world.

Once again, SATs are a burning issue with the anti-SATs campaign supported strongly by many teachers and parents alike. You can lend your support by joining the meeting on 18th November with John Bangs from NUT headquarters.

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.

Happy Birthday to Norfolk NUT!

The Norfolk County Division of the National Union of Teachers was set up in September, 1903. For 100 years it has worked to protect and improve the working conditions of teachers.

We hope to plan suitable events to commemorate this important event and would welcome suggestions and memories of times past. In the meantime, the best way to celebrate is to continue to work on behalf of all the members of the NUT in Norfolk.

The Threat to your PENSION

Yes, this does affect you. Everyone under 50 will lose.

The proposals concerning our pension scheme would result in a worsening of the pension rights of most teaching staff and of ALL new entrants to the profession.

You need to be aware of how YOU will be affected.

By the time you read this, West Norfolk and Broadland associations will already have held meetings. Dereham and Fakenham association will have this as a main agenda item on **Thursday, 27th November**; likewise Breckland and South Norfolk on the **25th November** and Norwich District and City will also be highlighting pensions at their next meeting. For further details contact the relevant local secretary (see back page).



Division Secretary's Up- date

from Tony Mulgrew

School workforce reform

The main changes this term are:

- The transfer of the administrative tasks away from teachers

To help you decide use the KEY questions approach

(a) Does the task need to be done at all?

(b) Is the task of an administrative nature?

(c) Does it call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skill or judgement?

If the answer to (a) and (b) are 'Yes' and the answer to (c) is 'No', then the task should be transferred from teachers. It is the headteacher's responsibility to allocate that task to someone else. The time saved by not doing these tasks should not be replaced by additional teaching time.

The N.U.T. ballot on bureaucratic burdens continues to protect our members against these and any other tasks to which the key questions approach can be applied.

If you are still expected to perform any of these tasks please inform you Local Association secretary.

- Work Life Balance

Schools should be collectively developing strategies to reduce the number of hours teachers work over and above the 1265 hours. 'Headteachers must have regard to the desirability of all teachers in the school (this means the head and the leadership group also) being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work'. (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions book

p164 - there is a copy in your school). All schools should have copies of the NUT's guidance on this issue. If you don't, please contact your local association.

- **Leadership and management time**

All teachers with responsibilities for subjects, departments, faculties, etc are entitled to a reasonable amount of time, within school sessions, to undertake these tasks.

Preparations for 2004 changes

These deal mainly with cover for absent colleagues. As from September, 2004 no teacher can be asked to cover for more than 38 hours per academic year. Schools should now be working towards compliance with this, so that systems are operational on the 1st September, 2004. Further guidance will be issued during the year.

The threat to teachers' jobs

In some schools, cover supervisors – not qualified teachers - are being used to cover, not only for short-term absences which could not be predicted but also for absences which are known in advance. The NUT successfully campaigned for years for an all graduate profession, to raise the standards of teaching and the quality of education provided for pupils. The other teacher unions are prepared to risk losing this by agreeing to allow people who are not qualified teachers to take classes – they will not be TEACHING them - in order to achieve 10% PPA. The protection of the right for only teachers to teach is the fundamental reason why we in the NUT cannot sign up to the Workforce Reform Agreement. If you allow cover supervisors, by that or any other name, into your school, any apparent short-term gain will be at the cost of jobs for properly qualified teachers in the future.

Please let me know if your school is proposing to go down this line.



Survival Guide for NQTs

We made it !

**By Helen Bunyan and
Caroline Butler**

What to remember:

- Take each day as it comes; it's normal to feel you are drowning in work. You find a whole week has passed and wonder how you got to Friday!
- It is always nearly Friday.
- If your desk is covered in sheets of paper, follow this rule: if you haven't touched it for more than 4 weeks – bin it!
- Everything stops for the Christmas play – you then become choreographer, musical director, guardian angel etc...
- You WILL lose your voice at least once (even if you didn't on teaching practice).
- Laminate all display materials for future use.
- If you need help – ASK FOR IT, you won't get sacked!
- Watch out for too many worksheets – you'll have to file them!!
- Don't spend a bundle on them at Christmas, they won't thank you for it.
- Don't drink too much on a school night, unless you have the blessing of an LSA who won't mind covering whilst you run to the toilet!!
- Tomorrow is another day.
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Tie long hair back to keep those nits at bay!!

What is important?

- Laugh at your mistakes.
- 3.30pm comes round pretty quickly.
- Stop for lunch.
- Have a life outside school.
- Say hello to everyone - you don't know when you might need their help!!
- Keep up with your marking.

- DELEGATE
- Take your NQT time, and check with other NQTs to see if they are off on any good courses that you haven't heard about (ESPECIALLY any at Barnham Broom).
- Learn to let go of your class.
- Share your cough sweets.
- Chocolate.
- Alcohol (medicinal).

We have both had a really good first year because everyone at our school has been so supportive. If you don't get the support you need talk to someone.

At the start of the second year you realise just how much your last class had learnt and how young your new class seems. The challenge starts again....

Recruitment at UEA

Students enrolling for the PGCE at the University of East Anglia were invited to join the Union at a number of recent recruitment events. Hilary Bucky, the Regional Officer, Tony Mulgrew, Division Secretary and other willing helpers gave out welcome packs to those who signed up. Representatives of other unions were also there and students were encouraged by all the groups to join all three unions represented. Once they begin their teaching careers they can decide which union best represents their views and provides the most useful service.

Copies of Norfolk News are distributed every term to all students on the PGCE course so that they can see what goes on in the local area. Any students reading this would be very welcome at any of the events mentioned in this newsletter. If any of you have any spare moments in this very hectic year, your views or comments would be welcome!

SATs: Keep Up The Pressure!

Another Saturday, another anti-SATs stall, another sixty signatures on the Union's petition... Since the NUT first published material in support of its campaign to end national testing, teachers, parents, learning support assistants and fellow trade-unionists have given their time to the campaign in Norwich, and now we are reaping the benefit. Close on one thousand people have signed the petition in the city. Many have taken stickers, balloons, posters, model-letters, trade-union resolutions, leaflets and postcards to send to Charles Clarke, all furthering the aim of the campaign. Norwich anti-SATs Alliance (part of the national anti-SATs Alliance) has brought together activist parents and teachers dedicated to ending the punitive, wasteful, damaging and educationally-useless New Labour/Old Tory policy of publicly testing children at 7, 11 and 14.

The NUT is going to hold a boycott-vote, and there must be an overwhelming vote to boycott SATs. As John Illingworth put it in his speech launching the national anti-SATs Alliance, we have boycotted before and the sky didn't fall in. We have the best chance in a decade to win back more control over what we teach and widen the educational offer we can make to pupils free from the narrowing influence of teaching-to-the-test. But voting is only the start. We must keep up the pressure to make sure that all SATs go. Ordinary members need to play their part in making clear their opposition to SATs and ensure that they and all their colleagues vote in the ballot.

The NUT has so far taken a principled position against these useless tests. In doing so it has gained wide support from parents and students. There must be no compromise. All SATs must go!

To get involved in Norwich anti-SATs Alliance, contact Patrick Yarker: 01362 860826 email: patyarker@aol.com

<p>Norwich anti-SATs Alliance Public Meeting Wednesday, 12th November, Parkside School, College Road, Norwich, 7.30-8.30pm</p>
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The Wider Teaching Community

Steve Sinnott urges us to look beyond our own problems.

Norfolk Division recently invited Steve Sinnott, the Deputy General Secretary of the NUT, to speak about the international work of the Union. The details and information he brought were a sobering reminder of problems faced in other parts of the world and help put some of our own experiences into perspective. Steve reminded us that the world is now a global village and that events in one area impact on others.

The NUT has been able to support teachers recruited from abroad by the agency Teaching Personnel. 159 mature, mid-career teachers with management experience were recruited from Africa and India with the promise of financial incentives. On arrival in this country they were given no orientation courses and no social inductions. Their accommodation was with Social Services B and B and before the end of six months they were made redundant to avoid holiday pay and the promised bonus. Without the help of both the NUT and Teacher Support Network they would have been destitute. The loophole which allowed them to be recruited in this way has now been closed.

The NUT has campaigned along with other organisations over the issue of Developing World debt. Steve told us of the appalling conditions he has seen teachers working in, with no electricity, telephone and sometimes no classroom. Sometimes one teacher is working with 100 to 190 pupils and few resources. 115 million children worldwide do not go to school and persecution of teachers is prevalent in some countries, for example Ethiopia. The NUT has worked with Amnesty to produce school packs showing the importance of freedom from imprisonment, brutality and degradation. It has worked with the UN to produce material about aspects of globalisation.

Education International is a global organisation of 26 million members – all teachers. Steve suggested that Teacher Associations should twin with each other to provide solidarity and practical support. It would need to be a long-term commitment and one brokered with the support of the NUT. Let your local association secretary know if you would be interested in supporting this.



Hilary Bucky is the new
Regional Officer for our area.

I began my teaching career in the London Borough of Bexley in 1980 as a secondary PE teacher. Although I remained at the same school for 20 years, I took on a number of different roles in the school, teaching other subjects in addition to PE and holding various posts of responsibility. Having become an active NUT member fairly early on, in 1991 I took over as divisional secretary for Bexley. In addition to this, in subsequent years I was divisional health and safety adviser and secretary of the Bexley JCC, so that for the last 5 years of my teaching career I found the time to teach only one day a week.

In 1999 I was appointed as a Regional Officer in the NUT's London East Regional Office on a year's secondment. This was extended for a further term, and then I applied for and was appointed to the permanent Regional Officer post in the Eastern Regional Office in Newmarket from January 2001. Although I managed to commute from south east London for the first 6 months, I could not sustain this any longer and have now relocated to just outside Cambridge.

Initially I was given responsibility for Essex, Thurrock, Southend and Suffolk, but following a recent reshuffle I am now covering Norfolk, Northants, Bedfordshire and Suffolk. I am looking forward to getting to know members in Norfolk. I have already visited several schools in and around Norwich and am beginning to get to grips with the one-way system!

IMPORTANT MEETING FOR ALL TEACHERS!

**Norwich and District Association
NUT**

**John Bangs
NUT's Head of Education**

**speaking about
Developing the Anti-SATs Campaign**

6.00pm on 18th November, 2003

**Professional Development Centre,
Woodside Road**

Come with your colleagues and find out more!

Reminder:

Elections will be taking place shortly for officers of the Union: Vice-President, Examiners of Accounts and Treasurer. Don't forget to use your vote!



Glenys Shepherd reports from the National Executive

NUT Training

One of my roles on the National Executive is to chair the Training Committee. This year more NUT members than ever have attended the high quality courses at the Union's training centre Stoke Rochford near Grantham. All courses, accommodation and travel are free to NUT members and the building and grounds are a treat in themselves that every member should experience at least once. There are courses for members with specific roles, such as school representatives or teacher governors, and also more general courses. Consider the courses such as New Teachers, Supply Teachers, Women's Development, Stress and Well-being, Moving into Management, etc.

School Funding

Research undertaken for the NUT has identified at least £1 billion shortfall over the next three years. Job losses are already serious. There were 12 redundancies in Norfolk last year and many more job losses where leaving teachers were not replaced.

Workload

Teachers are not required to carry out the 24 tasks. NUT members are protected by the Democracy Ballot from doing these tasks at all. You are protected by the ballot despite the word "routinely" in the agreement signed by the other unions.

Cover Supervisors

A few schools are already moving towards employing non-qualified people to do cover. Do not be misled into thinking this would protect your non-contact time. The cover supervisors are to save money on supply teachers with permanent staff still doing the usual cover. NUT members should not set or mark work where unqualified staff are in charge of classes.

SATs Campaign

At the time of writing the NUT is taking external legal advice and awaiting the results of the latest survey.

Pensions

Government proposals for public sector pensions would affect all teachers below 50. The younger you are the more you would be affected. Watch out for local meetings to explain the situation.



Jim Taylor reports from the JCC

I attended a meeting of the Teachers' Panel of the JCC at County Hall on Tuesday, 7th October as a substitute for Tony Mulgrew. The meeting was to keep members of all the Teaching Unions abreast with current issues, and allow members of the Panel to prepare for a full JCC meeting, which will include officers and elected members.

There were four items of timed business which required officers of the Authority to address the Panel.

10.30am. Bob Headley, head of personnel, spoke to the panel on issues including open references, Workload Agreement, support for suspended teachers, Upper Pay Spine, Non-Teaching Assistants and Exit Interviews.

11.00am Sue Rossiter and Paul Venn explained the new internal mailing system and set members' minds at rest concerning security issues.

2.00pm Sue Massey and a colleague described the new system for the Electronic Monitoring of problem children during the school day by use of a telephone voice recognition system. The system should not impinge on lessons and school activities.

3.00pm Fred Corbett took away the concerns of the Panel regarding the new School Visits Guidance document. He agreed that further refinement was necessary so that the document should not appear to pose a threat to the future of educational visits.

The Panel also received reports from its representative on the following LEA working groups: LEA Improvement Group, Education and Cultural Services Review Panel and the Retention and Workload Advice Group. The NUT has strong representation on the Panel including Martin White, its chairperson, and Glenys Shepherd, our executive member who is its secretary.

Government Proposals to worsen Public Service Pension Schemes

The following is a summary of the Government's proposals to worsen the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the Union's reactions to date, as far as is known at the time of writing. Look out for details of local association meetings where hopefully there will be further clarification and opportunity for discussion.

1. The Government is proposing to worsen teachers' and other public service pensions schemes. From 2006 it is intended to raise from 60 to 65 the age at which teachers can draw their pension and lump-sum benefit without any actuarial reduction.
2. The minimum age at which members will be able to receive their pension and lump-sum under premature retirement compensation arrangements is to be raised from 50 to 55.
3. The Union is committed to campaigning against these retrograde proposals which will do nothing to improve the present serious recruitment and retention problems nor address the serious problem of motivation and morale.
4. The Union has arranged to meet further with other teacher organisations to consider a joint campaign.
5. Meetings are in progress through the TUC with other public service sector unions affected.
6. The proposed transitional arrangements for those approaching retirement have been clarified.
7. We now understand the existing entitlements of those aged 50 and above will not be affected and that up to 2013 they will continue to be able to draw their teacher's pension and lump sum at age 60 without any reduction.
8. Teachers currently below 50 will be progressively affected. Pensionable service up to 2006 will still be payable at 60 if people opt to retire at that age but any service after 2006 will be based on the proposed new normal retirement age of 65. Such teachers will therefore accrue two different categories of teachers' pension entitlements. They will still be able to retire at 60 and service to that date will be payable in full.

9. Service after 2006 will not be payable in full until 65 but it will be possible to draw post-2006 pension entitlements at 60 on an actuarially reduced basis. The level of the reduction is, at the time of writing, not known but if the post-2006 benefits are taken at 60 the reduction is likely to be significant.
10. The effects of the proposals on ill-health and actuarially reduced pensions have not yet been made clear. It appears that those over 50 will retain their present entitlements up to 2013.
11. The logic of the proposed new age of 65 for non-reduced post-2006 benefits is that future actuarially reduced pensions would not be available before 60, or, if they were, they would be subjected to such a large actuarial reduction that teachers generally would not be able to afford such a reduction in both their pension and lump-sum.
12. These proposals relate specifically to teachers' and other public service pensions. They are not changes to the retirement age. Indeed, from 2006 the Government will implement a European directive on age discrimination which will outlaw compulsory retirement on age grounds, currently 65 in most areas of teaching.
13. Clearly any worsening of teachers' pension and lump-sum arrangement in the future is bound to affect the age at which they can afford to retire.
14. The Union will oppose these proposals and work with other teacher unions and public service unions to oppose the implementation of the Government's plans and members will be kept informed of developments.
15. In the meantime, members should not make any rash or panic changes to their present pension arrangements without consulting Regional Office and seeking Union advice.

The above is only a summary of the situation. Further details and clarification are becoming available, so members should attend local meetings as detailed on page 3 to find out more about the new proposals. Members are advised to seek further advice on all matters on which they are unsure. Existing teacher pensioners may wish to note that they are not affected by the new proposed arrangements.

Ray Russell

NUT Young Teachers' Weekend

If you're a young(ish) or newly qualified teacher, you'll probably be interested in a free weekend at a top class hotel. This is a once in a life-time opportunity to meet teachers in the same position as you to discuss the issues that concern you with people in the know from the NUT and education! The Dereham and Fakenham local association wishes to pioneer this initiative in Norfolk.

The aim of the weekend is to give new and inexperienced members a chance to find out more information about current developments in education. There will also be a chance to see how the Union can help you with any problems in developing your career. For anyone who already has an interest in the work of the Union we will be able to give you more information about how you can become further involved. However, the weekend will also be very informal and the aim is for people to enjoy the company of other young teachers from around Norfolk and to benefit from the recreational facilities of the hotel.

The Conference will run from about 6.00p.m. on Friday until lunch on Sunday. Accommodation, with full board, will be provided from Friday evening till Sunday lunchtime.

If you qualify and are interested, please contact Tony Mulgrew on 01362 638371 or e-mail dandfnut@aol.com.

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Teacher Support Network

The Teacher Support Network is constantly trying to simplify how teachers can contact it. It has announced that very soon teachers will be able to access the entire range of services simply by calling one freephone number!

Teacher Support Line – 08000 562561 – will soon provide teachers with free information, support and counselling, along with grants and loans, money advice and a home-finder for retired teachers. This will make it simpler, as they will no longer have to call two different numbers to access its services.

Has your workload changed this year and is it for the better ?

Having moved to Year 6 this year, it is ironic that I seem to be working longer hours than ever and, even though it is half-term next week (at the time of writing this report), I feel as tired as I do at the end of a normal school year. Ironic, since this is meant to be the first year of workload reduction, yet I am doing fifty-five to sixty hours a week.

How many other teachers feel as I do? It makes me think how many more years I can continue without falling ill to stress-related illnesses which, let's face it, shorten our lives perhaps quite considerably, if we are teaching over, say, thirty years.

The list is, I am sure, very familiar: excessive planning, SNARS, IEPs, heavy marking load, almost monthly formal assessments, meetings, parents' evenings, dealing with awkward parents, challenging behaviour, preparing and collecting homework, SATs revision, mock tests, sending off TAs to County, organising ICT across the curriculum, larger classes, less LSA time and support (because of budget cuts), assemblies, reports, QCA tests, transfer documentation, High School bridging units, etc..... Oh, and I nearly forgot – teaching five days a week!!

Unless we have a real and determined effort by the Government, LEAs and headteachers (some do not appreciate that there is a workload problem) teachers will be cornered and will not take it any longer. They cannot rely on our goodwill and dedication for too much longer, or we will take action not seen in education for thirty years. Enough is enough! Leave us alone and let us do what we do best – teach!

Steve Smith

The 2003 Pensioners' Parliament, Blackpool

After the traditional march, some 3000 representatives from all parts of Great Britain were welcomed to the Parliament by the Mayor of Blackpool. In his opening speech, Rodney Bickerstaffe, President of the Nation Pensioners' Convention, made a scathing attack on the Government when he contrasted the small and declining percentage of the gross domestic national product devoted to pensions in this country with the considerably higher figures which apply elsewhere in the EEC.

"Today, out of a population of 59 million people, some 11 million are pensioners but, equally important, all the rest aspire to become pensioners and our fight is for tomorrow's pensioners as well."

Malcolm Wicks, the new Pension Minister sought, amidst much heckling, to defend the peripheral benefits introduced for pensioners by the present Government without explaining why the state retirement pension has been allowed to wither in value year on year. Oliver Heald, the Conservative pensions spokesperson, was highly critical of Government policies on pensions but was forced to admit that his own party does not currently have a pensions policy. "Ask me next year," he said.

Paul Burstow, of the Liberal Democrats, condemned the totally inadequate state pension before outlining the substantial improvements his party would wish to make. In a further strong attack on means testing, he referred to elderly people being robbed of their homes and savings. "Why should it be okay to charge the elderly for health care and not anyone else?" he challenged.

The Conference went on to discuss in large committee groups a range of issues as diverse as pensions, public transport, the closure of post offices, the de-regulation of pharmacies, crimes against people, bogus callers, discrimination and social exclusion including isolation, the impact on pensioners of the new levels of council tax, health and social care and problems specific to women pensioners.

Ray Russell

Classroom Quips

I keep a small notebook in my bag and when I'm sitting with teacher colleagues and they're relaxing over a glass of wine recalling the odd incidents which crop up during the school day, I discreetly jot them down to add to this page. Unfortunately, by the time I write them up I've quite forgotten where they came from..... so if you think any of these came from you, and you deserve the wine or chocolates this issue, let me know! Ed

The local police were visiting and talking to the whole school in the hall. As part of the "friendly bobby" approach, two children were handcuffed together. At the end of the session one policeman turned to the other.

"You've got the keys."

"No, you have!"

"No, you!"

It was some time before the children could be released – the police had to return to the station to collect the keys.

A school trip to Howe Hill became rather an adventure for two children. They turned left and not right 170 miles later, they were found.

Our former Chief Education Officer must have been considerably embarrassed showing some Japanese dignitaries around a school. On seeing them, one child leapt up, screamed, shot at them with an imaginary machine gun, yelled "Japs", leapt out of a window and gave another burst with the imaginary gun.

Another school trip (why do we do them?!) - the children were counted back on the coach, ready for the journey home. Darren was missing. Suddenly a police car screamed up. Darren jumped out, beaming.

"I had a great ride, sir!"

Send in your funny stories. Keep us laughing! You could win a box of chocolates or a bottle of wine.

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