

Norfolk News

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

Issue 19

Spring 2004

100 years serving teachers in Norfolk



Editorial

Norfolk NUT is celebrating 100 years of working for teachers in the area. Over this period many people have given their time and energy to protect and improve the working conditions of teachers. Those of us working in Norfolk today have cause to be grateful to the efforts of previous generations. In this issue we have included memories from two colleagues of earlier Union days. Ray Russell recalls the experiences which led him to first become involved and Peter Ayers reflects on his period working for the Union. We would be very interested to hear more recollections from people who have been involved with the Union over the years.

Also in this issue you can read about the latest developments at national level from Glenys Shepherd, our Executive member and at local level from Martin White, Chair of the JCC, and other members of the Union. We report on the current position regarding the anti-SATs campaign and bring you up-to-date with the progress of the Well Being Programme in schools and Health and Safety issues.

Once again, we post the details of meetings and events from our Local Associations and hope that some of you will find time to join colleagues in discussing issues and working for improved conditions for all teachers. Our contact details are on the back cover. Finally, there are the usual humorous anecdotes to lighten the last few weeks of term.

It is always interesting to have articles, information or humour from different members, so don't be afraid to put pen to paper, or fingers to the keyboard and send in your contributions.

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.

Keep a check on your records of Pensionable Service!

As was pointed out in the December 2003 edition of the Teacher, from time to time serious errors occur in the official recording of teachers' pensionable service. Last year, having contacted the Teachers' Pensions Agency for details of his reckonable service, a local serving teacher member was told that he had a 'nil' entitlement. On challenging this, he experienced unnecessary, lengthy delays in replies to correspondence and responses to telephone calls.

In due course, an error was acknowledged, the member's service details appearing under two different DfES reference numbers. Even then, he discovered that his reckonable service had been incorrectly recorded, resulting in yet more hassle. Some five months elapsed before all mistakes had been put right.

But what if someone in similar circumstances, who may have been employed by more than one Authority, had died without having previously sought to check and correct details of his reckonable teacher service? How could a widow hope to establish benefit entitlement?

1. Clearly, members should maintain their own accurate records of service (e.g. schools where employed, dates of appointment, posts held, employing Authorities and DfES reference number) and make them available to next-of-kin.

2. If difficulties arise, assistance should be sought from the expert help available at NUT Regional Office.

3. At an opportune time, it may be desirable to check one's details of service with the Teachers' Pension Agency. Confirmation is awaited, but it now seems likely that the Agency will, in due course, provide up-dated details of reckonable service on an annual basis.

Ray Russell



Divisional Secretary's Update

from

Tony Mulgrew

School Workforce Reform

What has changed in your school? From feedback it would seem that more progress has been made in the secondary sector than in primaries. Many schools have seen virtually no change. Lack of money is usually used as the reason for this. Originally, the Government and the signatory Unions said that sufficient extra finance would be given to schools, for example, to employ sufficient non-teaching staff to undertake the administrative tasks. Where are they? In many schools last year's budget problems have resulted in a reduction in numbers of non-teaching staff rather than the increase needed.

Many teachers find it difficult to stop doing certain of the tasks, but neither this nor the difficulties with finance should stop every school from having a clear and active plan, which will reallocate these tasks away from teachers.

Has your work / life balance improved? Whole staff meetings should regularly monitor progress on this, on the 24 tasks and on preparations for the September 2004 changes, which deal mainly with cover for absent colleagues. Planning should also be starting on how the school is going to deliver 10% PPA for all staff from September 2005. Please let your Local Association Secretary (details on back page) know of progress, or lack of it.

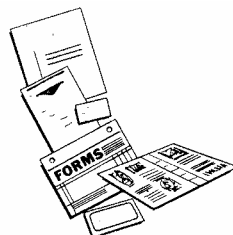
Newly Qualified Teachers

I have been contacted by some who are having problems, e.g. finding it difficult to be released for induction courses or inset, not getting sufficient non-contact time, not having a sympathetic mentor etc.. If you have any problems let me know. Your first year is difficult enough without extra impediments.

Upper Pay Spine

Remember filling in that Threshold form to get access to those untold riches of the **five** levels of the Upper Pay Spine? Now, with the agreement of the other teacher unions, Charles Clarke has decided that the first three are enough and has withdrawn levels four and five. The savings are supposed to help pay for the Workforce Reform. Oh, and by the way, that is also why teachers are getting a low, two-year pay settlement. The other unions and the Government (well they would, wouldn't they) believe this is a price worth paying. But for what? Strange Government this! They make you an offer and then, a couple of years later, they take it away. This is the same lot who promise in their manifesto **not** to do something - even saying they will legislate against it - yet a couple of years later they go right ahead and do it. Funny old world!

It has come to my attention that, in some schools, teachers who achieved the threshold in September 2000 have not been put forward for UPS2 in September 2002 – because they 'did not apply for it'. It was not up to teachers to 'apply'. It was the job of headteachers either to put teachers forward, if they had maintained the threshold standards, or to produce evidence showing why some had not. If you feel you have not been fairly treated, please let me know.



Student Teachers

Your membership is free and will remain so until the end of your course, but remember that you are full members of the Union. After finishing your studies you will receive free membership of the NUT for the whole of the first term of your teaching career. I was able to meet many of you at the recruitment days when you started your courses. I would like to arrange a social function for you before you go out to schools for your final teaching practices. Please contact me so we can arrange a time and a venue. In the meantime, if you have any problems, do get in touch.



NUT Young or Young-ish 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! Now that the Government has changed the pension rules and teachers under 50 will need to work till they are 65 to get full pension, perhaps the definition of young must change.

The aim of the weekend is to give new or 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. I hope to arrange a weekend in May or June, whichever suits the participants. Originally I asked for volunteers only from the Dereham and Fakenham Association. I would now like to make this available to all Associations.

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

NUT policy and how to make it...

A brief guide by Patrick Yarker

As an ordinary teacher, an education-worker, something concerns you: perhaps you're worked too hard, your pay has been cut in real terms, you want to scrap the SATs, see an end to child-labour, support trade-unionists facing assassination in Colombia or you're worried about your pension... And as an NUT member you think the Union should do something about it. You feel strongly, so you draft a motion for debate at the NUT's Annual Conference. Any individual can do so and take the draft-motion to their Association for discussion and hopefully endorsement. Members of the Executive also draft such motions. If endorsed by Associations, the motions are submitted to the elected Conference Business Committee who circulate all school reps., local Association secretaries and Division secretaries with a booklet containing every motion.

In January local Associations meet, discuss and choose six of the motions they regard as the most important for debate at Conference. These prioritised motions go back to the Conference Business Committee, who collate the votes received for each motion on the basis of the number of members in each Association prioritising it. The results of this year's prioritising-process show that Workload, Pay and Pensions, Testing, and preserving funding for the teaching of black and other ethnic minority students were of most concern to members. Other issues making a strong showing were the abolition of OFSTED and opposition to Foundation Stage Assessment.

A final agenda for Conference will now be drawn up. Delegates from all local Associations in the country assemble to debate and vote, and the NUT's policy is set for another year. This process, while not faultless, is open and subject to democratic checks and balances in the best traditions of the Labour movement. It enables genuine debate to crystallise into policy. If you feel the Union is not addressing the right issues, you have a ready remedy: get involved! Come along to your Association meeting and raise the issue you want discussed. Make your voice heard. Draft, amend, endorse or vote to reject a motion. You can make a difference!



Peter Ayers reflects on his memories of Norfolk NUT

Although I joined the Union in the 1960s when a student at Keswick Hall College of Education, Norwich, my first eleven years of teaching was in South East Essex. I had never been to a local Association meeting until I became a School Representative and so then went from time to time, but never took on a post on the local Association. In those days there were enough members willing to do so.

I remember one impressive speaker at meetings. This was Peter Kennedy, who was the Executive member for the area who later became President of the Union. When I moved back to Norfolk in 1979 my post was in a small school and no one seemed to have any desire to attend union meetings. However, I did attend an open meeting, advertised as "President Kennedy Visits Norwich". It was here that I once again saw John Knowles, a fellow student at Keswick Hall and husband to Margaret née Kennedy, also a former Keswick Hall student. Being quick on the uptake I then realised that Margaret's father's was President Kennedy.

It was only through musical activities outside school that an active Union member, Pat Atkins, urged me to go to a local Association general meeting. It happened to be the one where Great Yarmouth and East Norfolk Associations had decided to amalgamate and become Broadland Association in 1984. I attended meetings of the new Association and unfortunately the hard-working secretary Paul Thornton decided to take a post in Humberside. I took over from Paul as Secretary of Broadland Association in the same year that it was formed.

It has been encouraging to attend Norfolk Division meetings, to meet colleagues who also hold firm views about the need to work for high standards in working practices for both pupils and employees. I have now attended Division meetings and Conferences for nearly twenty years and have developed firm friendships through these meetings.



Ray Russell looks back at his early days in the Union

At the age of 17 I became a student teacher in Norfolk and served at Terrington Secondary school, where I enjoyed the wise guidance, encouragement and support of Horace Pooley, the head-teacher, He was very active within the NUT and taught me a lot about our Union. After serving for some 27 months in the RAF, I entered College in September, 1949, where I lost no time in enrolling in the NUT as a student member. On taking up my first appointment as a qualified teacher in a large Spalding secondary school, I was approached by the NUT Rep., who asked if I had considered joining a Union. I explained that I was already a member of the NUT, at which she was overjoyed and immediately assumed her old war-time ATS rank of sergeant and instructed me to accompany her to the annual meeting of the Spalding and District NUT Association's Young Teacher section the following week. I duly obeyed and, having seen fit to ask a question at the meeting, I was elected as Press Secretary without having been a candidate. I must have asked other questions at later meetings, since I went on to become Vice Chair and Chairperson in subsequent years.

Whilst our activities were predominantly social, it was at this time that I became involved with NUT campaigning and went on my first deputation to a Member of Parliament. There was an alleged deficiency in the Teachers' Superannuation Fund which, in reality, is nothing more than a paper account and the Union was fighting Government pressure to increase our contributions from five to six per cent. Initially we were successful in that we managed to get the matter dropped, but the issue came up again some two years later when a compromise was reached. Contributions were to go up to six per cent but we were to receive an interim pay award to enable us to pay them, there were a number of benefit improvements and we were assured that any future actuarial deficiencies would be met by the employing authorities. Whilst all this was going on, I was also actively engaged in the battle to secure equal pay for women teachers. I guess I had become hooked!



Martin White

Chairman of JCC

Martin attended schools in Leicestershire in the 60s and 70s and experienced comprehensive education in its earliest forms as part of the 'Leicestershire Plan', Leicestershire being one of the first Authorities in the country to be totally comprehensive. In 1972 he went on to Portsmouth Polytechnic to study biology, followed by a year's postgraduate teacher training at Keswick Hall College of Education in Norfolk. It was at Keswick Hall that he joined the NUT as a student member, as it was described to him as the best Union and it was free!

He began his career at West Earlham Middle School in Norwich in 1976. It was here that he was fully inducted into the merits of being an active member of the NUT as his Year Group Leader and Union Rep. was a certain Pete Eldridge. His teaching career has taken him to Colman Middle School, Old Catton Middle School, Ellingham Primary School, and finally in 1996 to Drayton Middle School as headteacher.

In 28 years as an NUT member he has held the posts of Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, President and finally Secretary of the now dissolved Norwich City Association. He became the first President of the Norwich and District Association, following the amalgamation of the two Norwich Associations and is once again the Vice-President. He has attended many Annual Union Conferences, been a County Division delegate for over twenty years and County President. It was from County Division that he was elected to JCC and he has been the Chair of this Committee for a number of years.

Martin says, "I have been very proud to work with many local activists, including John Knowles, Walter Roy, the late Jean Heaviside, Pete Eldridge, Ray Russell, Avril King, Jim Taylor and Glenys Shepherd. I have been fortunate to work alongside many others who have supported Norfolk's members so well over the years."



Jim Taylor

President of Norwich and District Association

Jim was educated at Bemrose Grammar School, Derby, leaving in 1957. He joined the NUT in 1960 when taking up his first contract in a high school. It was here he met Doreen, and they were married a year later. He changed to primary teaching and in 1967 he secured the headship of Stibbard CE VA Primary School near Fakenham at the age of 29.

Jim took over from Ron Bagshaw as Secretary of the North West Norfolk NUT and remembers attending Division meetings in the Assembly House, and Annual Conference in the Isle of Man. He was appointed Head of Shipdham CE VA Primary School in January, 1972 when he joined the Dereham NUT Association, of which he was President 3 times. In the 1970s he took an in-service B.Ed at Stoke Rochford through Nottingham University. In 1982, when the school moved into a new building, he became head of Thomas Bullock CEVA First and Middle School, from which he retired in December 1996. Whilst at Shipdham Jim initiated a Twinning with a French village and was founder member of the Thomas Bullock Day Centre. He sat on the Teachers' JCC for 12 years and was Chairman for 4 years. He was Primary Adviser to the Education Committee from 1993-1996 and pioneered Activity Led Staffing.

Doreen taught most of her career in Primary Schools serving the Dereham and Fakenham NUT as Secretary and President. Jim and Doreen have a son and a daughter. This year Jim is President of Norwich and District. He still deputises at JCC meetings, and works the occasional supply day. He is currently Chairman of the Division Retired Teachers' Section.



Glenys Shepherd

reports from the National Executive

Your pay – more bad news

The other unions have agreed to accept the Government's proposals to scrap points 4 and 5 of the Upper Pay Spine. The notion of an upper pay spine – accessible to all classroom teachers - has been shown to be a sham. The separate talks with the NUT did not discuss the proposal.

The other unions have accepted that money is diverted from teachers' pay (the low cost multi-year settlement, the freezing of management allowances) in order to pay for the remodelling agenda.

SATs

No boycott, but the campaign continues. The NUT has been joined by ATL and PAT in calling for change in the current regime for national curriculum testing and assessment. Discussions are also taking place with NAHT with a view to a joint statement, including guidance on Key Stage One Pilot.

Good news from Wales, where the Welsh Assembly has accepted the need for reform. Children in Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland not have the testing and league tables now operating in England.

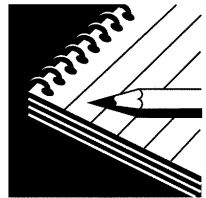
Need Cheering Up?

- Use your Countdown Card or go through Travel Club to get a discount on a holiday.
- Sign up for a training course at Stoke Rochford.

Visit www.teachers.org.uk and click on Union services in the left hand column.

Please use your vote in the forthcoming elections.

Martin White reports from the JCC Teachers' Panel



Workforce Remodelling

The panel met Dudley Whittaker who is the Secondary Project Leader for Norfolk and Suffolk. He was previously a secondary headteacher in Suffolk and appears to share the many concerns surrounding workforce remodelling that were expressed by the panel (all members, not just NUT!) Pete Simmonds as Primary Project Leader, will join him after Easter. Pete is currently headteacher at Bure Valley Junior School in Aylsham.

Ethnicity Issues

Gillian Boone visited the panel to discuss concerns she had over the employment and retention of teachers from ethnic minorities in Norfolk. The panel share her concerns and discussed ways that the issue could be given a higher profile in the county.

Staffing Models

There was a general level of concern expressed by many panel members about the production of staffing models to help headteachers plan for the future. This has been instigated by Financial Services and Paul Fisher met with the panel and explained that these were only advisory and were to be used when schools wished to access the extra transitional funding that was available to schools in budgetary difficulty this year. Our fear was that it would become a tool to control staffing numbers across all schools and further discussions will follow.

School Holidays

The debate continues with four models for the year 2005/06. Headteachers have been asked to consult staff, so members should ask if they have not seen these. This time the dates have been included so you can see exactly what the choices are. Look out for suggestions such as INSET days on the last Thursday and Friday of the summer holiday, or no training days at the beginning of the autumn term at all (when will teachers prepare?). Model D looks favourable but whatever happened to the six-term year?

Where next for the anti-SATs campaign ?

by Patrick Yarker of Norwich and District Association

2003 ended with a setback for teachers, parents and students campaigning to abolish the restrictive, unreliable and overly-stressful national testing system in English state schools. The result of the NUT's ballot of Key Stage 1 and 2 teachers left members deflated and uncertain how best to take the campaign forward. Although only some 34% of the 103,000 eligible to vote actually did so it is not a poor turnout for a postal ballot, and on these figures the Union could have called a boycott legally under New Labour's very stringent anti-union laws. But the turnout failed to meet the Union's own requirement that 50% of those eligible to vote (not simply of those who do vote) must return their ballot-forms.

The NUT's anti-SATs campaign continues, as does the work being done by the anti-SATs Alliance which brings on board parents, students and members of other unions such as UNISON (to which many LSAs belong.) The campaign will again be debated at Conference this Easter. Classroom teachers should keep raising the issue in our school and Union branches: those who didn't vote this time around need their concerns addressed, and to be persuaded. A whole generation of teachers is in post now who have no experience of teaching without the straitjacket of SATs. The pressures on our members to "teach to the test" are unremitting and unavoidable. There are genuine concerns about what a curriculum unshaped by SATs might look like. And yet so much is wrong with the current testing regime. The impact SATs have on students, staff and the education on offer in schools is so pervasive, that alternatives must be developed urgently. What can replace SATs? What kinds of assessment should be used in order to help pupils succeed? How can the Union locally ensure a winning result in a future ballot, turning fine words into successful industrial action on SATs and laying the groundwork for winning campaigns on pay and pensions, the preservation of jobs and opposition to privatisation? These are the testing questions all those active in the Union must now face and answer.

To contact Norwich anti-SATs Alliance phone

Pat Yarker 01362 860826

Norfolk Education Staff Well-Being Project

The programme began as an initial two year pilot project, following consultation with professional associations and unions about the need for a more pro-active approach to support staff in the workplace. The programme has established a confidential way to help staff identify issues which could affect their well-being, and a process by which staff can contribute possible solutions to address the issues. There are now over 300 organisations in Norfolk LEA following the programme. From follow-up reviews, staff perception of well-being has improved in nearly 70% of the organisations. Each organisation has at least one well-being facilitator, who is the contact point for the programme.

For further information, contact you school's facilitator or the well-being team. If your school is not in the programme and you would like further information contact the Well-Being team on 01603 222326 or visit the web-site www.norfolksinet.org.uk

Paula Amis Programme admin officer

David Saunders Programme co-ordinator

Health and Safety

The Norfolk Division of the NUT is concerned that school funding difficulties have forced Health and Safety down the agenda of many schools.

NUT staff are entitled to appoint a Health and Safety Officer in their schools, and the teacher chosen is entitled to attend a training course (free – lasting 3 consecutive days) at Stoke Rochford. Later in the year we hope to conduct a survey of conditions in schools in which we have members. This will cover physical conditions as well as issues such as bullying in the workplace, stress etc.

We hope that members will ensure that a Health and Safety Officer is appointed, so that we can achieve high returns in our survey. If you would like a Local Association or Division Health and Safety Officer to accompany you on a school tour of inspection, please let us know.

Jim Taylor, Division Vice-President and Health and Safety Officer

Local Association events from around the County

Norwich and District Association

4.30 meetings begin with refreshments available from 4pm. Put the dates in your diary now!

May 4 th , 4.30pm	Profesional Development Centre Conference Report
July 8 th , 7.30pm	Earl Arms at Heydon Summer Social - buffet with drinks

West Norfolk and Downham Market Association

June 21 st	Downham and District Annual Dinner Guest of Honour - Steve Sinnott
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West Norfolk Retired Teachers' Club

Meetings are held at the West Norfolk Profesional Development Centre, Kelham Way, King's Lynn, unless otherwise indicated.

16 th March	Rev Mike Bossingham 'Fair Trade and the Third World'
20 th April	Dr. Robin Hanley, Lynn Museum 'Roman Fenland'
18 th May	The Head Gardener, Congham Hall 'Tour of the Herb Garden' Meet at Congham Hall at 10am
15 th June	Visit to the 'Silk Road' exhibition British Library, Euston, by train
20 th July	Summer Supper William Burt Hall, West Winch

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

Thurs 11th March, 7.30pm Annual General Meeting
(venue to be advised)

Broadland Association

Tuesday, 24th February, 2004

Tuesday, 22nd June, 2004

For details contact Peter Ayers (see back cover).

Members will soon receive ballot papers for the election of the Executive member for Norfolk, Suffolk, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. There are two candidates, Chris Grant from Cambridgeshire and Glenys Shepherd from Norfolk, who is standing for re-election. Members will receive ballot papers on the 10th of March and they need to be returned by the 31st of March.

As you may know, Doug McAvoy is retiring as General Secretary of the Union. Elections will be held to elect his replacement and also a Deputy General Secretary. Members should receive ballot papers in early June and the deadline for their return is 28th June.

You will also receive ballot papers for the election of other Officers, such as the Examiner of Accounts and Treasurer.

You will receive election information from each of the candidates and, though you may feel that these elections are far removed from your life in school, it is important, in a democratic union, that members do exercise their right to vote.

Government Proposals Worsening Public Service Pensions.

Since we went to press last term, we have received a further point of clarification in respect of the Government's proposals to worsen the Teachers' Pension Scheme. In brief, the Government wants all new contributors to the scheme from 1st September, 2006 to be on the basis of a normal pension at age 65 instead of 60 as at present.

We understand that existing contributors will not be affected in any way until 1st September, 2013, which means that those aged 50 and above by 1st September, 2003 will not be affected if they have reached 60 and wish to retire by 31st August, 2013. For those under 50 on 1st September 2003, the method of calculating pensionable entitlement is likely to remain the same in respect of service to 1st September, 2013 but, assuming one decided to retire at age 60, any service after that date will be subject to an actuarial reduction.

For example for a teacher aged 47 by 1st September, 2003, all service up to 1st September, 2013 will be calculated for pension purposes in the same way as at present. If such a teacher decided to retire at age 60 with effect from, say, 31st August, 2016, the benefits in respect of the last three years of service, to that date, would be subject to an actuarial reduction.

Ray Russell

Education, Education, Education?

In highlighting the international work of the Union, it was reported in our last Newsletter that some 115 million children worldwide still lack the opportunity to attend school. If the world's expenditure on armaments for just four days of the year could be diverted for this purpose, then the necessary education provision could be made available. But do politicians really care?

Classroom Quips

A bottle of wine is winging its way to Ann Hill for this contribution!

The articles about school trips in the recent newsletter reminded me of this incident that took place several years ago now.

I was taking a large and rather unruly class through the town and down to the local beach for the day. It was difficult to keep them together and in some semblance of order and I was feeling quite harassed. When I spotted two children gazing in a shop window, I pulled them away and told them to stay with the rest of the group, which they duly did. We arrived at the beach and were just settling to various tasks when a rather distressed lady rushed up and claimed the two children that I had dragged away from the shop window. The children were on a family holiday in the town - and NOT pupils of the school!! ***from Ann Hill (peacefully retired!)***

Thanks to a teaching assistant in one school for the following:

Child: How old are you?

TA: Guess!

Child: 41? 42? 43? Gosh! Your'e older than my mum. It's about time you were a teacher!

And a few more picked up over the last few months:

Teacher: Who can tell me what a phoneme is?

Child: (confidently) I know what that is – it's when you phone in on the tele.

Teacher: (looking at a picture the child has drawn) Who's that?

Child: That's my illogical father.

Teacher: (to class) Why do we have ears?

Child: (seriously) To rest our glasses on.

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

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