

hARD COPY

VALENTINE
SPECIAL

In this issue:

Cashless Society
AGM Venue Change
Blackpool Lights
Mental Health
Quizmas Special Results
Business Travel
Work Hazards
Stress
Workplace Violence
Guest Editorial
And much more.....



GUEST EDITORIAL

By Duncan Griffiths



I have no real idea why I was asked to do a guest editorial for the Valentine's special of the Branch Newsletter the Hard Copy, especially as it is the Valentine's special.

Perhaps the Editors see me as some kind of romantic character, Mr Darcy perhaps from Pride and Prejudice. Well perhaps not.!

Anyway I agreed to do so I will probably have fallen into some trap or other and my photo will have been doctored and made into another character. Last time it was scrooge, who knows this time.

I hope that you all enjoy this edition of the newsletter and that you had a good Christmas and New Year.

If there is any feedback on this edition or if you feel that there are topics that could be covered in future then please contact any of the following on the editorial board:

Lee Wallace-Dand
Jacqui Dunkerley
Trisha Spencer
Grant McClure
Katya Lawder.

Duncan



They're getting married in the morning...

Well not quite exactly, more like they got married between Christmas and New Year, but that did not scan so well with the song did it?

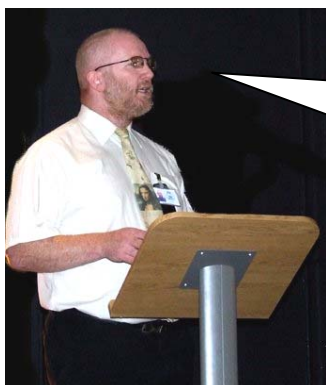
Yes Lee Wallace-Dand (Deputy Secretary, designer and producer of the Newsletter) tied the knot with Rachel Dickinson (Veterans Agency Branch Organiser) on the 27th of December 2007.

The fellow editorial board members and Branch Officers (at least the ones I have spoken to) would like to wish Lee and Rachel Wallace-Dand all the best for their future together.

You never know Lee may treat you all and put a picture of the happy occasion in the newsletter with this article, or he may even put a picture of his wedding to Rachel instead!



Jacqui & Durcan



**GOOD
LUCK!**

Mini-Wade Says...

WADE'S WORLD™

Quiz

"Party on Wade". "Party on Grant".

"Party time most excellent"!

Lets see if you are worthy of entering into Wade's World.

Not!

Question 1

James Wade is famous at which of the following sports:

- a) Darts
- b) Snooker
- c) Boxing
- d) Fencing
- e) Horse Racing

Question 2

Which "Mike" wrote the film Wayne's world. Was it?

- a) Carvey
- b) Moran
- c) Myers
- d) Winters
- e) Raphone

Question 3

Which of the following are sometimes worn by anglers? Is it?

- a) Paddlers
- b) Waders
- c) Sploshers
- d) Splashers
- e) Dabblers

Question 4

Which General presented a report to King George I on the 10th of December 1724. Was it?

- a) Wade
- b) White
- c) Waite
- d) Wake
- e) Whale

Question 5

Wayne's World first appeared as a sketch on which show? Was it:

- a) Friday Night, Saturday Morning
- b) Going Live
- c) TFI Friday
- d) Saturday Night Live
- e) Tiswas

Question 6

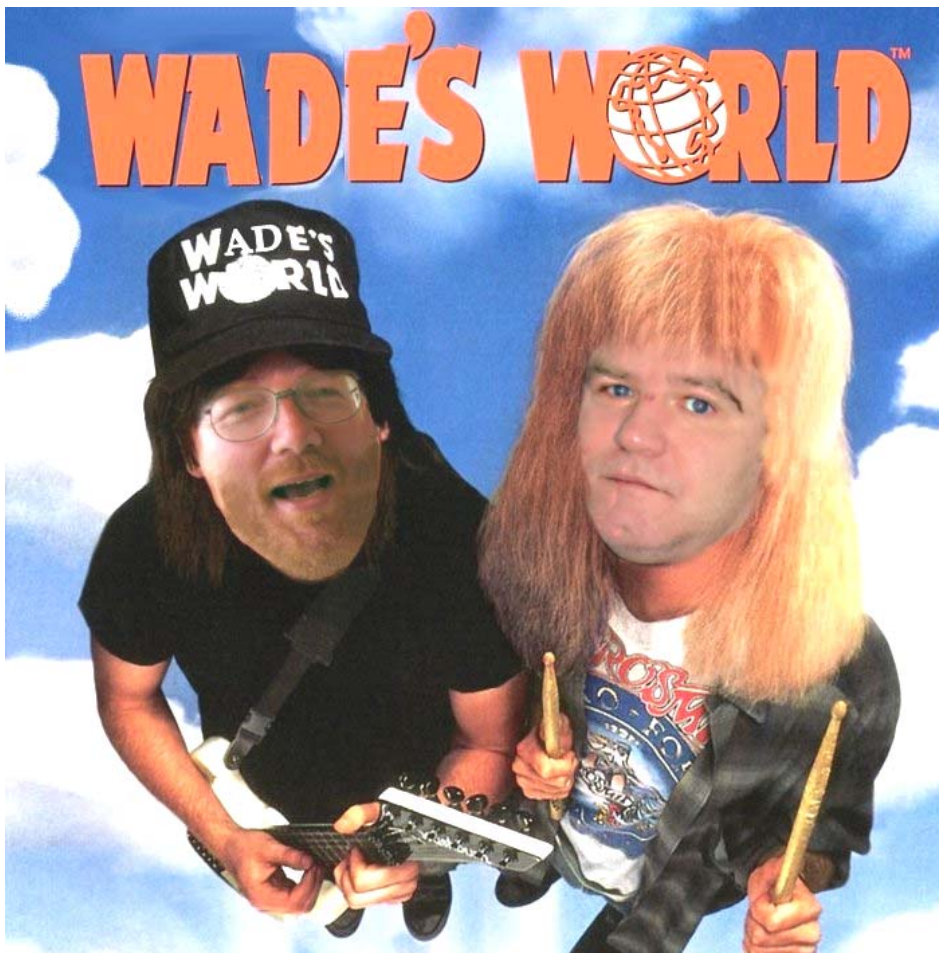
"Everything about you", is on the soundtrack to the film Wayne's World but which Ugly Kid performed the song. Was it?

- b) Chris
- c) Steve
- e) Joe

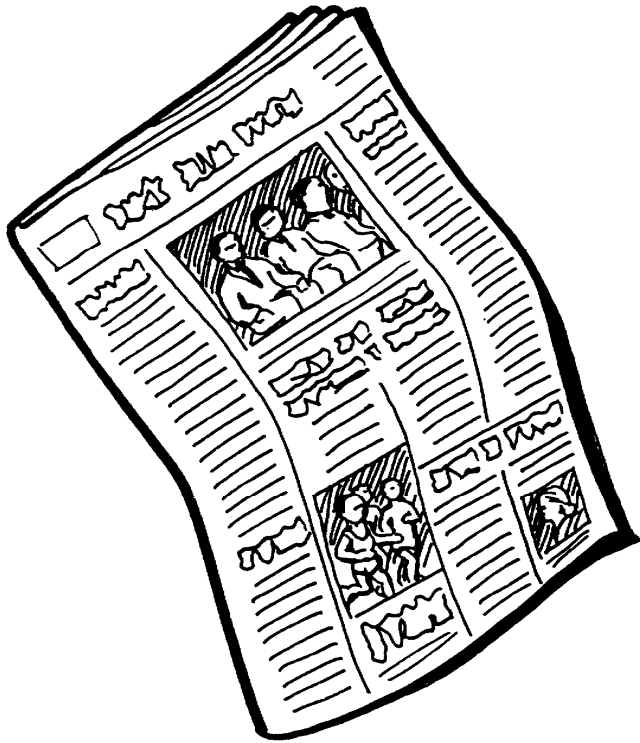
Please send your answers together with your name and details to Jacqui "I think that Wayne's World was a really good film, I even saw the follow up film Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, I'll have you know" Dunkerley, Room 7233 Norcross; to arrive no later than the 7th of March 2008.

The winner will receive a mystery prize. Please remember that only members of the Fylde Central Benefits and Services Branch, excluding Branch Executive Committee can enter the quiz. That's the last thing that you will hear from me! **Not!!!**

C hris Wade



The following article was reported in the Guardian on Saturday January 5 2008 by Bobbie Johnson and David Hencke



Not fit for purpose: £2bn cost of government's IT blunders

- Catalogue of abandoned projects over seven years
 - £1.6bn wasted by work and pensions ministry
- The cost to the taxpayer of abandoned Whitehall computer projects since 2000 has reached almost £2bn - not including the bill for

an online crime reporting site that was cancelled this week, a survey by the Guardian reveals.

The failure of the multimillion pound police site marks the latest chapter in the government's litany of botched IT projects, with several costly schemes biting the dust. Major blunders overseen by Downing Street have included the Child Support Agency's much-derided £486m computer upgrade - which collapsed and forced a £1bn claims write-off - and an adult learning programme that was subjected to extensive fraud.

Top of the ministries for wasting public money is the Department for Work and Pensions, which squandered more than £1.6bn by abandoning three major schemes - a new benefit card which was based on outdated technology; the upgrade to the CSA's computer which could not handle 1.2m existing claims; and £140m on a streamlined benefit payment system that never worked properly.

The Guardian's survey of abandoned projects is not exhaustive and the total of £1,865bn is likely to be a considerable underestimate of the actual cost to taxpayers because neither Whitehall nor the National Audit Office, parliament's financial watchdog, keep definitive lists of which schemes go wrong.

Neither does it include the major modifications required to fix new systems that have failed to perform as required. One example is the pilot work done on the new £12bn NHS computer system - where outdated technology was installed at Bexley Hospital in south London, and has had to be replaced after it was found to be "unfit for purpose". Another is the huge modification required to the new computerised single payments system for farmers run by Defra's Rural Payments Agency, where the government has had to set aside some £300m to meet possible EU fines for wrong payments to thousands of farmers.

The abandoned police site, which was launched in 2003, allowed the public to report non-urgent crimes and provide photographic and video evidence through the internet. The system - linked to police forces around the country - then prioritised the information and distributed it to the correct forces.

It was being used to report around 30,000 crimes a year but began to falter when defence technology company, Qinetiq, was brought in to build a replacement in 2005. Costs began to spiral and the new system was deemed to be unfit for purpose, resulting in suspension of the service last March and final closure in

December. The deal is now subject to a legal dispute, with Qinetiq claiming that it has completed the work it was contracted to do. The National Police Improvement Agency, which manages IT systems for the police, would not say how much money had been spent on the portal, but documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act showed that running costs had risen above £5m a year in 2006.

The replacement system was not fit for live use due to "a range of serious defects and delays", a spokeswoman said. "It is not possible to issue more details as it is now subject to legal proceedings." A senior Whitehall official has questioned the heavy spend and high rate of failure.

Joe Harley, programme and systems delivery officer at the Department for Work and Pensions, said that the government's £14bn annual spend on IT could be used to build thousands of schools every year, or to employ hundreds of thousands of nurses in the NHS. "Today only 30%, we estimate, of our projects and programmes are successful," he told a conference. "It is not sustainable for us as a government to continue to spend at these levels. We need to up the quality of what we do at a reduced cost of doing so."

The extensive list of failed projects calls into question other major government IT programmes, such as the proposed £5bn ID cards scheme.

Price of failure: Where the money went

Benefit claims

Set up in December 2003 to streamline payment of benefits. Aimed to save £60m by picking up new and repeat claims by phone and the internet. The system was shelved in 2006 after it failed to work. Cost: £140m

Broadband procurement

Stephen Timms, e-commerce minister, led the 2004 project to pool public-sector buying power to get cheaper broadband deals. But after it was found the £3.5m savings made from the scheme were far smaller than the projected £200m cost the DTi shut the project. Cost: £15m

Immigration casework

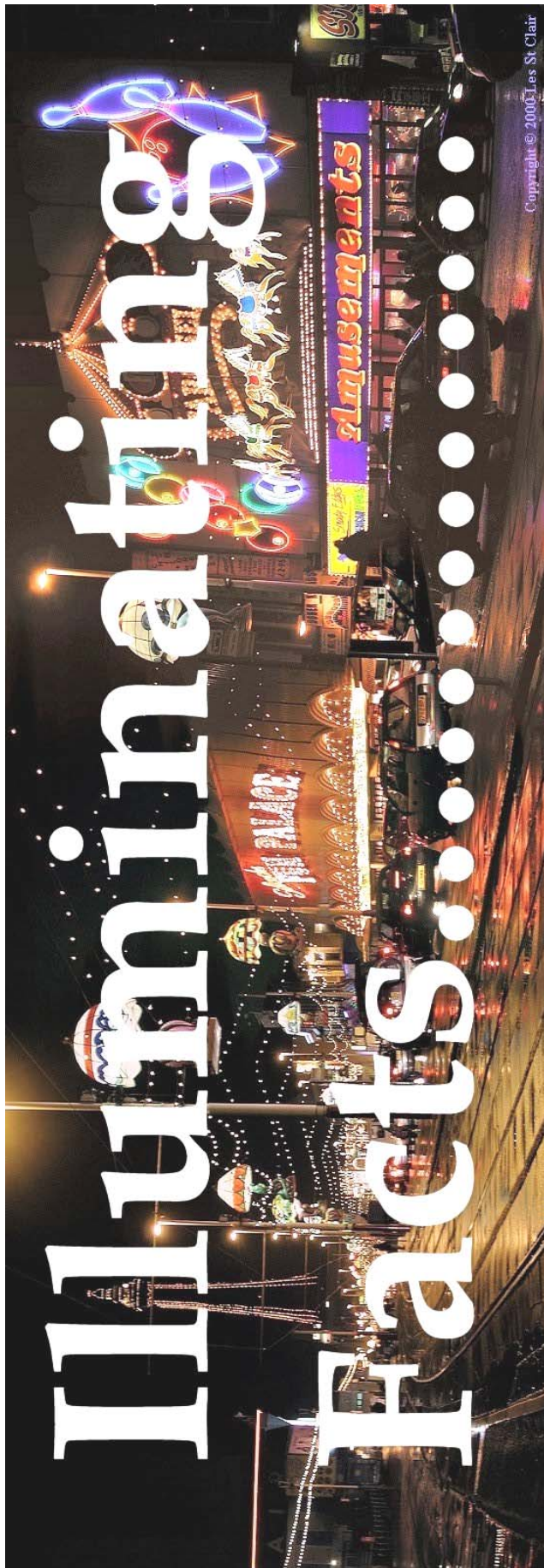
A computer system of 2001 meant to clear the backlog of immigration casework for the Home Office, was scrapped after missing its deadlines. Cost: £77m

Independent learning accounts

The 2001 system offering adults £150 for educational use was abandoned after fraudsters coined millions in fake applications. Cost: £97m

Pathway

This project to introduce a benefits payment card in 2000 was scrapped after four years of expensive development when government experts realised the magnetic swipe technology that it was based on was already outdated. Cost: £1bn



The Blackpool lights first came in to existence 127 years ago, 1879 to be exact, the total number of lights at that time was 8,

(that's eight, two less than ten), but it was the start up of what we have today. EIGHT arc lamps splashed out the light in what was described at the time as artificial sunshine...

This never went on without any problems though, there were times when the lights went out as the tide came in...because, yes you've guessed it, water leaked into the old cast iron wiring pipes on the seafront, some might be tempted to say it was a washout.

The nearest thing to what you may call the "modern-day display", was staged along what is now known as Princess Parade during May in 1912. This was to celebrate the first Royal visit to Blackpool and it was "Princess Louise" who officially opened the new section of the promenade which has been known ever since as "Princess Parade".

As part of the celebrations for this event, the Blackpool electrical engineer was instructed to decorate the Promenade in what was then a novel fashion with festoons of garland lamps. About 10,000 bulbs were used and the results were so impressive that the local chamber of trade and other business people in the town persuaded the council to stage these lights again in the September of that year. With the thousands of people who visited the resort to see the Illuminations the event was judged a commercial success and In 1913 the council was again encouraged to stage the Princess Parade lights as an after-season event in the September.

The response from the public was nothing short of astonishing but hopes of building on this success were short-lived with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. The Illuminations returned in 1925 on a more ambitious scale with lights festooned along the Promenade from Manchester Square to Cocker Square. It quickly became appreciated that Blackpool Illuminations were a worthwhile tourist attraction and they continued to be staged annually for many years.

By 1932 animated tableaux had been added and these were erected on the cliffs linking

North Shore and Bispham. The length of the lights was extended to its present length - just under six miles - starting at Squires Gate and finishing at Red Bank Road. In 1939, although the Illuminations were ready for staging, they were prevented by the outbreak of the Second World War.

There was a full-scale preview on August 31, complete with a giant searchlight sweeping wide from the Tower top. But the next night the blackout had been enforced and the only colour to be seen was inside hotels and boarding houses where landladies had coloured their bulbs with Dolly blue.

Even after the war had finished there were restrictions on the use of fuel and decorative lighting such as the Illuminations, remained prohibited. The austere climate of post-war Britain meant the lights did not come on again until 1949 when Anna Neagle pressed the switch. Even then there was a cliff-hanger situation as the council waited for government permission to burn the required amount of electricity.

Although Lights displays were staged in 1879, 1912, 1913 and then 1925 through to 1933, it was not until 1934 that a proper Switch-On ceremony was devised to launch the Summer Season's Grand Finale. Lord Derby did the honours, followed by this impressive roll call of celebrities:-

1934 Lord Derby
1935 Audrey Mossom (Railway Queen)
1936 Sir Josiah Stamp
1937 Alderman Ashton (later Duke of Kent)
1938 Councillor Mrs Quayle
1939 Cancelled when war broke out, no display during War years or indeed until
1949 Anna Neagle
1950 Wilfred Pickles
1951 Stanley Mathews
1952 Valerie Hobson
1953 George Formby
1954 Gilbert Harding
1955 Jacob Malik (Russian Ambassador)
1956 Reginald Dixon
1957 John H Whitney (American Ambassador)
1958 A E 'Matt' Matthews

1959 Jane Mansfield
1960 Janet Munro
1961 Violet Carson
1962 Shirley Ann Field
1963 Cliff Michelmore
1964 Gracie Fields
1965 David Tomlinson

1966 Ken Dodd
1967 Dr. Horace King (Speaker)
1968 Sir Matt Busby
1969 Canberra Bomber
1970 Tony Blackburn
1971 Cast of "Dad's Army"
1972 Danny La Rue
1973 Gordon Banks
1974 Wendy Craig
1975 Tom Baker (Dr Who)
1976 Carol Ann Grant (Miss United Kingdom)
1977 Red Rum
1978 Terry Wogan
1979 Kermit the Frog and the Muppets
1980 Cannon and Ball
1981 Earl & Countess Spencer
1982 Rear Admiral "Sandy" Woodward
1983 Cast of "Coronation Street" (Doris Speed)
1984 Johannes Rau (Minister-President, North Rhine Westphalia & David Waddington, QC,MP (Minister of State, Home Office)
1985 Joanna Lumley, BBC "Children in need"
1986 Les Dawson
1987 Frank Bough, Ann Gregg & Kathy Tayler, BBC "Holiday" programme
1988 Andrew Lloyd Webber and Sarah Brightman
1989 Frank Bruno
1990 Bet & Alec Gilroy "Coronation Street" (Julie Goodyear & Roy Barraclough)
1991 Derek Jameson and Judith Chalmers
1992 Lisa Stansfield
1993 Status Quo & Radio One
1994 Shirley Bassey
1995 Bee Gees & Radio One
1996 Eternal & Radio One
1997 Michael Ball & Radio Two
1998 Chris De Burgh & Radio Two
1999 Gary Barlow & Radio Two
2000 Westlife & Radio Two
2001 Steps & Radio Two
2002 Ronan Keating & Radio Two

2003 Blue & Radio Two
2004 Geri Halliwell & Radio Two
2005 Chris Evans & Radio Two
2006 Dale Winton & Radio Two
2007 David Tennant & Radio Two

*And if you missed them, this
years lights were very good!*

Call for tough action on safety 'crime wave'

There must be tougher enforcement action to tackle a workplace health and safety 'crime wave', the TUC has said. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber told a conference there are at least 20,000 work-related deaths and 2.2 million injuries every year. He said the 241 fatalities in 2006/07 'only tells us part of the story. We have to remember the 5,000 people killed last year because of asbestos exposure, the thousand killed in work-related road accidents, the many thousands killed by workplace cancers every year, as well as those who suffer heart attacks as a result of overwork or stress.' Mr Barber told the Centre for Corporate Accountability conference: 'Nobody knows exactly how many people die prematurely every year as a result of work, but is certainly well over 20,000 a year - and every single one of these deaths was avoidable. The HSE estimates that over 80 per cent of injuries are a direct result of management failures. This means that the vast majority of deaths are simply down to management breaking health and safety laws. The same is true of the 2.2 million people who are suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their work.' Mr Barber concluded: 'To me this is a crime wave on a massive scale. A crime wave that screams out for action. Evidence shows the most effective way to change behaviour is strong enforcement action, supported by advice and guidance. And there is also evidence of a clear link between enforcement levels and injury rates. So if we know enforcement works, then why are we not doing more to enforce the law?' Part of the answer lies in the government's attitude towards enforcement, with some ministers and agencies talking up the importance of enforcement, and others actively working against it, he said. 'If one half of the government sees regulation as a dirty word, then it makes life very difficult for the other half who recognise the importance of protecting the vulnerable. Unfortunately, the government seems to have been taken in by employer lobbying about so-called 'red tape'. He called for statutory safety duties on company directors and stricter penalties for safety offences. 'But most of all, we want more inspections and enforcement activity,' he said. Mr Barber said cuts in the HSE budget had to be reversed to make this a possibility.

Unions want more than guidance

Unions have welcomed new guidance from the Institute of Directors (IoD), but have said there should also be legal safety duties on directors. TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said: 'The TUC welcomes anything which will help change the culture in the boardroom, and we will be strongly promoting this useful and well written guidance, however there is a limit to what can be achieved through guidance and there are some directors who will simply not take their responsibilities seriously. That is why we need a clear legal duty on directors.' Tony Woodley, Unite joint general secretary, said: 'Government is right to say there is an obligation on employers but instead of that being moral and ethical, in other words voluntary, it should be compulsory and enshrined in law. The frustration is ministers had a chance to tackle this but failed to act and now the HSE itself is facing possible budget cuts, which, if implemented, will mean the situation won't improve. Meanwhile, workers have continued to pay the price by being killed at work in increasing numbers.' Unite health and safety officer Bud Hudspith, who represented TUC on the panel drafting the IoD guidance, said: 'We want guilty directors in prison, and we want other individual penalties when directors and senior managers fail to meet their health and safety duties.' He told Risks: 'Until health and safety duties on directors become a reality, Unite welcomes the approach identified by HSC chair Judith Hackitt. She has said HSE inspectors will be trained in the new guidance, will discuss it with duty holders and will use the guidance to assess the health and safety role of board members during any investigations.

Directors publish voluntary code

Company directors have published their own voluntary guidelines to good boardroom safety practice. The Institute of Directors (IoD) says the new guidance will remind directors it is their responsibility to lead on health and safety and establish policies and practices that make it an integral part of their culture and values. 'Leading health and safety at work', written by directors for directors, was published by the Health and Safety Commission and IoD last week. Supporting the new guidance, safety minister Lord McKenzie of Luton said: 'The health and safety of employees is a moral and ethical obligation for each and every employer and this must be driven home from board level. Only this way will we ensure that health and safety is taken seriously. This guidance clearly sets out the agenda for effective leadership of health and safety.' New HSC chair Judith Hackitt said: 'It is visible leadership from the top of an organisation which truly makes for an effective health and safety culture which in turn delivers good health and safety performance and much more. I am still confounded by the number of people who see 'health and safety' as a barrier to doing things, as experience and evidence shows that the reverse is true.' She added: 'This guidance makes it clear what directors need to do but it is their action and delivery which will really count'. The new HSC chair also emphasised the importance of inspection and enforcement in securing safe and healthy workplaces.

The following details have
been supplied by the:



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been supplied by the:



Long hours working on the rise again

A culture of working long hours is on the rise once more in the UK after a decade of gradual decline, according to figures published this week by the TUC. More than one in eight of the British workforce now work more than 48 hours a week, the maximum allowed under the law unless workers agree to waive that limit. The proportion rises to one in six in London. The 48-hour ceiling was introduced as a health and safety measure, as long hours have been linked to increases in both workplace injuries and a range of work-related health problems. The figures, extracted from the latest Labour Force Survey, show the UK's working hours are among the longest in Europe. While the law protects people against an average working week of more than 48 hours unless they opt out of working time rules, the TUC says a lack of enforcement means bad employers know this is one employment right they can breach with little or no risk of any consequences. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: 'These are very disturbing numbers. They suggest that the slow, but at least steady, decline in those working more than 48 hours a week has come to an end.' He added: 'Neither the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) nor local authorities who share responsibility for enforcement have the resources to implement the law. And the government knows that employers can abuse the opt-out as ministers consulted on ways to close loopholes in 2004, but have yet to bring forward any concrete proposals for change. The current discussions on how best to protect vulnerable workers and enforce existing rights must include working time rights and closing the loopholes that make a voluntary opt-out a joke.' The TUC says that these official figures underestimate long hours working as the sample on which the survey is based is unlikely to include a proper share of migrant workers and excludes those who live at their place of work, such as some hotel and care staff who work long hours. HSE's enforcement database records just two successful prosecutions for breaches of the 1998 Working Time Regulations.

CBI wants GP visits off the clock

Family doctors are costing business a billion pounds a year because it is so hard to see them outside normal working hours, employers have said - a claim which has been challenged forcefully by the British Medical Association. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) said millions of staff were forced to take time off work to visit GPs because they could not get evening or weekend appointments. The employers' group wants patients to be able to register at more than one practice so they have

access to GP services near their work as well as at home. A CBI report says each year 3.5 million working days were lost to visits to GPs - four times as many days as were lost last year to industrial action. John Cridland, CBI deputy director-general, said: 'Good employers want employees to look after their health. But they don't want to pay for a health service that isn't flexible enough to cope with the modern world. In the 21st century it should be possible to have a doctor close to work and close to home so that we can all get on with our lives with the minimum disruption.' The British Medical Association (BMA) said the real problem was the failure of employers to provide their staff with a proper occupational health service. In a firm riposte to the CBI's claims, Dr Laurence Buckman, chair of the BMA's GPs Committee, said: 'The CBI and its members should put their own house in order before trying to heap the blame on general practice. If employees lose time from work to see their doctor it is either because they are ill and need care or because their employer has insisted they get a sick note even for a temporary illness which has passed. This abuse of the sick note system is a waste of the time of both working people and clinicians.' He added: 'If the CBI really wishes to change things for their employees, a good starting point would be to talk to the people providing care to see if things can move forward. If its members think their staff are seeking medical appointments without any real cause, that seems to point to the need for a better occupational health service. Many employers seem to regard their sick employees' time as their own. It isn't. NHS general practice is there to treat patients and their care is what comes first and last.'

Minister backs union strains campaign

Health and safety minister Lord McKenzie has added his weight to a union bad backs prevention initiative. The minister joined trade union safety representatives and experts from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on a London unionlearn course to mark European Health and Safety Week in October. The unionlearn course demonstrated tools union reps can use to help prevent back pain and repetitive strain injury in the workplace. Speaking at the event at TUC's Congress House, Lord McKenzie said: 'Every year more than 1 million workers in Great Britain suffer from back pain or repetitive strain injuries, making these the most common form of work related injury in the country. Partnership working and events such as this play a key role in making progress in reducing the number of workplace injuries.' Geoffrey Podger, chief executive of HSE, said: 'When employers and employees work together on health and safety issues, there can be real improvements. HSE is committed to raising awareness and reducing the incidence of work related MSD cases. Early next year we will be working on further planned initiatives with stakeholders.' Liz Rees,

unionlearn trade union education manager, said she was delighted the minister could 'see at first hand what difference safety representatives are making in the workplace. Safety at work is a concern for every worker and employer as well as the TUC. Unionlearn together with trade unions are all playing a part to make workplaces safer.

Concerns about new work capability tests

Disability, work policy and union organisations have warned changes to the incapacity benefit system risk penalising and harassing the sick and those with disabilities. Commenting on the new incapacity test to be introduced in October 2008, Sophie Corlett, policy director at mental health charity Mind, said there was a danger that those forced to return to work prematurely would see their health deteriorate, meaning that 'their chances of working actually diminishes.' The TUC said returning the sick to work required cooperation, not coercion. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: 'The government must get people back to work through access to rehabilitation and support. Government pilots, such as Pathways to Work, have shown that this is the most effective approach. Removing benefits or introducing new tests will only force people back to work before they are ready. This will not benefit UK business or the taxpayer.' The Work Foundation's David Coats said it is important the government 'does not begin pandering to ill-informed sentiments'. He said: 'Evidence gives little credence to 'sick-note Britain': sickness absence in the UK compares favourably with most European countries. In addition, the fact that some disabilities are 'psychological' as opposed to 'physical' does not make them less 'real'. Although the occupational illnesses that affect the most people in the UK remain conditions such as back pain and muscular injuries rather than stress or anxiety.' Phil Gray, chief executive of physios' union CSP said: 'Investment now in rapid early intervention and rehabilitation by physiotherapists will lead to long-term savings - for the NHS and for the wider UK economy.'

Business says business is bad to workers

A top business organisation has urged companies to put the health of the nation's workforce on to the boardroom agenda, after its research revealed 'apathy' on the issue was damaging both workers' health and productivity. Business in the Community (BITC) said its research has revealed that a third of workers (31 per cent) feel their health is neglected at work, while six in 10 (62 per cent) 'don't believe bosses consider staff as assets worth investing in.' Almost half (46 per cent) claim apathy towards employee wellbeing has taken its toll on workplace productivity. Nearly half (44 per cent) said they

were discouraged from taking sick days when unwell, with the same proportion reporting they were under pressure to do unpaid overtime. Over half (55 per cent) said they were suffering stress and over a third depression (38 per cent). BITC says there is a proven return on employee health and wellbeing investment of 3:1, and has launched a national campaign calling for at least 75 per cent of all FTSE 100 companies to publicly report on employee wellbeing by 2011. BITC says its Business Action on Health campaign, which is backed by a string of major companies, 'provides a suite of tools for UK boards to effectively measure bottom line impact of employee health

and wellbeing investment for the first time.' Stephen Howard, managing director of BITC said: 'We know substantial investment is already being made in employee wellbeing, however, public reporting in this area is almost non-existent. Our aim is to increase business accountability and competitiveness by helping companies introduce simple health and wellbeing programmes that can be effectively measured against the bottom line.'

Unions and enforcement are the safe option

Rigorous enforcement backed up by active unions is the best way to deliver safety at work, a new World Health Organisation report has concluded. 'Employment conditions and health inequalities' says contrary to the current fashion for deregulation, regulations are not the problem. 'Mandating of standards or enactment of regulation will have little effect without adequate supporting infrastructure and rigorous enforcement,' the report says. 'Evidence of the failure of existing regulations to protect vulnerable workers even in developed countries, generally reflects a failure of enforcement rather than an argument against the regulatory option.' A case history on the role of unions notes: 'Extensive research mainly conducted in Canada, Australia, the United States, and especially in the United Kingdom, shows that workplaces where trade unions are present are safer, improving occupational health outcomes.' It adds: 'Participation of unions and the workforce at different levels can have a considerable effect in changing health and safety at the workplace. For instance, unions dramatically increase enforcement of the occupational safety and health acts, and unionised workplaces are much more likely to have a health and safety committee and to have undergone a management safety audit in the previous year than non-unionised workplaces. Unions ensure that their safety representatives are better trained in health and safety than employers. Moreover, unions often realise the risks long before management does.'



**Fylde Central Benefits
and Services Branch**

Proudly Present:

The 2008 AGM

Details as follows:

Date: Thursday, 28th February 2008

Venue: The Layton Institute, Blackpool

Time: 1:00 pm

For further details contact:

Duncan Griffiths
Branch Secretary
Room 7233, Norcross
Ext: 63484

***** CHANGE OF VENUE *****

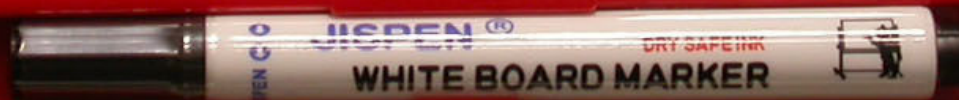
New HSC chair wants boardroom action

The new chair of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) has called for more board level engagement and ownership on health and safety issues. Judith Hackitt - who has previously served time as a HSC commissioner - has held top posts in chemical industry lobby groups, including a stint as director general of the Chemical Industries Association. Commenting as she took up her new post on 1 October, she said: 'I am delighted to return to HSC and lead an organisation that has played a crucial role in improving Britain's health and safety record. I look forward to working with members of the Commission, the Health and Safety Executive, our partners in local government, trade unions and business leaders who have all played a vital role in influencing the safety culture in this country.' She added: 'With the latest figures showing 241 workplace fatalities, 146,000 serious injuries and two million reported cases of work-related ill-health, there is no room for complacency. More needs to be done in addressing the enormous challenges of improving health and safety in our workplaces. To improve our safety record we need strong and committed boardroom leadership that focuses on real causes of harm in the workplace and not trivia.'



Courts protect cash much better than workers

The courts disqualify company directors risking cash hundreds of times more often than directors risking people's health and safety, a major study has found. Research for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published recently reported that since the introduction of a director disqualification act in the mid-80s only a handful of directors have been disqualified for breaching health and safety laws compared to over 1,500 each year for breaches of financial rules. Professor Alan Neal and Professor Frank Wright of the Employment Law Research Unit of the University of Warwick looked at the use made of powers contained in the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 in relation to disqualification orders related to workplace health and safety failures. From the records made available to them, the researchers were able to identify just 10 directors who had been disqualified for health and safety reasons between the date when the 1986 Act took effect and the end point of their study in 2005. They say conservatively this means there are 300 finance related disqualifications to every safety ban, but the ratio could be as high as a thousand to one. The researchers said there were clear reasons why there had been so few safety related disqualifications even though the 1986 made this a clear option. Professor Alan Neal said: 'We found a marked absence of awareness even of what potential powers may be contained within the 1986 Act.' The study authors call for better guidance for prosecutor and enforcement agencies on the use of the act, and say arrangements should be made 'to supervise and monitor all health and safety prosecution files, with a view to identifying cases where it would be appropriate to make application for a disqualification order, and that, in any event, a formal return should be made by all prosecutors in respect of the outcomes of any cases handled by them before the courts.' Commenting on the report, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: 'The law is more concerned with punishing directors for financial offences than it is with dishing out penalties when safety crimes are committed.' He added: 'At the moment there is no legal duty on directors to ensure the safety of their employees. That must change. The courts must start imposing higher fines as well as other, more imaginative penalties such as corporate probation on directors who show scant regard for the safety of their workforce. But any increased sanctions are dependent on the offenders being prosecuted, and with most workplaces being inspected, on average only once every 13-20 years, few employers see it as a deterrent.'



Children's



Quiz - *the results*

Flobber lobby little weed. Ooohhh flobber obber weed. Weeeed.

Yes it's the answers to the Children's TV quiz. All aboard the Skylark! All aboard the Skylark!

Answer 1

In Pipkins Octavia was an Ostrich

Answer 2

the Clangers used to visit the Soup Dragon to get their soup

Answer 3

In Bagpuss there was a Mouse organ

Answer 4

It was Chorlton and the Wheelies.

Answer 5

The sour grapes were the archenemies of the banana splits.

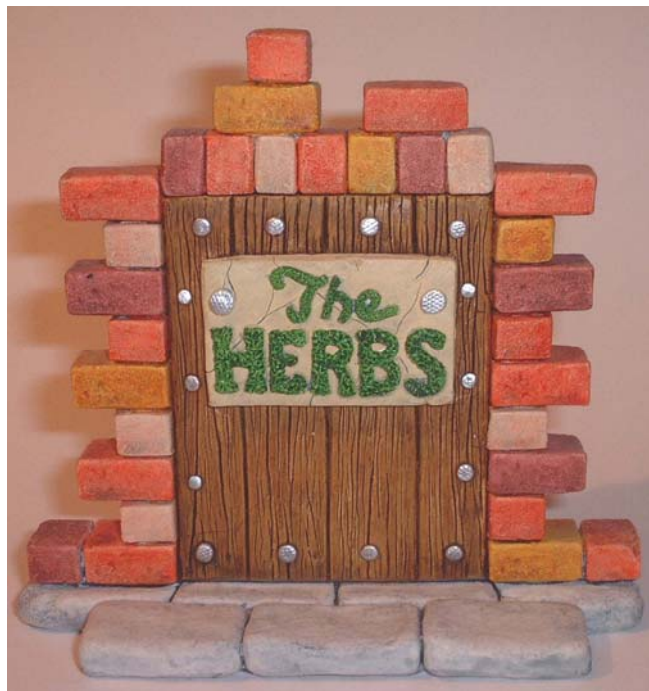
Answer 6

In the herbs Dill was a dog

The winner is Cathy Griffiths (again) from Norcross who receives a box of chocs

Flobber lobby weed!

Lee and Duncan



KING JONES MONEY QUIZ II - *The results*

Money it's a gas!

Arise for the King. In the DWP it would be a small rise that's for sure.

Answer 1

"Money" is on Dark side of the Moon

Answer 2

Alistair Darling is the current Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Answer 3

Hmmmmpppphhhh. Tricky. You needed a time machine for this one. As the article was no in the newsletter. The answer was Mondex

Answer 4

Adam Smith is on the back of the present £20 note.

Answer 5

1971 was the year of decimalisation

Answer 6

Mervyn King is the Governor of the Bank of England

The winner who received a £20 voucher is Roy Griffiths of Norcross.

I am not really a monarch.

King Jones



Jacqui's Riddler the answer

Jaffa is the name of my ginger stripy cat. Did you get it the clue was in the name and also Jaffs was pictured in the Animals quiz as well.

She has a brother called Socks as well who is my sisters cat, I'll have you know.

The winner is Di Dykes from Norcross who receives a box of chocs.

Jacqui



Jacqui's Animals quiz - *the results*

Just enough time to give you answers before I have to go and feed my friends cat. She is away on holiday you know. The friend that is, not the cat....So here are the cuddly and furry answers.

Answer 1

The tail is missing from a Manx cat.

Answer 2

Kevin was the name of Roland Rats friend who was a gerbil.

Answer 3

According to the Blackpool Evening Gazette what type of animal was the "Norcross One" - a Pigeon of course!

Answer 4

Budgerigars originate from Australia

Answer 5

In Alice in Wonderland, Alice followed a white rabbit down the hole.

Answer 6

A witch's cat is a Familiar

And the winner is Janet Hill from Warbreck Hill who receives a box of chocs. Well done.

I'm going to see if they have any tortoises in the pet shop, I love tortoises.

Jacqui



Mick's Poodle Rock Quiz

- *the results* -

Time to fluff out my perm and pout at the camera, here are the not so heavy answers.

Answer 1

The Gods of Poodle Rock Bon Jovi had an album called "New" Jersey

Answer 2

Van Halen wanted us to Jump

Answer 3

Motley Crew sang about Girls, Girls, Girls

Answer 4

Heart wanted to get you Alone

Answer 5

Bon Jovi sang Bad medicine (and sang badly)

Answer 6

According to Poison every rose had its thorn

The winner is David Bevan from Warbreck who receives a box of chocs.

Not so Metal Mick

briefing



Public and
Commercial
Services Union

Equality Health & Safety Department

BB/06/08

TO: BRANCH SECRETARIES PCS DISABILITY NETWORK

DN/1108

FROM: PHIL MADELIN

DATE: 18th January 2008

SUBJECT: TUC DISABILITY CONFERENCE 2008

The TUC Disability Conference 2008 will be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, on 21-22 May, 2008. The conference will start at 11 am on Wednesday 21, finishing at 6pm and run from 9.30am to 5.30pm on 24. There will be a delegation pre-meeting on the late afternoon of Tuesday 20th May, 2008.

PCS will be sending a delegation to the conference which will include places for disabled members, who will be selected from among those either self-nominating or put forward by Branches. Precise numbers are still to be decided.

I am therefore writing to seek nominations from those who wish to be considered for one of the member places on the delegation. An Application Form **MUST** be used when applying for consideration.

I would be grateful if Branch Secretaries could bring this circular to the attention of disabled members in the branch. You may wish to note that this conference takes place at the same time as the PCS Group and National Conferences will be taking place in 2008.

Delegates will have London accommodation booked and paid for centrally. Delegates are required to attend for the full duration of conference.

The criteria for selection of delegates will be:

- The need to achieve a wide mix of union groups and employers
- The need to have a reasonable geographical spread
- The need to encourage more people to take an active role alongside existing experience.

In considering applications, great weight will be attached to the reasons given for wanting to be a delegate to this important event. So applicants should spend some time outlining their reasons. The TUC Conference is **NOT** primarily a learning event-business is concerned with the debating of policy motions submitted by affiliated unions.

Please ensure that nominations are sent to Phil Madelin, at PCS HO, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN by the closing date which is: Friday 22nd February, 2008. Faxes are acceptable and can be sent to 020 7223 8363. You can also e-mail nominations to equality@pcs.org.uk

No nominations will be taken after 5pm on this date as the National Executive Committee, who will decide the delegation, will meet shortly thereafter.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on 020 7801 2683. Alternatively, I can be e-mailed on phil@pcs.org.uk

For alternative formats for this circular and/or the application form, please contact me.

The following details have
been supplied by the:

TUC

'Tougher' work tests for disabled

New incapacity benefit tests planned for next year mean fewer sick and disabled people will qualify as being unable to work. Work and pensions secretary Peter Hain said the changes, due to be introduced in October 2008, will end 'sick-note Britain.' The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that about 2.64 million people currently claim incapacity benefits. The new work capability assessment, which will cover the entire UK, is being introduced alongside the employment support allowance - which will replace incapacity benefits for new claimants from next autumn. At the moment more than 60 per cent of the people who apply for incapacity benefits are successful, but only 50 per cent of people who take the new test are likely to pass it. Those who fail will be expected to seek work. Tests such as being able to walk more than 400 metres (437 yards) or being able to climb 12 steps without the aid of a banister will be abolished. The new test will look at other skills, such as a person's ability to use a computer keyboard or a mouse. Mr Hain said: 'We want to help people, not punish people. This is about giving people opportunities because you are better off in work - the evidence shows that.'



'Work while you're sick' is hurting firms

Pressure to stagger into work when sick is hurting workers and damaging productivity, commitment levels and motivation, according to research from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). Its 'Quality of Working Life' report reveals that 17 per cent of managers believe their health is deteriorating and more than four in 10 (42 per cent) claim illness rates in their organisation have gone up over the last 12 months. But the study of 1,511 managers found 1 in 3 believe a culture of not taking time off work for sickness exists in their organisation. Only 53 per cent of employees feel they would be treated sympathetically if they were ill. The report reveals half (48 per cent) of those reporting symptoms relating to stomach bugs in the past year did

not take sick leave and only 9 per cent suffering from stress took time off from work, despite 1 in 3 citing stress symptoms. Two-thirds of respondents (67 per cent) said their productivity was reduced by ill health. CMI corporate affairs director Jo Causon said: 'While many employers bemoan the cost of absence to their organisations, they fail to see the damage done by creating a culture where illness is seen as a weakness. The risk of mistakes or spreading sickness surely outweighs the short-term benefits of someone turning up for work when not fully fit.'

Research proves health and safety pays

A positive approach to health and safety not only helps businesses attract quality employees, but also boosts sales and workforce commitment. Research by the Institute for Employment Studies and The Work Foundation for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) looked into UK business attitudes, intentions and performance and their health and safety strategies. A telephone survey of 3,000 UK businesses found a clear link between higher expenditure on health and safety and three key areas - a greater capacity to attract quality employees, higher employee commitment and faster sales growth. Health and safety was generally seen as either 'important' or 'very important' by firms - although smaller companies were less likely to have a positive attitude or regard it as a key strategic area. According to the researchers: 'Taken overall, our performance models, across a wide range of indicators, suggest that a strategic commitment to good health and safety practice does businesses no harm, and a spending commitment is strongly associated with tangible improvements in employee related aspects of the business.' Others have raised concerns about the priority given by small firms to health and safety. The

Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) criticised claims in a Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) report this month that said health and safety legislation 'is stifling the UK economy.'



Unions fears on workplace violence

Assaults on workers dealing with the public have reached record levels, unions are warning. They say anyone who serves the public seems to be vulnerable to outbursts of anger. The shopworkers' trade union, Usdaw, says that last year there were 10,000 physical assaults by customers on retail staff. 'Shop staff have been attacked with iron bars, stabbed with hypodermic needles, customers have driven at trolley boys in the car park,' said union spokesperson Paul Clarke. Verbal abuse of staff has reached 'epidemic levels', from ranting and raving through to specific threats of violence. 'It's incredibly destructive,' Paul Clarke told the Guardian recently. 'Who wants to go to their workplace and have someone shouting in their face?' NHS staff are also vulnerable to attacks - with 58,000 physical assaults last year. UNISON spokesperson Anne Mitchell said alcohol and drugs have played a 'huge part' in the surge in attacks. A&E departments become very 'distressing' places to be, with binge drinkers and drug users taking out their aggression on staff, she said. 'Wearing a medical uniform used to be a protection, now it seems to make them a target.' Some believe the emergence of a 'rights culture' is contributing to escalating violence. Patients want to be seen immediately and get violent if they are refused. 'They're very clear about their own rights, but they don't want to think about anyone else having rights as well,' said Anne Mitchell. Customer aggression also reflects the poor attitude that some in the UK have towards the service industry. 'People see retail staff as having non-jobs,' said Usdaw's Paul Clarke. 'So they behave in a way they wouldn't behave anywhere else.' He added: 'There seems to be part of our culture that has lost any respect for public service.'

The following details have
been supplied by the:



Controversy over mental health measures

The government will treble the number of employment advisers in GP surgeries and pilot a new £8m advice and support service for smaller businesses as part of a new approach it says will help people with stress and other mental health conditions find and keep work. Announcing the initiative recently, which includes development of a 'National Strategy for Mental Health and Work', work and pensions secretary Peter Hain said: 'People suffering from mental health conditions often experience problems in finding and keeping work, and mental ill-health is now the biggest single cause of both absence from work and incapacity benefit claims. In fact, around 40 per cent of people currently receiving incapacity benefits are doing so because of mental ill-health.' Alan Johnson, secretary of state for health, said: 'This package is designed to help people keep well and in work, which will ultimately save businesses huge amounts in sick leave and contribute to a better quality of life for those who may have otherwise had to give up work.' The drive to get people with mental health problems off benefits and into work has been criticised by mental health charity Mind. Commenting last week on the new incapacity test to be introduced in October 2008, policy director Sophie Corlett said there was a danger that those forced to return to work prematurely would see their health deteriorate, meaning that 'their chances of working actually diminishes'. She added: 'Unfortunately, many employers are still not very understanding about mental health problems. We fear that thousands of people with mental health problems will be under pressure to take up inappropriate work and risk becoming ill again. They will find themselves caught in a devastating cycle where they are turfed out of their new job and back onto benefits. This won't be good for the individual's health or for the economy.'

The following details have
been supplied by the:



Workers need mental health support

Family doctors need to do more to help people with mental health problems make a productive return to work, a new report has concluded. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) findings are based on the latest CIPD/KPMG quarterly Labour Market Outlook report, launched this week. CIPD reports that GPs are typically rated negatively by employers for the level of support they provide in helping people with mental health problems return to work. Almost 40 per cent of employers rate GP support in this area as either very poor or fairly poor compared to only 20 per cent who rate GP support as good or very good. Ben Willmott, CIPD employee relations adviser, said: 'GPs are letting down patients signed off work with mental health problems by not communicating effectively with employers. All the evidence shows that a phased return to work can play a hugely beneficial role in the recovery of people suffering with this kind of illness. Employers are willing to do their bit, but they need support and better communication from GPs to facilitate appropriately phased returns to work.' Commenting on the report, TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said: 'We agree that far more must be done to ensure that workers are given access to support when off sick and the GP must have a major role in this, however the role of the sick note system must be to help employees get better so that they can return to work rather than force them back too early. Many of the government's proposals may help this but only if employers have good sickness absence and return to work policies in place.'

Valentines Day History

There are varying opinions as to the origin of **Valentine's Day**. Some experts state that it originated from St. Valentine, a Roman who was martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February 14, 269 A.D., the same day that had been devoted to love lotteries. Legend also says that **St. Valentine** left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine". Other aspects of the story say that **Saint Valentine** served as a priest at the temple during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Claudius then had Valentine jailed for defying him. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius set aside February 14 to honour St. Valentine.

Gradually, February 14 became the date for exchanging love messages and St. Valentine became the **patron saint of lovers**. The date was marked by sending poems and simple gifts such as flowers. There was often a social gathering or a ball.

In the United States, Miss Esther Howland is given credit for sending the first valentine cards. Commercial valentines were introduced in the 1800's and now the date is very commercialised. The town of Loveland, Colorado, does a large post office business around February 14. The spirit of good continues as valentines are sent out with sentimental verses and children exchange valentine cards at school.

The History of Saint Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honour Juno. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia.

The lives of young boys and girls were strictly separate. However, one of the customs of the young people was name drawing. On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry.

Under the rule of Emperor Claudius II Rome was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns. Claudius the Cruel was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues. He believed that the reason was that Roman men did not want to leave their loves or families. As a result, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome. The good Saint Valentine was a priest at Rome in the days of Claudius II. He and Saint Marius aided the Christian martyrs and secretly married couples, and for this kind deed Saint Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. He suffered martyrdom on the 14th day of February, about the year 270. At that time it was the custom in Rome, a very ancient custom, indeed, to celebrate in the month of February the Lupercalia, feasts in honour of a heathen god. On these occasions, amidst a variety of pagan ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed.

The pastors of the early Christian Church in Rome endeavoured to do away with the pagan element in these feasts by substituting the names of saints for those of maidens. And as the Lupercalia began about the middle of February, the pastors appear to have chosen Saint Valentine's Day for the celebration of this new feast. So it seems that the custom of young men choosing maidens for valentines, or saints as patrons for the coming year, arose in this way.

St. Valentine's Story

Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine. I lived in Rome during the third century. That was long, long ago! At that time, Rome was ruled by an emperor named Claudius. I didn't like Emperor Claudius, and I wasn't the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.

Claudius wanted to have a big army. He expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want to fight in wars. They did not want to leave their wives and families. As you might have guessed, not many men signed up. This made Claudius furious. So what happened? He had a crazy idea. He thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army. So Claudius decided not to allow any more marriages. Young people thought his new law was cruel. I thought it was preposterous! I certainly wasn't going to support that law!

Did I mention that I was a priest? One of my favourite activities was to marry couples. Even after Emperor Claudius passed his law, I kept on performing marriage ceremonies -- secretly, of course. It was really quite exciting. Imagine a small candlelit room with only the bride and groom and myself. We would whisper the words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers.

One night, we did hear footsteps. It was scary! Thank goodness the couple I was marrying escaped in time. I was caught. (Not quite as light on my feet as I used to be, I guess.) I was thrown in jail and told that my punishment was death.

I tried to stay cheerful. And do you know what? Wonderful things happened. Many young people came to the jail to visit me. They threw flowers and notes up to my window. They wanted me to know that they, too, believed in love.

One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit me in the cell. Sometimes we would sit and talk for hours. She helped me to keep my spirits up. She agreed that I did the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and going ahead with the secret marriages. On the day I was to die,

I left my friend a little note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

I believe that note started the custom of exchanging love messages on Valentine's Day. It was written on the day I died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people remember. But most importantly, they think about love and friendship. And when they think of Emperor Claudius, they remember how he tried to stand in the way of love, and they laugh -- because they know that love can't be beaten!

Valentine Traditions

In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling.

Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch, she would marry a millionaire.

Think of five or six names of boys or girls you might marry, As you twist the stem of an apple, recite the names until the stem comes off. You will marry the person whose name you were saying when the stem fell off.

In Wales wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on February 14th. Hearts, keys and keyholes were favourite decorations on the spoons. The decoration meant, "You unlock my heart!"

A love seat is a wide chair. It was first made to seat one woman and her wide dress. Later, the love seat or courting seat had two sections, often in an S-shape. In this way, a couple could sit together -- but not too closely!





Moon Questions

Does the moon rotate?

In short, the answer is yes, the moon also has a rotation and a revolution motions. Moon's rotation and revolution have the same period, so that the same side of the Moon is always facing us. In fact, most moons in the solar system have a similar synchronous orbit, caused by the tidal forces exerted on the moon by the planet.

Why does the Moon seem to be Moving ,when seen from the Earth?

Because it does! The Earth Moon moves around the Earth and rotates over its axis roughly at the same speed. The Moon rotational speed at its equator is about 10.3 mi/hr (or 16.7 km/hr).

Which way does the moon rotate around the earth and why?

The moon appears to move east to west, as do all celestial bodies, due to the direction of the Earth's spin.

What causes the moon to change shapes (phases) throughout the month?

At any position, half of the Moon is illuminated by the Sun (the light side of the Moon) and half is not (the dark side). Also, half of the Moon is visible to the Earth (the near side of the Moon) and half is not (the far side). As the Moon moves around the Earth, we can see different fractions of the illuminated half of the Moon.

Has the moon been moving away from the Earth since the beginning of time?

The tidal force exerted by the Moon on the Earth causes the oceans to bulge. The Earth rotates about its axis faster than the Moon revolves around the Earth, and this rapid rotation carries the tidal bulge of the oceans forward of the Moon in its orbit. So the tidal bulge on the Earth is always slightly ahead of the Moon's own position. This bulge is continuously tugging the Moon forward, increasing the Moon's total energy.

How long does it take the Moon to make one revolution around the Earth?

It takes the Moon 27.322 days to go around the Earth once.

Why doesn't the Moon fall down?

Good question! The moon is actually falling all the time. Its just going so fast it never catches up to the Earth. This never ending falling is called orbital motion.

I would like to know... what direction does the moon appear to move at night- east to west or west to east?

The moon appears to move east to west, as do all celestial bodies, due to the direction of the Earth's spin.

<p>Why does the moon orbit the earth in an elliptical path instead of just a circle?</p>	<p>The Sun's gravity pulls the Moon's orbit a little bit out of its circle into an elliptic path.</p>
<p>Is the dark side of the moon always in darkness? Does it ever face the sun? What about during a solar eclipse?</p>	<p>The "dark side" of the moon is not always dark. The reason it is called the "dark side" is that that side of the moon is never visible from Earth. The moon's rotation and orbit are synchronized in such a way that we can only see one side. However, that "dark side" (or far side which is a more appropriate name!) does see the sun. For example, when we see only a sliver of the moon, most of the far side is facing the sun. During a solar eclipse, all of the far side is sunlit!</p>
<p>How is it that the Moons rotation and revolution are the same? What are the odds?</p>	<p>It may seem quite a coincidence that the Moon's rotation and revolution have the same period, so that the same side of the Moon is always facing us. But in fact most moons in the solar system have a similar <i>synchronous</i> orbit, caused by the tidal forces exerted on the moon by the planet.</p>
<p>Why does the earth spin? I know that it has always been spinning, but what started it? Why does the moon not spin? Does it have to do with gravity?</p>	<p>Well, the answer to your question starts way back with the Big Bang. Matter spun off of this original explosion (much like water spins in smaller circles when you swirl your hand through it). The Earth and other planets continue to spin unless acted on by an outside force (a big comet hitting the planet, etc). The moon actually does spin. It rotates just once as it orbits the Earth. This is the reason we always see one side of the Moon.</p>
<p>In which direction does the moon rotate, clockwise or counter clockwise, and in which direction does the sun rotate?</p>	<p>The Moon and the Sun both rotate counter clockwise. They exhibit direct orbital motion (as opposed to retrograde) - or counter clockwise when viewed from the north pole of the celestial sphere.</p>
<p>Why doesn't the moon keep on going in a straight line into the universe? And can you tell me how it was proven (if it has) that the earth doesn't orbit around the moon.</p>	<p>The reason the moon doesn't continue out into the universe is that the Earth exerts a pull on the moon, which keeps it orbiting the Earth. Since the Earth is so big compared to the moon, it pulls the moon toward it. In a sense, the moon is falling towards the Earth, but since the moon is also moving forwards, it ends up going around and around the Earth. The reason we know the Earth doesn't orbit the moon is that the Earth is so much bigger than the moon. The gravitational pull of the moon isn't enough to pull the Earth into its orbit.</p>
<p>Does the moon rotate in an elliptical orbit or a circular one?</p>	<p>The moon's orbit around the Earth is almost circular, but not quite. So it is slightly elliptical. The moon's orbit along with the Earth around the Sun is just plain elliptic.</p>



ANTI-RACIST AND ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGNING SUPPORT NEEDED

The following details have been supplied by PCS HQ:

Background

This article gives details of the Justice for Jay Campaign. Please support this campaign.

Justice For Jay Abatan - Update and Action Needed

Background

It has been over 8 years since Jay Abatan a former PCS member, died as a result of injuries sustained on the streets of Brighton January 1999, after being attacked by a gang of men. The attack is believed to have been racially motivated. To date no one has been brought to justice to account for the death of Jay Abatan. Moreover Jay's family request for a Coroners' inquest has to date been denied. You can find out more about this family campaign at www.justiceforjay.co.uk

Investigation of Police Conduct

There have been two reports about the police conduct of the investigation of Jay Abatan's death. Jay Abatan's family dispute the conclusions of the reports as they believe that the police did not provide an acceptable level of service that would have yielded Jay's attacker(s) being charged for the unlawful killing of Jay Abatan. The family want a coroners' inquest as they believe that it will provide evidence to strengthen their position and ensure someone is made to account for the death of Jay Abatan.

Coroners' Inquest - Request for Support

Due to relentless pressure from the Justice for Jay Abatan campaign, the Coroner has indicated that an inquest may be granted if sufficient public interest is registered.

PCS supports the Justice For Jay Abatan Campaign and members are encouraged to support the Campaign by sending the attached letter to the Brighton and Hove Coroner.

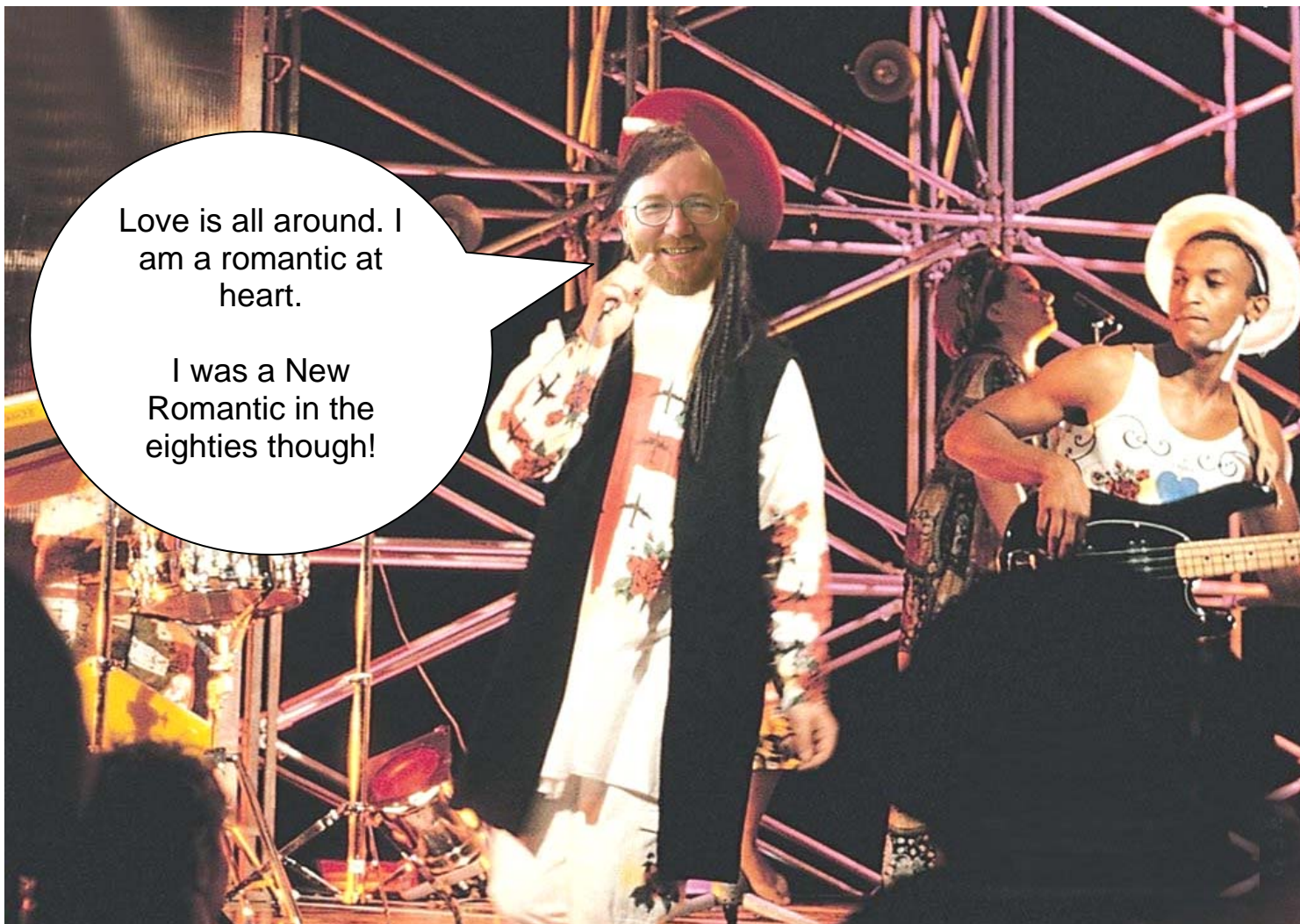
The Coroner's Office
Woodvale
Lewes Road
Brighton
BN2 3QB

To the Coroner of Brighton and Hove

It has now been 9 years since the murder of Jay Abatan on 29th January 1999. It is standard procedure for any deaths that may have been unlawful to be examined in a public hearing. As Mr. Abatan has not received a murder trial, there therefore should be an inquest to determine the cause of death. In the case of Mr. Abatan, this has been particularly important for his family, a member of which was witness to his murder, as there have been disputed reasons given for the cause of his death. The inquest into his death was only suspended to aid the police with their immediate investigations pending a trial. The investigations into the case are now currently dormant. We the undersigned hereby call on you to reinstate the inquest into the death of Mr. Abatan.

Signed:

WADE SAYS....



Love is all around. I am a romantic at heart.

I was a New Romantic in the eighties though!

A CASHLESS SOCIETY!

Contactless credit and debit cards will be launched in London last autumn with an expected nationwide rollout to follow in 2008.

Mondex is the company providing this cashless system and has already franchised over 20 major nations.

The system is based on Smart Card technology having microchips concealed in a plastic card which stores electronic cash, identification, and other information.

The cards will initially be for transactions of £10 or under and customers will simply hold their card up to a secure reader to make a payment in any participating retailer.

The amount will then be deducted automatically from a debit or credit card which has been upgraded.

The scheme is voluntary and card issuers will not be obliged to upgrade their cards as with chip and pin, however many major banks have already adopted the scheme and others are expected to follow.

Existing card holders will not need to do anything and will be contacted by their card companies as they join the rollout.

As a security measure cardholders will occasionally be asked to enter their pin especially if there is any suspicious spending, say five quick transactions of £9 each, the spending limit of £10 also makes them unattractive to fraudsters.

There has also been talk of carrying a card itself becoming obsolete due to loss, damage etc, leading to microchips being placed in the human body as with the current pet identification systems...just talk?

The following text is a press release sent to the BBC news website on December 3rd 2007 and was featured the same day.

Bosses avoid the truth in annual appraisals - Failure to talk straight undermines the benefit of end-of-year reviews

As Britain's workplaces approach appraisal season, new research published today finds that nearly half (44%) of employees who receive appraisals don't think their boss is always honest during these sessions. It is unsurprising, then, that almost a third (29%) of employees who receive appraisals believe they are a waste of time while a fifth (21%) have had an appraisal they felt was unfair.

The research, conducted by YouGov for Investors in People - the organisation that works with companies to improve productivity - also found that a quarter of employees (23%) who receive appraisals believe their manager sees their annual review purely as a 'tick-box' exercise and that one in five (19%) accuse their manager of not even thinking about the appraisal until they are in the room.

While appraisals are now common in many workplaces, and 41% of employees who receive appraisals think they are a useful assessment of progress, very few have faith in their manager taking action on what they talk about. Only a fifth (21%) believe their manager will always act on what is discussed, whereas 20% say their boss rarely or never bothers to follow-up on their concerns.

A third (31%) believe that although their appraisal is helpful, they would prefer to get more regular feedback. A lack of feedback throughout the rest of the year could explain why 40% have been surprised at what they heard in their appraisal.

Simon Jones, Acting Chief Executive at Investors in People UK, commented:

"It is encouraging that many people now receive an annual review and the research suggests that they find the feedback useful. But, it is also a concern that some managers may be letting down their employees by failing to give full and frank feedback. Annual reviews can be hugely beneficial to both employer and employee, identifying areas for development as well as ensuring the employee

feels motivated, engaged and part of the organisation's success. However, many of these benefits will be lost if managers avoid difficult issues and hold things back."

"Employees are not just after honest, but also regular feedback throughout the year so there aren't any big surprises when it comes to the annual review. Appraisals should always cover both past performance and objectives, but equally important are discussions of future targets and opportunities. It's a great chance for managers to make sure their employees feel challenged and valued for the year ahead, rather than unmotivated and without guidance."

Other interesting findings from the research include:

Only 54% of people working in organisations with fewer than 250 employees have a regular annual review. In contrast, 81% of people employed at organisations with more than 250 employees receive annual reviews.

Of those who receive appraisals, the biggest sceptics of them are those working in the public sector (Government/ Local Government and Civil Service), with 40% believing they are a waste of time; 42% of people in the North East agree. The people most positive about appraisals work in accountancy and financial services and the charity/NGO sector, where 50% and 52% respectively believe they are a useful assessment of performance. Londoners are also positive, 50% feel they are a good measure of performance.

Those employed in accountancy and financial services (48%*) and the public sector (47%*) are most likely to think their boss isn't always honest in their annual appraisal. However, the voluntary (57%*) and education sectors (57%*) are most likely to think their boss is always honest and upfront in appraisals.

Londoners are most likely to ask for a pay rise in their appraisal, 37%* have done so compared to only 18%* in the North West.

Ends

* Figures relate to those questioned who have annual appraisals.

Notes to editor:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,931 UK employees who work in a company/ business with 2 employees or more. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27th September - 5th October 2007. The survey was carried out online. The figures are unweighted.

Mick and Grant's Kings of Comedy Quiz II

- the results

We are funny.

So here are the laugh a minute answers.

Answer 1

Little "Ern" was famous for having short fat hairy legs

Answer 2

John Eric Bartholomew was Eric Morecambe's real name.

Answer 3

Riviera "touch" was Eric and Ernie's film

Answer 4

The play what I wrote is a play that is a tribute to Eric and Ernie.

Answer 5

Stan Stennet's Playhouse Tewksbury was Eric Morecambe's last performance.

Answer 6

"Not now Arthur"'s real name was Arthur Tolcher

And the winner is Pauline Kendal of LSA who receives a box of chocs.

What do you think of the quiz so far. Rubbish!



Mick and Grant

Taxi leaders welcome smoking ban

Leaders of England's taxi drivers have welcomed the complete ban on smoking in taxis and private hire vehicles which comes into effect at the end of this month. 'For some years we have promoted the right of drivers to ban smoking in their taxis, and the new law will end any confusion on the issue,' said taxi driver Jim Kelly, who chairs the cab trade committee of Unite's TGWU section. 'For us, this is primarily a workplace health issue. Like other workers, taxi drivers are entitled to do their job without being at risk of cancer and other deadly diseases from cigarette smoke.' He added: 'No-one would expect to be able to blow smoke over a factory or office worker while they are at their posts. Now taxi drivers, together with bar staff and others still at risk from cigarette smoke, get the same protection and consideration as the rest of the working population. 'He said he had just returned from Dublin, where a workplace smoking ban was working well. 'I hope the next generation of taxi drivers will wonder how we ever tolerated smoking in our vehicles, and this measure could mean a lot more of our members will still be around to answer that question,' he said. From July 07, it became illegal in England to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places, workplaces and public and work vehicles, including public transport and buildings associated with public transport.

The following details have been supplied by the:

TUC



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The following details have been supplied by the PCS DWP Group:



Shared Services – Privatisation Failure

It has been announced that yet another failed privatisation is to be brought back in-house to the DWP. Liberata Ltd, have been carrying out financial services for DWP as part of a privatised contract but with the creation of DWP's Shared Services it has been determined that conducting the work in-house provides better value for money.

PCS has welcomed the announcement as it proves yet again where civil servants are provided with the same flexibilities as private companies that we can and do provide a far more efficient service.

As well as transferring the work back to the civil service the announcement of the cessation of the Liberata contract from 1st January 2008, means that upwards of 70 staff will transfer from the private sector into DWP on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) conditions.

Over the coming months, PCS will work with all parties to ensure a smooth transition of the contract back into the public domain, as well as protecting the terms and conditions of staff who wish to transfer to the DWP.

The news that DWP have decided in-house is best follows in the footsteps of other similar announcements such as Vertex in CSA Bolton, and the use of EDS in CSA Darlington.

PCS believes this shows that campaigning works and action gets results.

The following details have been supplied by the PCS DWP Group:

DWP Business Travel Review



DWP has recently carried out a review looking at ways to reduce the impact that the Department has on the environment; reduce the risks associated with road travel; and improve the work life balance of staff.

The review found that last year DWP staff travelled close to 70 million miles by road on official business, which equates to 20,000 tonnes of CO₂ (6,000 tonnes of carbon) into the atmosphere. The review made various recommendations with a view to changing the culture to reduce carbon emissions, minimise environmental damage and create better working conditions.

DWP want to act on this report and have put together some proposals these include making a reduction in the 'grey fleet' (i.e. private vehicles) by strictly enforcing the following policies:

- Where anyone intends to use their own vehicle in excess of 1000 miles per annum a Business case will need to be submitted
- Use of a private motor vehicle for any official journey will only be approved where all travel options have been considered
- Where there is an intention to travel over 100 miles on any one day then this must not be in a private motor vehicle

To support these proposals DWP has made some amendments to its travel policy by:

- Relaxing the qualifying criteria for access to the Private User Scheme
- Increasing and making more readily available Official vehicles
- Promoting the use of hire cars

DWP has been carrying out Road shows around the Country explaining their policy proposals and it seems from the feedback received by PCS reps that there has been some confusion about the message. As a result of members contacting PCS reps I wrote to DWP to clarify exactly what was being said at these road shows.

In their reply DWP assures PCS that there are no plans to reduce the amount of expenses paid but there appears to be a misapprehension that the need for a business case for usage over 1000 miles also means that the limit for the 40p per mile will also change. **This is not the case, the mileage rate remains at 40p per mile for the first 6000 miles and 25p thereafter.**

PCS Policy

PCS policy carried at Conference 2006 is to work with all government departments/employers to reduce greenhouse emissions and to promote renewable energy and sustainable lifestyles.

PCS therefore welcomes the DWP's initiative to reduce its impact on the environment as long as staff who genuinely need to travel in their own vehicle are able to do so without financial detriment. We will also insist that the work life balance of members is not worsened and that proper safeguards are in place for vulnerable members.

PCS has been in talks with the DWP Business Travel Team and they have assured us that the policy is not about stopping staff driving but about giving staff more options and making greener options available. The review also recommends that alternatives to travel such as the use of video conferencing and telephone conferencing should be considered. The location, need, reason and alternatives for meetings should be considered. (A move that will be welcomed by members as there is already a view that there are an excessive number of meetings held.) It is clear that the DWP will have to make proper investment in the IT necessary to make this work but it seems likely that this initial investment will save not only money but also make a substantial cut in carbon emissions.

It is clear that the DWP's ever increasing thirst for office closures and the emergence of Benefit Processing Centres and Contact Centres does not fit into the green agenda. In order to reduce emissions and meet its green targets DWP should reconsider office closures and centralisation. Members are having to travel further to get to work and the public is having to travel further to access our services. It makes sense to keep offices and services local for both staff and the public - surely this alone would make a significant difference to DWP carbon emissions and improve work life balance for staff and service to the public.

DVLA Checks

The DWP have also informed us that because of the introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter Bill they will be making more stringent checks on driving licences and vehicle documents. This tightens up existing Health and Safety law which requires employers to carry out risk assessments to the health and safety of employees and other people who may be affected by their work activities – this includes any driving on the road. PCS is currently taking legal advice on this matter.

Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development in Government 2006 report found that Government Departments are not on course to reach their carbon targets. All Government Departments are expected to reduce carbon emissions from road vehicle usage by 15% by 2010/11. With climate change such an important issue it is important that Government Departments take the lead in reducing carbon emissions and consequently PCS supports the DWP's aspirations to minimise environmental damage.

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Docs pressed to send sick to work

The government has given another push to its contentious 'work is good for you' campaign. Unions and health campaigners have warned that pressure on GPs to get patients back into work fails to take into account that it is good work and not just any work that can be good for you. The debate was rekindled this week after a survey for the DWP of 1,500 GPs 'found that two-thirds (64 per cent) are unaware of the evidence that work is beneficial for physical and mental health. However, nearly 90 per cent said that if they knew of this evidence it would affect the advice they give to their patients.' The findings were presented by safety minister Lord McKenzie at a British Medical Association conference. The minister cited government 'evidence', which attracted wide criticism last year, and which it now claims proves 'conclusively' that work is good for you. 'The recognition that there is evidence that work is good for people's health is, I believe, that powerful. Because it means staying in work or returning to work could actually be part of the solution to ill-health - no longer be seen as part of the problem.' Jawad Qasrawi of the trade union safety reps' journal *Hazards* commented: 'GPs are virtually uneducated in occupational health, rarely ask what job a person does and will scarcely ever understand the risks posed by the job. Without better access to occupational health services, rehabilitation support and better designed, good jobs, work can be anything but good for you, especially if you are already

injured or ill.' Critics also say that the government might be promoting work as good for you, but it has conceded it still doesn't know what constitutes a good job. Health minister Ivan Lewis last week announced this year's second £10 million of capital funding to finance new NHS Plus demonstration sites, intended to improve the occupational healthcare services offered to small and medium sized businesses.

Stress at work update

Stress is one of top workplace health problems - and it comes with a big cost. A new policy paper published by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (SCMH) says mental ill health costs UK employers more than £25bn a year. 'Mental health at work: Developing the business case' puts this cost a £1,000 per employee in the workforce. On any given day, one worker in five will experience mental distress, the report said. It adds mental health problems accounted for 40 per cent of sickness absence from work. SCMH employment programme director Bob Grove said: 'Employers need to be aware of mental health as it affects every workplace in the UK. It is a normal part of the human condition. Yet most employers vastly underestimate how many of their staff will have mental health problems. Employers who take effective action to improve the wellbeing of their staff will reap the rewards for their efforts.'

TUC says sort out work

hazards not workers
Many employers have a healthier appetite for addressing their employees' diet, exercise and smoking habits than addressing the work-related causes of ill-

health, the TUC has said. It says if firms really want to improve the health of their workforce, they should address problems like stress and poor office design that are really making their staff ill. In a TUC submission to Dame Carol Black's review of the health of the working age population, the TUC adds that employers' attempts to encourage healthy living are most effective when they look at how work can contribute to or cause lifestyle problems. It also warns against employers moralising over lifestyle issues, like drug and alcohol use. Providing support for any worker with an addiction problem that is affecting them or their work is laudable, it says, but warns employers should not be attempting to interfere in what employees do outside the office if it has no bearing on what goes on at work. Although healthy food in staff canteens, subsidised gym membership or access to counselling for those with drug or alcohol problems are to be encouraged says TUC, lunchtime yoga classes are no substitute for reducing stress in the workplace. And while access to fresh fruit is a good thing, it won't be of much use to employees who never get to take a lunch break, nor will gym access be a benefit to those who work late night after night. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: 'The workplace can, like any other environment, be a useful place to encourage people to make healthy choices, but it must be done in a non-judgmental way. Employers should be creating opportunities so that staff can make healthier choices should they so chose, rather than try to force them to adopt a particular lifestyle that has no bearing on how they do their jobs.' The full TUC response covers issues including prevention, sickness absence

and access to occupational
health provision and
rehabilitation.

Work stress linked to heart risk

People who go back to a stressful job after a heart attack are more prone to a second attack than those whose work is not stressful. Canadian researchers followed over 1,000 patients returning to work. In six years, over 200 suffered heart problems again. Those with job strain were twice as likely to fall ill. The Journal of the American Medical Association study defined job strain as having a high pressure workload but few decision-making powers. Studies have also shown a link between job strain and a first heart attack, but researchers at Laval University in Quebec said little was known about the association with subsequent heart problems. They concluded 'information about the results of this study should be disseminated in cardiac practice and in occupational health services with the aim of reducing job strain for workers returning to work after a heart attack'. In a related editorial in the same issue, Kristina Orth-Gomér of Sweden's Karolinska Institute commented: 'Job strain and other related psychosocial risk factors are associated with worse prognosis in patients with coronary heart disease.' She added: 'Patients and physicians may benefit from widening the medical framework to include job strain evaluation. If physicians have difficulty finding adequate time to discuss job experiences with patients, this role may be adopted by other health care professionals, such as experienced cardiac rehabilitation nurses.'

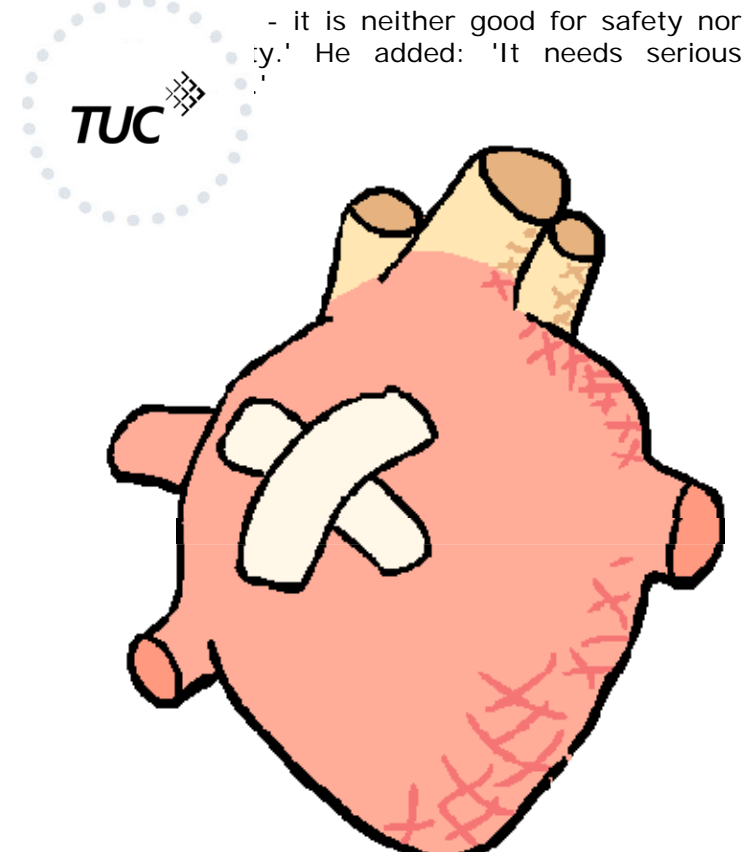
Inspection cuts could cost lives

Proposals to limit on-the-spot safety inspections could result in increased workplace deaths and

injuries, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has warned. Safety

professionals' organisation IOSH is also concerned that cuts in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) staff, due to budget restrictions next year, could hamper the organisation in meeting its statutory obligation to enforce health and safety law. The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) in its draft code of practice for regulators proposes that random inspection should only be a small element of a regulator's programme, used to test its processes, and recommends that regulators 'allow or even encourage economic progress and only intervene when there is a clear case for protection.' The code covers regulators including HSE. Richard Jones, IOSH's director of technical affairs, said: 'It's important to remember that just because companies don't report accidents and their workers don't complain to the authorities, this doesn't necessarily mean they're OK. They could be under-reporting and their workers could feel intimidated. In some of the poorest workplaces, an inspector's visit 'out of the blue' may be the workers only hope of improvement.' He added: 'Random inspections are an important element, as 'rogue' organisations need to be deterred by the prospect they could get caught.' Commenting on the draft code, TUC deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady said: 'There is an implication that on-the-spot inspections should be very limited. This means in reality that the chances of bad employers being detected are very slim - unless they actually kill someone. Not only is this intrinsically dangerous, but it gives out a signal to employers that they can probably get away with bad practices.' David Bergman of the Centre for

Corporate Accountability said that whilst the impact of the code 'would be to 'reduce burdens - it is neither good for safety nor y.' He added: 'It needs serious



Support Stephen Maddock

Support Your Union

PCS members are now aware of the downgrading of Stephen Maddock, a rep at Burnley Pension Centre in East Lancashire branch. Stephen was found guilty of making short calls to his home and leaving his smartcard unattended on two occasions, the second time when his line manager went into his drawer to find it.

Appeal

Management dropped their allegation that Stephen had peeled the plastic coating off his smartcard during the appeal process. However, Stephen has still lost his appeal and the penalty of downgrading still stands.

Victimisation

PCS believes that Stephen has been victimised because of his trade union activities. We have still had no reasonable explanation of why his manager was looking in his drawer, which enabled her to find his smartcard while he was on annual leave, and why this happened only a few weeks after he had received a final written warning. PCS does not believe that other members receive such severe penalties for making phone calls or leaving a smartcard unattended twice. We know of cases where members have been asked to pay for private phone calls, rather than disciplinary action being taken. We also know of situations where smart cards have been handed back to staff without any disciplinary action being taken and of senior managers leaving smartcards unattended with impunity. Stephen has been treated differently following his successes in taking cases to Civil Service Appeal boards and his willingness to represent members up to Employment Tribunal level.

Defend Our Reps

Messages of support have been coming in from throughout the union and from other trade unions. Another PCS rep, Eddie Fleming, has recently been sacked in Hastings CSA and reps in the North West region have been investigated and threatened with disciplinary action for reasons related to their work on behalf of the union. In addition our regional secretary Steve Bramhill is being refused time off for legitimate union duties. We will not stand by and let management attack our reps. We are now looking at taking Stephen's case to an employment tribunal and his branch is organising a petition to demand that he be returned to his original grade. We will take similar steps in defence of other reps if we need to do so. If these steps do not succeed, we will have no choice but to consult members about further action to defend our reps and the union. Thanks to all members who have offered support so far.



What is the truth about Asylum Seekers?

An opinion poll carried out in 2006 showed that the public overestimates the number of asylum seekers in the UK by about 10 fold – most people asked thought there are 1000% more asylum seekers in Britain than there is. Why is that? I decided to take a look at some of the myths and legends attached to asylum seekers and I'm sure you'll be as surprised as I was to actually hear the truth.

Are Immigrants a drain on Britain's resources?

In a nut shell no!! The governments own figures show that migrants and refugees made a net contribution of around £2.5 billion in the tax year 1999-2000. This is actually about £800 million pounds more than it costs to run the immigration system.

Aren't Asylum Seekers just on the blag for a free lunch, are most claims bogus?

If that was the case would we see immigrants from all over the world rather than war and poverty stricken countries. The countries that most refugees come from can be mapped to closely follow the patterns of wars, conflicts, repression and persecution all over the world.

In 2002-2003 they mostly came from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe. In the '90's it was Balkans, the '70's South East Asia, the '40's Poland and so on and so on. My mother was the first generation of our family born in the UK, as her parents and family were Polish refugees who came to Britain during the occupation of Poland.

The only common factor to be found with Asylum Seekers is war and repression.

Aren't they all illegal?

No – in fact there is no such thing as an illegal or bogus asylum seeker. Under the 1951 Convention on Refugees, which the UK has signed, anyone has the right to apply for asylum in the UK, and stay here until the final decision on their application. The stories that are printed in the press give the impression that asylum seekers are doing something wrong by simply applying.

Don't we take more than our fair share?

Britain is 32nd in the world for taking refugees. Even in Europe we are only 10th taking into consideration population and wealth. In fact the highest numbers of asylum seekers are in the poorer developing countries

Don't they use false documents to get in?

Of course some do, but a moments thought as to why does

explain all. It is often the only way get away from repressive regimes like the Taliban's. That is why the Convention on Refugees stops governments from punishing refugees with false documents. One in three applications are approved despite the governments continual moving of the goal posts and tightening of procedures. This means at least a third of applicants are able to prove the oppression at home and half of ALL applicants are found to need humanitarian protection in one form or another.

Aren't refugees just scrounging our benefit system?

Hardly.. Asylum seekers are given less than £40 a week, 30% below the poverty line and are not eligible to any other benefits.

Don't Asylum Seekers cause crime and unemployment?

There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that refugees are anymore likely than you or I to commit crime despite of their abject poverty. According to a report by the Association of Chief Police Officers suggests that they are more likely to become a victim of crime in the UK. Very few Asylum seekers are allowed to work regardless of UK's working population declining and areas like education and health services crying out for people. The EU estimates that Europe needs over 1.6 million new workers a year!

Aren't they taking up our housing?

There is a desperate shortage of affordable housing in the UK but this has nothing to do with Migrants of Asylum Seekers. Even if every Asylum Seeker left the country today there would still be a huge housing crisis. This is due to the systematic privatisation of Council Housing and developers being allowed to build profitable "luxury flats" rather than decent cheap accommodation that's needed.

Don't they drain the NHS and increase waiting lists?

No. Migrants have supported the NHS and often kept it afloat since it's creation in 1948.

Currently over 20% of doctors and nearly half of all nurses were born outside the UK. Many nurses gaining their training at home in much poorer countries than our own like

Zambia and Nigeria. Asylum Seekers most defiantly do not block waiting lists etc. GP's can and do refuse patients if their books are full. The problems within the NHS run far deeper than waiting lists. The government just doesn't spend enough on it!!

Can't Terrorists use the Asylum System to get in?

There is not a shred of evidence to suggest this is the case. I would imagine that no terrorist would want to have to jump through the hoops and pass the increasingly toughing guidelines.

What is the Truth Continued..

Aren't the papers just sticking up for working class people with their reports?

The exact opposite is true – The campaign against Asylum Seekers will not lead to a single school or affordable house to be built nor will it reduce NHS waiting lists. The campaign against these people relies on fear and ignorance. It diverts attention away from the real causes of poverty, bad housing under funded schools and hospitals.

Now these are just my opinions but just think If I'm right then those responsible for society's problems are getting away with it Scott-free. It's the oldest trick in the book Blame the other fella- it wasn't me!

Katya

Sources: IPPR paper "Asylum in the UK", Refugee Council, Independent "asylum the facts" papers from Home Office, UNHCR, ACPO, General Medical Council, Commission for Racial Equality, Mori, MCAR&F

The following details have been supplied by the DWP North West Regional Committee:



PCS is aware of members being given warnings and being dismissed in the most extreme circumstances. Some recent cases include.

Warning for Bereavement

A close relative of a member was diagnosed with cancer and given a prognosis of days to live. The member took some time off work at the time of his illness and subsequent death. Months later the department has linked this absence to four days absence related to her disability and she has been given a warning. The member has been told that the bereavement cannot be classed as a "one off". PCS thinks it should be clear that an individual can only die once. We expect more situations like this as the regional instructions are implemented.

Warning for Pneumonia

In a similar situation a member was off with pneumonia, which is a potentially fatal condition. He has now been off for a few days with a minor illness and has been given a warning because the department no longer accept that his absence for pneumonia should have been discounted. As the department is telling him that the absence cannot be considered to be a one off, he feels that he is in a position where he may get the same condition again and have to come into work to avoid being sacked.

Warning for Cancer

A member has been given a warning because of time he took off to have an operation for cancer, despite the fact that this is another potentially fatal condition, which is automatically covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. PCS is taking a tribunal case on the member's behalf.

Warning for management errors

A member was given a warning after being off for 39 days whilst she was diagnosed for IBS and appropriate medication was identified. An appeal was submitted on the grounds that the absence should be treated as a one off and the warning was over-turned. 9 months later she was sick for 3 days for an unrelated illness. A warning was given on the grounds that it was not specifically recorded that the previous Appeal Manager has disregarded the absence for IBS and she had therefore exceeded the Consideration Point.

Sacked for 8 days sick after 32 years

A member has been dismissed for having 8 days in her "backsliding" period following a warning. She has worked for the department for 32 years and was 4 years from retirement.

Get the Union Involved

These cases are just examples. PCS deals with and wins, many similar cases every day. It is essential that members involve PCS at the earliest stage. The member who was dismissed only came to us when she got her dismissal letter.

If you are having problems because of the attendance management procedures contact your local rep. If you are a line manager and are not happy with what you are being asked to do, you should talk to the union as well.

Just a brief note for the more eagle eyed amongst you that an earlier edition of the newsletter indicated that a contract had changed from ATOS to Capita, by the time the article had been printed Capita had been shown the door and ATOS were once again doing the OHS referral.

It is unfortunate that things change so quickly that articles can seem out of date by the time that they are printed.

By the time you read this who knows ATOS may no longer be doing the OHS referrals!



mick and grant's valentines quiz

Love is all around. Yes its Mick a Dee and Grantington's back once again, with a quiz this time about love. It's what makes the world go around after all.

Question 1

"Love is all around" was a hit record for which of the following:

- a) Wet Wet Wet
- b) Duran Duran
- c) Bon Jovi
- d) Billy Ocean
- e) A Flock of Seagulls

Question 2

What was the name of the car in the film "The Love Bug"

- a) Henry
- b) Micky
- c) Robbie
- d) Ernie
- e) Herbie

Question 3

"Love me do" by the Beatles was released in which year in the UK. Was it?

- a) 1961
- b) 1962
- c) 1963
- d) 1964
- e) 1965

Question 4

Which of the following PCS activists on the Fylde got married to each other in 2007? Was it?

- a) Mick and Janice
- b) Tony and Vicki
- c) Mick, Grant and Gloria
- d) Martin and Jacqui
- e) Lee and Rachel

Question 5

"Desert loving in your eyes all the way" is the opening line of which Culture club single:

- a) Do you really want to hurt me
- b) Time (Clock of the Heart)
- c) Victims
- d) Church of the Poison Mind
- e) Karma Chameleon

Question 6

Who were the leading actor and actress in the 1970 film Love Story? Was it

- a) Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw
- b) Paul Newman and Liz Taylor
- c) Steve McQueen and Audrey Hepburn
- d) Burt Reynolds and Debbie Reynolds
- e) Robert Redford and Julie Christie

Please send your answers together with your name and details to Jacqui "I think that Culture Club records are great, I'll have you know" Dunkerley, Room 7233 Norcross; to arrive no later than the 7th of March 2008.

The winner will receive a mystery prize. Please remember that only members of the Fylde Central Benefits and Services Branch, excluding Branch Executive Committee can enter the quiz.

