

Branch Meeting

**Thursday
31st
March
6.30 p.m.**

STUC
333 Woodlands Road
Glasgow
G3 6NG



Branch member Ian Forbes who was recently elected as the Branch's first Education and Development Officer

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**Merger Mania:
amicus, TGWU and GMB**

The major discussion at last month's meeting of the union's National Executive Committee (NEC) was an item which had not been previously notified to the NEC's members! Following stories in several national newspapers, the General Secretary, Derek Simpson, notified the NEC that he had begun informal discussions about a potential merger with the TGWU and the GMB last summer, but had not reported this due to the sensitivity of the talks. The General Secretary stated his belief that, following globalisation, the trade

union movement in the UK would need to form a few very large unions. With 2.5 million members we would have enormous political clout and could stand shoulder to shoulder with European unions. Some NEC members expressed concern about considering a further merger before many remaining administrative problems from the last one are sorted. Further concern was raised about the position of public sector members in such a large private sector dominated union.

Mike Chapman

**"Sicknote Britain" a myth
claims TUC report**

Employers' complaints about the amount of time taken off as sick leave are completely unfounded according to a new report from the TUC. 'Sicknote Britain?' counters the accusations that public sector workers are always taking sickies, that stress is not a serious illness and that too many people are on incapacity benefit. The TUC's research shows that British employees have the second best short term sick leave record in Europe (behind Denmark) and fourth

best in time lost due to long term absence (behind Austria, Germany and Ireland).

A comparison with private sector workers shows that public sector employees take less short term sick leave (4.9 days average compared to 5.5). "When employers complain of sicknote Britain, they are attacking some of Europe's most loyal employees" said TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber. The report can be downloaded from www.tuc.org.uk/

Contacts

	
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Access to accident book information

In 2003 a new-style accident book was introduced to ensure that personal details remained confidential and thus ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act. Since then, some employers have been refusing safety reps access to accident records claiming that to do so would breach the Act. An amended accident book was then published which allows the injured worker to agree that their personal information can be given to the safety rep. In the absence of such agreement, the other information must be given to the safety rep, with any personal identifying data removed. If necessary, ask for the new-style books to be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive Bookshop as their books now make the legal position absolutely clear.

Book review: NHS plc

'NHS plc' by Allyson Pollock (pub by Verso). Allyson Pollock is a leading critic of the private finance initiative (PFI). For stating that PFI projects cost more and provide less than their publicly funded counterparts, Pollock has been subjected to vilification by politicians and industrialists. Her book is a clear exposition of the details of the private sector involvement in the NHS including the role of business in advising ministers on public policy to the profits extracted on cleaning and catering by driving down pay and conditions.

Chief executive salaries

Pay rises for many of the NHS bosses are continuing to outstrip the pay rises for the rest of us. A report on NHS director level salaries from the respected Income Data Services (IDS), reveals that Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) averaged £95,000 in Scotland (£107,000 in England and £116,000 in Wales). Top fat cat was the CEO of Hammersmith Hospitals in London who received £210,000. An IDS spokesman said "as in the private sector, the earnings of NHS directors have outpaced those of the rest of the NHS."

Pregnancy discrimination

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), each year around 30,000 women are sacked, made redundant or leave their jobs due to pregnancy discrimination. The figures were made known at the launch of the EOC's campaign "Pregnant and Productive" which calls for an end to the unlawful treatment of pregnant women at work. Other research shows discrimination that includes denial of promotion, bonuses, training opportunities and changes in job description.

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1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of previous meeting and arising.
3. Correspondence.
4. Reports.
5. Motions.
6. A.O.C.B.

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on Tuesday 26th April at 6.30 p.m. All meetings are held in the Scottish Trade Union Congress, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG.
(Tea, coffee & biscuits 6.15 p.m.)

