

*Celebrating*

Trade Union

**Press & PR**

Awards **2002**

*25 Years*

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# *Focus on the winners*

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## **General Observations**

In this 25th anniversary year of the Press and PR awards 28 unions entered the competition submitting a total of 107 entries. However it was not always easy for the judges to decide on the winner and in one case they had to resort to a vote.

The important part played by union publications in recruiting and retaining members has been well known for many years. Therefore, the closure of the outstanding winning publication, which seemed to have such potential, must contain lessons for us all.

Overall the entries provided the judges with some clear winners containing memorable, often hard-hitting and in some cases influential themes and images. Unions are becoming more prominent in public debate on many issues that affect members and non-members alike. These issues range from health and safety to the delivery of public

services and pensions. In this way not only is the image of unions enhanced but also the idea of trade unionism is popularised.

In each of the seven categories unions were tackling issues in a highly focused way. They were imaginatively dealing with contentious issues involving the public sector, complicated disputes, and problems facing individual members.

The winning and commended entries came from a range of big, small and medium sized unions. This reflected well on unions with limited resources.

## **Judges**

**Chris Adams** Employment Editor, FT

**Jon Cruddas** MP

**Joy Johnson** Head of Media, GLA

**Philippa Kennedy** Editor, Press Gazette

**Andrew Linington** Journal Editor, NUMAST

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## Winner

## Highly Commended

## Commended



## Best publication

This is usually the strongest category, and this year was no exception. All the judges were impressed by the high professional standards on show, regardless of resources available. Unions seem to be getting better and better at targeting their members and activists with lively copy and, on the whole, good design. The best make excellent use of human interest stories. Two unions stood out – **GMB** and **UNISON** – and the judges found it hard to separate them. GMB's *Action* won the day, with its clean, fresh design and excellent journalism. This is a magazine, which in the opinion of the judges, manages to tackle

tough issues like PPPs with a deft touch rather than belabouring its readers with rhetoric. Although clearly targeted at activists, it could easily work as inspiring recruitment literature. **UNISON**'s *u* magazine was awarded a high commendation for its busy pages and peppy writing, combined with good use of colour and pictures. The teacher unions **NUT**, **ATL** and **NATFHE** made a strong showing in the fight for a commendation, with the NUT's *The Teacher* pipping the others for its thorough and detailed editorial, good use of supplements, and balanced reporting of educational and political issues. It may have climbed higher were it not for an overly dense layout. Other honourable mentions go to **UNIFI**'s *Fusion* and **FDA**'s *psm*, both offering attractive design, perky news pieces and interesting features.

## Winner

## Highly Commended

## Commended



## Best feature

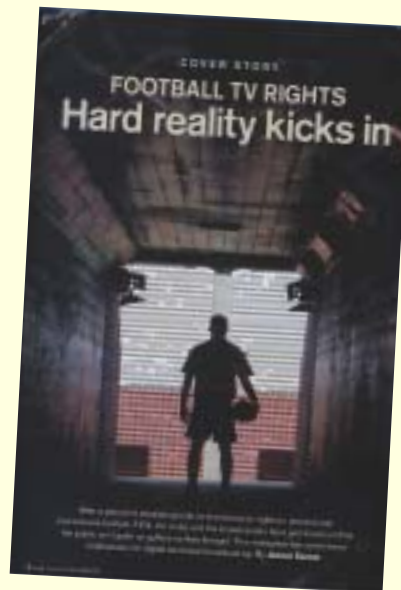
Hot competition among many very union centred stories. Members featured strongly and issues of direct interest to them were handled well. The winning entry from rail union **RMT** 'I endured nearly two years of hell' told a harrowing story of sexual harassment of one of the small number of women in a male dominated union and industry. It told of the only female underground driver on a line, and detailed her trauma and the appalling behaviour of some male colleagues. Her stress and fear came over strongly. The feature was a really good read, and it was a bold decision of the journal to publish it. The

**GMB**'s 'Privates on parade' was highly commended for having the best intro of the lot. It was snappy, pulled the reader straight in, and provided useful action points. It made its anti privatisation case strongly, was beautifully written and presented, but was clearly propaganda and not a balanced argument. The commended entry was an unusual union story from **Prospect** (EMA sector) about how the union defended a member who was a managing director. The judges were instantly drawn in to the story, which proved that unions were not just for blue-collar workers. **MSF-Amicus**' piece 'Justice at last' was also a contender, with a moving, gripping article about a female member who suffered serious bullying.

## Winner



## Highly Commended



## Commended



## Best photograph

Given the potential for arresting imagery, the judges were disappointed by how many entries failed to rise above the routine. Too little thought appeared to have been given to what makes a good picture, and how it should add meaning to a story. The two highest placed entries did convey a sense of the story immediately and added another dimension to the reader's understanding. The winner was the

**NUT's** use of a Jez Coulson picture taken at a September 11 memorial service. The close-up innocence of the child combines instantly with the cover line about how you explain large-scale human atrocities to young schoolchildren. **BECTU** captured the highly commended slot with the silhouette of the footballer about to emerge from the tunnel, poised to play, but facing rows of empty seats. Coming in third to pick up a commendation was the **GPMU**, with their gritty cover shot of the print room machine minder.

## Winner



## Highly Commended



## Highly Commended



## Best use of electronic communications

Despite the massive growth of this sector, and the dramatic increase of union websites, few entries were received for this category. The judges wondered whether this showed a lack of confidence, or whether the smaller unions would just assume dominance by the bigger. As it turned out one of the biggest did hold sway, with **UNISON's** site ([unison.co.uk](http://unison.co.uk)) collecting the winner's laurels. The judges liked its excellent home page, super-fast links, clear

signposting, and good campaign material. It also drew praise for its absolutely up-to-date press pages. Mild criticisms were the long scrolling pages, and a falling away of consistency as you delve deeper. The **USDAW** site ([usdaw.org.uk](http://usdaw.org.uk)) ran it a close second, with good layout and links, good feedback and interest group sections, and wealth of downloads. The site was marred by slow pages and text that was not always easy to read. Coming in third was the **ATL** site ([askatl.org.uk](http://askatl.org.uk)) which proved that big is not necessarily best, with its simple styling, good use of colour, and intelligent options for interactivity. Praise too for **UNIFI's** credit card sized CDRom of e-bulletins, and **NATFHE's** e-survey, proving that electronic communication goes beyond websites alone.

## Winner



## Highly Commended



## Commended



## Best recruitment material

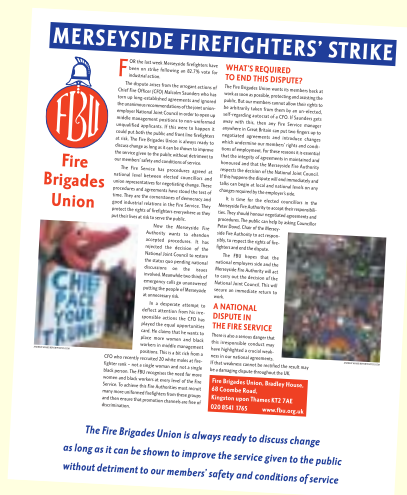
There was some fresh and original thinking revealed in this very important category. And unions were urged to make even more out of their own success stories. **TSSA's** 'Just the ticket' won for being unusual, clever and different. The publication had pinched the best ideas from the commercial world, and contained items that would hook-in the readers. It was clearly a subliminal sell and was very well

done. The judges highly commended **UNIFI's** clearly segregated recruitment pack, which highlighted membership benefits in a friendly and accessible way. It also confronted and answered the reason that people often give for not joining – this was impressive. The **GMB's** 'wreckers' campaign was commended as a fast reaction, professional and hard-hitting advert. It concentrated on public services to the exclusion of other union issues and possibly had as much, if not more value as a membership retention tool.

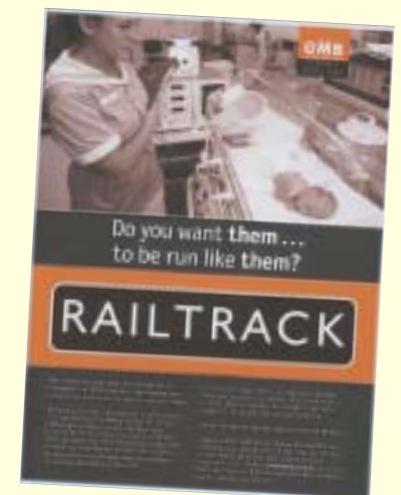
## Best campaign

Only a worryingly small number of entries in this category, but strong competition nevertheless, even so the judges agreed that only two awards would be made. If there are not many more campaigns going on in the union world, then it may be time for some unions to think about their image, profile and public affairs objectives. The judges were very impressed by the highly focused, winning, **FBU** campaign 'Merseyside Trade Dispute', with creatively used materials. One judge described it as a piece of "precision bombing", consisting of a powerful locally targeted media operation, which all the judges had heard about. It was not simply an advertising campaign, but came straight from the heart of the union's concerns. Only £70,000 was spent on the successful campaign making it a "good winner". The **GMB** was highly commended for its 'Keep public services public' campaign, which pushed the issues so hard at a crucial moment as to change the terms of reference of the debate. A lot was spent on advertising, but that led to further media coverage, which took the story on.

## Winner



## Highly Commended



## Winner



## Highly Commended



## Commended



## Best illustration

The best entries in this section made their points with good use of colour, vitality and freshness of thought and a good relationship with accompanying text. However, there were a significant number of entries that lacked originality of approach, or failed to rise above the

ordinary. But unlike last year the judges were able to find a worthy winner in the **GPNU's** strong image that gave a good sense of the workplace, and was clearly rooted in its subject. They highly commended **ASLEF's** illustration which they found dramatic and providing a lasting impression, although they felt that it could have been used even better. **PCS** was commended for an image that was technically crude and told the story well – a good idea.