

unionsouthwest

e-newsletter of the South West TUC

March 2013

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South West annual union gathering

South West TUC Annual Conference

19-20 April

Unison Holiday Centre, Croyde Bay, North Devon

The campaign against austerity and the need to build stronger unions will be key items at this year's annual gathering of trade unions in Croyde Bay, north Devon. Lesley Mercer, TUC President will address the conference just ahead of the launch of the TUC's campaign plan.

Delegates to the event will discuss the attack on welfare and how unions are working with other allies to fight the changes and help those affected. Motions will be debated on the strike by Post Office workers, the need to defend public transport, attack on union rights at work and ways to strengthen trades union councils.

The Annual Conference is open to visitors as well as the new Regional Council delegates from unions and trades union councils. Live music from Caz Costley, Rosie MacGregor and The Sidekicks will fill the Friday evening's entertainment and the centre's facilities will be open for all to enjoy.

For more information or to claim your place contact southwest@tuc.org.uk

China clay strike centenary launch

Thursday 25th April exhibition opens at 4pm launch at 4.30pm
Wheal Martyn Museum, Cathew, St Austell PL26 8XG

Imerys Mid-Cornwall Choir, music from Richard Trethewey, Cornish clog dance, speakers and launch of new book will start a range of activities to mark Cornwall's most significant dispute.

Fighting the Cuts

Friday 26th April 7pm for 8pm start
Labour Club, Yeovil BA20 1JL

Banner Theatre's 1st of May Band presents a cabaret of resistance in music, video, comedy and song. Click [here](#) for more information and booking or contact vivianvjw@aol.com

Remember the dead, fight for the living

Sunday 28th April 12.30-2.30pm
Fill Bristol Cathedral with trade union banners

A historic event is being planned in Bristol Cathedral to remember those who have been killed or injured during the course of their work.

Open to people of all faiths and none, the event will bring together a range of people to honour those killed at work and commit to defending health and safety at work.

South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley said: "Workers' Memorial Day is marked around the world. This will be a historic occasion and one fitting to those killed and injured as a result of their work, while we redouble our efforts to keep workers safe."

Nigel Costley said: "Those that knock health and safety should be reminded what safety law is all about – preventing deaths and accidents like these. Not only do funding cuts to the HSE and local authorities mean there are fewer official safety inspections, the government has also said that workplaces like shops, offices, schools, docks and farms no longer need to be routinely visited.

Speakers will include NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet, Julia Verne from the South West Public Health Observatory, Farzana Saker from Bristol Multi-Faith Forum, David Smith from the Blacklist Support Group, Sam Maher from Labour behind the Label and Canon Tim Higgins. Bristol's Red Notes Choir will provide the musical accompaniment. BBC Points West's Sally Challoner will interview the families of people who have died as a result of their work.

The fight against blacklisting

Monday 29th April 7.30pm
Tony Benn House, Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6AY

Public meeting with Di Parkin speaking about the actions of the Economic League who ran blacklisting information to employers in the 1970s. An electrician will talk about his experience of victimisation.

Organised by Bristol and District Hazards Group and Bristol Radical History Group

Save our NHS

Saturday 6th April 11.30am
Sandford Park (lido car park) Cheltenham

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Stop any plans to axe Cheltenham's A&E services

Libres, songs of the Spanish Revolution

Bristol Anarchist Bookfair, Radical History Zone

20th April

Pilar Lopez's performance about the Spanish Revolution of 1936 draws inspiration from the beauty and relevance of those events and making links with what's currently happening in Spain.

In 1936, after a partially unsuccessful military coup and by popular demand, the libertarian unions took control of the organisation of society in many parts of Spain. In no time large portions of land and industry had been collectivised and belonged to the workers. This short-lived and fascinating revolution inspired the whole world ...and can continue to inspire us as we walk our paths working for and dreaming of equality and justice.

"Libres" is a historical presentation which includes a concert and a lecture, story-telling and beautiful folk songs written and sung in those days as well as some of Pilar's own.

It covers the events of the Spanish Revolution, bringing together the music of the freedom fighters of the 1930s with images and poetry.

Pilar is also touring and will be at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival on 20th July. for further information see: pilarawa.wordpress.com

A city built upon the water

Tuesday 23rd April 6pm-8pm

The Studio, M-Shed, Princes Wharf, Wapping Road, Bristol BS1 4RN

The launch of a new book edited by Steve Poole. The Spanish crew of the *Rosarios* had been drinking in the Hole in the Wall for several weeks without incident but the arrival of the *Highlander*, with a mixed crew of Englishmen, Scots and Americans, created competition over Bristol girls. Leave your weapons at the door. RSVP Angela Sansom on 1007 973 7207 angelasansom@hotmail.com

The Happy Lands

12th May 1pm

Watershed, Bristol (Festival of Ideas)

It's the General Strike 1926 - only seven years after the slaughter of the trenches. Miners' unions lead the country against savage austerity cuts handed to the nation by a Liberal-Conservative government.

Inspired by true stories from local families in Fife, *The Happy Lands* follows the journey of law-abiding citizens who become law-breakers in a heroic battle against the state. It's never a good time to stand up for your rights - but it's always the right time.

The community-led feature film by Theatre Workshop Scotland, directed by Robert Rae, links professional film makers with first-time locals who have owned the project. The community has not only taken on major acting roles but contributed to the research, writing, costumes, set building – including a whole street of miners' cottages - and other 'behind camera' jobs.

[Happy Lands](#)

South West TUC Reps Awards

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Wednesday May 15th Exeter City Football Club

Frances O'Grady, TUC General Secretary, will help present awards to union reps from across the region. Nearly 100 nominations were received for the South West TUC Awards and the event will showcase what volunteers reps do for those they represent and support.

Unions are asked to contribute £32 a head for the awards dinner.

Tolpuddle programme launched

A packed programme of entertainment and politics at this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival has been announced. The range and diversity of activities and speakers makes the weekend event so special. Highlights include *We will be free*, the new play by Townsend Productions; Billy Bragg; a cracking line-up of music for all tastes; a lively menu of fun for kids in the amazing Tin Village and a programme of fringe discussions.

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival [Programme](#) Printed flyers are being dispatched to unions. If you need more contact the South West TUC on 0117 947 0521 southwest@tuc.org.uk

Radical History School

Those interested in discussing trade union and radical history, with an emphasis on the 1930s, can arrive at the Tolpuddle site a day before the Festival. An agenda involving a wide range of speakers offers an informative programme.

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival [Radical History School](#)

New Tolpuddle Facebook page and Twitter

Check out and 'like' the new Tolpuddle Facebook page [here](#) and make friends with @tolpuddlefest

PCS Budget day strike kicks off action

Public and Commercial Services union members started a programme of action with a strike on Budget Day. This will be followed by a half-day strike on 6th April and other national and sector-specific strikes and industrial action as the union steps up its opposition to cuts to pay, pensions and working conditions. Rallies in Bristol and Plymouth heard from angry civil servants about the vindictive government attack on their pay and conditions.

The union has asked for talks on the key issues affecting the lives of civil servants and the services they are able to provide to the public, but the government has refused to negotiate.

Public sector workers to face extra pain

Millions of families will face another year of severely squeezed incomes following the budget announcement that public service pay is to be capped for another year and incremental pay progression is set to be scrapped.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said: "The Chancellor is either oblivious to the tough time that millions of public sector workers and their families are having or he is deliberately setting out to punish them. Public sector workers have seen their pay frozen as the cost of living soars and thousands now find themselves earning less than the living wage.

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“Family budgets are at breaking point and millions of nurses, teachers, fire-fighters, council workers and civil servants will have been hoping the Chancellor might ease their pain, not add significantly to it.”

Who needs the cuts?

New book by Barry and Saville Kushner from UWE in Bristol

Don't want to swallow the myth of economic crisis? Dismayed about the social impact of austerity programs? Want to defend public sectors against the cuts agenda? Read this book challenging the claim that a banking crisis needs to become a crisis of public finance. It makes banking and economics accessible to all. Click [here](#) for more.

BBC Strike

Members of BECTU and the NUJ in the BBC are on Thursday taking joint strike action over compulsory redundancies, excessive workloads and bullying and harassment.

The twelve-hour strike will start at midday, and comes after the corporation's Delivering Quality First programme that will result in the loss of 2,000 jobs. Details of local picket lines will be at www.nuj.org.uk. Ask your MP to oppose the redundancies here <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2012-13/1071> Email the BBC to let them know you support the strike trust.enquiries@bbc.co.uk

Managing performance in further education

Centre for Employment Studies Research

Friday, 12th April 2:30-4pm

Room 2D73, UWE, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY

Graeme Mather is a senior lecturer in Human Resource Management at Bristol Business School. He teaches on 'employee relations' and 'performance management' and is currently undertaking part-time doctoral studies at Cardiff University. His research interests include HRM and industrial relations in the public sector, with a particular focus on the nature and impact of performance management for those working on the front line.

Somerset Racial Equality Council closes

Somerset Racial Equality Council (SREC), the main advocate and sounding board for people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in Somerset has been forced to close. Funding cuts are leading to the closure of more and more voluntary organisations and charities.

Anthea Fisher, the chair of SREC's trustees, said: "This has been a very difficult time for everyone at SREC and despite our best efforts we have not been able to prevent this closure from taking place. This is too high a price to pay for the austerity measures imposed by the government.

South West Migrant Workers Forum

The regional forum has not met for some time and would like to gauge the level of interest from organisations in the region. The Forum hopes to meet again in May and would welcome views on the current issues on the migrant workers agenda. Forward any issues to Kelly-Anne Phillips (Kelly-anne.phillips@swcouncils.gov.uk) and let her know if you wish to attend.

Bristol May Day Rally

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Saturday 4th May

Assembly College Green at 11am to march at 11.30am to Castle Park for 12.30pm

Defend the right to a decent life from cradle to grave. Organised by Bristol Trades Council

South West to miss 24,000 green jobs

[Regen South West](#) has published a new report warning we are not on track to make the most of the potential of renewable energy to create 24,000 new green jobs by the end of the decade.

[Potential Energy – Potential Jobs: building a low carbon economy in south west England](#) shows that on current trends the South West will achieve about 9 per cent of energy from renewable sources by 2020 – well short of the government's target for 15 per cent.

At this rate the number of people employed in renewables will grow from 10,000 people to some 15,500 by 2020. However, if growth accelerates to meet the 15 per cent target we could reach 34,000 renewable energy jobs.

To reach the target and create 24,000 green jobs, Regen South West are calling for:

1. Clear, consistent and certain national policy framework for renewable energy
2. Local planning policies that back renewable energy
3. Investment in the local electricity grid to cope with decentralised energy
4. Improved engagement between local communities and renewable energy developers
5. LEP and local authorities putting renewable energy at the top of the growth agenda for infrastructure and skills investment
6. Industry and academia collaboration on new technologies.

Boost South West construction

A campaign has been launched to urge the Government to invest in construction in the South West after the region suffered an 11% fall in output in 2012 and levels of employment in the region are predicted to fall by 1.1% per year.

[Construction4Growth](#) is a new campaign, by local businesses, in partnership with CITB-ConstructionSkills, to respond to the challenges facing the construction industry.

The latest figures put annual average construction output growth in the South West at 1.3% up to 2017. Infrastructure is set to see a boost if construction of Hinkley Point C nuclear power station goes ahead. Private housing will grow at a rate of 4.3% a year, while the hardest hit sector will be public non-housing, which will shrink 2.5% between now and 2017.

Roger Stone, sector strategy manager for CITB-ConstructionSkills in the South West, said: "The latest figures show the challenge facing the construction industry in South West. It is crucial that business leaders and employers from across the region come together to ensure that everything possible is done to encourage investment, and return the industry to growth."

Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

The Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, has recently announced that crucial government documents relating to the Shrewsbury pickets' trials in 1973 are to be kept locked away for a further 10-50 years. An e-petition has been launched to ensure that the documents are released whilst the pickets are alive. The youngest is 65 and the oldest 85.

In 1972 building workers faced the worst health and safety conditions in British industry. They faced hostile and powerful employers, lump labour and low pay. This was the background to the

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first national strike to improve pay and conditions. At the end of the twelve-week dispute, in September 1972, they succeeded in winning the highest ever pay rise in the history of the industry.

Five months after the strike ended 24 pickets were picked up in North Wales and charged with over 200 offences. Six of the pickets were charged with conspiracy to intimidate. None of the pickets had been cautioned or arrested during the strike. Approximately 70 police accompanied the pickets on the Shrewsbury building sites at all times.

The first trial, in October 1973 ended with three of the pickets being found guilty of conspiracy to intimidate, unlawful assembly and affray, and were sent to prison: Des Warren for three years, Ricky Tomlinson for two years and John McKinsie Jones for nine months on each charge. In the other two later trials a further three pickets were imprisoned and the remaining pickets given suspended sentences.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign has lodged an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission to have this miscarriage of justice against trade unionists overturned. The Campaign believes that there was government interference in the prosecution of the pickets. The government is citing National Security, as the reason for not releasing the papers.

[Sign the e-petition](#)

For further details please see the campaign's website www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk.