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Unite in HS2 STRONGER

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- Overtime
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buildingWORKER

Tuesday 23 March was a truly historic day, when after 49 years of campaigning, the Shrewsbury Pickets finally secured justice.

The pickets were 24 ordinary construction workers who were involved in the 1972 building strike, campaigning for better pay and improvements in safety. The workers were members of predecessor unions of Unite, the TGWU and Ucat.

They were fitted up by the Conservative government of the day, the police and judiciary on entirely trumped up charges.

Ever since their convictions the pickets have been fighting for justice — a campaign which was reignited 15 years ago by the creation of the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign.

That campaign unearthed new evidence which showed how the original witness statements had been destroyed before the original trials, a fact that the Court of Appeal found was so serious that it squashed the convictions.

I am very proud that Unite has supported the [Shrewsbury 24 Campaign](#) and the pickets every step of the way. An injury to one is an injury to us all.

The message is clear, if our members are treated unjustly, Unite will never give up the fight. Read more about the campaign for justice on pages 14-16.

Unite is also in it for the long haul when it comes to [HS2](#). This will be the biggest construction project in Europe and

it is absolutely imperative that it will also be the best paid and the best organised. There is further information on the campaign on page 9 of this issue.

Given the scale and the length of HS2, virtually every region of Unite will be involved in the campaign, which will last for the duration of the project and built over the next decade.

At this early stage Unite's voice is crystal-clear, if construction employers (many of whom are convicted blacklisters) think they can prevent Unite representing workers on the project, they can think again.

Equally if the joint venture companies who are building the major sections of HS2, think they can build it on the cheap, then they are sadly mistaken.

If HS2 is to be built successfully and delivered on time and on budget, then workers must be well paid and well treated and that means working with Unite and not against us.

Further information about the HS2 campaign will be included in future editions of *buildingWORKER*.

Gail Cartmail, assistant general secretary



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Front cover picture: Getty Images

Electrician deskilling plans dropped

Unite has welcomed the announcement that contractors Balfour Beatty and NG Bailey have dropped plans to attempt to introduce new training standards which would have resulted in the deskilling of electricians.

Earlier this year it emerged that the two companies were part of an alliance at Hinkley Point C to introduce training standards for a new position of electrical support operatives.



Getty Images

Attempts to deskill electricians have been dropped

The new training standards had not been discussed with Unite and the union objected immediately to the proposals which were never implemented. The proposals led to widespread protests at workplaces across the UK.

As a result of the pressure by Unite and the protests, Balfour Beatty and NG Bailey have now, following discussions with

Unite issued a statement which includes the confirmation that: “The disputed Electrical training standards developed by the ECITB (Engineering Construction Training Board) for HPC to create the electrical support operative have been permanently withdrawn by EDF after Unite raised concerns.”

They also stated that these standards; “do not form part of our current or future development plans”.

Unite national officer for construction **Jerry Swain** said: “This statement is welcomed and provides clear clarification that the companies are committed to the future training of fully qualified electricians.

“Unite’s position was clear from the outset that it would oppose any and all efforts to weaken the skill set and training of electricians.”

Safeguards needed on hi-tech monitoring of workers

Unite has warned that strict safeguards are needed to protect workers’ rights if hi-tech equipment for construction workers is introduced onto sites.

Unite issued its warning following the promotion of a hi-tech monitoring platform by the company Kenzen that constantly tracks a worker’s heart rate and body temperature and detects when they enter a state of heat distress.

Unite recognises that heat distress can be a major issue on sites but it has severe concerns about the monitoring platform for the following reasons:

- The platform is recording a worker’s private medical information and there needs to be strict safeguards on who can access this information and what it is used for.
- Companies who invest in the technology may become lax in implementing preventative measures to prevent heat stress, such as covering work areas from direct sunlight, providing extra breaks, supplying free water and amending shift times. Instead they may just rely on the equipment to monitor workers.
- Companies could use the monitoring to target workers who experience heat stress and then remove them from the workforce.

Unite believes that the way the industry is currently organised, with high levels of bogus self-employment, working via umbrella contracts or short-term contracts, means that such actions are likely.

Unite national officer **Jerry Swain** said: “The unintended consequences of this form of hi-tech monitoring are very serious and there is a real danger that employers will either fail to implement preventative matters, or use the data to victimise workers.

“It is ironic that construction workers are increasingly under the highest level of monitoring but have the fewest employment rights.

“If an employer is found to be using any form of hi-tech monitoring unfairly or inappropriately and it affects a Unite member, the union will use all possible avenues to secure justice.”

Spycops infiltrated Shrewsbury Justice campaigns

During the latest tranche of evidence into the [undercover policing inquiry](#), led by Judge Mittings, it has been revealed that police spied on the Shrewsbury Justice campaigns in the 1970's and that spycops were infiltrating unions much earlier than previously understood.

At the beginning of the latest evidence sessions which deals with the period from 1973-82, David Barr QC, the counsel to the inquiry

revealed that two police officers infiltrated the TGWU (now part of Unite) in the 1970's and 1980's

A police officer with the code name David Hughes who was undercover between 1971-76 infiltrated the TGWU as did the officer Barry Tompkins during his deployment from 1979-83.

It had previously been thought that the first officer to infiltrate a union was the police officer Mark Jenner, using

the code name Mark Cassidy who infiltrated the construction union Ucat in the early 1990's.

Barr also revealed that one of the campaigns that the spycops heavily infiltrated were the justice campaigns for the Shrewsbury Pickets, which were established after the construction trade unionists were wrongly convicted on trumped up charges in 1973 and 1974.

Unite has demanded that the inquiry does not gloss over the latest revelations.

- *Victory for the Shrewsbury Pickets page 14-16*

Construction workers facing pension black hole

Research by Unite has found that the vast majority of construction workers are not saving for their retirement. Official figures reveal that just 797,000 construction workers are paying into a pension, 36 per cent of the entire workforce of 2.225 million.

The figure includes professional and white collar workers in the sector, so the actual figure for blue collar workers is likely to be far lower.

There are no figures published for self-employed workers paying into pensions but this figure is likely to be low. Even if self-employed workers have their own pension, the fact that they receive no employer contributions means it is highly unlikely to be sufficient in retirement.

Unite believes the reasons why pension take up is low includes:

- Rampant bogus self-employment with roughly half of blue collar construction workers being officially registered as self-employed and therefore not eligible for the auto-enrolment scheme
- The extensive use of umbrella companies where workers are required to contribute both employers' and employees' pension contributions making them unaffordable for many

- Short-term engagements which results in workers believing it is not worth making pension contributions
- Construction employers' hostility to paying pension contributions
- The low level of pay for unskilled workers.

Unite national officer for construction Jerry Swain said: "These figures are deeply troubling. With the majority of construction workers not saving for retirement, we are creating a destitute generation of future pensioners.

"After a lifetime of hard manual work the ultimate ignominy for construction workers is to face poverty in retirement. Put simply, construction workers deserve better."

Getty Images



Many construction workers don't have pensions and face poverty in old age

Cruise ship accommodation plans need scrutiny

Unite has demanded that there is full consultation after the company behind plans to build a Disney style theme park on the Kent side of the Thames estuary, revealed plans to potentially house 2,000 workers on cruise ships. Under the proposals, after workers complete their shifts they would be transported to cruise ships on the Essex side of the Thames estuary.

Unite has several concerns about the plans including: the quality of the accommodation, cost of the accommodation and the food and the ability of workers to freely leave the ships and venture into the local area.

Unite national officer for construction Jerry Swain said: "On the face of it this looks like an attractive option for workers. The Hinkley Point project has demonstrated how good quality accommodation for major construction projects attracts highly skilled workers.

"However, it is essential that the cruise ships don't in reality become an expensive prison.

Getty Images



Unite has concerns about Cruise ships being used to house construction workers

"Workers are human beings and in order to protect their mental wellbeing it is essential that they are able to freely leave the ship and visit the local community.

"There also needs to be guarantees about the quality of the accommodation throughout the life of the development. At the moment due to COVID-19 there is a huge surplus of cruise ships but when that market recovers, it would be immoral to force workers into clapped out hulks."

Hospital construction workers at Covid risk

Unite has rung the alarm about systematic failures by outsourcer Mitie to ensure that workers on its facility management contract with NHS Dudley Hospital Trust, are not exposed to COVID-19.

The workers who include many construction trades people, working on buildings throughout the trust, were at risk of spreading Covid to patients and staff due to the failures. The problems were so bad that the

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued a notice of contravention in relation to Covid safety.

Problems identified by Unite include: a total lack of social distancing, a lack of ventilation, a failure to require staff and visitors to sign in when visiting the building, a lack of security at the main building allowing anyone to enter and a lack of hand sanitiser.

Unite regional officer Su Lowe said:

"This is one of the worst workplaces I have attended as a union officer since the beginning of the pandemic.

"Keeping our NHS staff and patients safe should be the first thought of every company working for the NHS.

"Unite will always speak out to ensure the health and safety of workers, we will continue to hold management's feet to the fire, if we don't, who will."

Unite organises bench in memory of member

Members of Unite employed on the Highways England Area 10 contract (which covers motorways and major roads in Merseyside, Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria), unveiled a memorial bench dedicated to a former colleague on International Workers' Memorial Day.

Unite member **Ian Watson**, who was based at the Milnrow depot near Rochdale, succumbed to COVID-19 during the pandemic.

Mr Watson's colleagues approached their employer Amey and Highways England and were given permission to clear a part of the depot and to install the bench.

- For further details of events that took place on International Workers' Memorial Day go to page 18-19.



Unite members have unveiled a bench in memory of a former colleague

Fair Work prospect in Scotland

A major piece of work is being undertaken in Scotland to develop how fair work can be achieved in construction.

The project which is being undertaken as part of the Scottish Government's [Fair Work Convention](#), is being led by the Construction Industry Inquiry Group (CIIG), which is co-chaired

by Unite regional officer **Mary Alexander**.

The CIIG is utilising research by Strathclyde University in its 18 month study, the final report is expected to be published by the end of next year.

Mary Alexander is particularly keen for the study to investigate how public

sector commissioning and procurement can be utilised to ensure fair work in construction.

The ultimate aim of the Fair Work Convention is that by 2025, Scotland will be the world leader in ensuring that working life drives success, wellbeing and prosperity.

Scottish craftworkers reject pay offer

Unite craftworkers in Scotland employed in local government have overwhelmingly rejected the pay offer from employers.

The employers' organisation COSLA offered a flat rate increase of £800 for the current financial year or a two per cent increase for workers earning between £25,000 - £40,000, with allowances also increasing by two per cent.

Members recorded an 83 per cent vote against the offer as it didn't meet the 12 point pay claim that had been issued. The pay claim included a pay increase of £2,000, a COVID-19



Getty Images

Scottish craftworkers have rejected the pay offer

recognition payment, a reduction from 37 to a 35 hour working week, two days additional annual leave, a use of agency labour agreement, an increase in tool allowance and insurance payments, a no compulsory redundancy agreement and a definition of essential emergency works.

Unite is now putting pressure on local government to reopen negotiations and come forward with a more realistic pay offer.

Unite regional co-ordinating officer **Steve Dillon** said: "Construction craftworkers have worked throughout the pandemic keeping homes safe to live in, they have risked their own and their family's lives to keep the country ticking over. COSLA and the Scottish Government need to reconsider their offer, craft workers have had enough."

PAY AND BARGAINING

Construction agreement pay negotiations

All of the major construction industrial agreements are currently in various stages of pay negotiations.

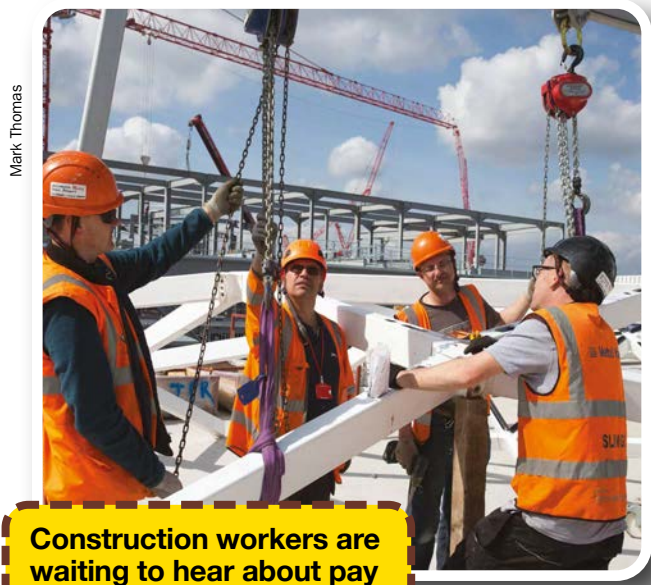
Pay talks are ongoing for the JIB electrical agreement, with the next pay date due in January 2022. Unite has insisted that there must not be a further pay freeze following the current block on wage increases. It is a position that the employers have accepted.

Meanwhile, the pay claim for the NAECI agreement which covers mechanical construction workers has been submitted. An initial meeting to discuss the pay claim has been arranged and the employers' response is expected shortly.

Talks are due to begin with the National Federation of Demolition Contractors for workers covered by the demolition agreement. Pay talks are due to begin soon for workers at tower crane company Wolfkran.

An initial offer has been made by the employers' side of the Building Engineering Services Association that covers heating and ventilation workers and talks are ongoing about a final deal.

Local government craftworkers operating under the Red Book have been informed that employers' pay claim will



Mark Thomas

Construction workers are waiting to hear about pay

not consider their pay claim until the green book (the main local government agreement) has been resolved.

■ As *buildingWORKER* went to press the employers side of the Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC), which covers workers in civil engineering and is the largest construction agreement, made a two per cent pay offer. The offer will be considered by Unite members.

Marshalls secure pay increase but holiday concerns remain

Workers at building supplies company Marshalls have agreed a pay increase of 1.4 per cent on all rates and allowances. The employer has also provided a share buying scheme and a form of healthcare provision which is estimated to be worth an additional 0.6 per cent.

However, members remain very concerned about proposed changes to holiday entitlement.

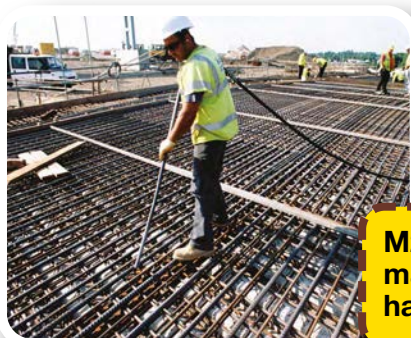
The company has moved to a new shift pattern which sees workers mostly working a four day week and while members have accepted a reduction in normal holidays as a result, the company wanted to reduce the entitlement to statutory holidays (bank holidays) from eight to six days.

This has been strongly rejected by members and the matter is ongoing.

Highways maintenance pay increases

Unite has secured a two year pay deal for workers employed on the Connect Plus Services contract, which undertakes highways maintenance on the M25.

Under the deal workers received a 1.25 per cent pay increase for 2021 backdated to January 2021.



Getty Images

M25 highways maintenance workers have secured a pay rise

In the second year which is payable from January 2022 workers will receive an increase in line with the RPI or CPI inflation index depending on which is higher plus 0.5 per cent or 1.2 per cent if that is higher.

Meanwhile Unite regional officer **Malcolm Bonnett** has secured a one per cent pay increase for highways maintenance workers employed by Skanska on the Hampshire County Council highways contract.

The pay increase was agreed as the workers usually receive an increase in line with the Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC) agreement. However, that was not possible this year as the CIJC instituted a pay freeze for 2020.

HS2: Big Job, Great Pay?

Unite is launching a major campaign to ensure that not only is [HS2](#) the biggest job in Europe but the best paid and safest.

This year is when the building of phase one of the line (between London and Birmingham) gets underway. The tunnelling and track-laying part of the development has been divided into four sections, one in London, one north of London running through the Chilterns, one from the Chilterns to south of Birmingham and finally the line into Birmingham.



Getty Images

One of the huge tunnelling machines that will bore HS2's tunnels

Unite's initial campaign will focus on these areas, although the union will be seeking to recruit workers across the whole project.

Unite's priorities will be to ensure that the union has proper access to the project, in order to talk to workers and understand their concerns, while also ensuring pay rates fairly reflect the scale of the job.

Both aspirations have been made more challenging by a failure of the HS2 board to ensure that the agreement struck with the [TUC](#) on behalf of construction unions such as Unite, was included in the contracts that have been awarded to the major contractors they have appointed to build HS2.

This is an issue that Unite have been pursuing directly with HS2 and pressure will be applied until the TUC agreement is fully implemented.

Currently the pay and the conditions available on HS2 compare unfavourably with those available to workers on Hinkley Point C. At HPC workers in their thousands have joined Unite and we have stewards and safety reps across the whole project, in addition Unite has helped establish site committees where concerns are dealt with.

It is this sort of Unite organisation that has ensured at Hinkley that workers are well paid and have a voice. Hinkley has set the gold standard for construction workers terms and conditions, HS2 should at least equal these. Of major concern is that some contractors on HS2 think they can build it on the cheap, boosting profits by underpaying workers.

Workers undertaking civil engineering work on HS2 should be paid in line with the Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC) agreement. The CIJC agreement sets minimum rates of pay but makes it clear employers can pay above these rates.

Whatever your rate of pay the CIJC is clear you should be paid an overtime rate (a minimum of time and a half) after 39 hours. Also all workers should be receiving a minimum of 22 days holiday plus eight paid bank holidays, 30 days per year.

Unite with the support of its members can ensure these rules are properly enforced.

Equally the union will be ensuring that workers are not only directly employed but are properly treated and that umbrella companies in all their forms are barred. Unite national officer for construction Jerry Swain said: "The message is simple join Unite, get organised in the workplace."

KEY FACTS:

- HS2 phase one will cost between £38 billion – £45 billion
- Completed between 2029 -2031
- Overtime rates should be paid after 39 hours
- CIJC rates are minimum rates and employers should be paying far more on HS2
- Workers should receive 30 days of holiday

Protecting you the cancer warni

Spotting cancer at an early stage saves lives

Have you noticed something unusual for you or something that isn't going away? It's important to take charge.

You're not making a fuss or wasting your doctor's time – if something's not normal for you, your doctor will want to know about it. Cancer that's diagnosed at an early stage is more likely to be treated successfully. In most cases it won't be cancer. But if it is, finding it early can make a real difference.

What should I look out for?

There are over 200 different types of cancer that can cause many different signs and symptoms. Sometimes symptoms are linked to certain cancer types, but signs can also be more general, including unexplained weight loss, tiredness, or pain.

You don't need to know all the different possible signs and symptoms of cancer and it's not your job to know what is wrong. The most important thing you can do is listen to your body. It might be a cough that lasts for a few weeks, a change in your poo, heartburn that keeps coming back or any other change that isn't normal for you. Whatever the symptom, if something doesn't feel quite right - never ignore it, speak to your doctor.

Remember, anyone can develop cancer, but it's more common as we get older. Most cases are in people aged 50 or over.

Find out more at
cruk.org/spotcancerearly

Make the most of your GP appointments:

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the doctor will usually talk to you by phone, video chat or via an online messaging service first. If they do ask to see you face to face, it's really important you go. Your doctor is ready to see you safely.

Talking to your doctor isn't always easy, but they are there to help. Here are some ideas for how to get the most out of your appointment:

- **Be honest** - Tell your doctor about anything that's not normal for you, even if it doesn't seem that important or you think it might be a bit embarrassing
- **Be thorough** - mention all your symptoms and don't put it down to 'just getting older' or assume it is part of another health condition
- **Stick with it** - even if you've seen your doctor already, they'll want to know if your symptoms haven't gone

away, or if something still doesn't feel quite right, so speak to them again

- **Be prepared** - think about how to describe any changes and roughly how long you've had them for. Writing down the things you want to say can help.

Can I reduce my risk of cancer?

A person's risk of cancer can depend on many different things. Some of these things can't be changed, like someone's genes or age. But did you know four in 10 UK cancer cases could be prevented? There are lots of things you can do to reduce your cancer risk.

The best ways to reduce your risk of cancer are:

- Not smoking
- Keeping a healthy weight
- Eating a healthy, balanced diet that is high in fibre, fruit and vegetables and low in processed and red meat and high calorie foods and drinks

Top tips for telephone and video appointments

You should contact your doctor if you notice a change that isn't normal for you. More appointments are happening on the phone or online. These tips will help you get the most out of your phone or video appointment.



1 Let your doctor know if you might have trouble with a phone or video call. Tell them if you need a face-to-face appointment



2 Ask the receptionist what to do if the call goes wrong. You could try practicing with a family member or friend beforehand



3 Make sure you are close to your phone or computer around the time of your appointment, so you don't miss the call

Prevention health Warning signs



cruk.org/prevention
Together we will beat cancer



Want to chat about your experience with cancer?

If you or someone close to you have been affected by cancer, you can call our free nurse helpline on:

0808 800 4040.

Our service is confidential and open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Looking for more cancer information?

Visit cruk.org/aboutcancer

- Cutting down on alcohol
- Keeping physically active
- Staying safe in the sun

Even small changes to your daily routine can add up. Go to cruk.org/health for more information on how to reduce your cancer risk.

Do you work outside?

Nine in 10 cases of the most serious type of skin cancer (melanoma) could be prevented by staying safe in the sun and avoiding sunbeds. Skin damage doesn't

just happen on holiday or in hot, sunny places. The sun is often strong enough to cause damage in the UK, even when it's cloudy.

Getting sunburnt just once every two years can triple your risk of skin cancer.

Reduce your risk by:

- Spending time in the shade if you can, especially between 11:00 and 15:00 in the UK
- Covering up with clothes, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses
- Use a sunscreen with at least sun

protection factor (SPF) 15 and four or five stars. Use it generously, reapply regularly and use in combination with shade and clothing.

You should speak to your employer, or your Unite safety rep or regional officer about how to stay safe in the sun. If you do notice any unusual changes to your skin, including a mark or mole that's new, has changed or been there for a while, speak to your doctor.

When skin cancer is found at an early stage, treatment is more likely to be successful.

SPOTTING CANCER SAVES

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Whatever the symptoms,
if something doesn't
feel right don't ignore it,
speak to your doctor

For more information go to:
cruk.org/spotcancerearly

Or if you need to speak to
someone confidentially, call:
0808 800 4040

Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm



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FINALLY: Justice for Shrewsbury Pickets

Tuesday 23 March 2021, was a historic day for the labour movement and particularly for construction trade unionists.

The Court of Appeal squashed the convictions of the Shrewsbury Pickets ending a 48 year campaign for justice. It was a day that many feared would never come, especially the pickets themselves, the youngest of whom is in their mid-70's.

The case began during the 1972 builders strike, the only time there has ever been a national construction workers strike, which was about pay and improving the industry's abysmal safety record.

In September 1972 a group of construction workers from the North Wales area, went to the Shrewsbury and Shropshire area to picket several sites that were still working. The pickets were accompanied by the police, who on the day congratulated them on their conduct.

Five months later in early 1973, 24 of the pickets were arrested by the police, the charges brought against them included, unlawful assembly, conspiracy to intimidate and affray.

The charge of conspiracy to intimidate was particularly controversial, it was a 19th century law that had never been brought against a striking worker and had hardly ever been used at all.

The 24 were tried in three separate trials beginning in October 1973. At the first trial three of the pickets were given prison sentences including **Des Warren** who received a three year sentence and **Eric (now Ricky) Tomlinson** who was given two years.

In total six of the pickets received prison sentences, 16 received suspended sentences and just two were acquitted.

There then followed a 40 plus year campaign for justice, the pickets had been made political scapegoats by a government which was angry at successive, successful industrial disputes.

"I am no longer a criminal"
Terry Renshaw, Shrewsbury Picket

There was a conspiracy involving Shrewsbury Pickets and the late **Des Warren** summed it up when he addressed the court: "Was there a conspiracy? Yes there was, but not by the pickets; the conspiracy was one between the home secretary, the employers and the police".

The pickets suffered terribly after their ordeal, all of them were blacklisted in the construction industry and many were forced to seek different professions, to provide for their families.

The campaign for justice which had initially included activists from across the trade union movement, slowly dwindled. Then in 2006 the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign was launched in the North West, which involved the vast majority of the pickets and the families of the deceased pickets including the family of Des Warren who died in 2005.

In 2007 the campaign received a further significant boost when the construction union Ucat (now part of Unite) moved a motion at TUC Congress which was

unanimously passed and committed the entire movement to campaign for justice for the pickets.

Crucially, soon after its creation the [Shrewsbury 24 Campaign](#) appointed **Eileen Turnbull** as its researcher, in order to find new evidence which could be used to overturn the convictions.

Turnbull traversed the UK, researching the case and looking through archives and discovered two crucial pieces of new evidence.

Firstly, during the prosecutions the original handwritten witness statements had been destroyed and this information had never been disclosed to the pickets' defence team.

Secondly, during the initial trial an ITV programme called *Red Under the Bed*, a distorted version of the builder's strike was aired. Chillingly, the programme had been made with information supplied by a secret government department called the Information Research Department, which was dedicated to producing anti-communist/anti-union propaganda and its actions were sanctioned by the then prime minister Edward Heath.

Armed with the new evidence the pickets submitted an application in 2012 for their case to be reviewed by the [Criminal Cases Review Commission](#) (CCRC) for a fresh appeal against the convictions to be granted.

Devastatingly in October 2017, when the CCRC finally reviewed the case, their application was rejected.

This was probably the lowest point of the campaign but the pickets' solicitors,

e for the ets



Pickets L-R John McKinsie Jones, Terry Renshaw and Kevin Butcher

Bindmans, advised that the CCRC had failed to apply the correct legal test.

A judicial review, financially supported by Unite, was held and half way through the hearing in April 2019, the CCRC threw in the towel and an appeal against the convictions was granted.

That appeal was finally held in February this year and then after an agonising six week wait the verdict was announced.

The Court overturned the pickets convictions upholding the decision that the destruction of the witnesses statements, meant that the pickets

did not receive a fair trial and their convictions were unsafe.

However, it decided that the *Red Under the Bed* TV programme could not be viewed to have “prejudiced” the jury.

After 47 years of campaigning, the joy and relief, as well as anger of the pickets for their experiences was unconfined.

This was summed up by Unite stalwart **Terry Renshaw** who said: “It’s been 47 years. I’m just so emotional. I didn’t think it would hit me like this. I am no longer a criminal.

“We never thought that we would see this day when this miscarriage of justice was overturned. The police and prosecuting authorities used every trick in the book to secure guilty verdicts, even if it meant trampling over our rights and manipulating the evidence.”

The pickets’ victory was welcomed throughout the labour movement, Unite general secretary **Len McCluskey** said: On behalf of Unite I want to pay tribute to the pickets’ determination and to the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign, without whose work this victory would not have been possible.

“However, this day must also be marked with sadness, for those who have not lived to see justice secured. It is vital that this miscarriage of justice is never forgotten.

“The pickets were victims of the state, whose agencies, including the police, the judiciary and the intelligence services, conspired to make an example of ordinary trade unionists.

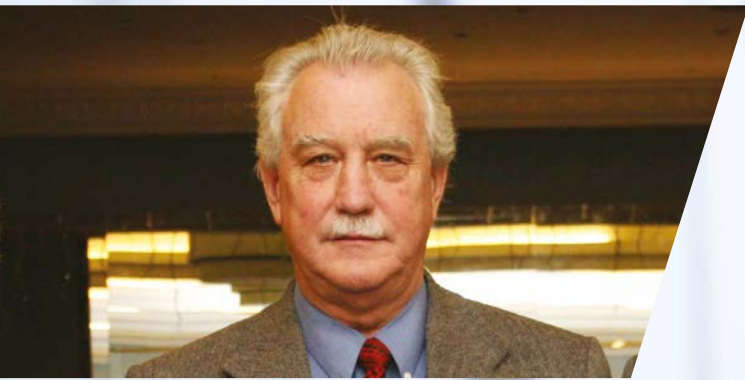
“The full details of who was involved in these trumped up charges remain shrouded in mystery and it is critical that the government papers from the time are finally published.”

BACK ROW: L-R Pickets Bernard Williams, Kevin Butcher, Michael Pierce, Terry Renshaw and Ken O’Shea
FRONT ROW: L-R Picket family members Dawn and Melanie McKinsie Jones, Eileen Turnbull (campaign researcher) and Harry Chadwick campaign chairperson



2018 TUC conference, L-R Terry Renshaw, Harry Chadwick, TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady, Eileen Turnbull, Mark Turnbull

FINALLY: Victory for the Shrewsbury Pickets



**Terry Renshaw
convicted
picket and
founder member
of the
Shrewsbury 24
Campaign**

At 10:30 on Tuesday 23 March the Court of Appeal handed down its judgement informing us that all the convictions of the Shrewsbury 24 pickets had been quashed.

Forty seven years of campaigning to clear our names had come to an end at last. This is a momentous decision.

The appeal court judges ruled the evidence discovered by the [Shrewsbury 24 Campaign](#) researcher Eileen Turnbull made the convictions at all three trials unsafe.

My suspended prison sentence for unlawful assembly has been struck from the court records. My family is overjoyed. The tears flowed and there was much socially-distanced hugging.

As arranged, I immediately contacted five of my fellow pickets to inform them of this historic decision. The responses from them was a mixture of total disbelief and pure joy. Kevin Butcher said, "Terry, I don't believe it, are you sure?!" Michael Pierce shouted, "We have won. I am an innocent man!" Malcolm Clee just cried throughout our conversation.

We all shared thoughts of our long struggle for justice with a great deal of relief and vindication. Emma Lane, the granddaughter of the late Ken O'Shea, was absolutely ecstatic. Emma told me, "Now our family are able to hold their heads up high". Bernard Williams was completely choked up and thanked the campaign for all its hard work.

We said we were innocent of all charges in 1973 and always believed that we had suffered a miscarriage of justice. It has taken 15 years of campaigning by the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign to right this wrong.

I have to make special mention of the family of Des Warren, of John McKinsie Jones, Michael Pierce, Malcolm Clee, Bernard Williams, Kevin Butcher and Ken O'Shea. We all stood together and never gave up the fight for justice when, in 2017, the Criminal Cases Review Commission rejected our case. This was a big setback for us and two other pickets gave up. But eight of us decided to go on; we would never give up. And we won. Because of our stand, we have now achieved justice for all the pickets.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign has been tremendous in the work that it has put in over the years. We, the pickets, and all trade unionists owe Eileen Turnbull a great debt. Without her research, which unearthed the decisive evidence that got us to the Court of Appeal, none of us would have achieved this great victory.

Thank you to all members of Unite for the support and solidarity you have given to us over these many years of struggle.

Bouygues fined in France

Major contractor Bouygues, which operates in the UK, was fined earlier this year for taking part in concealed employment which resulted in construction workers being denied support after being injured at work.

The problems occurred from 2009-2011, when 460 Polish and Romanian workers were employed on the Bouygues project to build a new nuclear power station at Flamanville in France.

The workers were employed by the Irish employment agency Atlanco (which has traded under many names) but were registered to an office in Cyprus. Several of the workers were injured while working on the project,

but when they returned to Poland, they were forced to pay for their healthcare charges upfront and then try to reclaim the costs from Cyprus. The case was taken to court by the French construction union CGT.

Following the judgement **Jean-Pascal Francois**, the federal secretary in charge of international issues said: "We are satisfied with the confirmation of the condemnation.

"The French social security institutions calculated that 12 million euros should have been paid in social security contributions. If this amount



Major contractor Bouygues has been fined for poor employment practices while building the Flamanville nuclear plant in France

was taken into account in the original bidding, the company would never have won the contract for this project."

Right to health and safety a step closer

Moves to make occupational health and safety a fundamental human right have taken an important step forward.

At the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) governing body in March, representatives of the world's governments supported a move from worker members to move forward with making occupational health and safety a fundamental right at the ILO Conference in 2022.

By making occupational health and safety a fundamental human right, it will make governments and businesses more accountable for their actions and force them to protect workers.

International TUC general secretary **Sharan Burrow** said: "Safe workplaces mean greater safety for workers and for the public as well."

Top Glove in forced labour shame

The United States customs agency has ordered the seizure of disposable gloves made by Malaysia's Top Glove company, as it is understood that Top Glove uses forced labour in the production of disposable gloves.

Top Glove is the world's largest producer of latex gloves and exports to 190 countries including the UK.

Despite making PPE Top Glove was forced to close half of its 28 factories as 2,500 workers tested positive for COVID-19.

Top Glove the world's largest producer of latex gloves has been found to be using forced labour.

Indian workplaces dangerous

A report by the global union federation IndustriALL, has found that there has been no progress in industrial accidents in India.

The report said: "The shockingly high accident rate in India's factories, chemical plants and mines continued."

The statistics show that at least 1,160 workers are killed in industrial accidents every year.

Kemall Ozkan assistant general secretary of IndustriALL said: "It is appalling to see that no significant efforts have been taken by the government of India to address the safety crisis. We reiterate that the government should immediately call for a review of safety regulations."

Unite tribute to two workers killed at Power Station 20 years ago this Unite Middlesbrough constructi



Construction workers in London observed a socially distanced minutes silence at Tower Hill



Construction sector stalwart Graham Farquhar pays his respects in Aberdeen



Workers gathered together in Liverpool at the building worker statue

led in a fatal accident on Enron s August. RIP Comrades from on branch.



Trade unionists gathered together in Wellington, Shropshire for Workers' Memorial Day



Workers at Hinkley Point unveiled a memorial for construction workers in Bridgewater



Workers paid their respects in Dundee

Don't miss out!

Get your *buildingWORKER* every quarter

buildingWORKER is the magazine for all Unite construction workers. In order to keep up to date with what is happening in your industry and your union you need to opt in to receive future editions.

Opting in to receive the *buildingWORKER* is quick and simple.

To receive *buildingWORKER* for free, four times a year. You just need to contact your regional office by email, phone or in writing.

Also by contacting the regional office you can update your address, notify a change of employer and request receiving free copies of *uniteWORKS* (Unite's award winning magazine) and *Landworker* (the magazine for rural workers).

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Your 2020/21 tax refund: what changed and what didn't

The COVID-19 pandemic should not prevent workers making a tax claim

Nothing about the pandemic should mean you miss out on your tax refund. When you're spending your own cash on the essential costs of your work, you should be claiming back every penny HMRC owes you.

Changing expenses and work conditions

You might have seen your expenses change in 2020. Don't get put off by the fact that the numbers are shifting. If your income has dropped over the pandemic, for instance, that's even more reason to be sure you're not losing out.

Changing employment status

Being made redundant won't prevent you getting your tax refund either. In fact, you'll probably be owed some additional tax back from HMRC.

If you have been made redundant or your employer goes bust, the tax you've already paid will probably have been too high.

If you've changed employers or switched between self-employment and on the books work, you can still claim. When you become self-employed anything the taxman owes you from your PAYE days is still yours.

If you are self-employed in construction, there is likely to be tax being taken immediately from your pay by contractors via the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS). You can claim for that via your tax return.

CJRS and SEISS

Even if you were on furlough (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) for part of the year, you can still claim for travel and work expenses in the months you were working. With the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), the grants you get count toward

the profits you're being taxed on. They might mean you're owed a lower refund, but it doesn't stop you getting it.

Self Assessment

Even if your self-employment income's dropped below the tax threshold, you'll still have to file your self assessment paperwork. If you're on the Construction Industry Scheme, you've already been taxed at 20 per cent and need to claim it back.

If you're on the books, if you're claiming a tax refund for over £2,500 of expenses for the year, HMRC will need to see a tax return to process your claim.

Working from home

If you've been working from home in the last year, you're probably owed some extra tax back. You can claim tax relief based on expenses of:

- £6 a week without any extra records or bookkeeping involved.
- Your actual costs, if they're higher. You'll need to keep records for this.

If you haven't made a tax refund claim before, it only takes a few seconds to find out for free if you're owed cash back for the last four years. Once you've started your claim, the RIFT app keeps everything simple and stress-free.

Talk to RIFT about your yearly tax refunds, and use our mileage expenses calculator to get an instant estimate of how much you could be owed.

Call the friendly RIFT team on our dedicated members line 01233 653974 or visit [RIFTrefunds.co.uk/UNITE](https://www.riftrefunds.co.uk/UNITE) to check what you're owed and get discounted prices for UNITE members.

This page is a counterpoint to the mainstream media and reviews important pieces of work for Unite members.

Books

Fall: The Mystery of Robert Maxwell by John Preston



Rob Bogerts

Robert Maxwell (right) rubbed shoulders with the world's powerful, pictured here with Henry Kissinger (centre)

Robert Maxwell was one of the biggest (in every way) figures in British society in the latter half of the 20th century, he was also a crook and a monster.

This new biography provides a flavour of the man behind the myth and details the background that shaped him.

Maxwell is famous/infamous for his ownership of the *Daily Mirror*, his raiding of the papers' pension funds and his demise in 1991 when he fell/jumped or was pushed from his private yacht and drowned.

What is without doubt is that Maxwell (which wasn't his original name) had a remarkable life. He was born into a grinding poverty to a Jewish family in what was then Czechoslovakia and is now part of the Ukraine.

Maxwell managed to avoid the holocaust (unlike much of his family) and then during the Second World War, found his way to the UK where he became a British army officer. After the war, with the assistance of the security services he became the leading publisher of scientific publications, through his company Pergamon Press.

Yet Maxwell always craved more. His appetite for power, food and anything else was a huge part of his personality.

In the 1980s he became the proprietor of the Mirror Group newspapers and that is when his abuse of power really kicked in.

Having built a huge business empire he was simply unable/unwilling to accept by the early 1990's it was collapsing. It was why he decided to raid the company's pension funds and steal workers' pensions.

The true scale of his thievery was about to become known, when he disappeared from his private yacht off the coast of Tenerife and was found drowned.

The book is an important reminder that such corporate sharks, where the ultimate victims are the workers whose lives are treated with complete disdain, didn't disappear with Maxwell.

Barckley Sumner

Film

The Trial of the Chicago Seven

The Trial of the Chicago 7, is the true story of what was intended to be a peaceful protest against the Vietnam War at the 1968 Democratic National Convention but it turned into a violent clash with the police.

The organisers of the protest were charged with conspiracy to incite a riot and the trial that followed was one of the most notorious in the history of the United States.

The film was written and directed by Aaron Sorkin who wrote *The West Wing*.

It has a stellar cast which includes, Sacha Baron Cohen, Michael Keaton, Frank Langella, Eddie Redmayne, and Mark Rylance.

Sacha Baron Cohen's portrayal of one of the leaders of the seven, Abbie Hoffman has generated rave reviews and led to him receiving several nominations for best actor and best supporting actor.

A truly remarkable film enjoy.

Jimmy Woods



Richard O Barry

Sacha Baron Cohen portrays Abbie Hoffman (centre) one of the leaders of the Chicago 7

Your Recommendations

Unite members are encouraged to send ideas for future recommendations. We will cover film, television, DVDs and books. The only stipulation is a recommendation needs to be easily available. If you would like to write your own reviews please do but keep your contributions to 250 words. Send recommendations and reviews to barckley.sumner@unitetheunion.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM GB

Please use capitals

This address will be used for the purpose of ballots

Forename _____ Title _____
Surname _____ Gender _____
House No./Name _____
Street _____
City/Town _____
Postcode _____ Date of Birth _____ / ____ / ____
Home Tel _____ Mobile _____
Email _____

About Your Job

Employer/Company Name _____
Job Title _____
Work Address _____
Postcode _____ Work Tel. _____

Which membership do you require?
 Enhanced full time (more than 21 hours per week)
 Enhanced part time (up to 21 hours per week)
 Enhanced low pay
 Enhanced apprenticeship
Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4
Date apprenticeship started _____
Date apprenticeship due to end _____
 Driver Care (a separate Driver Care application form will be sent to you.)
Date apprenticeship started _____
Date apprenticeship due to end _____

Authorisation of deduction of your trade union contribution from your pay (check-off)

Note: Not all employers operate check-off. I hereby authorise the deduction of Unite the Union subscriptions from my pay of such amounts as shall be notified to my employer on my behalf from time to time by Unite. I authorise my employer and Unite to share personal data necessary to operate check off and for my employer to inform Unite of any changes of address.

Are you paid? Weekly 2-weekly 4-weekly Monthly
Payroll No. _____

I agree to abide by the union's rules. (Rule Book is available online)

NI No. _____ Signature _____ Date _____

For Office use only

Mem. No. _____ Employer Code _____ Workplace Code _____

Political Campaigning

Unite fights for our members' interests through political and industrial campaigning on issues affecting you – from pay, pensions, and broader workplace rights to housing, equality issues and our NHS.
If you would like to be part of this, opt-in to our political fund for just 10p per week. (tick here)

Those who choose not to opt-in will not be disadvantaged in any way compared with members who do opt-in, except in relation to control of the political fund.

I support Unite in campaigning on our policies and members' priorities in the Labour Party and I would like to be a Labour Party Affiliate Supporter* (this is free for political fund payers). I authorise Unite to share my personal data with the Labour Party for this purpose. (tick here)

* I agree to the terms listed at <https://support.labour.org.uk>

Equal Opportunities

The provision of this information is to ensure equality for all and is not a requirement

Unite campaigns for equality for all and to ensure that women, black Asian ethnic minorities, disabled members, lesbian gay bisexual trans - LGBT+ and migrant workers are fully represented within the union. To find out more go to www.unitetheunion.org/equalities. Confidentiality is protected. Please complete:

Please tick your ethnic origin: Black/Asian White Please tick if you are LGBT+
Please tick if you are a disabled person: Please tick if you consider yourself to be a migrant worker

Direct Debit Details – Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Service User Number **9 7 1 4 6 7**

Name of bank/building society _____
Town of the Bank _____
Sort Code _____
Account Number _____
Name(s) of Account Holder(s) _____
On the selected day of the month: 7th 14th 21st 28th

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Unite the union Direct Debit monthly from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Unite the union and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank Building Society.

I authorise the payment above. I agree to abide by the union's rules. (Rule Book is available online)

When you join Unite, you are also authorising the Union to deduct an additional amount for your subscription to your local branch fund.

Signature _____ Date _____

Branch No. _____ Job Code _____ Recruitment Code _____

Please send completed forms to: Freepost Plus RTZC-HKGG-RZBY, Unite the union, 2nd Floor, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN

GET READY TO VOTE



Unite GS elections are coming your way soon

Unite's current general secretary Len McCluskey is standing down – and the race to be his successor has already started.

If you are a Unite member, Unite Community member, or Unite retired member plus, and you joined before April 14, 2021, then you are eligible to vote in this election

So get ready to make your voice heard and cast your vote for your candidate of choice.

HERE ARE THE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

BALLOT PAPERS DISPATCHED – **FROM JULY 5**

BALLOT PAPERS RETURNED TO INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER* – BY NOON, **AUGUST 23**

DECLARATION OF RESULTS – **AUGUST 26**

And the new general secretary will take up the post at the conclusion of the election process.

FIND OUT MORE

See the Unite website's handy guide at: www.unitetheunion.org/2021gselection

*In accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, Civica Election Services has been appointed to act as Independent Scrutineer for this ballot. They can be contacted at: The Independent Scrutineer, Civica Election Services, Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW.

