



## Unite Retired Members Support the NPC

Unite the union sends greeting to all attendees at the NPC Annual Convention 2023

### Unite – the union of Jack Jones

By **Tony O'Brien**, UNITE representative on the National Executive Committee of NPC

Jack Jones founded the NPC based on our trades unions and self-organised pensioner action groups.

We are proud of our union members' heritage: leading the way for a 36-hour work week for so many; the 1972 re-sistance that freed the Pentonville dockers from prison; the 1972 building workers' strike victory and resistance against the jailing of the Shrewsbury 24; and the fight by women in Ford Dagenham and Trico factories for equal pay.

Our solidarity with all other unions that led to other great gains for our people. Even

when our struggles have not led to direct victory without having them we would have been so much worse off. Our victory is also for the struggle itself.

We give solidarity and message to all those at the Annual Convention. Today we as pensioners face some of our hardest battles to survive, despite all the obstacles our history proves that when we put up a fight we can win.



## 68 is too late: don't raise the state pension age campaign

On May 2nd, Unite, the NPC and supporters gathered in London and Edinburgh to hand in 36,484 petition signatures opposing further rises in the state pension age.

We were joined by some Labour MPs and MSPs, and the demonstrations received ex-tensive press coverage including in the Mirror, Morning Star, Daily Record, the Express and many local news outlets.

Find out more at: [www.unitetheunion.org/68-too-late](http://www.unitetheunion.org/68-too-late)



# Editorial Comment

By **Mike McLoughlin**

It's good to be back in Blackpool at NPC events after 4 years, during which time we have had the Covid-19 pandemic, which has cost us many friends and activists. Despite vigorous campaigning by the NPC, Unite and other unions and pensioner activist groups we have had the free TV licence for the over 75's taken from us by the BBC who were conned into doing the Government's dirty work for them since we were last here in 2019. For many older people who live alone, with no family, the TV was their only contact with the outside world. We have gone through very difficult times since we were here last, we have had Brexit which has had a severe effect on our economy, this has affected older people in particular due to the massive increase in the cost of living and the horrendous cost of fuel and electricity which has been of massive benefit to the energy companies. The NPC with its very limited resources has continued to campaign on all the issues of importance to retired people: the NHS, care in the community, care homes, and more.

The NPC has campaigned very successfully with the support of the trade unions to defeat the Government's attempt to scrap the Pension Triple Lock. It has been defeated for now, but we need to remain vigilant. The Unite Retired Members National Committee has always supported the NPC but in recent years we have developed a much closer working relationship, with joint discussions and campaigning.

A very good example of this was the recent "68 too late" demonstration outside the

Houses of Parliament and in Edinburgh on May 2nd. These demonstrations although small in numbers were very successful in gaining much publicity. The "68 too late" campaign is one that the people in work must fight for, however it's vital that we retired people assist them to help ensure that our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren have decent and dignified conditions to retire to.

Many of you who will read this leaflet are regulars to NPC events and will exchange your experiences and go away from here with your batteries recharged. However some



of you are first timers to these events and I am certain that you will be surprised at some of the hardship that is being experienced by many people in our society, equally I am convinced that you will be impressed by what some groups are achieving in looking after the interests of retired people. It's my hope that after this conference that you will want to get involved in your local pensioner group, trade union retired members branch, the Scottish Pensioners Forum and the NPC. Best wishes for a successful NPC Blackpool event from the Unite Retired Members National Committee.



# Gender Pension Gap

By **Monica Taylor**, Chair of Unite's National Retired Members Committee

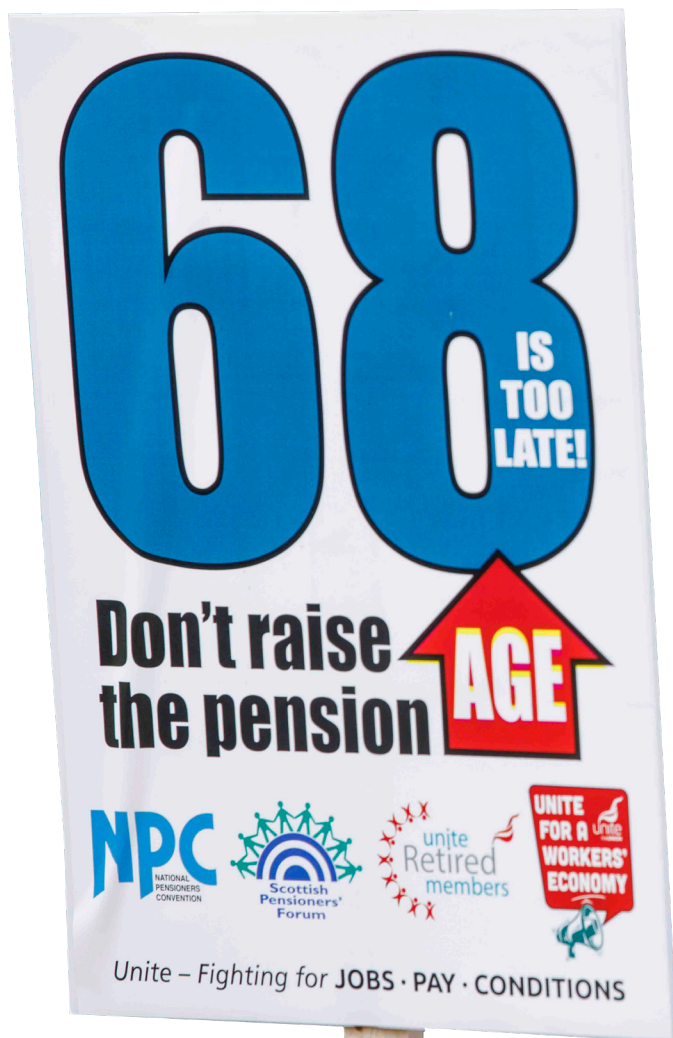
The cut-off date for the former state pension was 6 April 2016 for women born before 1953. The Basic State Pension pre 2016 was very complicated and outdated because married women could build up a pension based on their husband's working life – though this assumed they would not be divorced or widowed. There was simply too much complexity partly because it was based on previous NI contributions and earnings. It was difficult to work out how much pension would ultimately be available on retirement for any individual. The New State Pension simplified this making it easier to work out how much pension an individual can claim. The full credit is 35 years of work with 10 years minimum. It is based on the individual and there is no widow's pension.

The biggest fault with both the old and new pension is that they simply aren't enough to live on. Women have been, and continue to be, badly let down by the pensions system and

there is a large disparity between the income of women pensioners and that of men. Due in part to breaks in employment for caring responsibilities. For the low paid, mostly women, greater reliance is placed on the state pension because they simply cannot afford to make contributions to occupational pensions.

We must continue to campaign for improvements to the State Pension and overcome the growing disparity between the basic old state pension of £156.20 a week and the new state pension of £203.85 per week. Add to this the scandal of WASPI women and the tens of thousands of women who were underpaid their state pensions by up to 60%. It just builds injustice on injustice.

The NPC Pensions and Incomes Working Party is currently working to revise its guidance book on the State Pension.





## Better Buses Campaign Conference

By **Mike McLoughlin**

The Yorkshire and Humber Pensioners Convention held a conference in York on June 17th on the issue of "Better Buses". This publication has been written before this important conference has taken place, and we are very hopeful that one outcome may be a National Bus Campaign.

You can find more information online here:  
[yhpctransportaction.wordpress.com](http://yhpctransportaction.wordpress.com)



## Better Buses for South Yorkshire

By **Paul Smillie**, Branch Secretary Unite NE/999/9

The Unite South Yorkshire Retired Members Branch 999/9 has also been lobbying the Mayor and council leaders to bring back bus services in South Yorkshire under local control for the people of South Yorkshire and not for profit. We will keep lobbying until we achieve our goal: better buses in South Yorkshire.



## The 1972 National Building Workers' Strike and the Shrewsbury 24

*Find out more on these significant moments in history by following the links below.*

**'It was a victory for the trade union movement'.** Unite retired member Terry Renshaw tells the story of how the Shrewsbury 24 campaign won their 47-year fight for justice. By Morag Livingstone.



### Building workers' strike podcast

Tony O'Brien and Ricky Tomlinson on the 1972 building workers' strike and the Shrewsbury backlash, for Working Class History.



[www.workingclasshistory.com/podcast/e65-66](http://www.workingclasshistory.com/podcast/e65-66)

[www.unitelive.org/it-was-a-victory-for-the-trade-union-movement](http://www.unitelive.org/it-was-a-victory-for-the-trade-union-movement)

# Take The Power Back – bring energy back into public ownership

By **Joe Rollin**, Unite for a Workers' Economy campaign

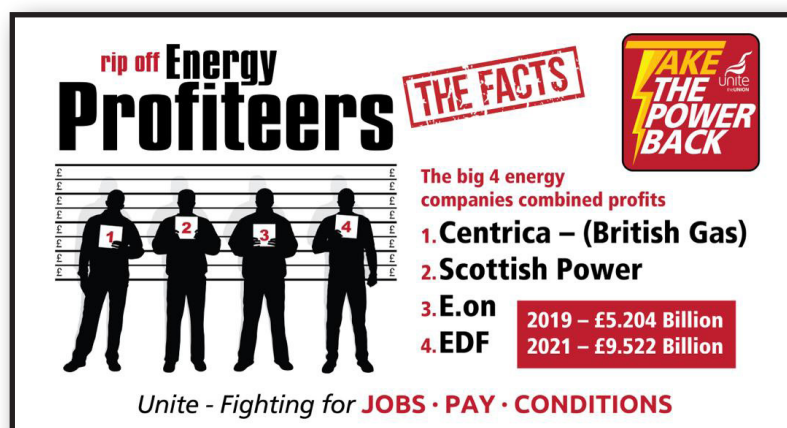
Household bills have hit record levels. While millions of energy consumers struggle to pay astronomical bills, the energy sector is making eye watering profits.

This comes at a huge cost. In our new report Renationalising energy: costs and savings Unite found:

- Public ownership could have saved us nearly £45 billion in 2022 – over £1,800 per household.
- Public ownership could cost £90.3 billion, equal to just two years of profits at the 2022 level.
- The ability to freeze household energy bills would have meant that inflation was at least 4.1% lower.

It's clear the economy isn't working for workers and only benefits the extraordinarily rich and shareholders.

Continuing to leave our critical infrastructure in the hands of profiteers comes at a high cost, but it does not need to be like this. We need an energy system which functions to meet our needs, not prioritise profiteering.







# Unite Retired Members welcome you to Blackpool

By **Caren Evans**, Unite National Officer for Retired Members

I'd like to thank all participants for taking time to attend the convention. Together we can continue to fight for improvements to the lives of our retired members.

Over recent months Unite has grabbed the mantle and worked with the NPC and the Scottish Pensioners Forum to campaign to reinstate the Triple lock for 2023, together we succeeded and saw the state pension rise in line with CPI. It's imperative that this joint working relationship continues.

During the convention you will be discussing the Unite campaign that 68 is too late to begin receiving the state pension, amongst other important issues. Unite thank both the NPC and SPF for their support with the campaign that is now growing in momentum and seeing other trade unions wishing to become actively involved.

I hope you all have a good convention and look forward to seeing any new campaign issues that come from the event.







# The National Pensioners Convention welcomes you to Blackpool

By **Jan Shortt**, NPC General Secretary



We welcome everyone to our first face to face Annual Convention in Blackpool. Over the two days of the Convention, we hope that you will participate fully in the sessions arranged and also let us know how we can progress with your help.

One of the issues being discussed is the “68 Too Late” campaign on the increase to the state pension age. The NPC welcomes the initiative that Unite are taking alongside the NPC and the Scottish Pensioners Forum. We have long argued that all things to do with the state pension (campaigning for a decent state pension for all; the importance of the

triple lock; and the rises in the state pension age) are Trade Union issues. The workers of today are the pensioners of tomorrow and the NPC stands for a better retirement than the one we have today.

Along with Unite and the Scottish Pensioners Forum, we hope that we can engage with the workers of today to raise awareness of the issues around the state pension, its future and the part they can play in telling decision makers that increasing the state pension age is unacceptable. Working longer, paying more in and getting less out is not a favourable outcome for those retiring now or in the future.



## The Scottish Pensioners Forum welcomes you to Blackpool

By **Rose Jackson**, SPF Chairperson

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum are delighted to be attending the NPC conference in Blackpool – an important date in the calendar for older people across the UK to come together to discuss the issues affecting them both locally and nationally.

Over the past few months, we have worked closely with Unite for a Workers Economy and the National Pensioners Convention on the '68 is Too Late' campaign which seen

large numbers turn out at widely publicised demonstrations in London and Edinburgh.

As Westminster continue to chip away at the state pension for future generations, we remain committed to working together on this campaign, and many others, to ensure that our children and grand-children are given the rights and dignity that they deserve in their later years.

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## Join Unite today

You can join Unite Retired Members Plus for 55p per week, online or by completing a membership form. Please pick up a membership form from the Unite stand today.

Scan QR code to sign up online

