



Equality Matters

Communication Workers Union - South West Region Equality & Diversity Newsletter

Just a Drop Of Water Project

Edition 6

The CWU Equal Opportunities Department is very proud to announce that the green light has been given for an excellent project to bring water provision to African villages in Tanzania. The project is a result of a joint commitment made by CWU's Race Advisory Committee and CWUHA (CWU Humanitarian Aid) and the Specialist Water Provision Charity called Just a Drop.

Depending on how much money we are able to raise will determine how many wells we would be able to provide. A typical project is likely to cost something in the region of between £4,000 and £7,000 although it is not unusual to find a project costing as little as £2,000.

We will be largely relying on the generosity of CWU branches and regions to ensure the success of this project.

Further details will be communicated as and when developments occur but at this stage we would urge branches and regions to consider a generous donation to be made towards helping the people of Africa. Some interesting facts in relation to the provision of drinking water are as follows:-

- £1 can give a child safe drinking water for up to 10 years
- Water is the biggest killer of children under the age of 5
 - 1 child will die every 17 seconds
 - 5000 children will die today
 - 1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe water, roughly one sixth of the worlds population
- 2.6 billion people don't have access to adequate sanitation - two fifths of the

- world's population
- Water-related disease is the second biggest killer of children worldwide
- The simple act of washing hands with soap and water can reduce diarrhoeal diseases by over 40%
- The weight of water that women in Africa and Asia carry on their heads is commonly 20kg, the same as the average UK airport luggage allowance.

The above explains why this project means so much to both the Race Advisory Committee and CWUHA.

Cheques should be made payable to CWU and sent C/O this department. Any enquiries should be directed to the CWU Equal Opportunities Department.

Just a Drop is an international charity that aims to provide clean, safe water and sanitation. To date they have helped over 900,000 children and their families in 28 countries. They raise money to build wells, install hand pumps and carry out health and sanitation programmes to give clean, accessible water.

This means children are well enough to go to school, mothers needn't trek miles in search of clean water, and fathers are healthy enough to work. The cycle of sickness and poverty is broken and the future immediately brighter.

Just A drop website is www.justadrop.org



Regional Equality & Diversity Committee

We held a successful AGM of the committee in January at the regional office where Trevor Matty was elected as Chair and myself as Secretary.

This is the season for AGM's and I know we will have some new faces at our next meeting which will be in the regional office in Bristol on the 7th April starting at 11am. Can branches please try to ensure their equality officer or a stand-in can attend.

Finally, apologies for appearing again below this article but we have had some problems getting a volunteer to come forward for an equality officers profile so I have filled the gap for this edition!

Gary Williams Secretary

LGBT History Month

February saw the start of LGBT History Month to celebrate and raise the profile of the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. This symbolic annual event has taken on much more prominence in recent years and there were many commemorative occasions specially prepared around the country to celebrate this.

Locally, there were events, cinema shows, debates and meetings in Liskeard, Exeter, Camborne, Gloucester, Bristol, Falmouth and Plymouth and an exhibition held in Gloucester for the whole month.

For more information please go to:
www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk



Equality Officers Profile



I became my branch equality officer in 1999 because of the discrimination I had seen in the workplace. It was during this time that I

found how supportive many in the CWU are in working to achieve full and proper equality and felt able to 'come out' at work. There was some initial hostility from colleagues and I did feel I had to work harder to prove myself, but with the support of fellow officers it became largely a non-issue.

Becoming involved in equality led on to taking part in the initial Equality & Diversity Tutors course, but it also evolved into other areas. I was our first Branch Lead ULR and interested in the learning agenda, I became more involved with IR issues through being a workplace rep and I am now Branch Secretary.

Our branch has taken an active stand against the BNP locally and in the last local elections we leafleted branch areas where the BNP were standing.

In February and March this year our branch held two rallies to protest at the rising tide of bullying and harassment in BT and the threat of job losses to justify bad management. (see photo on left at Bournemouth rally)

I am very proud of the hard work so many in the union do to promote equality and fight discrimination but there remains much to do, particularly now as the government props up bankers whilst letting other workers jobs go to the wall.

In this environment of fear over jobs the fascist BNP are making inroads behind that nasty phrase of British jobs for British workers. Workers have no boundaries, we are forced to go where the work is to make a living and support our families.

The real threat isn't the nationality, race, religion or colour of working people, it's the fascists who try to split us up and make us fight each other whilst they take power by the back door. Solidarity amongst all workers has never been more important.

*Gary Williams
Solent Branch*

My Rights Are Better Than Your Rights!

In October 2008 Gary McFarlane claimed he had been discriminated against because he is a Christian. He worked for the relationships counselling service Relate and claims it failed to accommodate his faith or allow him to try to overcome his reservations and applied to an employment tribunal.

He said that he has "overcome" his prejudices against same-sex couples since he began working as a Relate counsellor but now that he is training to be a psychosexual therapist, he feels he cannot deal with gay and lesbian people as it would be incompatible with his beliefs. After complaints by staff at Relate about his views, he was suspended and later told he would face a disciplinary hearing. Eventually he was dismissed.

On January 9th the tribunal dismissed his claims. A spokesperson for Relate said: "This important decision validates Relate's commitment to equality of access to our services. Our trusted service, both in Avon and across the country, relies on making respectful and professional counselling and sex therapy available equally to all members of our society, regardless of their gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or relationship status, and we take every effort to balance rights which may be competing. We cannot allow anything to damage our clients or to undermine the principle of trust that underpins our work."

Mr McFarlane's case was backed by a group created "to stand up publicly against a tide of unChristian legal and political changes in the United Kingdom." Christian Concern For Our Nation (CCFON) claimed the law needs to be clarified and that the law preventing religious discrimination against Christians is in danger of becoming a dead letter.

His tribunal follows the case of Lillian Ladele, who won her employment tribunal against Islington Council.

A registrar, she had refused to carry out civil partnerships because she claimed they conflicted with her Christian views. The

tribunal found she had been discriminated against because of her faith. There were concerns her victory would set a precedent that would allow people claiming strong religious convictions to opt out of the provision of services to gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

The Christian Institute, which funded the employment case, has mounted a string of unsuccessful court challenges to gay equality.

Islington appealed the ruling and the employment tribunal appeal ruled the council was not guilty of religious discrimination and were not taking disciplinary action against Ms Ladele for holding her religious beliefs but because she was refusing to carry out civil partnership ceremonies, which involved discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

The employment appeal tribunal's judgement stated: "The council were entitled to take the view that this would be inconsistent with their strong commitment to the principles of non-discrimination and would send the wrong message to staff and service users. The tribunal's ruling is a blow to fundamentalist Christians who claim they should be allowed to bring their prejudices against gay people into the workplace.

Free Polish DVD

The South West TUC has launched a new tool to help pass on advice to Polish workers. A free DVD is now available in Polish with English sub-titles. It covers a range of issues such as the minimum wage, contracts of employment, sick pay, maternity rights and health and safety. Copies are being distributed to unions and Polish support groups. For more South West TUC on 0117 947 0521 southwest@tuc.org.uk

Who makes up the South West?

The South West TUC have an updated version of "Who makes up the South West?" available. This is an invaluable guide in combating the myths pedalled by the fascist BNP. It is available as a download via the TUC website, select south west region.

Women's Conference, 28th February 2009, Manchester.

Pat Clouder, Chair of the Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) welcomed us to the 11th Motion-based CWU Women's Conference. She spoke about the work the WAC had been involved with the preceding year including;

- Equality Laws and how they affect women
- The Chain-makers festival
- Supporting Regional Women's Committees
- Supporting the Abortion Rights campaign Group
- Fighting the illegal trafficking of women into the sex industry
- Breast cancer awareness

National Equality Officer Linda Roy started by saying that we send our thoughts and best wishes to those affected by the credit crunch, especially our own members; people who have lost their jobs due to the incompetence of 'the masters of the universe'!

She told us how as women we need to put our names forward, to stand for elections and to increase the number of women holding positions within the CWU structure so it can reflect its membership.

She told us that despite it being almost 40 years since the first equal pay act came into force, there was still a gender pay gap of around 17% for full time employees and 34% for part time employees. The glass ceiling is still intact; women are still denied higher positions.

Vice President of the CWU, Jane Loftus told us how during this recession cutbacks are likely to be in equality as priorities go elsewhere. Agency and temp workers are likely to be first out the door, and they are usually women. She spoke about how it seems these days that they nationalise the debt and privatise the profit. She asked; 'Do Unions allow ordinary workers to pay for this crisis?'

There were 23 Motions on the Agenda; 3 industrial issues and 20 non-industrial issues.

One Motion was withdrawn. 19 of the 22 remaining motions were carried, mostly unanimously. These dealt with a wide range of issues including;

- Correcting the disparity of maternity leave between the business where the CWU has members (between BT, Royal Mail, Post Office Counters for example).
- To campaign for the right to a gradual build up of hours after returning to work from Maternity/Adoption leave.
- To support campaigns designed to increase funding for children who are victims of domestic violence.
- To raise awareness of health issues associated with the menopause.
- To raise awareness of mental health issues.
- To campaign for free eye-tests for all members.
- To continue to support the Chainmakers festival.
- To campaign to increase welfare benefits to reflect the cost of living.
- To resist our Employers rolling back our rights using the excuse of the recession and to make sure our members know their rights.
- To carefully monitor the effect of the recession on women members to make sure they are not disproportionately made redundant in comparison to their male counter-parts.
- To campaign to educate parents on the risks of the internet to their children.
- To continue to monitor the gender pay-gap within the businesses where we have members and seek to eradicate the discrimination that leads to it.
- Negotiate paid release for CWU Women's Officers.
- For the final endorsement on future editions of the CWU's women's magazine 'Women's Talk' to remain with the Women's Talk's editor.
- To work with the Race Advisory Committee to identify what barriers there are preventing more black and ethnic minority women taking up union positions.
- To campaign against "Honour killings" in Iraq

.....CWU Women's Conference 2009 continued

The South West Regional Women's Committee submitted a motion regarding treatment of our Women Members going through the menopause. The Committee felt that the CWU should be at the forefront of defending women's rights and dignity at work, and with this in mind had submitted a motion about protecting women against unfair attendance procedures triggered by menopause related absences and also to raise awareness with both CWU reps and managers within the various businesses where we have members (such as Royal Mail, BT and the Post Office) of the problems women can face during the menopause so they can be helped in a sensitive manner.

South West Women's Regional Secretary, Sandy Best moved the Motion saying that we needed to 'break the silence' that surrounds the menopause and put pressure on employers to treat these women fairly and with respect. She told us that we need to change the attitudes of employers and even some of our own reps. We need to lessen the stigma attached to the menopause to make it easier for women to discuss it like any other health condition.

Gloucestershire Amal's Equality Officer Katy Hartland seconded the Motion on behalf of The Branch. Addressing Conference, she told us how according to the NHS, 8 out of 10 women experience symptoms during the menopause, and 45% of those will find their symptoms difficult to deal with, but many of us know little about the effects of the menopause, thanks in part, to the stoic efforts of our mothers and grandmothers who often 'suffered in silence'. Several more delegates spoke in support of our Motion which was carried unanimously.

Janette Taylor spoke to conference on behalf of Gloucestershire Amal on a Motion about correcting the disparity of maternity leave between the business where the CWU has members and asked that adoptive parents not be forgotten when negotiating maternity and paternity leave as adoption can be a very time consuming and emotionally turbulent time as well. At the end of the Conference, every

Branch voted for the two Motions which they felt were the most important to be put to General Conference in June.

We were extremely pleased to find out that one of the two Motions voted for was our own Motion on the menopause, along with a Motion calling for paid release for Women's Officers.

Guest Speaker Valerie Shawcross of the London Assembly for Lambeth and Southwark London Constituency, told Conference it was like 'nailing a jellyfish to a wall' trying to get any sense out of London Major Boris Johnson. He had cut funding for domestic violence victims by 2/3rds as one of the first things he did at City Hall.

She told us how her first feminist thought as a young girl listening to stories about the death and carnage of the Second World War was that 'politics is too important to be left to the boys!'

She concluded by telling us just as our mothers wanted something better for us, we should leave a legacy of expectation for the next generation. She told us not to be shy to seek power, and not to be embarrassed to use it.

There was an excellent turn-out for this years Conference; 80 Branches were represented at conference by 128 delegates. Linda Roy closed the Conference, telling us to encourage our women members to get involved.

The South West Regional Women's Committee would like to express their thanks to Gloucestershire Amal's Branch Secretary, Paul Trehearne for his invaluable advice and assistance in wording our Motion.

*Katy Hartland,
Gloucestershire Amal*

*Photo: Janette Taylor,
Gloucestershire Amal*



Report from CWU Black Workers Conference.....

Due to the heavy snow, many Branches from the South West had difficulty getting to Belfast. Bristol Airport had been closed on Friday but most of us had arrived by Saturday morning.

Colin Bell, Chair of the Black Workers Advisory Committee welcomed us to Conference. Colin spoke to us briefly about the history of Belfast including Harland and Wolff ship building and 'News Letter' – the oldest English language newsletter still in production. He went on to talk to us about the work the RAC (Race Advisory Committee) had been involved in over the preceding year including the CWUHA (CWU Humanitarian Aid) to bring water to a village in Tanzania, enhancing black representation, working with schools to enhance Trade Union profiles, the ACLT (African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust) and the Black History Exhibition

Colin then spoke to us about the recent offensive remarks from high profile people such as Prince Harry and Carol Thatcher – he told us 'people need to know that it's not okay'. Colin told us how it is worrying that the BNP could win up to 4 seats in European elections. He told us how it is tougher for the 'visible minority' especially at a time of recession and redundancy – but asked 'why are they not visible at a time of promotion?'

Finally, Colin spoke about the momentous occasion of Barack Obama being elected the first black president of the USA. Quoting Nelson Mandela, he concluded by saying 'it always seems impossible until it is done'.

Lawrence Huston, Northern Ireland Regional Secretary welcomed us to Belfast. He told us dignity and respect are at the forefront of equality issues.

Linda Roy, National Equality Officer, addressed conference. She spoke to us about how it was the CWU's priority to raise the profile of equality, especially race equality and human rights. She told us we need to make our structure more representative of our membership; perhaps this would involve having reserve seats or maybe creating a new role of Branch Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) Officer as well as the Equality

and Women's Officers. This would need a rule change at conference and this would take time. We need to put BEM members' issues on the agenda.

Linda also mentioned the recent offensive remarks by Prince Harry and Carol Thatcher. 'It is not acceptable' she said. The excuse that it is 'just banter' is not good enough - we've heard that excuse before. She told us how a postman had committed suicide due to racial bullying. Linda concluded that we should be proud of our record as a Union. The CWU is at the forefront of equality, respect and inclusiveness.

Andy Kerr, Deputy General Secretary (telecoms), then addressed conference. He spoke about the on-going struggle for black equality, but how there was now new hope, not just for America, but for the whole world with the election of Barack Obama, but we still need to resist the far rights' poisonous agenda. Workplace equality for BEM people is still a major challenge and the racial structure of the CWU must reflect its membership. For example, currently there are no BEM Regional Secretaries in the CWU. He asked 'when will we see a black prime minister in this country?'

There were 10 motions (all National issues) including two emergency motions, E1 and E2. The motions dealt with a wide ranging set of issues such as

- for the CWU to help the dying people of Gaza.
- for the CWU to make representation to the relevant parties to condemn the offensive remarks made in the media by prominent people such as Prince Harry and Carol Thatcher.
- to lobby parliament to allow asylum seekers to work and for the CWU to sign up to the 'Let Them Work' campaign.
- for the editorial responsibility of the RAC (Race Advisory Committee) publication 'Drum' to return to the RAC.
- for the CWU to monitor the tendency to promote a mythical and arbitrary 'Britishness', dividing working class

.....Report from CWU Black Workers Conference continued

...people on cultural grounds, specifically in the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill.

- for the CWU to monitor the tendency to promote a mythical and arbitrary 'Britishness', dividing working class people on cultural grounds, specifically in the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill.
- to raise awareness of prostate cancer, especially amongst BEM men, who suffer higher rates of the disease than their white counterparts.
- to ensure black representation within the CWU structure is proportionate to our membership and also to monitor the proportion of BEM people gaining promotions within the various businesses represented by the CWU.
- for the CWU to use 'common sense' in regard to reserve seats for women; if there are not enough women coming forward then rather than have an empty seat on a delegation or committee; fill that seat with a man with the next highest number of votes.
- to raise awareness of the increased risk of diabetes in BEM people.
- to work to ensure the businesses in which the CWU has members are reflective of their local demographic in terms of the number of BEM people they employ.

All 10 motions were heard and carried unanimously. Delegates spoke with passion about issues which face them and their members. After Motion E1 was carried, calling for help for the people of Gaza, Conference held a minutes silence as a mark of respect to the innocent men, women and children killed in the Gaza conflict.

There were two very inspirational speakers at the conference. Firstly we heard from Hrathe Koundarjian, coordinator for the Strangers into Citizens campaign. Hrathe told us how it was recently the 5th anniversary of the deaths of the 23 cockle pickers on Morecambe Bay, but there had been very little coverage of this in the news. The cockle pickers had been assaulted only days before their tragic deaths by local cockle pickers. They didn't feel able to go to the

police about this because they were not legally allowed to work but instead took the added risk of cockle picking at night - with fatal consequences. He told us it shouldn't be a priority to deport these people as this would be a cost to the British tax payer but the UK could gain an extra £1 billion a year revenue from National Insurance and tax from letting these people work legally.

Pauline Buchanan, Equality and Social policy officer for the ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade unions) spoke to Conference. Pauline told us how we have a duty, and the capacity, to organise vulnerable people.

Conference voted for two of the Motions to be put forward to General Conference next June; Motion 1; calling for a campaign to lobby parliament to allow asylum seekers in the UK to work and thereby retain their dignity and make a positive contribution to the UK.

Motion 5; calling for the CWU to ensure that black representation within its structure is proportionate to the membership and also to monitor the proportion of BEM people gaining promotions within the various businesses represented by the CWU.

100 delegates and 19 visitors attended the conference representing 55 branches out of a possible 150. The number of delegates was down from last year, but poor weather conditions had probably prevented some Branches from attending.

Katy Hartland; Gloucestershire Amal



Imagine...

the experience of Europe's Roma & Sinti during the Porrajmos

... being killed for being different

... life as a Gypsy or Traveller in Britain today

... how you can tackle anti-Gypsy prejudice

Like the Jewish population, Europe's Gypsies were targeted by the Nazis for total destruction. The "Porrajmos" (literally "The Devouring") is the term used to describe the genocide of Europe's Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) population by the Nazis. An estimated 200,000 Gypsies were murdered or died as a result of starvation or disease. Many more were imprisoned, used as forced labour or subject to forced sterilisation and medical experimentation.

The experience of Europe's Gypsy population has parallels with that of the Jewish people. Both were targeted on the grounds of their race and had previously suffered centuries of discrimination. The Nuremberg Laws which prohibited marriage between Jews and Aryans and enshrined the loss of citizenship rights were also applied to Gypsies. As with Jewish children, Gypsy children were banned from state schools and Gypsies found it increasingly difficult to maintain or secure employment.

As the war began the persecution of Gypsies intensified. Deportations of Gypsies to ghettos including Lodz and to concentration camps including Dachau, Mauthausen and Auschwitz-Birkenau which had a specific "Gypsy Camp" began. Of the 23,000 Gypsies imprisoned at Auschwitz-Birkenau approximately 20,000 died. Despite the atrocities committed against Gypsies by the Nazi regime their experiences were only fully recognised by the West German Government in 1981 and the Porrajmos is only now becoming more widely known.

We don't know how many Gypsies and Irish Travellers live in the United Kingdom. It is estimated that there are 300,000 however as the census does not include a separate category for Gypsies and Travellers there is no accurate or reliable data. Gypsies and Travellers face a great deal of prejudice, misunderstanding and distrust.

A MORI poll revealed that more than one-third of the adults who took part admitted to being

prejudiced against Gypsies and Travellers – this is more than for any other group including asylum seekers and refugees.

Despite Britain's far-reaching anti-discrimination laws Gypsies and Travellers face widespread hostility and suffer from low education and health standards:

- "No Travellers" signs can be seen in pubs and shops despite being illegal
- Gypsy and Traveller children are often bullied at school
- Gypsies and Travellers can find it difficult to obtain planning permission for private sites and local authority sites are placed near sewage works, electricity pylons and beneath flyovers.
- Gypsy and Traveller women have a life expectancy 12 years less than women in the general population and are three times more likely to have suffered the death of a child
- 22% of Gypsy children leave school with no qualifications – the British national average is 6%

Consider how you can develop relationships with Gypsies and Travellers within your own community.

- Invite members of the Gypsy/Traveller community to tell you about their experiences of discrimination.
- Read poetry or books which reflect the Gypsy experience of Nazi persecution and Gypsy life today – the HMDT website has examples which are suitable.
- The Gypsy Council and the Commission for Racial Equality have provided this information.

*Johnny Delany was a 15 year old Traveller who was killed in May 2003 by two sixteen year old boys. Johnny lived on a legal encampment with his parents, three sisters and brother. Johnny was attacked while meeting friends in Ellesmere Port. According to witnesses at the trial of the accused one of the boys said that Johnny deserved the attack because he was only "a f***ing Gypsy".*

Despite the belief of Johnny's family and the investigating police officers that the attack was a racist killing the Judge at the trial ruled that the attack could not be described as racially aggravated.

CWU LGBT Advisory Committee January 2009 — Report

Linda Roy gave a verbal update on the issue of Communications and the magazine reverting back to the previous type. It is our understanding that Comms Department would go back to providing full support. The issue of equality conference guides for new delegates was raised, comments were made about inaccuracies which it was agreed would be taken on board. The committee agreed that it was a good initiative.

There was an update on the DEBUT project and everything appears to be on target; the first draft of the equality toolkit should be ready by the end of February 2009; the draft will be open to comment and Advisory Committees will have an opportunity for input. Ongoing concerns were raised about BTs support for the Alpha Course and running it in BT buildings. This continues to be raised with BT.

There was a report from the TUC LGBT Committee on the ongoing campaign to remove Joel Edwards from his position in the EHRC as being inappropriate given his comments and campaigning against LGBT rights.

TUC LGBT Motion: It was agreed that the theme of Christian groups using the employment tribunal system to undermine LGBT people and their rights and the Popes attacks on LGBT people would form the basis of the CWU's motion.

Linda Roy presented a paper on the departments budget and that if Advisory Committees identify issues or campaigns they would like to take part in we will need to look at bringing in some external funding. She proposed that the LGBTAC appoints a fundraiser.

Working Party Update: IDAHO: The Committee considered that the Saudi Arabia's Embassy should be targeted, though the location was not ideal. After debate it was finally agreed that the Indian Embassy (Aldwych) should be the target as there is a growing campaign there for LGBT equality, there were also strong links with BT and the

location was central so good for publicising the issues. This will be taking place on Sunday 17th May. In terms of the monument the shape is already agreed and this will be the pink triangle. On the location we are considering a national monument and also a small scale model of the monument in Alvescot.

Tackling homophobia in sport: Fevzi gave a report on progress on this issue. A new development was reported where Liberty and Kick It Out have launched a new initiative with the Olympics in mind and have asked CWU to be involved given our focus in this area. A meeting is planned on 3rd February and a conference call for 10th February.

Faith & Homophobia Conference, initial publicity will be available in the next few weeks. The Conference is taking place on 16th May at Institute of Education at Bedford Square.

Stonewall link on CWU website

The Committee debated the issue and whilst acknowledging Stonewall are by no means perfect it was pointed out by some that they do excellent campaigning on behalf of LGB people. There were also views expressed that some regard them as transphobic, they undermine trade unions in the workplace and support employers. A motion was put that the link be removed: this was agreed.

Linda Roy presented a paper concerning the choice of Dundee as the next venue for the next Conference. A debate took place and there was a mixture of views. Cost was also a serious consideration. It was pointed out that the south coast had not been visited yet by the LGBT conference and that holding all equality conferences at the same location, albeit at different times would place undue pressure on travelling for some branches. It was agreed that the 2009 LGBT Conference would be held in Bristol provisionally set for 21st November.

There was a discussion on how the policies carried at Equality Conferences are enacted.

Date Of Next Meeting: 17th April 2009, 10.30am
Gary Williams, Vice Chair LGBTAC

Just Below The Surface

This is an initiative to raise public awareness of sexism at work as part of Fawcett's Sexism and the City campaign. It is estimated that between 70% and 90% of women experience some form of discrimination in the workplace, including pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, stereotyping, and pay discrimination.

Fawcett is the UK's leading campaign for equality between women and men. Why it's needed:

...When applying for jobs:

"He told me there was no point in me applying because I was female. He went on to say that women have to work much harder to get such a job." *Ruth, City worker*

...In the office:

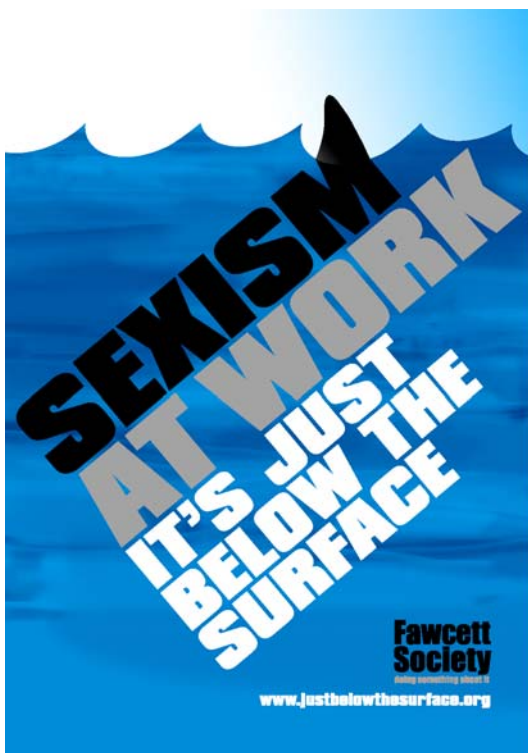
"Guys looking at pornography on each others' computers was pretty common, sometimes very explicit stuff. Some of the guys thought it was really funny to look up our skirts or to touch us." *Ellen, City worker*

...When entertaining clients:

"Thousand of pounds were spent by male colleagues entertaining clients in lap dancing clubs." *Alison, City worker*

You can download posters, order material, send your experiences and sign the open letter to the government on:

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>



CWU / TUC Events

The TUC have organised a Faith, Homophobia, Transphobia and Human Rights Conference in London on the 16th May, at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1. Registration starts from 9am onwards.

This will bring together faith and non-faith groups and equality organisations to discuss issues around faith and equality, conflicts and issues, challenge to homophobia in faith schools etc.

Guest speakers include Trevor Phillips Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Maria Eagle MP Minister for Equalities and Amanullah De Soudy Director of Islamic Studies, University of Glasgow.

More details at www.lgcm.org.uk/fthrconference2009 where you can also book online.

The following day there is a CWU rally outside the Indian embassy in London to protest at the continuing illegal status of LGBT people, so why not join us there as well?

CWU HELPLINE
HARASSMENT
0800 107 1909
or email cwu.dignityandrespect@firstassist.co.uk

CWU HELPLINE
HARASSMENT

The CWU harassment helpline:

- is for anyone who feels unable to speak to anyone locally about a harassment problem
- offers a 24 hour service for logging calls which will be passed to union HQ for action
- can also give direct access to professional counsellors if you need additional emotional support

To seek advice, just call **FREEPHONE 0800 107 1909**

CWU - General Secretary Billy Hayes - 150 The Broadway London SW19 1RX - 020 8971 7200 - www.cwu.org

Pope says gay's as big a threat as destruction of the rainforest

The head of the Roman Catholic Church used his end of year's message to claim the existence of homosexuals is as great a threat to humanity as the destruction of the rainforest and behaviour beyond traditional heterosexual relations is "a destruction of God's work."

Pope Benedict XVI also attacked transgender people and claimed that a "blurring" of genders would lead to the extinction of the human race.

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement's chief executive Rev Sharon Ferguson SAID: "It is comments like this that justify homophobic bullying that goes on in schools and it is comments like this that justify gay bashing."

"When you have religious leaders like that making that sort of statement then followers feel they are justified in behaving in an aggressive and violent way because they feel that they are doing God's work in ridding the world of these people."

The Vatican also recently opposed a statement at the United Nations reiterating the universal human rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans people. According to the Roman Catholic church gay people are disordered.

TUC warns on changes to maternity leave

Unions are urging ministers to press on with plans to extend maternity leave after fresh reports that business secretary Lord Mandelson wants a bonfire of any legislation that might damage business during the recession.

Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, said there would be a backlash if ministers backtracked on new rights for working mothers expected to come into force in April next year. The Institute of Directors said the extension of paid maternity leave from nine

nine months to 12 months could load £600 million of costs on to companies already struggling during the downturn.

Mandelson is understood to be sympathetic to a delay until the economy picks up. "He is not opposed to it: he just wants to look at it a fresh. There has been no final decision on this yet," said an aide.

The broader issue of workers' rights is exposing tensions at the top of the Labour movement over the direction of the party and the government. Labour MP Jon Cruddas said there would be "deep unease across the party" if such "progressive" policies were abandoned because of the economic downturn.

Labour Research Department, February 2009

Regional Pride's 2009

Oxford Pride

The Parade starts from Broad Street at 12-noon, Saturday 6th June and finishes at Oxpens Field for the official opening of the Oxford Pride Event at 1pm. Entertainment then continues throughout the day until 8pm.
www.oxfordpride.org.uk/

Bournemouth Pride

Tel: 0845 463 9583
Pride rally starts at Meyrick Park on Saturday 12 July 2009.
www.bournefree.co.uk/

Cornwall Pride. Truro, Tel: 07872 324 821
Parade in Truro, starting at Lemon Quay Saturday 8 August 2009. Picnic in Victoria Gardens 12 to 5-ish. Ticketed Marquee event in the evening, Tickets £10.
www.cornwallpride.com/

Gloucestershire Rainbow Day
Cheltenham. A March Through the Town Centre has been agreed with the Police on Saturday 8 August 2009.
www.gloucestershirepride.org.uk/

Plymouth Pride
Tel: 07753 339 965
Plymouth Pride returns for its second year to the city centre. Saturday 15 August 2009 at Plymouth Guildhall
www.plymouthprideevent.co.uk/

Regional Equality & Diversity Committee

Chair: Trevor Matty, (see Worcester & Hereford).

Secretary: Gary Williams (see Solent branch).

Regional Secretary: Kevin Beazer;
0117 935 0055, southwestregion@cwu.org

Branch Equality Officers:

Bournemouth & Dorset Amal: Luke Brown;
luke.brown@unioncwu.org Office: 0844 4849593

Bristol & District Amal: Deputy Equality Rep
Lincoln Dookie, 07855 759558;
lsdookie@hotmail.com

Cornwall Amal: Office 01872 243462

Devon and Somerset: Garry Jacobs;
garry.jacobs@openreach.co.uk

Gloucestershire & North Wiltshire: Les Glover,
07793461434; l.glover@gnwb.com

Gloucestershire Amal: Katy Hartland,
01452333970; cahartland@hotmail.co.uk or
equalops@glosamal.co.uk

Guernsey: Office 01481 733589

Jersey: Office 01534 616652

Madley C.C. & Maritime Northern: Office 01981
512865

Plymouth & East Cornwall: Secretary Tony
Bouch 01752494473; tonybouchcwu@yahoo.
co.uk

Solent: Gary Williams: 01202 511022;
07779468972; email cwusolent@btinternet.
com

South Devon & Cornwall:

South West & Thames Valley: Gill Gillett,
0117 9207098; gill.gillett@virgin.net

South West Engineering: Pascal Mensah,
paschal.mensah@bt.com Office:
01179290283

South West No.7: Sandy Best, 01793584095;
sandybest_65@hotmail.co.uk

Swindon Supplies: Office 01793 483330

Wessex South Central: Andy Rathbone,
07763458958; andyrath@hotmail.co.uk

Western M.T. Barrie Becheley Secretary
Mobile: 07718860225

Western Counties Amal: Office 01392 250479

Worcester & Hereford: Trevor Matty,
01905752244; tmatty@dsl.pipex.com



Left top Sandy Best, bottom left Katy Hartland
Below, South West Women's Committee

