

Unite General Secretary Election

As the final stages of the merger between the AMICUS and T & GWU sections of the union approaches there will be an election of a new General Secretary for the new merged union.

As we go to press the closing date for nominations, 6 September, is here and the candidates seeking nomination are:

Les Bayliss:

Website: www.les4gs.org
Email: lesbayliss@les4GS.org

Jerry Hicks:

Website: www.jerryhicks4gs.com
Email: jerryhicks4gs2010@yahoo.co.uk
Postal Address: 10 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol, BS6 5QE
Telephone: 07817 827912

Gail Cartmail:

Website: www.votegailcartmail.org.uk
Email: votegailcartmail@googlemail.com
Postal Address: PO Box 63346, London NW4 9FG

Len McCluskey:

Website: www.unite4len.com
Email: office@unite4len.com
Postal Address: 290 St James Road, Bermondsey, London, SE1 5JX
Telephone: 07889 296664 / 07727 653648

Briefly the timetable of events is:

Closing date for acceptance of nomination:
17 September 2010

Ballot Period: 25 October to 19 November 2010

Declaration: 24 November 2010

UKAPE does not endorse any of the candidates but leaves it to individual members to decide how they intend to vote. We do encourage all members to read the election addresses and use their vote sensibly, bearing in mind we have an interest in how a potential General Secretary would deal with the professional members.



UKAPE Contacts

If you have a home email address where we can contact you, please email the details to either Dick Hegerty or Peter Everitt. Updated information is also posted on the UKAPE website at: www.ukape.org.uk

**Syd Croft,
President**

Tel: 0191 297 2566
Email: syd.croft@ukape.org.uk



Syd Croft

**Peter Everitt,
Past President**

Tel: 0127 585 1174
Email: peter.everitt@ukape.org.uk



Peter Everitt

**Dick Hegerty
Vice President and Asst.
National Secretary**

Tel: 01284 727739
Email: richard.hegerty@ukape.org.uk



Dick Hegerty

**Bob Simpson
Vice President & Editor**

La Garde, 63600 Ambert,
Auvergne, France
Tel: +33 (0)4 73 82 35 85
Fax: +44(0)7050 659943
Email: bob.simpson@ukape.org.uk



Bob Simpson

**Bob Douglas
Vice President**

Tel: 02380 558 637
Email: bob.douglas@ukape.org.uk



Bob Douglas

**Jock Curren
Vice President**

Tel: 0116 267 4130
Email: jock.curren@ukape.org.uk



Jock Curren

UKAPE,

Hayes Court,
West Common Road,
Bromley, Kent, BR2 7AU
Tel: 020 8462 7755
Fax: 020 8315 8234



Hayes Court

**Kevin O'Gallagher
National Officer**

Email: kevin.ogallagher@ukape.org.uk

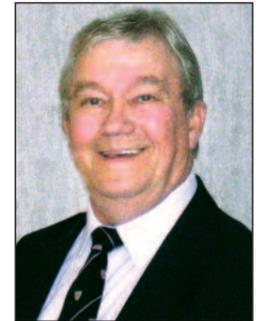


Kevin O'Gallagher

Michele Smith (x394)

Email: michele.smith@ukape.org.uk

Meet President Croft



Syd Croft

I was brought up in a close-knit family in Sunderland. As far as I was aware, there were no Union connections, but I was shown by example the values of hard work and dedication to duty.

Having obtained a Durham Degree in Mechanical Engineering, I had finished my Student/Graduate apprenticeship in the Aircraft Industry and was a few years into my career when I was sacked. There really is no other way of putting it, I was sacked. No matter how it was dressed up, the real reason was that I refused to be a 'yes man'. This should not have come as a shock to me because the Design Office was awash with apocryphal tales of previous employees who had 'disappeared' overnight. Nevertheless it rocked me on my heels and since I felt innocent of all charges, I not unnaturally wanted to do something about it. This is when I went onto a new learning curve, for which nothing had prepared me.

If I am honest, with the passage of time, I cannot remember where I obtained the advice to contact ACAS but this was my first step. Having progressed through several stages, it became obvious that we were heading towards an Industrial Tribunal. At this point I was advised unofficially that I would be better off representing myself, the theory being that the Tribunal would view my case as a David versus Goliath contest and would take a lenient view of David. With this in mind, I promptly paid my solicitor what I owed him and bade him adieu. THAT WAS A MISTAKE !

In my innocence, I believed that all I had to do was attend the Industrial Tribunal on the appointed date and tell my story to the three wise men who made up the Tribunal. They would pick the bones from it and make a judgement. WRONG !

I may have been unlucky in the composition of the Tribunal I faced, but these men were absolute sticklers for adhering to the correct procedure. Had I been in the dock at the Old Bailey it could not have been much worse.

While I was trying to explain to the Tribunal what had happened to me, I was constantly interrupted by the Head of the Tribunal who told me that now was not the time to say what I was saying, I would have plenty of time later on, but not now. The trouble was that later, when I did try to continue my story, I was told that I had missed the opportunity, and what I was saying was inadmissible as evidence.

The other thing that left an indelible imprint on my memory was the constant series of exchanges between the Head of the Tribunal and the Company's solicitor. These invariably revolved around recollections that this case sounded like that of X versus Y in 1972. The two learned gentlemen then retired to look up the relevant case in their reference books, before deciding that it did not. All the time I kept thinking, "Yes, but what about me?"

In spite of everything, I won. I could hardly have failed to do otherwise because it was an open-and-shut case. Nevertheless I felt frustrated because in boxing terms it felt like a points decision whereas it should have been a clear knock-out. Whether I would have done better if I had been properly represented I will obviously never know but, as I came out of the court room, I felt as a drowning man must feel if he is rescued after going under for the third time. As a result, I came to the unequivocal decision that THIS IS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME AGAIN and, for the first time, I started to think about joining a Union.

The problem was which Union should I join? The solution was not long in coming. Some time before all this happened, I worked for a man who was a technical giant in his field but was mild mannered, as sober as the proverbial judge and a long-standing Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. I remembered him telling me, when he was on the point of retiring, that if he had been younger he would have joined UKAPE. I thought, "If it is good enough for him then it is certainly good enough for me." I have never regretted that decision.

Syd Croft President

Editorial

The first and possibly most important thing I have to do is to make my apologies. The previous edition of this newsletter included an excellent article titled "With The Union and The Grace Of God!" This was erroneously attributed at one point to Peter Milne and at another correctly to Peter Michaels. The author was in fact the latter Peter to whom I apologise for attempting to attribute his thoughts to the former Peter, to whom I also apologise for any embarrassment this may have caused.

UNITE has been in the news again, this time in a dispute with BAA (not to be confused with BA). This particular dispute was settled very quickly; the mere threat of complete closure of six airports being enough to put more money on the table. It is of course a great pity that we have to do business in this way, but that seems to be the approach of the free market.

Is this something that professional engineers should take on board? Why is it that we always appear to want to settle for less than our worth? I operate on a freelance basis and as part of my current contract I deal with a number of different professionals and handle their fee payments. So why is it that a trainee solicitor's time is charged at £90.00 per hour and the Senior Partner of a substantial firm of Civil Engineers, a Chartered Structural and Civil Engineer, charges £80.00 per hour? If all Chartered Engineers were to become members of UKAPE and insist on a minimum wage in common with the medical and legal professions, perhaps we could be looking at the £300.00 per hour that a solicitor feels is an acceptable charge-out rate.

Our new president's intention is to concentrate on recruitment: perhaps this concept could be part of his armoury.

As part of the recruitment campaign Syd Croft has been looking at the discussions that took place with the CEI and perhaps more specifically with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers back in the early 1970s. This in turn prompted my friend and colleague Jock Curren to suggest that we serialise our history in this publication. We have taken this suggestion on board and the first thrilling instalment is included in this edition. If there are any long-term members who can recall these discussions with the Institutions I am sure Syd Croft will want to hear from you.

Finally, the good news is that there has been an influx of new members in the North West and I would like to take the opportunity to warmly welcome them to the association and trust that their membership will be long and rewarding.

So, at this point, it only remains for me to remind all our readers, old and new, that we always welcome your letters and comments about any of these or other topics on which you would like to express your opinion.

Bob Simpson
Editor

A History of UKAPE 1969 to 1988

Part 1: The Pre-UKAPE Years

The following notes are reproduced from a small booklet which deals with the history of the Association. I have to thank Bob Douglas for this, who is unable to remember how it came to be in his possession. If any of our readers recognise the style or the content we would be pleased to hear from you.

UKAPE's founders created the organisation in 1969 because they believed Professional Engineers needed their own organisation. They saw a need for a "BMA" British Medical Association for the engineering profession. They fully expected members of the profession to welcome it, join it and accept it as the appropriate body for that select and elite group – Chartered Engineers. What is more they thought employers would welcome it because it was independent of the TUC and existing left wing unions.

UKAPE grew out of the Engineers' Guild Ltd which had been founded in 1938 to further the interests of professional engineers in contradistinction to the Chartered Engineering Institutions (e.g. ICE, I Mech E and IEE) which were qualifying bodies dedicated to advancing engineering knowledge, but restricted by their Royal Charters from providing pecuniary or employment benefits for their members. In the early 1950s the Guild decided to become incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Articles of Association it chose prevented it from carrying out any activity which would make it a Trade Union. It could advise its members on matters connected with their employment, run an appointments service, give legal assistance and conduct salary surveys, but it could not undertake direct negotiation with employers on behalf of members.

Three major trends, affecting the employment of many professional engineers became apparent in the latter half of the 1960s, causing many of those taking a leading part in the Engineers, Guild to regret that it was not a Trade Union:

Large mergers of engineering companies caused redundancies among professional engineers on a substantial scale for the first time since the 1930s. Both main political parties declared their intention to introduce new industrial relations legislation. Existing white-collar Trade Unions were claiming to represent professional engineers against their wishes by the extension of closed shop arrangements.

Proposals to change the Engineers' Guild into a Trade Union were rejected, and those actively seeking the BMA for the engineering profession realised that the Engineers' Guild could not get on the Special Register (provided for in the IR Act 1971) with the BMA. These Guild leaders convened a "Formation Committee" in November 1968 to create a Trade Union with the intention of operating as far as possible in parallel with the Guild. The name UKAPE was chosen and it was registered on 12 May 1969. Membership of UKAPE was restricted in the same way as that of the Guild to members of the Chartered Engineering Institutes which formed the Council of Engineering Institutions (CEI) – the engineering profession defined as those who are or soon will be Chartered Engineers.

It is intended to continue this history over the next few issues as space allows. - Ed

Proposed changes to the UK Retirement Age

The Government has announced that the Default Retirement Age (DRA) will be consigned to the history books in October 2011 under recently published proposals. The new plans allow for a six month transition from the existing regulations, following the announcement in the budget that the DRA would be phased out from April 2011. Currently employers can make staff retire at 65.

This measure is one of the steps the Government says it is taking to help and encourage people to work for longer against the backdrop of demographic change. Other measures include reviewing when the state pension age should increase to 66 and re-establishing the link between earnings and the basic state pension.

The consultation also proposes to "help" employers by removing the "administrative burden" of statutory retirement procedures. With the DRA removed, the Government claims there is no reason to keep employees' 'right to request' to work beyond retirement or for employers to give them a minimum of six months' notice of retirement. Although the Government is proposing to remove the DRA, it will still be possible for individual employers to operate a compulsory retirement age, provided that they can objectively justify it. Examples could include air traffic controllers and police officers.

The consultation asks whether the Government could provide additional support for individuals and employers in managing without the DRA or statutory retirement procedure. This includes the possibility of future guidance or a more formal code of practice on handling retirement discussions.

Views are also being sought on whether removal of the DRA could have unintended consequences for insured benefits and employee share plans. The consultation closes on 21 October 2010. The document can be accessed at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/retirement-age>



Klaus Armstrong-Braun

Following the election of our new president in June, those others putting themselves forward tend to be overlooked. Klaus also put his name in the hat for consideration by the Executive Committee to become the holder of what some might regard as a poisoned chalice. This particular post is the gift of the EC and the members present chose Syd Croft, but let us not forget our worthy runner-up.

Klaus has been a loyal and active member of the EC for many years and we hope this will continue for many years to come. He has represented the Association at a number of EETPU and FPA conferences in the past, as well as continuing a political career at various levels of local government in North Wales. Klaus was the only Green Party County Councillor in Wales, serving on Flintshire County Council for nine years. He is still a member of the Saltney Town Council including serving a term as mayor.

We thank Klaus not only for his involvement in the past but for seeking presidential election at this time, with all his other commitments.

Bob Simpson
Editor