

The President's Column

You should all be aware of the election within the Amicus section of Unite for a Joint General Secretary for the period from December 2009 to December 2010. Each candidate supplied an election statement to go out with the ballot forms and there were (maybe still are) websites for each campaign. A summary of the situation and links to each of the campaign websites was put on the UKAPE website (www.UKAPE.org.uk). I hope we all tried to make an informed judgement and used our votes.

The candidates' statements in this election sometimes appeared to be based on the Trade Union attitudes of 20 years ago and potentially 'confrontational'. But we have to remember that they are 'political' statements and we need to treat them as we would statements from any politician. A large organisation like Unite includes people with a wide variety of perspectives on life and the candidates' statements, inevitably, have to allow for that. Digging down through the campaign website sometimes revealed a more reasoned approach related to groups like the FPA and UKAPE.

This brings us back to the constant concern over the representation of 'professionals' by a 'general' trade union but I, and the other activists, believe that the benefits from being connected to a large organisation outweigh them. A significant amount of local autonomy has always been part of the way unions have worked. Even when I was a student in the 1960s the 'general' trade unions worked on a local basis. If one group in a plant (usually a car plant then) had a dispute with their employer it was left to that group to decide on any action to take and the acceptability of the final outcome; other groups at the same plant did not dictate to them. As an additional safeguard, as UKAPE, we have some autonomy legally included in our Transfer of Engagements stemming from the original transfer to the EETPU in 1979.

The main purpose in life for Trade Unions is supporting their members' best interests in any issues related to the relationship between the member and his or her employer. Generally an employer is a very large organisation compared to an individual employee and having a Trade Union on your side balances things out. For this reason a large Trade Union is generally in a better position to support members than a small one. It has more contacts and can employ more, and better, support staff and specialists such as legal experts. This was the logic behind UKAPE's Transfer of Engagements to the EETPU originally, and the progressive amalgamations which have taken place since then.

However, we are still in the hands of the legal framework which our political masters (they should really be servants) have produced for us. This is particularly important with individual, short term, employment contracts. Sometimes things don't work out quite as both parties hoped and then what matters is the words which were written down; not the (probably honourable) intentions which all parties may have had at the beginning.

Peter Everitt, President

Special Delegate Conference

A number of UKAPE activists have been concerned that the current governance arrangements, with the final authority being vested in a Biennial Delegate Conference, is no longer the right system. There are issues with electing delegates via the current procedure, which requires them to be elected at centre meetings. UKAPE membership is thinly spread and many members find it impossible to attend centre meetings and so are effectively disenfranchised. Also a conference held every two years is not agile enough to keep up with events.

As a result a revised procedure has been proposed and during the course of BDC 2008, the following substantive motion was carried:

Following the success of the special Executive Committee meeting in June 2007, this Conference agrees that the Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) is replaced by an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The current rules for the BDC will be replaced with a new set for an annual meeting to which all members are entitled to attend. In order to implement this, Conference will appoint a committee to formulate a proposed change of rules to facilitate the AGM. The Executive Committee will inform members of this committee's proposals so that they can be discussed at a Special Delegate Conference to be arranged no later than June 2009 and, if agreed at that meeting, to be implemented with immediate effect.

As a result the EC has agreed to arrange a Special Delegate Conference to deal with this, and the provisional date has been set for Saturday 6 June 2009. Under current byelaws this is the mechanism the EC has to use to introduce any new arrangements. The mechanism for identifying delegates will therefore be via the existing centres; but Conference Committee plans to introduce some flexibility into this procedure to encourage as many members as possible to participate in this proposed significant change in the way UKAPE is run.

The proposed new byelaws prepared by the Special Committee nominated by BDC will be circulated to all members as soon as possible within the next three months.

Under the existing byelaws, the Special Delegate Conference is only permitted to deal with one topic, which in this case is the proposed rule changes as covered by the above motion. Nevertheless if a delegate wished to submit a motion relating directly to this topic, that can be accepted, the mechanism by which this can be done will be circulated in due course. Amendments to all motions, however, cannot be accepted.

Editorial

Since our last edition the world seems to have changed, if not beyond recognition then certainly in a major way. For a start we have a new incumbent in the White House on whom everyone appears to be pinning their hopes. We have had various failed bankers parading before parliament saying how sorry they are for messing up, after ensuring their own futures are safeguarded. We have had businesses failing in the retail sector, the service sector and the manufacturing sector. We have had factories and other business centres going on short time. All of which has resulted in lay-offs, redundancies and reduced working times.

What we do not see is any evidence that the anally retentive banks are lending the money that we the taxpayers have provided, to the businesses that need it so that the economy can perhaps return to some sort of normality. Instead we now see the Bank of England printing money with apparently nothing to support it under the name

“Quantitative Easing”. So if you can explain any of this, or if you have been caught up in any of the problems of the economic recession or even depression (according to which papers you read), we would be pleased to hear from you, if you would like to share your experience.

In this edition, apart from the usual contributions, we continue our consideration of the roles of the Chief Executive and the Engineer. At the request of the Executive Officers we list the members of the Executive Committee, and we draw your attention to the forthcoming Special Delegate Conference (SDC) to be held in June.

Apart from the SDC, June also marks the 40th anniversary of the beginning of this Association. We hope to celebrate this by publishing a short history and I am indebted to Keith Armstrong, one of the founder members, for providing information. If there is anybody else with a long memory who would like to assist with this I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Bob Simpson, Editor

Parliamentary Inquiry into Engineering

The Inquiry is still rumbling on without, as yet, making any recommendations. The latest information indicates that the government does not consider it essential to appoint a Chief Engineering Adviser.

The Inquiry heard evidence from both John Denham, the Secretary for Innovation, Universities and Skills and Professor John Beddington, the Government Chief Scientific Adviser. Both rejected the Committee’s suggestion that a Chief Engineering Adviser be appointed. Beddington indicated that he did not see it as helpful to have two advisers; he felt

that there could be difficulties in defining responsibilities. He said “There is a clear continuum between science and engineering and a Chief Engineering Adviser would be seriously misconceived.”

Denham said that there was no need for a statutory duty to consult engineering bodies such as the Royal Academy of Engineering on relevant issues. He continued by saying that the key people in engineering do not feel excluded any more than anyone else.

Is the Government Scientific adviser right in asserting that a Government Engineering Adviser “would be seriously misconceived”? Should the Government reconsider? Your views on this matter would be welcome.

General Secretary Election

For those who may be interested, the count for the Amicus Section General Secretary Election was announced on 9 March. Derek Simpson, the existing General Secretary, was successful and will now remain in post until December 2010.

We reproduce below the Independent Scrutineer’s Report which will be presented to the next Executive Council meeting.

Our report of voting for the above election, which closed at Noon on Friday 6 March 2009, is as follows:

Number of eligible voters: 1,096,511

Total number of votes cast: 159,272

Turnout: 14.5%

Number of votes found to be invalid: 1,031

Total number of valid votes to be counted: 158,241



Result (1 to elect) – See below.

COYNE, Kevin	30,603
HICKS, Jerry	39,307
REUTER, Paul	28,283
SIMPSON, Derek	60,048 Elected

As Scrutineers appointed in accordance with Section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended), we are satisfied as to each of the matters specified in subsection 52(2) with regard to the election. The following points should be noted:

- 1) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the storage and counting of voting papers was Electoral Reform Services Limited.
- 2) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the distribution of voting papers was Electoral Reform Services Limited.
- 3) A copy of the register of voters (as at the relevant date) was examined in accordance with section 49(3). The examination took place at our own instance and did not reveal any matter that should be brought to the attention of the trade union.

A Chief Executive and an Engineer

In the December edition we looked at the appointment of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' new Chief Executive and whether or not the appointment of a non-engineer is appropriate. The following comments have been received:

Peter Milne writes:

I would have thought that the requirement is for some person capable of administering and leading that Institution in meeting its various objectives. I can see that a Chartered Engineer might well have a better understanding of those objectives and the needs of the Institution's members than a non-engineer, but should the search be restricted to ONLY Chartered Engineers? Given that there will be a number of members in senior positions in the Institution, all able to advise, should the search for CEO not concentrate on management and leadership skills and experience?

Executive Member Keith Armstrong writes:

I was appalled about a year ago to find that they had selected a non-Engineer for this job. There must be one of us somewhere who could have done it. Why is some admin considered more worthy of a high pay packet than complex Engineering? It sends a very wrong message to everyone.

My medical doctor does not think £100,000 is all that much these days. He gets it but is not highly satisfied.

As for a bonus on top!!!! They are just playing the same game as the bankers and treating those of us who do useful work as mugs. A modest bonus for someone who gets us all 100K might be justified.

We have all done years of studying that we have never been paid for but could not have done our jobs without it.

Finally Dr Robin Stephenson writes:

"What constitutes a Chief Executive?" you ask.

My own view is that whether the new CEO of IMechE is a Chartered Engineer or not is of little consequence. He or she needs to have the competence to do the job of promoting IMechE and support its membership with a financially viable business. The IMechE is one of the largest of the 33 Representative Licensed Institutions for Registration of Chartered Engineering Status; it is equivalent, in that respect, to the ICE or IET and far larger than any of the other 'engineering' institutions. Needless to say, they all have CEOs in post to manage a business and to make it successful. It may be more instructive to ask why Ruth Spellman was more attracted to the Institute of Management than the IMechE.

One of the most important issues for the success of the IMechE is the need to increase membership and to encourage talented young people into engineering. This brings me to the question posed by Mr Corkhill on the value of apprenticeships

to Professional Engineering. It is rather ingenuous to suggest that graduate engineers are probably useless without five years' practical training and experience. We are all continually training, getting practical experience and renewing our competence for the job in hand. Of course apprenticeships are necessary in a whole range of skills and these are being reviewed for the needs of the engineering industry as a whole. But the world has moved on since Mr Corkhill and I were apprentices at HMS Caledonia. Engineering graduates need four years of intensive education to get a good degree; a course that may well include a substantial amount of practical work in an industrial context.

I believe that the underlying theme of the question was to suggest that UK engineers are not up to the best for competing in the world markets. The most recent review of the industry found that engineering contributes 27% of the UK GDP and that was before the collapse of the Financial Services' contribution to the UK GDP. In addition, over 40% of the Professional Engineers in the UK are based in London, SE and SW England with far less in the cradle of UK engineering of the Midlands and the North East which suggests that another sort of engineering has taken over in the British Isles since the days of the 'dark satanic mills'.

So there we have it: differing opinions on this question. As far as I can tell IMechE have still not made the appointment so there is still time for further comments. As ever, they are always very welcome.

For those members who are not CIBSE Members there was a very perceptive article in the February edition of CIBSE Journal on improving status and recruiting youngsters to the profession. The article was written by Morwenna Wilson, current holder of the CIBSE/ASHRAE graduate of the year award and can be found at www.cibsejournal.com February edition under the title 'A Hidden Profession'. I commend it to you.

A New Website for Women

The Centre for Construction Innovation, based in Salford, has launched what it claims to be the first ever social networking website for women based in the construction industry www.wicnet.org.uk. Users can network with other women helping them to overcome any problems in the work place and share positive outcomes.

Why is it that the way the industry operates means that women feel the need for and/or the support of this kind of networking? Comments, especially from women members, would be very welcome.



UKAPE Executive Committee

At the Executive Officers Meeting it was decided that we should publish the names of the current Executive Committee Members together with the Centres they represent.

All UKAPE members are automatically allocated to a Centre, which is generally based on the area in which they live. Members of each of the centres are able to select one of their number to serve as the Executive Committee Member for that Centre. Centre meetings are organised on a quarterly basis and if any new members wish to be nominated to serve as Executive Committee Members, this is where the process begins. Further information is available from any of the Officers whose contact details are shown on this page.

Name	Position and/or Centre
Peter Everitt	President
Dick Hegerty	Vice President and Assistant National Secretary
Jock Curren	Vice President and East Midlands Centre
Bob Douglas	Vice President and Southern Centre
Bob Simpson	Immediate Past President, Vice President, Overseas Centre and Editor of Engineer Today
Brian West	UKAPE Treasurer
Keith Armstrong	Western Home Counties Centre
Klaus Armstrong-Braun	North Western Centre
Syd Croft	Northern Centre
Derek Fox	Yorkshire Centre
John Gallen	UKAPE Webmaster
Mike Gibson	Conference Committee Secretary & Eastern Centre
Ian Hay	Metropolitan Centre
Brian Lewis	West Midlands Centre
Graham Maxfield	Northern Home Counties Centre
David Oxenham	East of Scotland Centre
Keith Robinson	West of Scotland Centre
Roger Sabido	Western Centre
Graham Sturdy	South Eastern Centre

New EC^{UK} Standard

The Engineering Council UK has released the new version of its highly commended standard for professional engineering competence, UK-Spec.

The new standard builds on the 2003 document, integrating the three categories of registration, Engineering Technician, Incorporated Engineer and Chartered Engineer. The organisation emphasises the progression possibilities for those entering the profession. EC^{UK} has also provided more detailed guidance on how to satisfy the requirements for registration, and clarified educational benchmarks.

Copies of the new UK-Spec standard are available for downloading from:

www.engc.org.uk/ukspec/default.aspx

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

Peter Everitt, President

2 Cleeve Place, Nailsea,
Bristol BS48 2UF
Tel: 0127 585 1174
Email: peter.j.everitt@googlemail.com



Peter Everitt

Dick Hegerty Vice President and Asst. National Secretary

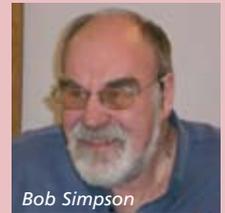
38 Heldhaw Road,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7ES
Tel: 01284 727739
Email: Richard.Hegerty@care4free.net



Dick Hegerty

Bob Simpson Past President and Editor

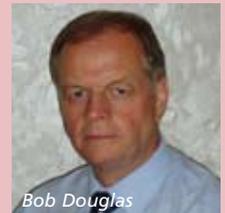
La Garde, 63600 Ambert,
Auvergne, France
Tel: +33 (0)4 73 82 35 85
Fax: 07050 659943
Email: bob.simpson1@orange.fr



Bob Simpson

Bob Douglas Vice President

9 Diamond Hill, Bitterne Park,
Southampton SO18 1JF
Tel: 02380 558 637
Email: rgd.ndh@hotmail.co.uk



Bob Douglas

Jock Curren Vice President

9 Woodgate Drive, Birstall,
Leicester LE4 3HT
Tel: 0116 267 4130
Email: barbandjock@btinternet.com



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.o'gallagher@unitetheunion.com



Kevin O'Gallagher

Michele Smith (x394)

Email:
Michele.Smith@unitetheunion.com