



GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

**ANNUAL CONGRESS 2009
WINTER GARDENS BLACKPOOL**

**SUNDAY 14 JUNE 2009 to WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2009
9.30 am - 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm**

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION



Dear Colleagues

Hello and welcome to our 2009 Congress from what I hope will be a sunny Blackpool.

During the last twelve months we have seen the collapse of the national and financial banking structures, brought about by reckless, irresponsible, greedy, selfish, incompetent and even some illegal activities.

All the fears expressed by GMB and delegates to our conferences about the immorality of the financial and business sectors has proved to be well founded, although it gives us no pleasure to be proved right when set against the pain and hardship so many ordinary, decent, working class people and their families are suffering at this time.

The private equity tax loopholes which we warned were creating huge debts and liabilities as well as cheating the taxpayer have now been given all but the last rites by the announcements on the crackdown on tax havens and the future regulation of the banks.

The de-regulated "market knows best" mantra followed by governments for the last 30 years is dead, we need to make sure we now bury it!

The Tory attacks on public sector pensions are in stark contrast to their silence over the scandal of last minute packages dreamt up for failed chiefs into millions.

The GMB has campaigned long and hard for better protection at work, for justice, equality and above all respect for all in our country. The Financial Services Authority took the view that the banks could be trusted to do the right thing, in the same way a fox will surrender itself to the farmer after eating all the chickens!

The GMB is not some Johnny come lately to the debate about regulation and control of banks' borrowing and the financial bonuses paid to city fat cats.

This week we will try and address some of our members' key concerns like employment, housing, pensions, health and safety, the environment, equal pay and equality. But all will be overshadowed by the spectre of unemployment and fear. GMB will campaign and fight for our members, pensioners and our communities holding on to the values we hold dear.

The GMB@Work Policy determined by Congress and the CEC has delivered a vast improvement in our ability to fight, organise, grow and deliver for the members. GMB@Work is a living part of our structures, policies and potentially the rules which govern our great union.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Paul Kenny'.

PAUL KENNY
General Secretary

CONTENTS

A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Update	5
National Organising Department	7
Communications Department	11
Executive Policy	16
Motions Referred to the CEC by the 2008 Congress	17
Equality & Inclusion Department	21
European Office	25
International Solidarity Report	29
Health & Environment Department	31
Legal Department	35
Pensions Department	38
Political Department	43
Appointment & Election of Officials	50
Gold Badge and Youth Awards 2008	50

SECTION REPORTS:

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	51
MANUFACTURING SECTION	59
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	71

REGIONAL SECRETARIES' REPORTS:

Birmingham & West Midlands Region	80
London Region	85
Midland & East Coast Region	91
Northern Region	99
North West & Irish Region	103
GMB Scotland	112
Southern Region	129
South Western Region	136
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region	144

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GMB: UPDATE

This report audits the progress that has been made towards implementation of the 23 recommendations set out in the CEC Special Report *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, and carried by Congress 2005. Where it has been previously reported to Congress that the recommendation has been implemented, the recommendation itself is no longer shown.

1.	<i>Implemented</i>
2.	<i>Implemented</i>
3.	<p>The CEC will establish a special working group on young people, whose terms of reference will be to examine how to raise trade union awareness amongst young people, how to attract more young people into membership of the GMB and how to increase the participation of young people in the Union.</p> <p><i>The membership of the GMB National Equality Forum (NEF) was announced to Congress 2008 and in line with the Deputy General Secretary's Report to Congress, two members of the Forum were lay representatives specialising in young member issues.</i></p> <p><i>A GMB conference for Young Members coordinated by a steering group of activists and officials was held at Camden Town Hall in November 2008. This was chaired by Kamaljeet Jandu, National Equalities Officer, addressed by the General Secretary, Martin Smith the Senior Officer from the National Organising Department and Dawn Butler MP. Young GMB members from all over the UK attended and took part in workshops at the conference to learn how to build GMB in their own workplace and campaign for issues of importance to them. They took part in workshops on 'Organising Skills', 'Fighting the BNP, racism and fascism' and on how to help organise – delegates were asked to adopt their local Asda store for signing up young members to the GMB. It was raised at the Conference the language used within the Union movement may act as a barrier to young people's participation and there was a general lack of knowledge and information around GMB structures and processes. This issue was taken up by the NEF to develop a young members' section of the GMB website.</i></p> <p><i>We continued to send a full delegation of GMB Young Members to the TUC Young members Conference in Eastbourne</i></p> <p><i>In addition to this work, the two young member representatives have also advocated work on issues of domestic violence and refugees.</i></p>
4.	<p>The CEC Training Committee will progress the development of education and training for workplace activists on the basis of the proposal outlined.</p> <p><i>GMB@ WORK two day training course for new shop stewards is in its second year of implementation with over 100 Regional Officials now involved in delivering training to new stewards as Organiser Tutors. The review of the training will involve the Organiser Tutors and the Regional Officials and is ongoing. The success of the training will be measured by its impact in the workplace in terms of improved membership and organisation.</i></p> <p><i>With regard to consolidation training for existing shop stewards within targeted workplaces, through regional initiatives this continues to progress. In discussion with the National Organising Team, Organiser Tutors and Regional Officials course materials are currently being finalised which once concluded can be used by regions to supplement current materials.</i></p>

	<p><i>To complete the process of re-connecting stewards training with the industrial realities of the workplace, we are in the process of reviewing regional training, with the object of ensuring that our training programmes are more industrially focused and standardised. Existing training materials from each of the Regions is being collated to form the basis of a review which will include all involved in the development and delivery of training, including Organiser Tutors and Regional Officials</i></p> <p><i>In respect to Union Learning Fund projects, a central monitoring system is now in place. This will allow the union to draw conclusions on the industrial impact for our members in the workplace of ULF funded work and also assist us to objectively assess its contribution to membership growth through recruitment and retention.</i></p>
5.	<i>Implemented</i>
6.	<i>Implemented</i>
7.	<i>Implemented</i>
8.	<p>The CEC recommends that the GMB should adopt and implement this increased workplace focus as policy, and will refer this matter in the first instance to the Recruitment & Organisation Committee for the Committee to identify how to progress this.</p> <p><i>Building our unions' strength in each workplace through improved local organisation, recruitment and retention has been a central theme in the GMB@Work organising strategy since late 2005. In particular, GMB@work training for Stewards and Officers has highlighted the need to put GMB representatives (now re-named GMB Workplace Organisers) back in control of the GMB agenda where they work. Specifically this has meant training all new and some existing GMB Workplace Organisers in techniques of Workplace Mapping and in the production of Workplace Newsletters. These techniques aim to ensure that in every workplace GMB reps know more than the employer does about who is coming and going, who is a member and who is not and that GMB Workplace Organisers control the GMB message to members and non members alike. At the same time briefing for GMB officials has shifted the emphasis of their work towards building and sustaining workplace organisation and GMB Workplace Organisers in place of offering one to one services outside. This has been supported by the production of a comprehensive Toolkit for all Workplace Organisers to assist them to be less dependent on their GMB Official for basic advice and guidance on representation.</i></p>
9.	<i>Implemented</i>
10.	<i>Implemented</i>
11.	<p>There will be a full examination of all nationally serviced branches by the Recruitment & Organisation Committee. This examination will be conducted with full consultation with the members of the nationally serviced branches and the Regions.</p> <p><i>Following discussion by the Organisation Committee and the Senior Management Team this review is currently on hold.</i></p>
12.	<p>The CEC will examine the issue of "tidying up" some regional boundaries where any alterations to these could enhance and improve the service to GMB members.</p> <p><i>Further work required.</i></p>
13.	<i>Implemented</i>
14.	<i>Implemented</i>
15.	<i>Implemented</i>

16.	<i>Implemented</i>
17.	<i>Implemented</i>
18.	<p>The CEC recommends that the Finance Committee and Senior Managers review all the financial restructuring issues identified by the Task Group with the aim of identifying appropriate reforms that can be implemented immediately and, in the case of reforms requiring changes to Union Rules, recommending detailed Rule Amendments for the CEC to propose to the next GMB Congress. Senior Managers have already taken preliminary steps so that the financial restructuring review can proceed quickly should Congress 2005 accept this recommendation.</p> <p><i>Financial processes are being kept under review.</i></p>
19.	<p>The CEC will look at all areas of expenditure to identify those that are unproductive and to make recommendations that these practices are stopped, to free up resources for direct servicing of members and ensuring the growth of the Union.</p> <p><i>To date cost savings made through national procurement give savings of over £300,000 per annum. Work is ongoing to identify further areas for cost savings.</i></p>
20.	<i>Implemented</i>
21.	<i>Implemented</i>
22.	<i>Implemented</i>
23.	<p>Regions should examine how to increase the number of members paying by direct debit, and whether incentives to convert to direct debit should be offered in the Region.</p> <p><i>Implemented. Paperless direct debit has allowed us to introduce web-site recruitment and joining by telephone. Web-site recruitment in particular has been a major contributor to GMB's success. Direct debit payers now constitute 24% of members, and Regional initiatives ensure that the figure continues to rise.</i></p>

NATIONAL ORGANISING DEPARTMENT

A period of deep reform and change is underway in the way we build our union in the workplace.

Congress 2006 and 2007 adopted the following policies and principles to turn around our decline and re-build the union:

Key Messages

1. **The main cause of our current decline is internal not external.** The answer to membership decline lies in our hands but we need to change how we work.
2. **Our job is not to manage the decline of the GMB** – but to take whatever steps are necessary to halt it and reverse it.
3. **We must be clear about what works and what does not work in recruitment.** We can identify and eradicate failed recruitment and organising practice from our past

4. **To turn membership decline around we need to focus on workplace organisation.** Increasing the activity of our membership and giving them a role in building the GMB where they work, mobilising our reps to recruit and organise.
5. **Increase union resources spent on recruitment and workplace organisation towards 20% of the total –** effectively directed within Regions.
6. **Fewer Targets more effectively organised and monitored.** Choosing targets by assessing the access we have to workers, the issues they face and potential to gain momentum, involving new members in growing the union.
7. **A bigger role in servicing and organising in the workplace for our Reps will be required.** New and coherent training and education will be required to equip them with the skills they need.
8. **Focus on consolidating membership in existing sites rather than green field.** Adopt a systematic approach to consolidation work and ensure all officers and Reps are briefed on what works.
9. **Expect every aspect of the GMB operation to make a contribution to membership growth**
10. **Focus on sustained membership growth rather than competitive sales culture.** Integrate recruitment and organising work with industrial issues and workplace organisation. We must end destructive competition on recruitment performance between officers and offices.
11. **We should go out of our way to include Reps, members, and potential members in our organising and servicing work.** We must guard against unconsciously displacing Reps or encouraging dependency on full time officials.

Regions

Performance and Accountability

1. Change performance measurement from league tables to a rolling average figure over the preceding year to replace competition between regions.
2. Each region to contribute to increasing the national rolling average by 2000 per month by increasing its rolling average recruitment figure substantially.
3. The adoption of Regional targets with collective performance measurements

Organising Teams

4. To divert resources into organising in each region under the control of a dedicated Senior Organiser.
5. To organise these resources into an Organising Team including an appropriate mix of skills and experience.
6. To require Servicing organisers to allocate regular time (ie one week per quarter) to the Organising Team on a rolling basis, to work on Project Board priorities at the direction of the Senior Organiser.
7. Organising Teams to include RHSO's to assist in identifying consolidation targets.
8. To consciously break with the "Recruitment Team" sales culture by full integration of the Organising Team into every aspect of regional activity, using servicing work as an opportunity to build membership.
9. To change the entry point for new officers, renaming the Recruitment Officer grade as Organiser.

Organising Project Boards

10. A single Organising Project Board in every region to ensure disciplined targeting of resources, with a clear, open and transparent method of selecting projects, regularly reviewed.
11. Organising Project Boards to include collective quarterly numerical targets and be on open display
12. Organising Project Boards to include no more than 6 main projects and the numbers expected to deliver in the quarter – and no more than 5 developmental targets.
13. Most targets to be consolidation – but in workplaces with membership density below 60% . Above 60% we should expect existing workplace organisation to improve density further – with external support and training.
14. Consolidation targets to be identified using organisers own workplace maps, and centrally produced information on membership levels, existence of check off and numbers of postholders.
15. Targets to be prioritised using the Aim Organising Test (Access, Issues, Momentum)

Administrative

16. To ensure each local office co-ordinates calls from potential members with allocated organisers to follow up leads within 24 hours.
17. To have an agreed and understood policy on services available to new members joining with pre-dated problems.
18. To adopt a systematic policy of contacting apparent leavers which involves the relevant servicing officer and establishes the scale of the problem of apparent leavers
19. To ensure the shift in resources to organising is understood by front line staff and put across to members.

Training

20. Follow on training in workplace organisation to be targeted at reps in consolidation targets. Training to be standardised, based around the 5 key principles and delivery to include organisers involved in the workplace.
21. Regional Training programmes to be reviewed and standardised, shifting the focus from dependency on officers to workplace organisation.
22. Regional training programmes to be open for entry at every level to allow retraining of Reps in targeted workplaces

National

Performance and Accountability

23. To produce monthly reports of average performance and the trend in each region.
24. To standardise evaluation system for projects into output measures (members recruited, increase in membership density, Reps coverage) and activity measures (contact time with potential members, workplace activity).

Organising Teams

25. To form a National Organising Team from the Senior Organisers appointed to make recommendations to the CEC organisation group on policy, review, monitor and manage recruitment work, share good practice and prioritise National organising projects.
26. That this team meet 10 times per year.

Organising Project Board

27. To develop a National Project Board on the same basis as in the regions but containing no more than 3 main projects at any one time.
28. To grade national projects into three streams: Stream One where we ask regions to divert some resources towards a common goal and place the project on their project board, Stream 2 where we ask regions to assist in developing a target, and Stream 3 where we launch projects designed exclusively to be run and lead by activists.
29. To produce data to assist in the identification of consolidation targets in regions
30. To produce data to assist in the prioritising of National Projects
31. To construct a clear streamlined decision making process to assess and prioritise National Projects: proposals come to MS or JM, are referred to the monthly NOT meeting for consideration and a recommendation made to JM for action.

Training

32. To produce a new Stewards Handbook to assist local reps learn the skills they need to improve workplace organisation – to re-define the role of workplace reps.
33. To use the Reps mailing to re-inforce the workplace organisation message to existing Reps.
34. To standardise training for new reps, follow on training for reps in consolidation targets and training for officers in consolidation techniques.
35. Briefing for all officers in consolidation techniques to be delivered in region, by the SO with support from the NOT and standardised nationally.

Administrative

36. To make the arrangements to allow workers to join us online
37. To establish a centralised lead Book in national office to allocate leads to the senior organiser in each region
38. To shorten the time between a TUC lead arriving and a local officer making contact

We are in our fourth year of implementing the GMB@Work strategy for growth within the union and each of the 38 points has been fully implemented or will be shortly

We remain focussed on helping our members build the power to improve their pay and conditions where it counts – in the workplace. In the process we have rejected quick fixes and short cuts, fluffy toys and gimmicks, gate jobs and employer partnership.

We no longer see recruitment as just giving out leaflets and hoping for the best Building the union is no longer what someone else does, or the last thing on our list. Recruitment and retention is now everyone's job and everyone's first priority.

Membership continues to grow despite the recession and recruitment remains high. 87,000 new members joined us last year, 20,000 more than in 2004 during the height of the "boom" . Two years into the recession and we are growing at the rate of 2% a year. Our members are suffering the threat of redundancy in many areas but thousands of workers are turning to us for the first time for the same reason. Because of this we have made great advances in building the union's strength in the Security, Retail, Care and Education sectors; not just in numbers but in Stewards elected and trained.

In these sectors we are better placed than at the start of any other downturn to weather the storm of redundancies and attacks on our members pay and conditions that is underway.

Over the next year we must continue to consolidate and develop GMB@Work further, taking more control of our Stewards training to make it relevant to the reality our members face at work; encouraging all branches to focus on building the unions membership as the best way for existing members to protect themselves and leading the campaign in the workplace for justice, respect and a fair share of the wealth our members work creates or sustains

Regional Officers through their NOT member will continue to focus on growth making sure every officer is focussed on spotting the opportunities to build the union and is supported in exploiting them

We need to stay focussed, keep our discipline be ready to stand by workers in any sector who want to get organised. Where our union is this time next year is our responsibility and no-one elses.

So we must stop blaming just the economy, the government, or the greedy bankers for the problems we face, and take control of our own future. Its what we do or don't do in each workplace that will count during this recession.

We must avoid the pessimistic and defeatist rhetoric that did us so much harm in the recessions of the 80's and 90's as a union, and made us seem weaker than we were to working people in the face of the Thatcher and Major attacks.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Press - The pace of industrial news in which GMB has an interest has increased markedly over this period. Each morning all GMB staff and officers receive an electronic copy of press clippings in which there is a reference to GMB for that day. This helps all parts of the union to be aware of what is happening to members across the union. Since the report to the 2008 GMB Congress has issued press releases on the following issues:

Pay - The Department has issued releases on the 2008 pay round in local councils, NHS, prison, FE and Environment Agency. There have been regular releases on strike ballots in pay and conditions disputes across a wide range of sectors including BMA, Balpa, airports and transport. Also covered were pay disputes and their resolution in Scottish Water, Scottish local authorities. There has also been coverage of pay freezes at the likes of British Airways. The stop start progress towards setting up a new national negotiating body for school support staff has also been the subject of releases. There has also been a release on pay and finance of high education. There were some releases on pay freezes: for example Stanley Casinos. There were also a number of releases regarding the de-recognition of GMB by Roadchef. The pay dispute at Appledore Shipyard in Devon was also covered.

Job losses - There have been a spate of job losses and closures all of which have generated press coverage. These include Fenlands Foods, Preston Brewery, JJB Sports, Indesit (formerly Hotpoint), Paramount Foods in Wrexham and Salford and Pringles in Scotland. The oncoming recession was forecast by GMB and a member of the Professional Drivers Branch was widely interviewed on the cut backs in the pipeline. The press releases have covered job losses at household names such as JCB, Findus, M&S, Woolworth, Indesit, Burberry, Wincanton, BMI, Corus, National Grid, Dupont, Thames Water, GKN, Ford, Legal Aid Service, Nottingham City Council, AA, Bakkavor, Tetley, Glaxo Smith Kline, Brett Martin, Kangol, Budelpack and Wilkinson. Of particular focus was GMB's support for Tony Goode the M&S whistle-blower who leaked to the media the company plan to cut redundancy pay for which he was summarily dismissed. His tribunal is scheduled for May 2009.

Economy and industrial news - Reacting to naturally occurring news stories with particular regard to the political agenda allows GMB to promote its policy and position on many issues. Recent reaction has been on the crisis in the financial sector and the government's response to it, as well as the monthly unemployment figures. Developments in the energy industry including nuclear gives rise to a steady stream of press releases; in particular issues relating to Ofgem generate coverage. One major story is the development of the third runway at London Heathrow which will run and run. GMB supports this development. During his visit to India we put out a number of press releases from Paul Kenny on the question of Coca Cola water use in its bottling plants in India. GMB also commented on the successful campaign to secure a future for the shipbuilding industry with the placing of the order for RN Aircraft carriers.

Political – GMB’s profile in the political arena has increased. In the run up to the Labour Party conference 2008 there was speculation about a change of party leader in which GMB was constantly mentioned. There was a series of releases and briefings from the General Secretary in the successful campaign to secure employment rights for Agency and Temporary workers. There was coverage on GMB comment on the Working Time Directive (WTD) vote by Labour MEPs in the European parliament. There was coverage on GMB’s cull of sponsored MPs and coverage on the run in to Warwick 2. GMB demand that oil speculation be curbed has also generated coverage.

Legislation - Other areas covered in the past period have been two releases for the Sex Workers Branch on the policing and crime Bill which set out the views of our members in the lap dancing clubs for new licensing arrangements and the views of the sex workers to criminalising aspects of the sex industry. We have also covered progress on ending the UK opt-out of the Working Time Directive from the European Parliament. Developments in relation to the campaign to restore Pleural Plaques compensation have also generated a number of releases. GMB has also put out releases defending pension schemes in the face of Tory attack and defending those on benefits in the face of government determination to force them to take up non existent jobs.

Posted Workers Directive - GMB Organisers helped to shift the way the news about the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute was reported. It was first reported as a story of unofficial strikes about migrant workers and ‘British Jobs for British Workers’. After GMB Organisers intervention, it moved to being reported as a story which revealed and discussed problems arising from the botched implementation of the EU Posted Worker Directive into UK law and the EU Commission’s failure to address the Viking and Laval European Court judgements. Once the construction engineering workers at the Lindsey Oil Refinery reached a settlement. GMB moved the story on to the GMB construction engineering disputes at the Isle of Grain and Staythorpe construction sites affected by the same botched laws. This is a developing story and the department is working very closely with GMB staff in Brussels. Without their help the department would not have been able to shift the focus of the story.

Equal Pay - The department has helped GMB Regions by issuing press release regarding equal pay disputes in Birmingham, Leeds, Blackburn and in Scottish councils.

Surveys - The department has put out a series of press releases on topics like the percentage of women and ethnic minorities in the top five percent of council workers earnings. We have put out releases on the level of recycling across the country and how clean are the streets. In June last year there were releases on the spending by councils on temporary and agency staff. Other surveys covered the number of beds in care homes, the numbers in care homes supported by the public sector, house prices compared to average earnings, numbers of vacant dwellings that could be acquired by councils for social housing, average earnings by county,. The department issued its annual report on the amount of unpaid council tax.

Other Stories – These have included GMB’s win for hundreds of ex-JJB Sports store workers redundancies to receive the full ninety days consultation notice, ex-Leyland Daf workers £8.4 million compensation win, River Thames lock-keepers homes saved, guarding the Olympic site, We welcomed the return of the Cammell Laird name to Merseyside.

All GMB press releases are available at www.gmb.org.uk/press where members can register to receive releases directly to their email address.

GMB Campaigns

The Department helped the London Region work to secure a recognition deal at **Pratts Bananas** in Luton. The Department also helped Southern Region with a recruitment campaign for technicians in **Virgin Media**. This is still on going.

Remploy: since the report to 2008 GMB Congress a delegation from the York factory attended the Labour Party Spring conference 2008 in Birmingham and secured a meeting the Prime Minister. He promised to look again at the case for closing York. However, nothing came of this meeting and thirty factories closed at the end of March 2008 with a loss of over 2,000 disabled workers jobs. The campaign has moved to a new phase of securing the re-opening of the York factory and securing public procurement work for the fifty three factories that remain open and there is litigation over the 2,000 job losses.

Co-op: the April CEC gave the go ahead for a public campaign to secure re-recognition in Co-op FuneralCare. A campaign under the theme of "The Co-op; Lions led by donkeys" was launched outside a Co-op members meeting in Croydon in early May and this was followed by protests outside Co-op meeting in Bristol, Wrexham, Newcastle and Manchester. At the Manchester demonstration the Co-op manager, David Hendry, who de-recognised GMB came out to get his photograph taken with the live donkey. This has been turned into a poster with the slogan "which one is the donkey?". There was a motion on this issue at the 2008 TUC congress.

AA/Saga: A motion from the GMB Retired Members conference calling for pensioners to question the AA/Saga on their attitude to trade unions has been tabled at numerous meetings of retired members' organisations. The ex-boss of AA Tim Parker has been appointed Deputy Mayor of London and his record at the AA has been brought back onto the agenda. Events are planned for the Kent chicken farm later in the summer. GMB made a formal complaint to the Department of Transport that AA was ignoring the tachograph ruling on patrol staff recovering motorists' vehicles and the GMB Complaint was up held. The AA had to change its method of operation as a result. GMB also won a tribunal case for Jayne Wyatt who was an AA hotel inspector who was sacked for standing by GMB when the private equity bosses took over. There are 300 job loses in the pipeline and the AA are seeking these cuts without paying redundancy money.

Cash In Transit (CIT): GMB has secured an agreement with G4S that pays out automatically to members injured in assaults on CIT vans. The campaign continues to try and raise the profile of this issue and to get action from police, banks and supermarkets. This is a serious problem and it is clear that only re-engineering of the facilities at banks and supermarkets to keep the cash away from criminals is the final answer.

Licensed Mini Cabs: For London Region the department has continued to raise the profile of the issue of violence against licensed private hire drivers by their customers and the need for fiscal measure to enable drivers to equip their cabs with CCTV camera and shields.

Since the 2008 GMB Congress the department has been asked to help with four new campaigns:

Chemilines: Chemilines is a London based pharmaceuticals distribution company with a mainly female workforce that has laid workers off, made redundancies and intends to cut pay. The aim of the campaign is to get proper joint working procedures between GMB and the company and a decent pay rise for the workers. The company has been affected by the drop in sterling exchange rate in what is a parallel drugs market. Its treatment of its workforce is unacceptable under any trading conditions. We are at the research stage in designing a press campaign for this workplace.

Thames Water: A meeting took place on Thursday 5th February 2009 between GMB Shop Stewards and officials from all three GMB Regions to consider reports from members facing problem in the company. Members employed at the call centre in Swindon have been told that unless they agree to family unfriendly changes in working hours and shift times, and other measures, that their jobs will be outsourced to India. GMB members are very angry with this threat. The meeting agreed that a report should be given to the CEC, together with a request for authority to proceed to a strike ballot of members employed by Thames Water. Thames Water is claiming that the economic downturn is the reason for continuing to cut jobs after many years of job losses and higher prices to consumers.

M&S: The department continues to highlight the poor treatment of M&S staff. Since GMB member Tony Goode was summarily dismissed by M&S in early September for leaking details of cuts in redundancy pay to the press GMB has received various reports from M&S employees who have been mistreated by the company. M&S are currently sacking 1,200 and GMB is seeking 90 days consultation period and a programme of voluntary redundancy before embarking on compulsion. We have promised to take tribunal cases where M&S cuts corners.

Licensed Public Houses with a Tie: The department has been asked to help with a new campaign to break the cartel which results in pubs owned by pub chains being charged up to £1 extra wholesale per pint of beer which it sells to its customers. The landlords who run these pubs are self-employed and they are being invited to join GMB, like the self-employed professional drivers, to secure their economic interest. The pub companies that own the pubs are up to their necks in debt and the additional charges are being used to pay interest payments. As we write this campaign is being developed.

National Organisation Department Training/Regional Targets Material

The Department has produced dedicated news letters and mailings for NOT and ROT targets.

The department also helped produce a DVD for distribution to Branches to show the success and impact of the GMB@Work training programme. Regions provided film of GMB Workplace Organisers who have completed the training and implemented what they learned into their workplaces. They told their success stories in their own words. GMB National President Mary Turner narrated.

Regional/National Magazines

The nine versions of GMB regional magazines are intended to deliver to GMB members information about the work of the union in workplaces around the country. The central, national pages are intended to convey GMB message on many work issues and factors relating to the GMB's work for members. For example, the March 09 editions inform members about their Labour Party candidates in the June 4th Euro elections. The importance of the elections of these MEPs was clearly demonstrated by the recent vote on the WTD.

2009 is the second year of the GMB regional magazines and all have been produced on schedule and on budget. The economic downturn has had a detrimental effect on our partners advertising budgets but up to now the advertising sales team have managed to maintain the income level for the Union.

The inclusion of various GMB letters, leaflets and financial information to members saves money on production and postage of separate mailings and enhances the quality of the contact with members.

GMB Congress 2009

The department has been asked by the Congress Working Party to look into reducing the cost of all elements of the staging of Congress including the cost of lighting and audio visual. In order to cut costs an entirely new approach was taken. It is planned to reuse the 2009 stage design at Southport in 2010. The use of fabric to replace the usual costly 'battleship' stage that has been used for many years has saved thousands of pounds. The success of the webcasting of the Congress 2008 has led to that being done again at Congress this year.

GMB National Website

At the time of writing the updated GMB national website was in the 'test environment' and being checked to see that the specification has been met by the supplier. The main change that members will notice will be that they will have access to a 'Member Only' area and to their own membership record by entering their membership number.

GMB Publications

Asda Charter:

Asda Teesport flyer	Asda Prize draw mailing
Asda Charter:	Asda Flyers
Asda Posters	Asda Back drop
Asda Ballot mailing	Asda Colleagues Circle - Newsletter
Asda Cold at work – Newsletter	Asda A5 Campaigning Leaflet
Asda GMB@ASDA Colleague Circle	

NHS

North Bristol Trust Posters	North Bristol Trust newsletter
DHL news letter	River Workers leaflet
MPO membership forms	Equalities flyer Labour Party Conference
Equality Strategy Leaflet	India Ship breaking Leaflet
M&S campaign boards	Engineering A5 Leaflet & Posters
Ofgem Lobby materials:	
2x Banners 100cm x 150cm Placards	

Reprints

- London Region - Stewards Credentials
- Southern Region - Schools Folders, Dividers & Way our Schools Work
- Security Folders & Membership forms
- Local Government Pensions Guide
- H&S for Support Staff
- H&S for Security Workers

Newsletters

- Four Seasons Newsletter
- GMB@SCHOOL Newsletter - Regional Variations
- 2 Wilkinson Newsletters
- Lock & Weir Keepers Newsletter
- Local Government Pay 2009
- Local Government Pay A5 leaflet
- Local Government Pay A4 & A3 Posters
- Southern Cross: Newsletter, Retention Mailing, Construction Workers leaflet, Southern Cross news letter
- Southern Region - Schools Folders, Dividers & Way, Our Schools Work
- Notice Board Toolkits all components
- H&S Feeling the heat
- GMB@SCHOOL x 2 regions

Merchandise

The loss of the Welsh Steadlers factory has led to GMB moving its pen contract to a German supplier. The Department continued to search for suppliers of other items that meet GMB policy criteria.

The department has returned the storage and despatch of GMB Merchandise from Clause 4 to National Office saving an annual cost of around £4,000.

Merchandise Provided to NOT and GMB Sections

- G4S Attack Fund Badges
- GMB@WORK T-shirts
- NHS Trust Pens

On-Line Surveys

The Department has increasingly used the new on-line survey facility to consult members on various issues. For example general member profile and opinion, on-line leavers, health and safety and environment questions, equal pay in Scottish councils and equal pay and bullying in Asda.

Sponsorship Realisation

GMB was one of the main sponsors of Glastonbury Left Field which was launched at a press conference in the Polish Embassy with the Polish Vice Consul and Michael Eavis. The Polish Vice Consul subsequently addressed GMB Congress. With the help of the Polish Embassy GMB put on three Polish bands in Glastonbury and they were introduced on to the stage by Paul Kenny. This raises further the GMB's profile among migrant workers in the UK and in Poland. GMB plan to work closely with the Polish Embassy on the year long UK wide Polish cultural festival which begins in June 2009. GMB also hope that the promise by the Vice Consul at Congress to refer cases of exploitation of Polish workers to GMB will come to fruition.

GMB sponsored the London march and rally to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Polish state.

EXECUTIVE POLICY

The Executive Policy section of the General Secretary's Department fulfils two roles:

1. Supporting the General Secretary in matters related to the Governance of the Union. The Executive Policy Section services a number of internal bodies and provides support for the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, CEC and National Officials at Congress and CEC meetings, TUC and Labour Party Conferences.
2. Developing union policy, raising the GMB profile and strengthening GMB influence by providing specialist advice, preparing proposals, drafting consultations and liaising with contacts in Government and other relevant industrial political bodies in the UK and the European Union.

Governance of the Union

During the past year Dolores O'Donoghue and Ida Clemo, Executive Policy Officers have continued to work closely with colleagues at National Office and the Brussels office and regional level. They are members of the Congress Working Party and are heavily involved in the planning stages for Congress which commence in July each year.

The Section co-ordinates policy work for GMB Congress and prepares the preliminary and final agendas; advises the CEC on policy stances; co-ordinates compositing of motions; finalises the programme and President's running order; co-ordinates and drafts the President's address and provides support and advice to the President's platform at Congress. At the time of writing this Report they are in the early stages of the preparations for Congress 2009, and dealing with the 226 motions (and 31 Rule Amendments) submitted by regions.

In 2008, the planning presented the new challenge of implementing the Task Group recommendations agreed at Congress 2007 to incorporate the Section Conferences into a more dynamic and streamlined Congress Programme. This was achieved by working closely with members of the General Secretary's Department, particularly Steve Short, Executive Officer and providing advice and briefings for national officials and section staff. The section developed a number of new information systems to improve the smooth running of Congress; in particular a calculation system for the Programme created by Ida which greatly assisted the timing of debates.

In order to assist Regional delegations, Dolores and Ida with input from Steve Short produced a new Guide: "Congress Explained" setting out information and advice on the processes and procedures of Congress in a user-friendly format. The document, primarily aimed at new delegates, also gives hints and tips on writing motions and making speeches, and will be circulated to Regions in advance of the Regional delegation meetings in April

Following on from the recommendations made in Framework for the Future at Congress 2007, whereby it was agreed that existing policy motions will not be debated at Congress, Ida Clemo has created a policy database where regions will be able to check all the carried motions and decisions of Congress from 2005 onwards.

At Congress 2008 the section dealt with 120 motions of which 91 were carried and 10 referred, 4 Emergency Motions were carried (one with qualification). In addition there were 40 existing policy motions which were not debated. Executive Policy supported 45 CEC speakers with speech drafts and policy advice, and programmed the attendance of Guest speakers.

Following Congress, the section produced the CEC Action on Decisions document for the September 2008 CEC meeting which recommended action to implement the will of Congress. The section is responsible for referring all decisions of Congress to the relevant officials and senior staff, and ensuring that they are reported on in this General Secretary's report in line with motion 52 passed at Congress 2005:

Congress, we request that at sector conferences and Congress, delegates and regions are given an update on previous motions adopted and what action has been taken in agreement with the resolution adopted. We feel this will enable regions and branches to track how specific motions are progressing through the process – giving us more accountability.

The CEC Action on Decisions document setting out who is responsible for the actions on all motions carried and referred by Congress 2008 is now available on the GMB National Website www.gmb.org.uk/congress. The following table sets out the actions taken on referred motions.

MOTIONS REFERRED TO THE CEC BY THE 2008 CONGRESS

UNION ORGANISATION: Representation & Accountability	
17. GMB ELECTIONS	The motion called for a candidate's statement to be produced in all GMB elections. The Finance Committee doubted the practicality of this and asked that a paper be prepared outlining the difficulties. At a subsequent meeting a paper was circulated demonstrating that it was impractical for candidate statements to be produced for every GMB election. This was endorsed by the Committee.
UNION ORGANISATION: Education & Training	
45. STEWARDS TRAINING IN RELEVANT LANGUAGES	Between November 2006 and December 2007, under the supervision of the NOT, Regions met to devise an overall organising strategy for migrant workers. This was adopted by the SMT and CEC in early 2008. A key discussion was around the value of establishing branches and sub branches for newly arrived migrant workers and other supplementary language services and structures within the union. It was agreed that the union should always seek to strike the right balance between allowing migrant workers to organise themselves within their own language, cultural and community groups on the one hand and providing assistance, organisation and encouragement to them to integrate fully into the GMB and the workplace on the other. It was agreed that Regional Organisers were best placed to work with migrant workers to strike this balance and call in language support, specialised training, English classes, publications from regional support teams as appropriate. Specifically it was agreed that the need for specialised language support on GMB training courses would be identified at an early stage by Regional Organisers as they completed Initial Support Training for new Workplace Organisers in the first few weeks following their election. training programmes are currently under review, in the context of all GMB training provision. The demand for courses to be delivered in specific languages other than English will be monitored by the NOT and NEF as part of this process. The NOT and NEF will particularly seek to establish whether regional provision of such courses could be assisted by National Office.
46. RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION	Agreement has been reached for the GMB to have dedicated use of the NUM College in Scalby for specified periods at an extremely cost-effective rate.
UNION ORGANISATION: Equality & Inclusion	
49. CULTURAL AWARENESS	This motion asked for a programme of cultural and religious awareness for officers and lay activists so that they may be able to engage appropriately and defend members from indirect discrimination and disciplinary action. We do have equality training from GMB Reps and officers, however the proposed programme would focus on issues around cultural differences. This motion has been referred to the SMT for Officer and lay activist training and the National Organising Department for possible input into shop stewards training programme.

51. WIDENING THE SCOPE OF EQUALITY CLAIMS	This motion is about the use of comparators in equal pay claim that are based on gender, race / ethnicity, disability or sexuality respectively. Some discrimination is between individuals within the same group. For example using a women comparator with a woman which the motion defines as 'personal discrimination'. This motion would require a fundamental change to existing legislation and would involve extending more legislation into the collective bargaining process at a time when unions are seeking to re-establish collective bargaining into equal pay. The present Equalities Bill attempts to streamline the existing strands of discrimination law into one, and GMB has been active in supporting this approach
INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY : The Environment	
121. CAMPAIGNING AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE	The motion called for the Union to affiliate to the Campaign against Climate Change. At the December 2008 meeting of the Finance Committee it was reported that the Campaign disagreed with a number of GMB positions, for example on nuclear energy and civil aviation. The Committee agreed that this meant that GMB should not affiliate.
SOCIAL POLICY: Criminal Justice	
147. CAMMELL LAIRD 1984	This motion forms part of the GMB campaign for justice for Cammell Laird Members. The legal advice remains the same – proceedings would not succeed at present. However, the General Secretary and the National Office Legal Department have approached the Institute of Employment Rights to examine whether there may be the possibility of pursuing through the courts any claims in the future. In the meantime The Cammell Laird Group has worked hard on the play telling the story of ordinary GMB members in struggle, and this was given its first public airing last year.
SOCIAL POLICY: General	
166. LICENSING HOURS	As part of the review of the Licensing Act more power has been given to local councils and communities when looking at pub and club licensing hours. There have also been a number of policy developments made in this area: The 2008 Queens speech outlined the Policing and Crime Bill which promises a crackdown on binge drinking, a compulsory code of conduct for pubs and clubs and measures for responsible selling and marketing of alcohol by retailers. Similar measures will be taken in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Future Government consultations will be issued as part of the legislative process on the Bill and we will ensure that we take forward the issues raised in this motion in our response
176. TELESALES	The Telesales motion was referred due to concerns over the call for the ban and the then possible effect on GMB members working in the industry. In discussions around the Union it has become clear that our membership, where it exists, in call centres is in companies that deal with calls inward or responding to solicited calls. This motion calls on the banning of unsolicited calls, and it would appear we do not represent members working in such organisations. In addition a review has recently been carried out and Ofel has produced a code of practice for the industry. Furthermore technology has progressed and call barring now allows individuals to bar calls from unwanted or unidentifiable sources. This motion can now be acted upon and the political department will follow up with by raising this issue with Government.

SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services	
198. WARM FRONT	<p>Since this motion was referred at Congress 08, the National Audit Office (NAO) has conducted a thorough investigation into the effectiveness of the Warm Front Scheme. This identified flaws in the way that the scheme is designed which prevent many of the households that the scheme is intended to help from accessing grants. Prior to the NAO investigation, the Commercial Services Section National Secretary had already raised the shortcomings of the scheme directly in discussions with the Energy Minister. Following the NAO report, the National Secretary again met with the Minister and officials from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to support the call (expressed in a Parliamentary motion) for the Department to initiate an urgent review of the scheme, and to suggest specific ways of improving the scheme that would benefit both consumers and GMB members working in the gas industry.</p>

POLICY AND SUPPORT WORK

Policy Work

Ida has responsibility for policy work on the National Minimum Wage. This has involved co-ordinating the GMB response to two Low Pay Commission Consultations; a general one and one on a Review of the NMW apprentices exemption; giving oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission and attendance at meetings with TUC, BERR & HMRC, Civil Servants and Policy Officers on NMW issues: Tips, Enforcement, Apprentices and Guidance.

Dolores has been involved in developing a close working relationship with the Child Poverty Action Group, the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and children. Part of this work involves the GMB/CPAG Special Report to Congress 2009 on in-work poverty and policy issues on welfare reform proposals.

Dolores co-ordinated the GMB response to the Government Green Paper on Welfare Reform which at the time of writing has been brought before Parliament as the Welfare Reform Bill. GMB is strongly opposed to these proposals; we do not believe it is right to increase conditionality and to seek to force many claimants into what may be a fruitless search for employment at a time of economic crisis, causing anxiety and fear amongst lone parents, disabled people and those facing the prospect of unemployment. This Bill further undermines contributory benefits and proposes the abolition of income support, our main safety net benefit.

Special Projects

The section assists the General Secretary by undertaking special projects and duties as directed. In 2008 this has primarily involved producing presentations, briefings, statistics, profiles or research intelligence for the General Secretary to use in internal or external meetings. During February, Ida was involved in preparations for the General Secretary for the Full Time Officers meeting in Edgbaston.

Information Systems and Other Resources for Bargaining & Representation

During 2008, selected GMB Officers were provided with laptops as part of an ongoing initiative by the Senior Management Team to provide them with immediate access to bargaining and information tools. Ida Clemo continues to monitor and train Regional and National staff in the use of research information systems ensuring that these products are used effectively for bargaining support, recruitment initiatives and company research. Approximately 50 Regional and National Officers have been trained so far.

Ida designed a Guide to Information Systems Leaflet which has been distributed to all Regions to inform them of the resources they have access to for organising and bargaining support. In addition to this, a questionnaire on XpertHR was sent to all Regions to enable them to assess the usage and the feedback was used by Ida when negotiating a

new contract with XpertHR. Ida has also rolled out training on the GMB Membership system to staff at National Office.

In addition, a new Recognition Agreements database has been created giving National Office and Regions access to the full text of a number of Regional and National recognition agreements. This will be accessible by Regions once the new GMB National website is up and running.

TUC General Council and Executive Meetings

The Section co-ordinates briefing materials for the General Secretary's attendance at TUC Executive and General Council meetings.

Senior Management Team

Dolores continues to provide the Secretariat to the Senior Management Team and has prepared the agenda, papers and minutes for the current schedule of SMT meetings and liaises with the General Secretary and Executive Officer to ensure that matters agreed by the SMT are progressed through to the CEC.

CEC Organisation Sub-Committee

Similarly, Dolores provides the Secretariat to the Organisation Sub-Committee and ensures that relevant Congress decisions are progressed through the Committee, which now meets 3 times a year.

Labour Party Conference 2008

Ida provided advice and assistance to the 44 strong GMB delegation at Labour Party Conference in Manchester. Our delegates asked questions on the Economy, Remploy and Public Sector Pay. GMB Contemporary Issues motion covered Energy Regulation and we submitted an Emergency motion on the Working Time Opt out. There were also four GMB fringe events.

TUC Congress 2008

Dolores and Ida ensure that GMB Congress decisions and GMB policy are taken through to TUC Congress. They are also responsible for supporting the GMB delegation and raising the GMB profile at TUC. They planned and organised (with assistance from colleagues in the General Secretary's office) the GMB stand and office at TUC Congress.

This year's TUC was particularly successful; the team created a series of new documents to assist and inform the delegation, and liaised with TUC to ensure that GMB was at the forefront of debate.

The team co-ordinated and provided speech drafts for the delegation and liaised with the TUC to ensure that GMB speakers were called. From the GMB delegation of 59, GMB had 31 speakers (19 Male, 12 Female), moved 3 motions, seconded 8 motions, raised 2 questions on the GC report and put questions to the Alistair Darling, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Harriet Harman Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. Delegation members also spoke in support of 15 motions (see table below).

GMB motions on Pensions and the Co-operative movement were carried, as was the GMB Emergency Motion on Energy Policy.

TUC Congress Motion	GMB Position	GMB Speaker
EM1 - Welfare Green Paper (PCS motion)	GMB seconded	Phil Davies
EM2 - The Failing Energy Market (GMB)	GMB Moving	Gary Smith
Comp 13 (on Motion 48) Pension Policy (GMB motion)	GMB Moved	Sheila Bearcroft
71. Trade Union Recognition by the Co-operative Group (GMB motion)	GMB Moved	Paul Kenny
26. Tax Justice	GMB Seconded	Neil Derrick

43. Transportation of Musical Instruments on Planes	GMB Seconded	Ed Blissett
64. Regular Foot Health Screening in Schools	GMB Seconded	Mary Turner
72. Protection of Employees in the Betting Industry	GMB Seconded	Jude Brimble
79. Apprentices	GMB Seconded	Edna Rolph
87. Participation of the Trades Union Councils' Conference at Annual Congress	GMB Seconded	Malcolm Sage
Comp 21 Health and Safety at Work	GMB Seconded	Audrey Harry
18. Improving Maternity Pay	Support	Margaret Gregg
20. Reclaim the Night	Support	June Minnery
23. Asylum Seekers and Employment	Support	Evelyn Martin
24. Access to Work	Support	Phil Davies
25. The Economy	Support	Ann Leader
35. Floodings	Support	George Fraser
39. Defence Expenditure	Support	Keith Hazelwood
45. National Identity Scheme	Reservation	Mick Rix
67. Royal Mail	Support	Gerry Ferguson
77. Cuba	Support	Andy Worth
Comp 5 Young Members	Support	Rory MacQueen
Comp 6 (on Motion 16) The Equality Bill	Support	Kamaljeet Jandu
Comp 14 (on Motion 49) Public Services	Support	Brian Strutton
Comp 22 Workers Memorial Day	Support	Michael Husbands
Comp 23 Nurses' Safety	Support	Sharon Holder
GC Report Para 3.9 Disability	Thank the TUC	Eileen Theaker
GC Report Para 4.6 Taxation	Question	Bernie Taylor
GC Report Para 4.13 Working Time	Question	John Toomey
Question to Alistair Darling	Question	Tommy Hall
Question to Harriet Harman	Question	Lorraine Parker

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT

The twin principles of organising and bargaining are at the core of the GMB strategy for the Equality and Inclusion (E&I) that was launched at Congress 2008. Our journey for achieving equality through inclusion has made considerable progress since last year

The first six months of 2008 was a period of transition, raising awareness and engaging on our new E&I strategy with the Regions, the Sectors and old equality Committees. This involved spending time in the regions, giving

presentation of the strategy to the Senior Management Teams, Regional Organisers, Equality conferences and other meetings such as the National Organising Team.

At Congress 08 in Plymouth, presentations were made to the three Sector conferences. A fringe meeting titled 'No Sweat' on organising the hospitality workers was arranged with the GMB young members, which included an inspirational video presentation of the experience of organising young workers in the fast food outlets.

National Equality Forum (NEF)

One of the key achievements of the year, following rigorous selection method including interviews, was the appointment of the new lay members to the National Equality Forum. The Forum has met four times since Congress. The members of the Forum are:-

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| • Dotun Alade-Odumosu (Vice Chair) | - Race |
| • Nick Day | - LGTB |
| • Sharon Harding | - Gender |
| • Sharon Hewitt (1 Sept-15 Dec 08) | - |
| • Tony Hughes | - Disability |
| • Harpal Jandu | - Race |
| • Lorraine Parker | - Gender |
| • Jill Richards (Chair 1 Sept 08 – 15 Dec 08) | - Gender |
| • Emma Ritch | - Youth |
| • Alex Sobel, | - Youth |
| • Brian Shaw (Chair 15 Dec 08) | - LGTB |

Jill Richards became an officer in South Western Region and accordingly resigned her membership of the NEF and Brian Shaw was elected Chair. Those Regions that were not represented on the NEF were asked to send an observer to the meetings to ensure linkage.

The inaugural meeting of the twelve member forum was held in September 2008 at Congress House. It was addressed by the General Secretary and included a message of support from the Brendan Barber, the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). Trevor Philips, the Chair of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission also relayed his support the NEF Secretary.

Progress on E&I Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1 - Increase Membership

As a part of the adopted (2007) policy framework for Organising Migrant Workers, two pilot projects took place in the Midlands and East Coast Region and in Southern Region. Based on the outcome and findings of these pilot projects, a generalised policy framework and a Migrant Workers Project were developed by the National Organising Department. Under the umbrella of this Migrant Workers Project, the E&I department

- Supported a National Demonstration for Polish Independence in London Region and a meeting with the Polish Community in Birmingham Region
- Attended TUC Conference on developing a network for Polish migrant workers
- Rolled out to all regions a Language Skills Register. First piloted by Yorkshire region,
- Organised the GMB Young Members Conference focusing on recruitment, addressed by the General Secretary and National Organiser. All regions were represented at this conference.
- Developed an equality section for the GMB @ Work Training Manual.
- Chaired a fringe meeting of the Migration Rights Network at the TUC Congress in Brighton. The key note speaker was the GMB rep from Kastouries factory in West London.

Strategic Priority 2 - Bargaining

In partnership with National Secretary for the Commercial Sector, national and regional officers, progress was made on achieving agreements to develop Respect at Work policies. The G4S Cash; Security Services; and Aviation operational areas were engaged to agree a holistic strategy on Respect at Work, which included a policy supported by a communication plan and a training package for members and joint training for management and GMB reps. The policy was designed to define 'acceptable and unacceptable' behaviour at work and outlines a clear process for addressing any complaints. The success of this will mean that up to 35,000 employees and members will benefit from the Respect at Work Policy. This raises the profile of the GMB and will enhance the potential of recruiting new members.

Discussions have been initiated with ASDA to negotiate a joint Respect at Work policy as well as a developing a joint diversity strategy.

Strategic Priority 3 - Campaigning

Equal Pay

There is continued engagement with different Government Departments and Ministers on highlighting the GMB concerns on Equal Pay, including meetings with Harriet Harman MP the Leader of the House and her PPS Barbara Keeley MP and Maria Eagle, Minister in Justice Department.

A very successful GMB fringe meeting on 'Delivering Equal Pay in the 21st Century' was addressed by Vera Baird MP, Tess Gill Barrister, Margaret Prosser Deputy Chair of the Equality & Human Rights Commission and Brian Strutton National Secretary for Public Services

There is greater alignment between the GMB legal officer, the National Secretary for Public Service and the National Officer for Equality in driving a number of issues that linked to equal pay.

Equalities Bill

The Government's Equality Bill came out of the manifesto commitment for a Single Equalities Bill (SEB), the Discrimination Law Review and green paper equality.

Proposals in the Bill included: -

- Applying anti Age Discrimination to the supply of goods, facilities and services and to people over the age of 18.
- Public Procurement – the Government buys in £160 billion of goods and services are from the private and voluntary sectors. This leverage would be used to promote equality.
- A new Public sector duty for Equality, incorporating the existing duties on gender, race & disability and adding duty to promote faith, age awareness and sexuality.
- Transparency in pay structures would be used to highlight the Gender pay gap, EMG Employment Gap and Disability Employment Gap. This would have a Private Sector focus. However there would be little chance of securing mandatory pay audits;
- Limited positive action; and Strengthened Enforcement procedures.

Equality Reps

The GMB continued to lobby Government on securing statutory basis for Equality Reps, along the lines of workplace health and safety reps. Recognition and therefore facility time off for branch officers with responsibility for equality remain one of the key issues in the workplace hampering greater success. This issue was highlighted in meetings with Ministers.

Sharon Harding member of the NEF and Birmingham Region was the key note speaker at a Government Conference on Equality Reps and at a conference held at the TUC on the same subject.

TUC Congress

A number of GMB delegates addressed TUC Congress on equality motions, as well as speaking at two popular fringe meetings on which were chaired by the National Officer on :-

- Privatisation, Equal Pay and Procurement
- Migrant Rights Network

Strategic Priority 4 - Enhance Profile

Enhancing the profile of the GMB and in particular the work on equality remains a priority. Following a review of the Equality section of the GMB website, changes and amendments are progressing slowly.

TUC Equality Conferences

Full GMB delegations participated in the annual TUC equalities conferences in 2008. These covered the following equality strands: - Women, Black Workers, LGTB, Disability and young members.

Strategic Priority 5 - Organisational Equality

Governance – National Equality Forum (NEF)

Following the inaugural meeting of the NEF, a successful away day was held in Birmingham region to achieve a greater focus on the GMB E&I strategy and improved working and cohesion.

Regional

In some Regions managing the change from the old committee structures (Regional Race Equality Committees and the Equal Opportunities Committee) to the new Regional Equality Forums (REF) remains one of the key challenges. Following presentations of the GMB E&I strategy in the Regions, the following Regions have established functioning Regional Equality Forums (REF):-

- Birmingham,
- Southern
- North West
- Yorkshire

The other Regions are in the process of establishing Regional Equality Forums.

GMB Equality Champions (Officers with responsibility for equality)

A meeting of Equality Champions was held at the NUM Centre in Scalby, Scarborough. This highlighted the key elements of E&I strategy, role of regions and Champions. Greater alignment between the Regional Equality Forums, Equality Champions and the National structures remain a challenge for the coming Congress year.

National Equality Conference

The GMB National Equality Conference took place in Manchester.

Congress 2010

Since last Congress, considerable progress has been made in rolling out and implementing the GMB E&I strategy across the Regions and the Industrial Sections.

A number of challenges remain for the coming year. These include:-

- Closer working with the National Organising Department
- Greater support for and joint working with GMB industrial sections
- Ensuring all regions have Regional Equality Forums up and running and aligned to National Equality Forum.
- Closer work with Equality Champions and National Office.

EUROPEAN OFFICE

1. INTRODUCTION

The GMB European office has been very active in maximising GMB and the wider trade union movement's influence in ensuring that major EU social and employment policy proposals, which finally became unblocked during 2008 (Temporary Agency Workers, Working Time, European Works' Councils) meet the needs of our members and their families, in line with motion 144 agreed at GMB Congress 2008. The office continues to monitor and respond to a wide range of EU and International policy proposals and initiatives, and to support campaigning activities at European and International level to protect and promote the rights and interests of GMB members and their families. We continue to develop the positive working relationships and solidarity with our trade union colleagues across Europe and the world in promoting labour rights, decent work, conditions and pay, and to strengthen trade union recognition and organisation.

CEC Political, European & International Committee – The recently combined CEC Political, European and International Committee is working positively and effectively in considering and developing GMB policy in relation to a wide range of issues, campaigns and initiatives. Attendance is consistently high, as is involvement in policy discussions. The Committee focuses on GMB's scope to influence legislative proposals and policy development at national, European and International level.

2. PERSONNEL

European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw and European Research and Policy Officer, Sarah King, continue to represent the GMB's interests in Europe. Both are based in the GMB European office located at the centre of the EU decision making institutions.

3. GMB MEP GROUP

GMB continues to work closely at European, national and regional level with our group of MEPs in the European Parliament: Stephen Hughes (North East – Group convenor), Richard Corbett (Yorkshire and Humberside – Chair), Robert Evans (London), Neena Gill (West Midlands), Glenys Kinnock (Wales), David Martin (Scotland) and Glenis Willmott (East Midlands). The group continues to meet bi-monthly in Brussels. Glenys Kinnock and Robert Evans announced that they will not be standing again in the 2009 European Parliament elections. GMB wishes them well for the future, and thanks them for their support and friendship over the years. The GMB strategy for the European Parliament election campaign has been finalised and work is underway. The General Secretary was invited to attend a wider meeting of European trade union general secretaries with leaders of the European Socialist Group in the European Parliament in December 2008 to discuss their manifesto and strategy for the elections. As well as our sitting GMB MEP's, we have a number of GMB candidates on the regional lists for the European Parliament elections on 4th June 2009, and collectively we will be supporting them to maximise their vote, and hopefully expand the size of the Labour group in the European Parliament. It is vital that we maximise the turnout of the trade union vote in these elections, as a low turnout in this proportional representation election could see the awful prospect of the BNP gaining a seat in the European Parliament. Glenis Willmott is standing for the leadership of the European Parliamentary Labour Party. The election is in January 2009, and Glenis has GMB's full support. GMB MEPs played a major role in 2008, in securing agreement on the long awaited Temporary Agency Worker Directive, as well as improvements to the European Works' Council Directive. The majority also supported our position regarding the revision of the Working Time Directive, despite coming under considerable pressure to do otherwise, and we thank them for their solidarity and commitment during this difficult vote. GMB MEPs, and several colleagues in the EPLP, have continued their support and involvement in the Remploy campaign, both in their regions and at national level, which is greatly appreciated.

4. SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

The GMB European office continues to support the work of National and Regional Secretaries and officers in organising and recruitment, particularly relating to multinational companies. Frequently, this work involves the European and International trade union sector federations, ETUC, as well as direct contacts with other European trade union colleagues, MEPs and with the EU institutions.

Migrant workers – Final agreement on the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive will provide vital protections for both domestic and migrant agency workers in the UK and across Europe, who have been unacceptably exploited for too long. It is hoped these provisions will help support recruitment and organisation work in this area, as well as more generally for workers on temporary contracts.

European Works' Councils – The GMB European office has been working with trade union and MEP colleagues to strengthen the European Works' Council Directive in the recent revision process, which is now agreed. These stronger rights to information and consultation, as well as rights to training, offer opportunities to develop our organising influence in multinationals, and to show a strong leadership role, which could stimulate further recruitment. The European office continues to provide support and advice to officers and GMB representatives on the development of European Works' Councils, and our role within them.

Comparing terms and conditions – The European office continues to receive regular requests to compare rights, conditions and redundancy terms across multinational companies operating in other EU Member States, to support our bargaining agenda. Support and solidarity from trade union counterparts in other countries in providing information on their social plans, and access to their works councils, has proved helpful.

Information on EU policy, employment and social rights - The European office provides regular briefings and a monthly EU bulletin, updating members, officers and organisers on developments in EU legislation and rights, such as Working Time, Temporary Agency Workers Directive, EWC's and Health and Safety to assist them in their roles, and support the bargaining agenda.

5. RECOGNITION

Comparing trade union recognition across key target multinational companies is another function of the European office, which has proved valuable in supporting GMB bids for recognition. European trade union colleagues continue to show solidarity in offering support to our members, and raising the issue with management in their national works councils or committees when requested.

6. EU POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAMPAIGNS

GMB continues to have a high profile at national, European and International level in raising our members' concerns, and influencing a large number of specific EU policy and legislative issues both within the EU institutions and at the highest level of UK Government:

Working Time Directive Revision – There have been major developments during 2008 on this long-stalled proposal. The political agreement reached by the EU Council of Ministers meeting in June 2008 on this issue was completely contrary to the trade union position, and constituted a step backwards in rights and working conditions in relation to working time. GMB has played a key role within the UK and European trade union movement in seeking positive amendment to this political agreement. At GMB's initiative, the TULO trade union group brought an emergency motion to Labour Party Conference to formally establish that ending the opt-out to the 48 hour working week was Labour Party policy. The motion was overwhelmingly supported. GMB held regular meetings with MEPs, and provided regular letters and briefings, urging MEPs to vote to end the opt-out to 48 hour week, to protect on-call workers rights that all on-call time is counted as working time, to ensure protections related to extended reference periods, and to allow workers greater ability to organise their working hours to achieve a better work/life balance. On 16th December ETUC organised a major demonstration in Strasbourg. On 17th December 2008, the European Parliament voted in its second reading on the Revised Directive, and supported all of the trade union positions on these issues, which was a marvellous achievement. GMB and our trade union colleagues across Europe are grateful to MEPs for the principled support they have shown, particularly as many were put under a lot of pressure not to defend this position. A conciliation committee of European Parliament and Council is now likely to be set up in late January 2009 to seek a compromise between these two very different positions. GMB will continue to work with TULO, TUC, European trade union colleagues, MEPs and the EU Institutions to ensure a positive outcome to this process. The European Officer continues to provide regular updates on the position.

Temporary Agency Workers Directive – After being blocked for several years, the proposals were finally adopted in 2008. GMB played an influential role both at EU level, and within the TUC delegation, which secured a tri-partite agreement with the Government and CBI in May 2008. This allowed progress at EU level with EU Ministers reaching

political agreement on the proposals at their Council in June 2008. The proposals give day one rights to equal treatment for temporary agency workers at EU level, whilst allowing social partner agreements in Member States to derogate from that principle, as is the case in UK, where workers will have equal treatment after 12 weeks. The provisions must be transposed into Member State legislation by December 2011.

European Court of Justice cases – The European Court of Justice delivered its judgments in two more cases in 2008 – Ruffert, and Commission v Luxembourg – following in the same vein as the Viking and Laval cases decided at the end of 2007. In the Ruffert case, German public procurement law requiring contractors to adhere to collectively agreed minimum wages were deemed to be a restriction on the freedom to provide services. The decision therefore calls into question the status and enforcement of social clauses in public contracts for foreign service providers. The Luxembourg case raised further important questions regarding the interpretation of the Posting of Workers Directive, particularly regarding the issue of national public policy provisions. The four cases raise serious issues regarding trade union rights and, more generally, on the future of Social Europe. GMB has continued discussions with the ETUC and TUC about the implications of the cases, and on developing the trade union response. This includes calling for a Social Progress Clause/Protocol (to help correct the balance between the economic freedoms of the single market and fundamental social rights), to be attached to the European Treaties, in addition to developing an early warning system and litigation strategy for any future cases. Discussions continue about how best to address the deficiencies in the Posting of Workers Directive that the cases have highlighted. The TUC will sit on an ETUC Working Party on this issue. Following trade union pressure, the European Commission has changed its stance, and has also established a specialist working party to consider the implications of the cases and what action may be required, giving the ETUC and BusinessEurope observer status. GMB also worked closely with colleagues in the European Parliament to ensure that its response to the cases reflected key trade union concerns.

Cross-border healthcare - In July 2008, as part of its Renewed Social Agenda package, the European Commission published its proposals for a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, where European citizens travel to other Member States to receive medical treatment of their own accord. The European Court of Justice has confirmed that patients have the right to access cross-border care, and have the cost of treatment reimbursed by their home country. However, the situations when this will apply need to be clarified to provide patients with certainty about when they can recover their costs, and to also ensure that Member States can properly plan and manage their healthcare systems. GMB and other public service union colleagues are following these proposals closely to ensure they are not used to liberalise the sector, and encourage an internal market for healthcare. GMB believes that the proposals are a disproportionate response to the issue of cross-border healthcare. They could threaten the NHS' ability to properly plan and organise healthcare budgets, and lead to inequality, where only those with the financial resources are able to access this right. GMB has been working with national and European public sector union colleagues and MEPs in the European Parliament to secure key amendments to the proposals.

Anti-discrimination - In July 2008, the European Commission published its proposals for a new Equal Treatment Directive, prohibiting discrimination outside the workplace on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. GMB and other trade unions campaigned together with MEPs to ensure the EU Commission proposal covered all the discrimination strands not previously covered by EU legislation. GMB retired members have direct experience of age discrimination when seeking travel and other forms of insurance. The European office is working with colleagues in the European Parliament to secure amendments to the proposals to ensure that age and disability discrimination in the provision of financial services is prohibited, and that the refusal or cost of insurance for older people and those with disabilities is based on actual rather than perceived risks attributed to these groups.

Public Procurement – The European Officer continues to work in close co-operation with National Secretary Phil Davies, the Remploy stewards and consortium officers to ensure that the rights we secured at EU level to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces for people with disabilities are implemented and used at all levels of public contracting. Regular meetings continue with Government Ministers and departments, and Members of the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies, with the aim of significantly increasing the number of public contracts being awarded to Remploy and other supported factories and businesses. The lack of progress in public contracts being awarded to Remploy was raised again by GMB members at Labour Party Conference. On behalf of the Remploy trade union consortium, the European Officer has been actively involved in the revision of the Office of Government Commerce guidance on reserving contracts in 2008, and amending the text to ensure that it provides positive encouragement for public authorities to use this contracting method. The European Officer also supported South Western Regional

Secretary, Allan Garley, in his work with the Welsh Assembly to produce a positive guide for public contractors to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces. The Welsh Assembly has published a reserved contract due to be decided early in 2009. MEPs continue to give their support and commitment to the campaign, which is most welcome.

GMB continues to campaign to ensure that wider social, employment, ethical and environmental considerations are included in public contracting. Working in co-operation with our colleagues in the European trade union sector Federations, and with the support of Stephen Hughes MEP in the European Parliament, we urged the EU Commission, through a campaign of letters, to be more open and inclusive with its work and studies in preparation for an EU guide to Social Procurement expected in spring 2009. GMB has been participating in the EU Commission meetings on this issue, and together with trade union colleagues, has made suggestions for improving the guide.

EU Lisbon Treaty – The UK Government refused to hold a referendum on the EU Reform (Lisbon) Treaty, which GMB campaigned for, and was the subject of motion 145 at Congress 2008. Instead, it ratified the European Union (Amendment) Bill in summer 2008. In June 2008 Ireland returned a “NO” vote in its referendum on the Treaty, which opened up further opportunity to highlight GMB and trade union concerns about the Treaty. After months of discussions, during the EU Summit in December 2008, the Irish Government agreed to hold a second referendum (likely in Autumn 2009) on the basis of agreement of various legal and other guarantees related to the Treaty, which will be incorporated into the Treaty as part of the Croatian accession Treaty. Clearly, this will re-open the debate again. The UK Government was heavily involved in the compromise agreement with Ireland in December, and at pains to ensure it did not make any change to the Lisbon Treaty which would involve further UK Parliamentary scrutiny, particularly in the area of employment and social rights. GMB continues to monitor this situation, and to support attempts across the EU trade union movement to push for a social protocol clause.

Defending trade union rights, freedoms and labour standards – The European office continues to support the work of our international trade union colleagues in Costa Rica, in co-operation with Bananalink, in following up on complaints made under the EU’s Generalised System of Preferences Plus trade agreements regarding breaches of labour standards and freedom of association. Further representations were made to the EU Commission and European Parliament during the review process of the trade agreements in autumn 2008. GMB also supported the Justice for Colombia campaign to highlight violence towards and murder of trade unionists there, and called for action to be taken to ensure that any renewal of the trade status to Colombia was dependent on compliance with labour standards, and trade union and human rights. GMB is also assisting Bananalink with the organisation of a Parliamentary delegation to Guatemala to gather support for ending the violence and exploitation of workers and trade unions there, and to promote decent work and trade union rights and freedoms.

7. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING, EU FUNDED PROJECTS, DELEGATIONS

The European office continues to support GMB regions and sections in developing EU funded projects, and participating in a range of conferences, meetings and training sessions relevant to our work, including those which are funded by the EU. The European Officer has also been supporting Manufacturing Section colleagues in seeking European interregional funding for a skills and employment project to rebuild the Medway Queen paddle steamer.

North West and Irish Region continued their success with the annual Women’s Conference in 2008, and the European Officer was pleased to be involved in this positive event.

The European Officer gave the annual lecture to Cardiff University Business School on GMB/Trade Unions in Europe, as part of its graduate programme, highlighting our campaigning work at EU level as Britain’s most proactive union in this area.

The European office was pleased to host an EU awareness raising programme for the GMB Retired Members Association in Brussels in December, supported by European Parliament funding. Our positive relationship with Danish trade union colleagues continues, and we welcomed a number of trade union delegations from Denmark in 2008, exchanging information on industrial relations and organising. The office also gave presentations on GMB work and EU activities to delegations of trade union colleagues from TUC regions and Ruskin College.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY REPORT

Introduction

Motion 208 'Support for Trade Unions Internationally' encompassed the spirit of GMB's commitment to international solidarity. Trade unions are the cornerstone of civil society and the old adage Unity is Strength was never more relevant internationally than it is today. GMB has built and developed strong links with trade unionists all over the world in the interests of solidarity and support as well as in the cause of mutual industrial interest. We work with a wide variety of organisations both at home and abroad in pursuit of social, economic and political justice.

Shipbreaking

GMB, working with the Mumbai Port Trust, Dock and General Employees Union (MPTDGEU), finalized the organising project for submission to the Department for International Development's (DFID) Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF). The project addresses the problems faced by workers in the ship breaking downstream industries in Mumbai and Gujarat areas in India. Under this project, workers will receive better wages, job security and conditions through a democratic trade union collectively bargaining on their behalf. Workplaces will be made safer through improved occupational health and safety training, legal support, and provision of personal protective equipment. Additional elements of the project include legal advocacy, a health clinic in Mumbai, health camps in Gujarat and a non formal after school project for the children of migrant workers. A full copy of the report is available on request from the International Department.

This project was a culmination of intensive research and consultation with a variety of people and organisations. GMB met with DFID, TUC, the International Metalworkers Federation, the FNV Mondiaal, the fundraising arm of the Dutch trade union movement, Thompsons Solicitors and other lawyers who specialize in Industrial Law from India and in Bangladesh to share information on aspects of the Factories Act and international legislation that will effect the project.

As a companion piece to this project GMB launched - Making a Difference – a fundraising initiative aimed at raising funds through GMB branches to enable the MPTDGEU in their campaigning work, the project has raised almost £4,000 to date. This money will be spent on sponsoring a recruitment officer, providing materials for an anti asbestos campaign and resources for the informal school.

Additionally we have been involved in a variety of events linked to the project. In December, following a fact finding visit to workplaces in India, the General Secretary Paul Kenny officially opened a photo exhibition graphically illustrating the exposure of Indian workers and their families to the killer mineral asbestos. The exhibition, features photographs of workers handling and using asbestos with no protective equipment or control measures in place. We have also met with other trade unionists from the region working in the informal sector such as Self Employed Women's Association of India, Bangladesh Federation TUC and representatives from the Bangladesh Occupational Health and Safety Foundation.

Latin America

GMB played a leading role in organising the Latin America 2008 Conference, held in December to mark 50 years of Cuban Revolution and 10 years of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela. This year over 500 participants attended this popular annual event at Congress House to learn more about the radical social and political changes taking place in Latin America. Speakers included the Venezuelan and Cuban Ambassadors and activists from Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Mexico who joined with parliamentarians and trade unionists from the UK for what has become one of the most informative and vibrant events in the political calendar.

Cuba

2008 marked 50 years of the Cuban Revolution. GMB joined with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in celebrating the outstanding achievements Cuba has made in health, education and social welfare programs not only for its own people, but the unstinting solidarity it has shown to those less fortunate throughout the world. And all of these achievements made despite the continued assault on its sovereignty by successive administrations of the United States of America. GMB are represented on the Executive Committee of CSC and through this we have campaigned vigorously for the release of the Miami Five. Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzales and Rene Gonzales who have all been imprisoned in the US for ten years for fighting terrorism. Mary Turner, President of the Union and Sheila Bearcroft in her first visit as TUC President led the GMB contingent

at the annual US Embassy Vigil in October where more than 500 people had gathered alongside two of the wives of the five. GMB also participated in the Law Society Conference which sought to raise the profile of the case to a new and influential audience. In 2008 GMB participated in a series of Parliamentary initiatives which contributed to the work which resulted in the lifting of EU sanctions that had been in place since 2003, 20 Trade Union General Secretaries signed an open letter to the UK Government and a total of 227 individual MPs signed one of more than 3 separate Early Day Motions.

Venezuela

GMB has played a leading role in the Venezuela Information Centre (VIC) since its formation in 2005. VIC is a broad based non sectarian organisation which brings together trade unionist, parliamentarians and other members of civil society to campaign for the defense of Venezuelan national sovereignty and the right of Venezuelan people to determine their own future free from external intervention. VIC works closely with the Venezuelan Embassy and the Labour Friends of Venezuela, the parliamentary group of MPs whose Chair is Colin Burgon, GMB sponsored MP. This year we have organised and participated in a variety of public meetings throughout the country, have been involved in working with Scottish Parliament and colleagues from STUC.

Colombia

GMB continues to work with Justice for Colombia on Campaigns designed to alleviate the suffering of our trade union brothers and sisters in Colombia. In 2008 we worked on the Military Aid Campaign and the GS wrote to the Foreign Secretary requesting that he investigate the series of killings by Colombian soldiers who have received military training from the UK. We also called on the UK Government to halt all military assistance until the Colombian military end their collusion with paramilitary death squads which murder trade unionists and other civilians.

We also participated in the campaign to challenge European Union trade preferences for Colombia. Astonishingly, the EU currently provides Colombia – the most dangerous country on earth for trade unionists – with special trade benefits meant only for countries that respect fundamental worker rights and human rights. Colombia clearly does not fit the bill, and JFC and allies in the trade union movement are calling for the EU to open an investigation into the regular abuses perpetrated in Colombia.

Bananalink

Costa Rican Flood Appeal

A number of GMB regions and branches have generously donated more than £1000 in response to an urgent appeal following devastating flooding followed by an earthquake in the Caribbean coastal region. COSIBA-CR, (the Coordination of Banana Workers in Costa Rica), whose members organise banana and pineapple workers in the affected areas, are extremely grateful for the monies pledged by British union partners to support victims of the flooding. Gilbert Bermudez of COSIBA-CR has reported that these funds are being used to respond to the most urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and now the earthquake, in particular providing emergency food, shelter and clothing to those who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

Guatemala Campaign

The GMB hosted the UK visit of two members of an ITUC delegation of Guatemala trade union activists in November. Activities included a MP briefing in the House of Commons, meetings with the TUC and Amicus and a public event in the evening hosted by Amnesty International and co-sponsored by ICTUR, ITF and IUF. The visit was part of efforts to raise awareness of

the human rights violations in Guatemala that disproportionately target trade union activists to the extent that it is hard on the heels of Colombia for the label of most dangerous country for trade unionists. The GMB signed a letter, along with the other unions involved in the visit, expressing concern to the British Ambassador in Guatemala about the safety of the returning delegates. The GMB European office has subsequently been lending support to identify MEPs interested in participating in a delegation visit to Guatemala later this year to be coordinated by the ITUC, their European and Guatemalan union affiliates.

GSP Plus

In November GMB sponsored MEPs co-signed a letter to Commissioner Ashton asking that a formal GSP Plus complaint be made against Costa Rica for breach of conditions of trade status in relation to Labour Standards and

Human and trade union rights and freedom. In 2006 a complaint was submitted by the Central Social Juanito Mora Porras (CSJMP) of Costa Rica relating to serious violations of core ILO conventions in their country. GMB lobbied Peter Mandelson in his role as European Commissioner about this matter in 2007 and following a subsequently devastatingly critical report by an ILO mission to Costa Rica about anti-union activity, are asking for an investigation into Costa Rica benefiting from this trade preference scheme whilst core labour conventions are not being respected in the country.

It is worth noting that progress is being made to protect and promote labour rights in the Latin American banana industry, notably with the recent adoption of a new constitution in Ecuador which amongst other things ended labour sub-contracting in all sectors of the economy and heralded other important reforms to labour law. However the latest ITUC Annual Survey on Violations of Trade Union Rights highlighted that *'banana plantations are frequently the location for anti-union repression on the American continent'*.

Palestine

In the early part of the year GMB joined with the TUC and other affiliated unions to call upon the Government of Israel to lift the blockade of Gaza. GMB took part in various actions and demos to campaign against this collective punishment and participated in both the National Demo on 10 May and marked the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people by attending the Lobby of Parliament. Additionally the International Solidarity Officer sits on the Trade Union Advisory Committee on Palestine and is a member of the Executive of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign an organisation we are affiliated to at a national level.

TUC and Other Organisations

GMB works with the TUC and affiliated trade unions on a variety of issues. As part of the day of action against global poverty called by the ITUC we participated in the world trade union movement World Day for Decent Work highlighting the work that we are undertaking in India. We took the excellent photographic exhibition created for Congress to the event which was held at Congress House. Through the year we were involved in a variety of issues where we wrote letters, signed petitions, attended demonstrations on issues pertaining to the treatment of trade Unionists in Zimbabwe, Philippines, Iraq and Iran. We were actively involved with the TUC, ITUC, ITF and, Amnesty International in the Free Osanloo and workers in Iran. Our concerns, outlined in motions to Congress, are presented to relevant organisations including frequent exchanges with the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Introduction

The year started with Dan Shears joining the department. From his previous experience in the Health and Safety Executive he brought with him a wealth of knowledge, never more apparent than when he gave evidence to the DWP Select Committee at the House of Commons in February into the resources of the HSE. Dan was able to use personal experience, from the number of former colleagues leaving the organization, to highlight the great loss of knowledge and experience following the proposed budget cuts and the relocation of HSE headquarters to Bootle from London. While the cuts were not fully implemented there has been a major restructuring which in the opinion of GMB has diminished the ability of the organization to function as it should in a 21st century industrial society.

Dan has fitted in well to the departments' ethos and has proven useful in dealing with members concerns, particularly in the Commercial and Manufacturing Sections. However the doubling of the department resources has led to greater demands being asked of it from National Officers and safety representatives on national committees.

Motions from Congress 2008 which required action are dealt with in the body of the text.

Asbestos

The year was effectively topped and tailed by the ongoing Pleural Plaques campaign. In January, following the decision by the House of Lords to deny compensation to pleural plaques victims, GMB led a very successful lobby in parliament attended by 300 workers from a number of asbestos related industries, and over 40 MPs. Every speaker, including GMB General Secretary Paul Kenny, spoke out against the injustice of the decision and resolved to keep

the campaign going. Perhaps the government imagined that this was so much hot air and that the campaign would somehow fizzle out-if so they underestimated GMB's' campaigning agenda. The pressure, through lobbying, meetings, a motion to the Wales TUC, a Special Report at Congress 2008 and individual members raising the issue with their own MPs resulted in the government issuing a twelve week consultation in the summer. All the trade unions responding, and we suspect the majority of total respondents, were adamant that the House of Lords decision should be overturned. However the government had still not published the results of the consultation exercise by year end. As a reminder that the issue was still at the top of GMB's' agenda another rally at the end of October, with just as impressive a turn out, reiterated the commitment towards reversing this injustice.

The department also ensured that the consultation on this issue from the Northern Ireland Office received a similar response. This was also able to take account of the decision by the Scottish Parliament, which had decided to overturn the original House of Lords decision and introduce legislation to reinstate the compensation.

To be fair to the Government the amended Children's Act had introduced fast track, no fault, compensation for mesothelioma victims which at least ensured that many sufferers received their rightful compensation before they died. And HSE enlisted the trade unions in both the pilot, and the national project, in an attempt to reach trades people who might be exposed to asbestos, through the use of the media and targeted information blitzes. Across the UK there are many private and public buildings where asbestos is present but unmarked and thus liable to be disturbed and lead to workers exposure.

The department also took part in the inaugural meeting at the House of Commons where interested parties ranging from victim support groups, thoracic surgeons, Macmillan nurses and GMB met to discuss the setting up of a properly funded research project into asbestos related diseases. Obviously it is early days on this but part of the difficulty on the pleural plaques debate was the disagreement on the extent of medical damage suffered by victims and this might be one avenue which could help avoid such injustice in the future. (Composite Motion 1)

Public Services

The Local Authority Forum, the body where the HSE, the Employers and the Trade Unions meet to discuss health, safety and welfare developments has not met in 2008 as the HSE felt it had gone as far as it could and took the opportunity of the chairs retirement to evaluate the future . Following a strong lobby from both the employers and the unions there are discussions underway on a move to reconstitute the forum. The guidance on health & safety to supplement the Green Book, of terms and conditions has largely been agreed though not yet published. Even though local authorities are by their nature supposedly exemplars of health and safety best practice the development of the twelve key principles for this sector can only help GMB reps to ensure high standards are met. Guidance on these principles was drawn up at the beginning of the year.

GMB continues to be represented on the Waste Industry Safety & Health Forum (WISH), co-ordinated by HSE where guidance and information on this dangerous industry is formulated. The department also spoke at a Veolia Waste meeting to managers and trade union reps on the need for workforce involvement and meaningful consultation.

Commercial Services

It has been a highly active year in provision of support to the Commercial Services section. The department has provided advice and expertise in dealing with employers across the utilities, security and retail sectors.

In British Gas, the department has been heavily involved with negotiations on Project Novo', a trial of new management practices with implications for health and safety. We have convened several meetings with senior Safety Representatives, and have met with management to discuss concerns, as the proposed changes to the business integrity and quality assurance elements of the business, which might have reduced protection to our members. We have instead agreed to pilot some proposed new measures, with GMB taking the leading role in designing the pilot.

The Senior Safety Representatives within the business have played a critical role in shaping the debate, by challenging the business when needed but also by feeding constructive comments into the process. The department wishes to thank Chris Bennett, Karen Dickinson, Pete Jones, Kevin Lover, Ted Pearce, Mark Thomas and in particular Aubrey Thompson for their contributions over the course of the year.

Within National Grid, the department has now taken a permanent seat on the National Safety Health Environment and Security (SHES) Forum, where we have begun to develop a positive relationship with management to secure our goals of full worker involvement. The department addressed the annual National Grid Safety Representative Conference, and we will be taken work forward on consultation in 2009 under the aegis of the "Trusted to Work Responsibly" programme that the company has instituted.

In addition, we have met with management to negotiate the terms of new policies on drug and alcohol abuse, and wider well-being. The management approach in both cases has been at odds with GMB policy and members interests, and discussions are ongoing to attempt to resolve matters to mutual satisfaction. The department wishes to thank Phil Byrne and Carl Meader for their efforts over the past year.

In the wider Gas industry, we are taking a leading role in an OFGEM-lead review of emergency call-out arrangements when gas leaks are reported. This is an initiative that GMB has long campaigned for, as we seek to improve and ensure worker protection whilst trying to minimise as best we can the number of vulnerable customers whose gas supply is cut off unnecessarily in situations that are not really emergencies.

We have succeeded in arguing the group away from the adoption across the industry of expensive and unproven technology, to more reasonable measures to increase awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO). We are also forging links with key players in the industry – we are developing relations with Capita following their successful bid to replace CORGI as gas installer registration body. The department wishes to thank Bill Higgs and Bob Matthews for their participation on the Working Group over the course of the year.

We have also met with the HSE to register our concerns regarding a number of recent developments in the gas industry, not least the removal of CORGI and the awarding of a 10 year contract to Capita to run the competent Gas Installers registration scheme.

We have been pursuing a number of issues with Group 4 Securicor (G4S).

On the Security side, we are helping to shape the company structure for health and safety consultation. We have worked with both National Officers and Safety Representatives to reform the national Health and Safety Committee, and are working with G4S management to review and jointly rewrite their national health and safety constitution. G4S held their first Manned Guarding National Health and Safety Committee in January 2009. The department attended to provide advice and support, and is now in talks to develop formal constitutions, sub-committees and policies with the Committee Chair and the Company Health and Safety Adviser. The department wishes to extend its thanks to Angus Groat for his efforts in helping to secure a positive result in our negotiations.

We are also working with G4S on the Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) side of the business. We are engaged with the company on their investigations into recent incidents of violence to staff, and a worrying increase in reported work-related asthma from diesel fumes. We are working together to jointly develop better practice on incident investigation (Motion 65), manual handling and control of diesel as a result, and this work will be ongoing for most of 2009. The department wishes to extend its thanks to David Lyons, Brian Terry and Lynda Seaman for their efforts in dealing with management over the past year.

Aside from these companies, the department has provided support to a number of other sectors. We provided refresher training for Senior Safety Reps in DHL; and presented on the legal rights of safety reps at conferences for activists in Asda and EDF.

Manufacturing Section

With National Officers in the Manufacturing Section, we are helping to develop a health and safety training project with Bouygues. Bouygues are a French-based construction company who are expanding operations in Britain, and signed a recognition agreement with GMB in January 2008. We have developed an outline programme for Safety Representative training, and submitted a bid for £60,000 funding from Construction Skills (formerly the Construction Industry Training Board) with a view to securing funding to implement the training in 2009. The department was also part of a GMB delegation to Bouygues HQ in Versailles in October to outline the draft project to French trades unions. It is hoped that the project will help to set a path for future joint initiatives, including apprentice training.

The department has also helped to negotiate a drug and alcohol policy with Hanson Heidelberg. Again, the management approach has significantly diverged from GMB policy, and the department has been working with the National Officer to rectify matters and publicise the nature of the disagreement. This has been an issue of increasing importance within the department, and we aim to publish a briefing on drug and alcohol policies to Safety Representatives in 2009.

Environment

At last years Congress it was obvious that members were taking environmental concerns much more seriously. GMB has taken a stand on a number of areas where both the environment and our industrial policy can sometimes appear somewhat contradictory, but as last years special report recognized our prime interest is in protecting decent jobs, with a sustainable future. For this reason there was a recommendation not to back Motion 121(referred to the Finance committee) as it put us in a difficult position.

It is obvious that environmental issues are moving up the personal and political agenda, and have been exacerbated by the financial crises. The government has pledged to create 100,000 new sustainable jobs but there are many economists and green activists who think that there is a prime opportunity to look at the environmental agenda as a real way of developing a "just transition" and shape the new industrial landscape. GMB is involved in the Trade Union Sustainable Development Action Committee (TUSDAC) which meets with other trade unions and ,now, two government departments, DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) & the newly created DECC (Department of Energy and Climate Change) (Motion 123).

In addition the Political department negotiated to include environmental reps in the Warwick (2) agreement, and the GMB supported the Prospect amendment to the proposed Employment Bill, which unfortunately fell, in including them the concept of these reps at the workplace. ACAS published a consultation document on time off for trade union duties where reference was made to these reps but only in a voluntary capacity. GMB will respond with our policy but does not expect much change in these deregulatory times. There is also a chance that following a seminar in the NHS on sustainable development that they may accept the idea (Motion 122).

The CEC Green working Party has continued to meet and has established a sub group to look at developing guidance for officers, reps and members. There will be a "green" page in the National magazine to help disseminate this information. This area is relatively fast moving and GMB will be keeping abreast of all major advances to ensure the members are engaged.

Policy Development

Aside from the responses to asbestos consultations, the department has played a full role in the wider development of policy over the past year. We assisted with the GMB response to the Labour Party "Partnership in Power" exercise, and subsequently contributed to the development of GMB policy lines during the Warwick 2 process, including negotiating with Secretary of State for Work and Pensions James Purnell on the introduction of Directors Duties and Corporate Manslaughter (Motion 56).

We will be feeding into a campaign developed by the Professional Drivers Branch aimed at stopping violence to taxi and minicab drivers (Motion 65), and work continues with the gambling industry on the provision of seating for casino staff, where operators are stubbornly refusing to let croupiers and supervisors sit on aesthetic grounds.

We have taken the opportunity to promote GMB policy on health and safety at a number of events, including the Hazards Conference at Keele University; at conferences organized by the Chemicals Industry Association, British Safety Council and Trades Union Congress; and at the European Work Health Network Conference in Bologna, where the GMB delegation played a crucial role in drafting the first resolution ever to be unanimously passed by the Network.

Publications

The major publication from the department this year was the new Safety Reps Handbook, which has been a number of years in the revising. This work was principally undertaken by Dan, with valuable input from the regions. As might be expected it forms part of the GMB@Work materials, though it is also capable of being used as a stand alone document. Feedback has been very favourable so far.

The department has taken the lead in developing new guidance on Toxic Shock Syndrome (Motion 54), and will be publishing the results in 2009 following consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

In addition there has been a regular production of monthly electronic newsletters covering a wide range of topics. This year they have been-

1. Climate Change - The Impact on the Workplace
2. Pleural Plaques - The Campaign for Justice
3. The Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act
4. REACH – Changes to Chemical Usage in the Workplace
5. The Decriminalisation of Death and Injuries at Work
6. Safety Reps – The Opportunity for Greater Involvement
7. The Health & Safety (Offences) Bill 2008
8. Pleural Plaques Compensation – The Fight for Justice Goes On
9. Changes to Employers Liability (Compulsory) Insurance Act
10. HSE Asbestos Campaign – “The Hidden Killer”
11. Mesothelioma Employers Liability – “Trigger Issue” Litigation
12. New HSE Strategy – Be Part of the Solution

These newsletters are now placed on the website for Reps to access. Any ideas for topics are always welcome.

Summary

The work that the department undertakes on behalf of GMB members and officers is shaped by the industrial, political and environmental worlds. In a recession there will be some employers who might decide to cut corners and endanger our members. There may be some employers who will replace their workforce with cheaper, less experienced and more vulnerable workers. There should be opportunities to look at how the industrial world can be changed by promoting green jobs. As always, GMB will continue to campaign and lobby on behalf of our members to effect political change, as always relying on GMB safety reps in all sectors to carry out their role in difficult circumstances. Even in the hard times there are many ways of demonstrating to both existing, and future, GMB members the benefits of defending good health, safety and welfare inside and outside the workplace.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Personnel

The Department comprises Barry Smith, Legal Officer, and Maria Ludkin Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer. Sarah King, Legal Research and Policy Officer, is currently on secondment to the GMB European Office in Brussels.

Activity – Introduction To A Broader Role For The Department

The Department has been heavily involved in organising and strategising the multiple actions regarding equal pay litigation, which is dealt with in more detail below. GMB continues to set the legal agenda which other Unions have followed. We are extensively involved in cases which are laying new ground in employment rights law.

As a result the Legal Department has also become much more involved in political campaigns as so much of our work now has a significant political dimension. This activity has expanded into new areas such as GMB’s campaigns in private equity, agency workers, Marks and Spencer’s treatment of employees, all of which are detailed below.

The role of the department has expanded to facilitate the co-ordination of legal, political, media and organising campaigns which serve to keep GMB at the forefront of campaigns on issues important to members, and which has assisted in our increased membership growth and political strength as a Union.

Action on Congress 2008 Motions

Motion 82 – Repeal the Anti Trade Union Laws

GMB remains committed to the repeal of anti-trade union laws. Although the Trade Union Freedom Bill was not heard in 2007, key parts of the Bill were put forward as amendments to the Employment Bill in November 2008. These included the protection of workers involved in lawful industrial action, employer's duties to provide information to unions, and the use of replacement labour during disputes. The amendments were defeated but 45 Labour MPs and 10 non-Labour MPs supported them.

Motion 85 – “Transforming Tribunals” Legislation, Motion 86 – Employment Tribunal, Motion 87 – Changes within the Employment Tribunal Services

These three Motions expressed concern at proposals arising from the Ministry of Justice Public Consultation “Transforming Tribunals”, including the use of more judges to hear Employment Tribunal cases sitting alone. We have called upon the Government not to weaken the involvement of lay members in the employment tribunals and for a fairer system to be put in place.

Motion 86 also referred to the statutory rules relating to tribunals (the statutory disciplinary, dismissal, and grievance rules) and the negative impact they have had on members pursuing their rights. These rules are to be repealed in April 2009, and replaced by a revised ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. We responded to the public consultations on repeal and on the revised Code of Practice. We will monitor the new procedures closely.

Motion 148 – Political

We have called on the Government, and the Ministry of Justice, to put in place a “people’s judiciary”, and to review the process of selecting the judiciary and magistrates so as to reflect a wider cross-section of society. This should include a positive quota of working people with a trade union background.

Support for Recruitment and Organisation

The Department continues to give priority to supporting recruitment, particularly in the Commercial Services and Public Services Sections. Equalities remain, as ever, a crucial organising issue and feature strongly in the work of the Legal Department.

A significant proportion of the Department’s work continues to relate to equal pay issues in the public sector, and in particular in local authorities and the NHS. We have continued to support National Officers in developing our equal pay strategy, and we work closely with GMB solicitors.

GMB remains at the centre of equal pay. We support the pursuit of equal pay claims and at the time of writing this report GMB is supporting 30,000 equal pay claims in the public sector.

GMB remains committed to pursuing litigation in tribunals and in the higher courts where necessary in order to achieve equal pay. We have been supporting significant ground-breaking litigation in the higher courts on almost every aspect of equal pay law in the last year including litigation relating to the following: time limits, statutory grievances, TUPE transfers, comparators, the source of pay, the employers’ so-called “genuine material factor defence”, market forces, and so on. This strategy will continue in 2009.

In the case of *Allen v GMB*, the other side won their appeal to the Court of Appeal. The House of Lords refused to grant us permission to appeal. The case will now be referred back to the original Employment Tribunal to determine remedies.

We continue to work closely with National Officers generally on equal pay issues. We have contributed to the Special Report to Congress 2009 on Equal Pay.

Policy Development

We continued to work to co-ordinate the legal, political, and industrial aspects of the campaign to save Remploy factories from closure. We supported National Officers in negotiations with management, and with legal and political

briefings of MPs and Government Ministers. We supported National Officers in respect of litigation relevant to the closures.

We have continued to be heavily involved in developing a legal and political strategy to support the GMB campaign to draw attention to the negative aspects of the unregulated private equity industry. We contribute widely to publications and conferences arguing the case for greater regulation, as well as considerable interaction with relevant politicians to bring about changes in the regulatory framework.

We have continued to support the campaign for Trade Union Freedom. We were disappointed that there was not sufficient time for the Trade Union Freedom Bill to be debated but we remain committed to supporting the removal of the legal shackles placed on trade unions. We remain committed to the repeal of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

We welcome the EU Directive on Agency Workers which requires member states to give agency workers comparable rights with permanent staff. The Directive requires member states to implement its provisions by 5 December 2011. We have called on the UK Government to introduce the rights for UK workers. We believe that these rights should apply from Day One and not, as is proposed, 12 weeks after the employment has started.

We responded to the public consultation on the revised ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievances. The new Code will come into effect in April 2009 when the statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures are repealed. We are co-ordinating the GMB response to the revised ACAS Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities.

Publications and Information Provision

Each year continues to see the introduction of a raft of new employment-related legislation. We aim to keep up with the changes, and to disseminate this information in an accessible and user friendly format for Officers.

We are updating the GMB "Most Asked Questions" which is presently in its 13th edition. This consists of a series of one page answers to questions covering a wide range of employment issues, including Health and Safety, Contracts, Pay, Maternity, Paternity, Flexible Working Rights etc. The aim is to provide a document which Regions can easily send or hand to members with common enquiries. This is posted on the GMB intranet and an amended version (which excludes Region-specific benefits) is posted on the GMB website.

Support for Recognition

GMB continues to meet with considerable success across a wide range of companies, both in terms of new sites and sites where GMB members have remained loyal through years of employer hostility. GMB continues to make good use of the legislation, both as a framework for voluntary agreements, and as a procedure for achieving recognition in the face of employer hostility.

We continue to provide support, advice, and assistance to Officers in considering and preparing applications to the Central Arbitration Committee. We provide standing guidance to Officers on the procedures. We provide a regular report on the progress of applications to the GMB Central Executive Council. Barry Smith is available to act as "devil's advocate" on applications.

Support for Industrial Action

We continue to provide day to day support to Regional and National Officers on industrial action issues and industrial action ballots. This represents a significant part of our work.

We continue to up date our guidance on ballots to reflect changes in legislation and case law. Barry Smith is available to run briefings for Officers.

We remain committed to Trade Union freedom, and the removal of the legal restrictions placed on trade unions to take industrial action, including the repeal of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Statutory Disciplinary, Dismissal, and Grievance Procedures

The statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures will be repealed in April 2009. This will mean that the fairness of a dismissal will no longer depend on compliance with the statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedures. The requirement that an employee sends a grievance letter and waits 28 days before bringing a tribunal claim will be removed. Instead tribunals will assess dismissals and grievance issues by reference to the revised ACAS Code of Practice on discipline and grievance. A failure by either side to comply with the Code may lead to an increase or a reduction in compensation of up to 25%.

The Government has indicated that transitional arrangements will be put in place in terms of both the new rules and tribunal procedures. At the time of writing this report details are awaited. We will keep Officers and Regions apprised of developments and monitor the position closely.

Other Employment Law

We continue to provide day to day support to Officers on individual employment law matters, though as previously collective issues and policy matters remain our priority.

We have provided support to Officers in respect of collective redundancy consultation, which is an area of concern for the Union particularly in the light of the present economic circumstances.

Maria Ludkin has been involved in the Union's campaign in Marks and Spencers, reviewing and selecting key cases to forward to the employment tribunal and co-ordinating a campaign to ensure Marks and Spencer follows existing legislation in their treatment of workers.

Trade Union Legal Services

We remain committed to playing our part in defending trade union legal services from attack. We are lobbying to prevent any adverse impact on services arising out of Government initiatives in legal services, including the Jackson Review on Costs. We remain concerned about the activities of "no win no fee" lawyers and support the Government inquiry into their behaviour. We will keep Officers informed about developments.

Standing Orders Committee

Barry Smith was Secretary to the Congress 2008 Standing Orders Committee (SOC). He is Secretary to the Congress 2009 SOC.

PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

Actions Taken on Motions Carried in Congress 2008

Motion 68 – State Pension

We continue to pressurise government to increase the basic state pension and introduce an indexation mechanism that equates to the better of inflation and average earnings. GMB is working with the National Pensioners Convention and others to achieve this goal. GMB led the pension debate at TUC Congress 2008 and successfully secured unanimous support for our motion calling for the reforms highlighted by this GMB motion. GMB also sought reforms at the Labour Party's National Policy Forum that replicated the objectives of this motion.

Motion 78 – Compulsion

As with Motion 68, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We have also worked with DWP and The Pensions Regulator to maximise the effectiveness of the compliance regime when auto-enrolment is introduced in 2012 and secured a ban on employers offering inducements to members to opt out.

Motion 76 – Workers' Pension Security

As with Motion 68 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. In addition we have worked with DWP and improved the benefits provided by the Financial Assistance Scheme and

Pension Protection Fund. GMB led the campaign to secure ill health provision in these schemes which is now in place. We also actively participated in the government's deregulation review and have led the trade union movement's resistance to the review's proposals to reduce members' pension security.

Motion 70 – National Insurance Buy Back

As with Motions 68, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We also joined with the EOC and others to promote and support amendments to the Pension Bill to facilitate greater NI buy back with some success.

Motion 75 – Pension Loss Compensation

As with Motion 68, 70, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. In addition we have worked with DWP and improved the benefits provided by the Financial Assistance Scheme and Pension Protection Fund. GMB led the campaign to secure ill health provision in these schemes which is now in place. We have also been working with the department to extend the coverage of the Financial Assistance Scheme to other schemes where compromise agreements were signed. Progress on this is expected in 2009.

Motion 71 – Tax Rates

The parameters of taxation and tax rates changed soon after the motion was written. However, GMB has continued to support a more equitable tax and tax relief system and maintains strong opposition to the continuation of means testing for pension benefits. As outlined for Motion 68, GMB continues to make every effort to improve state pension provision in the UK.

Motion 77 – Consultation & Member Involvement

As with Motion 68, 70, 71, 75, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We have also had discussions with DWP on improving the consultation legislation. As an outstanding pledge from the first Warwick Agreement, GMB has continued to pressure the government on the issue of increased member involvement in the governance of their occupational pension schemes. Progress on this in the private sector is expected in 2009. In public sector schemes GMB is in discussion with sponsoring government departments about improving the transparency and engagement of these schemes with their members.

Motion 72 – Women's Pension Reform

Reforms advocated by GMB would improve pension provision for women workers and carers. GMB has also produced significant amounts of guidance for members that is intended to increase awareness of pension issues. The Pension Department has also embarked on a programme of work in conjunction with the National Equalities Officer to progress this motion further.

Motion 73 – Fixed Retirement Ages

GMB has continued to oppose the default retirement age adopted by the UK government. The case taken to the ECJ by Heyday was unsuccessful in invalidating this part of the age discrimination regulations so GMB has continued to lobby employers on a case by case basis to remove compulsory retirements where they still exist. A major achievement was the successful removal of the default retirement age throughout the Civil Service in October. We restated our arguments against the default retirement age in our response to the Welfare Reform Bill and will continue to instigate and support moves to remove this regulation.

Industrial Issues

GMB's Pension Department continues to support industrial negotiations throughout the union on pension issues that arise in the workplace. As in previous years, the trend has generally been one of worsening provision and declining occupational pension provision. However, in many cases we have been able to reduce the cuts proposed by employers and ensure greater security for members' retirements.

Commercial Services

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations in the following companies in 2008: ASDA, BMA, Centrica, DHL, G4S, Jersey Mail, Magnox, National Grid, NUJ, Wincanton.

Also in 2008, OFGEM published a range of detrimental proposals to the energy distribution sector's pension arrangements. The department responded to OFGEM's public consultation and presented GMB's concerns at the OFGEM seminar held as part of the consultation process. We have produced briefing material for members and MPs and have worked with the CS section on the campaign to ensure OFGEM's proposals are not taken forward.

Manufacturing

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations in the following companies in 2008: Akzo Nobel, Castle Cement, Harrison & Harrison, Isleburn, Pilkington Glass, Remploy, Shorts, Stag Furniture, United Biscuits, Weinerberger.

Public Services

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations with the following employers in 2008: Civil Service, Environment Agency, HE sector, Legal Services Commission, Local Government Pension Scheme (England & Wales), NHS, The Rent Service.

As in previous years the department has been heavily involved in negotiations on reforms of the main public sector pensions. The new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England & Wales was introduced in April covering more than two million members. The department produced a new GMB Guide to the scheme and was involved in resolving implementation issues with a number of the employers involved in the scheme.

In addition, since the introduction of the new scheme the department has been heavily involved in discussions with CLG and employers on ill health provisions, outsourcing and two tier code issues, governance and management of the scheme's funds, scheme sustainability and redundancy provisions. In August we issued Freedom of Information requests to 93 administering authorities of the LGPS in England & Wales to gain data on their use of the new ill health procedures. We received 77 replies covering over 1.5m active LGPS members.

In the NHS, GMB has continued to participate in the Technical Advisory Group which advises the Governance Group, responsible for overseeing the running of the NHS Pension Scheme. The Technical Advisory Group's initial focus in 2008 was on the implementation of the New NHS Pension Scheme for new joiners from 1 April 2008 and the revised NHS Pension Scheme for existing members. The latter part of the year saw attentions turned to the implementation of the Choice exercise whereby existing members will be given the opportunity to join the new NHS Pension Scheme. Discussions have focussed on delivery of the Choice exercise and what terms should be offered so that choosing to join the new scheme is an attractive option to members but will not produce excess costs to the pension scheme. It is anticipated that the Choice exercise will commence in summer 2009.

The department has been involved throughout the year with the Civil Service scheme, working with the other unions in the Council of Civil Service Unions on a number of reform issues that have arisen relating primarily to age discrimination.

The Higher Education sector saw a review of pension arrangements across the sector being carried out by external consultants. GMB's position remains that we will fight any attacks on the defined benefit nature of these schemes and strive to achieve parity in pension provision across the sector and improved representation for GMB members in their pensions schemes.

The department has also been involved with the pension implications of reorganisations and redundancies in The Rent Service and Legal Services Commission.

Regional

The Pensions Department has also participated in or assisted negotiations at regional level in the following companies in 2008: Aesculap, Aga, Alitalia, Amcor Flexibles, Aquascutum, BAe, Bayer Cropscience, Becker, Bennett Safetyware, Bison Bede, Cargill, Chapmans Agriculture, Ford, Gala Casinos, Chivas Bros, CIBA, Cleveland Potash, HiFlex, Hoval, IKO, Inbev, Indesit, Liebherr, Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland), Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland), Luxfer, Minemorkers, Norbert Detressangle, Northgate, Oxsiris, P&O, Protega, Salt Union, Silvergate Plastics, Trillion, Urenco, Veolia, Viasystems.

Policy

- In addition to the work outlined above progressing specific GMB Congress motions, the department has been heavily involved with the DWP and The Pension Regulator on a number of issues:
- GMB has led the discussions with government and other stakeholders developing employer compliance safeguards in the context of the new Personal Accounts framework that is to be introduced in 2012.
- We have also been working with The Pension Regulator on improving the communication and governance practices of defined contribution schemes.
- GMB has resisted, so far successfully, the watering down of regulations that protect members' benefits as a result of the Deregulation Review published at the end of 2007. Discussions continue on issues of risk sharing, Section 75, surplus and statutory override.
- One outstanding commitment from Warwick I is progress towards having 50% member nominated trustees on pension trustee boards. We continue to press government for reform in this area and expect a statutory consultation on the issue to be launched early in 2009.
- The second outstanding issue is collective bargaining on pensions. Despite maintaining pressure on BERR to move on this issue, progress remains limited. BERR have conducted some research on the subject but are currently reluctant to abide by the spirit of the Warwick agreement in this area.
- As the Pensions Bill 2008 progressed through the Parliamentary process we have regularly briefed GMB MPs and Lords on our reform priorities. GMB successfully had terminal ill health provision incorporated into the Pension Protection Fund's provisions in July. Further GMB supported amendments on National Insurance buy-back and employer compliance have also been incorporated in the Bill that currently awaits Royal Assent.
- We submitted a raft of amendments to the National Policy Forum (Warwick II) and participated in a number of meetings with the Labour Party seeking to progress these points.

The department works directly with government on these and other relevant issues. In 2008 we had regular meetings with the Secretaries of State and Pensions Ministers at the DWP and also with senior civil servants in The Pensions Regulator, Pension Protection Fund, Financial Assistance Scheme, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Department of Health and Cabinet Office totally 59 meetings. In addition, the department formally responded to more than 20 government consultations in 2008 (copies of all these responses are published on the GMB website).

Casework

The Pensions Department continues to advise on, and manage, a very large number of cases and queries originating from all nine Regions. In 2008 we received over 300 new cases of which approximately 60% related to individual member queries or problems and 40% related to industrial matters. Replies to more than 90% of these cases are sent within one week of receipt.

In all cases, the Department acts in support of full time officers and will advise or take on casework as appropriate. As such, individual and industrial cases should be submitted from a regional officer in the first instance. The Department will keep regional officers advised on case progress at all times. Some members do contact the Department directly and in such instances we deal with these members fairly, but do advise them that their first point of contact should be their regional officer.

We deal with pension cases on all pension schemes operating in the UK: occupational, state, personal and stakeholder schemes. The cases worked on within the Pensions Department can be exceptionally complex and frequently involve Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures, the Pensions Regulator, Pensions Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman, and/or the Financial Services Authority.

Some of the more complex cases, particularly those concerning individual pension rights can take a significant length of time to resolve, particularly when ill health pensions are being disputed and medical evidence is required. The Department recognises the anxiety that uncertainty and grievances relating to pensions can cause and aims to deal

with all individual queries in an efficient and sensitive manner. In particular we have noticed a marked increase in the length of time it is taking the Pensions Ombudsman's office to investigate and make determinations on pension disputes. However the Ombudsman's office remains the main arbitration point for pension disputes and we have had to exercise and encourage patience when faced with lengthy delays.

In the more complex cases, the Department will recommend that regions or industrial sections will benefit from legal advice and we have good working relationships with solicitors who specialise in pension matters.

Communications

GMB has continued to raise the profile of industrial and policy pensions issues in the press and among members. In addition to a number of press releases the pension department also produced numerous member bulletins on a range of subjects as well as four/five Pension Q&As. We also launched a GMB Guide to the new Local Government Pension Scheme in 2008 and so far more than 16,000 copies have been distributed. The pensions handbook, "Pensions – GMB Putting You in the Picture" has continued to be distributed to members through their Regions and in addition to the hard copy, 2,000 disc versions have been distributed to the Regions that requested them.

The Pensions Department's webpage on the GMB National website continues to be used extensively to communicate our work. All general member communications, including our pensions guides, are posted here as well as many industrial and policy bulletins. There were over 50 news items added to the webpage in 2008. We have also added a checklist for members approaching retirement which gives useful information about benefits and age discrimination. A page of useful links to pension legislation and details of external pensions information has also been set up. The Department continues to run the Public Sector Pensions Campaign webpage.

In 2008, GMB began working with our colleagues in other trade unions on a joint venture known as Capital Stewardship. This project is focussed on increasing the profile of responsible investment issues and how pension funds, through their investments, can be used to shape the practices of publicly owned companies. A Capital Stewards website has been set up to provide high-level information to interested members and also to provide a forum for discussion of investment and general pensions issues.

Communications with members of our Member Nominated Trustee network continued in 2008. In the early part of the year a survey of network members was conducted which showed that there was significant support for moving this network towards being an electronic community with information provided via e-mail and the Capital Stewards website being a focal point for information and discussion. Those who did not elect to change to receiving electronic communications continue to receive regular mailshots from Pensions Department.

In 2008 a network of Regional Pension Officers was set up to facilitate communication and consultation between Regions and the Pensions Department at National Office. The first meeting was held in November with all regions represented.

Co-operation with External Organisations

GMB Pensions Department continues to work with other organisations where appropriate to promote GMB's agenda. This year we represented GMB at a number of public and industry events held by: Institute of Directors, Pensions Policy Institute, National Pensioners' Convention, UNISON, NAPF, The Pensions Regulator, Committee on Workers Capital, TUC, Swiss Re and OFGEM.

The joint GMB-T&G Local Government Pension Conference was held in Eastbourne in November providing a valuable opportunity for 100 delegates to discuss and learn about the provisions of the new Local Government Pension Scheme. Speakers at the conference included representatives from the Local Government Employers' Organisation and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

We also hold seats on a number of committees on behalf of GMB (or TUC), these include: The Pensions Regulator Advisory Panel, LGPS Policy Review Group, LGPS III Health Monitoring Group, TUC Capital Stewardship Steering Committee, NHS Technical Advisory Group, NHS Governance Group, CCSU Pension Reforms Group, Deregulation Review Body and FAS Stakeholders' Committee.

Training

The Pensions Department has continued to provide and expand the pensions training programme. Eight GMB Regions have now received the officer training course, which is a one day course that is normally run out of Regional Office. London Region Officers received the course in October 2008. The national Advanced Pension Course was hosted by GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Region in August 2009. This was a 5 day course and was invaluable for the trustees and those requiring advanced pensions knowledge. The Department has continued to develop the member training programme. Every Region was given the opportunity to have a course delivered in the Region in 2008. This is predominantly a two day introductory pension course and four courses were run in 2008. One scheme specific course is run every year and the national reps from Centrica had a two day pensions course hosted by GMB Midland & East Coast Region in January 2008.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

The Political Department has had a very productive year and has benefited greatly from having three political officers in addition to support staff. GMB's profile in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the wider trade union movement has substantially increased and is continuing to grow.

1. Actions Taken on Motions Carried in Congress 2008

Emergency Motion 1, Motions 4, 52, 56, 65, 103, 120, 131, 160, 163, 192, 194, 202, 213, 214 and 215, Composites 4 and 11. With regards to these motions, the Political Department submitted responses to the Labour Party's consultation process – Partnership in Power and took policies forward through the Labour Party's National Policy Forum at Warwick. A number were fully accepted, some were accepted following negotiated amendments and some were not accepted.

Motion 61, 62, & Composite 1. GMB have now organised two lobbies of Parliament in 2008 with 30 MPs attending and many other parliamentary activities have taken place. GMB's campaign has focused on overturning the Law Lords decision to stop paying compensation to those with Pleural Plaques.

Motion 127, 128 & 129. GMB has raised this issue at the Labour Party's NEC. A report on funding is underway and we await the results which are due shortly.

Motion 130. GMB has consistently lobbied the Government to implement stronger employment legislation through the TUC, Labour Party and through Parliament.

Motion 132. The Political Department in consultation with GMB Regions continually monitor GMB MPs to ensure they support the GMB's policies and agenda.

Motion 135. A press release was issued raising GMB concerns over MPs office allowances and there is currently a debate in Parliament on how to open up and make MPs expenses more transparent.

Motion 140. Up to date equipment for personnel serving in the armed forces is an issue which has been both debated and put forward by questions to the minister responsible in Parliament.

Motion 150. By 2010 there will be 3,500 sure start children's centres. There were no sure start centres in 1997. Since 1997 spending pre pupil has almost doubled in real terms from less than £2,900 to over £5,400.

Motion 154. The Political Department wrote to the Secretary of State to lobby for First Aid to be taught in schools. A review on the issue is currently ongoing and results are expected in April 2009.

Motion 157. The UCU reached an agreement with Keele University over the dispute.

Motion 161. A carers' campaign is due to be launched in early 2009. It aims to mobilize MPs through a parliamentary meeting hosted by the National Officer to pursue GMB's care agenda, which is focused on supporting and valuing carers.

Motion 162. Letters have been sent to the health ministers in the four nations regarding the current level of funding and any proposals to increase the funding available for both children and adult hospices.

Motion 164. GMB has raised this issue with government on numerous occasions. GMB have made representations to government in particular with reference to cancer sufferers for the abolition of prescription charges.

Motion 167. In January 2009 Gordon Brown voiced his support for presumed consent and is considering changing the law. The GMB will feed into this debate and raise the awareness of the importance of implementing presumed consent.

Motion 171 & Composite 12. GMB continues to have discussions with Government.

Motion 172. GMB works closely with the FBU in supporting this campaign along with other trade unions and also through the TUC. GMB has campaigned on this issue through TUC.

Motion 173. As per request of this motion GMB supported the RMT motion at TUC Congress and in fact seconded it. The motion was passed and GMB spoke in favour of it.

Motion 174 & 175. GMB has held various regulators to account. Ofgem has been held to account at Labour Party Conference over energy prices and by a campaign to prevent them from attacking energy sector pension schemes.

Motion 179. GMB continue to be involved in the Defend Council Housing campaign. Three Labour Party conferences have backed the fourth option and the council housing group of MPs have submitted EDM which the GMB have supported.

Motion 185. GMB has fought and won the argument for a third runway at Heathrow airport. The campaign focused on Heathrow being part of an integrated transport system in the UK.

Motion 186. Brake has been contacted by letter to ascertain the latest research in various topics highlighted. Depending on the results this will potentially form the basis of any campaign.

Motion 187. This issue will be highlighted to the GMB Councillor network for their consideration.

Motion 191. The issues have been raised through the Health Partnership Forums by the National Officer.

Motion 216. GMB are currently working closely with our sex workers branch in formulating responses and policy development in relation to the Policing and Crimes Bill, currently passing through Parliament.

Motion 217. Legal advice has now been taken and it is not possible to pursue this motion.

Composite 6. This issue has been raised with Labour MPs and with delegates to the NEC.

Composite 7. GMB has written to the secretary of state requesting that the government compulsory include trade union history and activities in the national education curriculum.

Composite 8. The Warwick agreement stated that there would be rights to request time off for training and that a Labour Government will introduce a right to request time for training covering over 20 million workers.

Composite 9. This is an issue GMB continues to take forward in discussions with politicians.

Composite 10. GMB opposes the Government's current proposals on welfare and benefits. A full response to the consultation was submitted.

2. Labour Party

Our two delegates – Mary Turner and Debbie Coulter - to the NEC have continued to play a crucial and central role in holding the Labour Party and Prime Minister to account. Issues raised during the past year include Remploy, funding caps for internal elections and temporary/agency workers.

The Political Department presented substantial contributions to the Labour Party's consultation process – Partnership in Power. The Department coordinated, reviewed, edited and wrote the response in-conjunction with most National Sections and Departments. A response was submitted to all six policy documents.

2008 marked the second Warwick Conference which was meant to provide the key manifesto policies for the next general election. As the next General Election is not expected to 2010 further discussions will take place to determine further policies to strengthen the campaign for a fourth term of office for the Labour Party. The July 2008 Conference therefore was not an end to the trade union's negotiations to improve the rights of workers in the UK. However, key policies agreed included:

- Free school meal trials in key areas of the UK,
- National minimum wage will be extended to 21 year olds,
- Sector forums will be established for areas of the economy employing low paid workers, e.g. for the hospitality and betting sectors.
- An increase in public procurement for Remploy to protect the remaining factories.

3. Labour Party Conference

GMB played a substantial and key role at Labour Party Conference 2008. The union submitted a contemporary issue on the current energy crisis and the failure of Ofgem to regulate the energy market. This proved very popular and many Constituency Labour Party's supported GMB's stance.

We rejected the Party's report on Remploy – the Contemporary Resolution submitted in 2007 – because it did not address our concerns regarding the future of the Remploy factories.

The Political Department also ran three fringe meetings on: equal pay, energy crisis and Remploy.

4. Campaigning/Lobbying

Pleural Plaques

The Department, alongside the Health and Safety Department, has campaigned tirelessly to ensure GMB members, who have contracted Pleural Plaques and whose payments were taken away by the recent decision by the Law Lords, are compensated and the decision reversed.

In October 2008 the Political Department organised a lobby of Parliament. The lobby was attended by over 250 people and more than 30 MPs. The Department has also organised various meetings with MPs who have submitted Early Day Motions on Pleural Plaques, and has been involved in the tabling of a Private Members Bill submitted to Parliament by Andrew Dismore MP – a GMB MP.

Temporary Agency Workers

The Political Department campaigned on a Bill focusing on temporary agency workers' rights tabled by Andrew Miller. The Bill passed its second reading but was then withdrawn in favour of a tripartite agreement between the Government, TUC and CBI.

This agreement ensured equal treatment between agency workers and those working directly for an employer. This is a significant win for the trade union movement and GMB was at the heart of mobilizing MPs to support the campaign which ultimately resulted in the Government backing down and agreeing to temporary agency workers' rights in the UK.

Professional Drivers Branch

The Political Department has continued to give support to the Professional Drivers Branch. In 2008 a Parliamentary event was organised where nine MPs attended to highlight the issue of driver safety. Meetings with civil servants were also co-ordinated to discuss the same issue. The Department is currently organising a meeting with Ministers to discuss a change in the licensing of private hire drivers.

CLP Affiliations

During 2008 GMB at a national level affiliated to every Constituency Labour Party (CLP) in the UK. This is in addition to the affiliations that individual Regions and Branches have already established with various CLPs up and down the country.

Lists of target constituencies have now been drawn up in preparation for the next General Election. GMB branches within these target seats have been affiliated to the constituency, although in many cases branches were already affiliated to CLPs. Branch secretaries were also asked to nominate a delegate where appropriate.

All members within the constituencies will now be written to and the material has been prepared. The overall aim is to regenerate the Labour Party and to build the campaign to win the next General Election, along with bringing GMB's policies to the heart of the Labour Party through the CLPs.

Anti-BNP

GMB policy has been at the forefront of the anti fascist and anti racist campaigns nationally and indeed locally. The work GMB has done recently in training GMB activists and officers in Regions, where the BNP are active, means that we are in a good position to mount a positive campaign against the racist and fascist threat of the BNP wherever it emerges.

Although the election of a BNP candidate in the London Assembly elections was undoubtedly a setback, GMB can be proud of the campaign we ran. The Department made sure that the BNP threat was campaigned against through leafleting, telephone and street canvassing, and other campaigning strategies.

Through meetings held with GMB Regions, the Department has emphasized the need to be vigilante against the BNP. It is crucial to ensure our members understand the threat to which they pose.

The Political Department is continuing to campaign against the BNP to ensure they do not win their first ever seat in the European Parliament in the 2009 elections. We will be working in conjunction with Searchlight and other trade unions to counter the BNP threat. Should the BNP win in this election it could emerge as the fourth political party in Britain – something that must be prevented. The Department has asked Regions to campaign against the BNP by:

- Organising day schools solely on the BNP threat;
- Training days for reps and officers - if required;
- Working closely with GMB regional MPs and MEPs;
- Linking up with universities, colleges and schools;
- Publishing pieces in regional journals to inform members of the BNP threat and most importantly go out and use their vote; and
- Organising GMB activists through email and the internet.

Gangmaster Licensing Authority - GLA

The GLA was set up to protect workers from exploitation in the agriculture, horticulture and shellfish sectors, along with the food processing and packaging sector. The GLA operates a licensing scheme for persons acting as gangmasters working in these sectors.

GMB sits alongside other trade unions, the TUC and employer representatives on both the board of the GLA and the GLA workers representation group.

In the last year the GLA has licensed 1134 gangmasters, although 52 have been refused a license, 77 have had their license revoked and 31 appeals have been won and 2 lost.

GMB would like to see some of the other Government enforcement agencies with as much teeth and trade union involvement as the GLA.

Regional Political Events

Various political events have been organised by the Political Department. Both Birmingham and Southern Regions attended Parliament where various presentations and discussions were made by politicians and special advisers.

In additions members of the Political Department have travelled to various Regions to give speeches and presentations to highlight the GMB's political agenda and to encourage GMB members to become active in the Labour Party's campaigns.

5. GMB MPs

We have continued to work with those Members of Parliament who are GMB members. Many individual meetings and briefings have taken place on a wide cross section of issues. The support we have had has been very positive in delivering for our members and sections. GMB continues at a Regional and National level to monitor the support we receive from our MPs. This as per previous congress motions this will be used in assessing support going forward.

6. Parliamentary Panel

There have been six rounds of interviews for the GMB Parliamentary Panel. 38 people have been successful and have been put forward to the Labour Party Parliamentary Panel. Many GMB candidates have been successful in both Parliamentary and European selections. They include selections for:

- Swansea West
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Bristol North West
- Brentwood and Ongar
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Guildford
- Kettering
- Sunderland Central
- Rochdale
- Wolverhampton
- Europe – London Regional List
- Europe – North West Regional List
- Europe – East Midlands Regional List

7. Government

Over the last year, regular meetings have been arranged with Government Ministers and Departments. These have ranged from meetings with Ministers and the General Secretary to National Officers, Regional Officers, Branch Officers and members. The list below highlights meetings with Cabinet level Ministers:

Gordon Brown	Prime Minister
Ed Balls	Secretary of State for Children, Schools & Families
Yvette Cooper	Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Jack Straw	Secretary of State for Justice
Jim Murphy	Secretary of State - Scotland
Hazel Blears	Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Alan Johnson	Secretary of State for Health
Lord Mandelson	Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform
James Purnell	Secretary of State – Work & Pensions
Nick Brown	Chief Whip
Liam Byrne	Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster
Ed Milliband	Secretary of State – Energy and Climate Change
David Miliband	Secretary of State – Foreign Office
Geoff Hoon	Secretary of State – Transport
Harriet Harman	Minister for Women & Equalities
John Denham	Secretary of State – Innovation and Skills

Many other meetings have taken place with civil servants and junior ministers. These are often more fruitful in delivering results for GMB members.

8. European Elections

The European elections are due to take place on 4th June 2009. The Political Department is supporting 5 GMB MEPs along with 5 candidates in the elections.

Eight leaflets have been designed for the following candidates:

North East	Stephen Hughes MEP
Scotland	David Martin MEP
North West	Brian Simpson MEP & Steve Carter
East Midland	Glenis Willmott MEP & Roy Kennedy
London	Anne Fairweather & Raj Jethwa
Wales	Lisa Stevens
Yorkshire & the Humber	Richard Corbett MEP
West Midlands	Michael Cashman MEP & Neena Gill MEP

240,000 leaflets have been produced nationally for distribution in the regions. In addition, a generic leaflet has been designed for Regions who wish to print further leaflets to increase voter turnout at the elections.

Furthermore, the GMB strategy will also include publicising the campaign through the GMB website and through the internal magazines. The Department will also increase voter contact through telephone canvassing, automated calling, and direct mails to post holders and through GMB members living in target constituencies.

9. Regional Political Officers

There have been a number of meetings throughout the year with the Regional Political Officers to exchange information and co-ordinate political work. This has continued to allow the sharing of best practice and highlight Regional experiences and approaches.

The Regional Political Officers are:

Paul Maloney	Southern
Justin Bowden	London
Pamela Drake	South Western
Martin Hird	Birmingham & West Midlands
Les Dobbs	Midland & East Coast
Steve Jennings	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire
Cheryl Pidgeon	North West & Irish
Julie Elliott	Northern
Richard Leonard	Scotland

10. Early Day Motions

The following Early Day Motions were circulated to MPs with requests for support:

EDM 669	STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY
EDM 489	OFGEM
EDM 157	SOUTHERN CROSS ELDERLY RESIDENT HOMES IN HILLINGDON
EDM 2168	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF AVIATION
EDM 815	ASBESTOSIS PLEURAL PLAQUES
EDM 693	BLACK, MINORITY ETHNIC AND REFUGEE WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
EDM 1099	GAZA
EDM 658	CENTENARY OF THE STATE PENSION
EDM 809	FUTURE OF REMPLOY
EDM 1171	BRITISH GAS PENSIONS
EDM 1374	DRIVER SAFETY
EDM 1382	ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY
EDM1405	EUROPEAN UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA
EDM 1438	TRADE UNION CASE FOR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES
EDM 1534	PENSION (S.1., 2008, No. 1083)
EDM 1609	TREATMENT OF ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS
EDM 1758	HUGO CHÁVEZ, FARC AND THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA
EDM 443	KAREN REISSMANN AND MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST
EDM 1604	TRADES UNION FREEDOM BILL CAMPAIGN
EDM 1910	ENERGY INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
EDM 1931	FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN YEMEN
EDM 2046	PRIVATE EQUITY
EDM 2313	GMB CAMPAIGN ON PLEURAL PLAQUES
EDM 2349	MR DAVID PUGH AND THE ECLIPSE PROCLAIM PERSONAL INJURY AWARDS 2008
EDM 247	STATE RETIREMENT PENSION
EDM 408	GAZA
EDM 500	CREDIT INSURANCE AND THE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
EDM 677	LABOUR STANDARDS, EMPLOYMENT AND THE EU

APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 JANUARY 2008 – 31 DECEMBER 2008

**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER** - Ed Blissett

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
South Western Region - Mark Stevens

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS
Midland & East Coast Region - Les Dobbs
Northern Region - Terry Scarr

ELECTION OF ORGANISERS
Southern Region - Tony Dowling
- Andy Prendergast

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISING OFFICERS
London Region - Vince Maple
- Darren Parmenter
Midland & East Coast Region - Tim Clements
- Pat Hardy
- Rachelle Wilkins
Northern Region - Gail Johnson
- Ian McKenzie
- Suzanne Reid
South Western Region - Ruth Bennett
- Jill Richards

GOLD BADGE AND YOUTH AWARDS 2008

Men's Gold Badge

The GMB Men's Gold Badge recipient in 2008 was Alistair McLean (London Region).

Women's Gold Badge

The GMB Women's Gold Badge recipient in 2008 was Audrey Harry MBE (Midland & East Coast Region). Audrey was nominated for the TUC Women's Award 2008.

Award for Youth

No nominations were received in 2008

The Central Executive Council, at its 21 October 2008 meeting, agreed that Gold Badge and Youth Awards will no longer be presented and instead from Congress 2009 each Region will select their own award winner for an achievement of the Regions' choosing. Each Regional recipient will receive a standard award which will be presented during Congress. The CEC will select from these nine Regional award winners who should go forward for the TUC Congress awards.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

Commercial Services Section National Committee

Kevin Flanagan	-	North West & Irish Region (Section President)
Brian Adams	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
David Clements	-	Southern Region
Kevin Crummey	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Elaine Daley	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Roy Dunnett	-	London Region
Gwyn Evans	-	South Western Region
Jean Foster	-	Southern Region
Peter Kane	-	Northern Region
Kath Manning	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Catherine Murphy	-	GMB Scotland
Benjamin Rankin	-	GMB Scotland
Malcolm Sage	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Lena Sharp	-	London Region

Commercial Services Section National Officials

Gary Smith	-	National Secretary
Jude Brimble	-	National Officer
Mick Rix	-	National Officer

Introduction

Since last year's Congress we have continued to take great strides in developing the Commercial Services Section.

The Commercial Services Section Conference, held in Plymouth in June 2008, was very successful and the feedback from delegates was positive. The Section Committee have taken on board delegates' views and will use these as guidance for organising future Section Conferences. In attendance were 83 Delegates, 16 National Committee Members, 11 Regional Officers and a large number of visitors to the Conference. There were wide ranging debates about industrial issues across the Section and speakers included Alan Johnson - Head of the British Gas Services People Academy, who talked about the British Gas Apprentice Programme; Adrian Bull from Westinghouse talking about opportunities for the UK Supply Chain around Nuclear New Build and Joanna Lucyszyn - GMB Southern Region, a Polish GMB activist who spoke about the challenges confronting migrant workers. There were also presentations to the Conference on Blogging and Company Surveillance at Work by Tom Jones - Thompsons Solicitors and Kerri Harding - Section Administrator. Other speakers to the conference included Kamaljeet Jandu - GMB National Equality & Inclusion Officer; Dan Shears - Research & Policy Officer, Health and Safety Department; and Keith Williams - National Organising Department.

Conference also enjoyed the thought-provoking music and dramatic presentation by the Banner Theatre Group.

The Officers and Staff in the Commercial Services Section have been working to a plan agreed by the Section National Committee. The focus remains on growing the Section, building Shop Steward Organisation and campaigning on issues important to our members.

Security Industry

The security industry still remains a high priority for GMB. There is massive potential for membership growth. In the Guarding side of Security a lot of progress has been made in developing Shop Steward structures and industrial relations machinery. This is particularly true in G4S Security.

G4S Security Services

G4S Security Services is enormously complex and diverse, the largest sector of G4S, currently employing some 18,000 security officers across eight divisions, made up of thousands of contracts. The workforce are spread across 5,800 sites. There are real challenges in terms of organising and representing such a disparate group of workers. In the Section we have consistently focused on the representative structures for members. We have learnt from past errors where we have grown the membership but failed to adequately develop the Shop Stewards structures. At the time of writing 13 collective bargaining committees have been established within this division of G4S, with a further four under discussion, which will ensure that GMB members have full collective bargaining rights in every sector of Security Services. The long fought for National Health and Safety Committee is also now actively up and running. The network of shop stewards continues to grow, and we are now represented in every division of Security Services within G4S. The NOT team are also supporting the organising agenda with a GMB@Work course planned for March, aimed at 30 senior reps. This is critical work if we are to secure sustainable growth and develop an organising culture on the ground. The development of the negotiating machinery and the dedication of shop stewards means that progress is now finally being made in delivering improvements on pay and conditions (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS12 and CS16).

In the Aviation Division a new national sick pay scheme has been secured. Work is set to start in March on negotiating the introduction of a sick pay scheme for the wider Security Services Division.

Pay negotiations have taken place covering various Strategic Accounts, Regional Accounts, Monitoring and Response. In some cases this is the first time that "real" negotiations have taken place. Pay deals in the main have been based on two year deals, and have ranged from 2% to 3% for 2009 and 2% to 2.75% for 2010. All pay negotiations have also focused on underpinning to address low pay.

At the time of writing, facilities had been secured for shop stewards to conduct work place ballots at over 600 sites, giving direct access to recruit new members over a three week period. Shop stewards will also be undertaking a detailed mapping exercise. A lot of work is also being done to ensure our membership information is as accurate as possible.

Within the industry we continue to see consolidation. In 2008 G4S acquired GSL, where we also have recognition. This is important as GSL now make up 80% of the G4S Division, dealing with Criminal Justice and Immigration. GMB is now the lead union in a division we have traditionally not been recognised in.

G4S Aviation

G4S Aviation Services have been hit hard as a result of the contraction of the aviation industry and economic downturn. As a consequence we have seen a several significant contracts being lost and the workforce involved in resultant TUPE transfers. A number of airports have also been hit by redundancies as clients reduce their security requirements. November 2008 saw significant financial losses in this division of G4S and as a result the business has now been transferred into Security Services. We are currently working hard to safeguard recent advances in terms and conditions within the new structure. Job security remains a high priority.

GSL / G4S

Pay negotiations within GSL private prisons resulted in a three year deal consisting of 5% in 2009, 4% in 2010 and 3% in 2011. In GSL court Services 4.3% was achieved on a one year deal. At the time of writing, negotiations for GSL Inter-Prison Transport were about to begin. G4S Care and Justice Division are clearly seeking to expand their footprint in the criminal justice sector as well as immigration detention.

In line with Congress policy, we have also been campaigning on the issue of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice Act. An amendment to the Labour Party policy document on Crime and Justice was submitted prior to the 2008 National Policy Forum (Warwick 2). Our submission called for the repeal of Section 127. As a result of our position there has now been a series of meetings with the Justice Secretary and Special Advisors. This dialogue is ongoing.

We have also had meetings with the POA in relation to a complaint to the International Labour Organisation on Section 127. The complaint argues that the legislation effectively denies our members the right to take industrial action without there being adequate compensatory mechanism in place to protect workers interests.

Aside from the work on Section 127, we have now given an increased focus on strengthening our organisation across the Criminal Justice Sector. The Government has well developed plans to build three large Prisons. Discussions have taken place with the Industry and Government to ensure that there is proper independent Trade Union recognition within any new privately run prisons (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS13). We have made very forcible representations about employers constructing sweetheart arrangements with Unions which are actually "company supported". The Union is also in early discussions with the Home Office, seeking to establish a national tripartite body to cover private prisons which if achieved will place GMB at the heart of this growing sector.

Securitas

In Securitas we have had difficult negotiations over the Company seeking to recoup the cost of license fees from Security Officers. The Union has vigorously resisted the Company trying to get their employees to pay for licences. If we had let them get away with it this would have set a dangerous precedent for whole industry. At the time of writing we are optimistic there will be a successful outcome to these negotiations. Agreement in principal has been achieved to get the national and local negotiating machinery in place by early summer. This will enable us to focus on the industrial and organising agenda in a company where there is still a potential for 3,500 members.

Licensing and SIA

The issue of security industry licensing has continued to present a challenge. On 6th November 2008, the Chief Executive of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) stood down. An interim Chief Executive is currently in place. A major security company (Securiplan) was found guilty on 7th November of employing unlicensed guards, including criminals, and has lost £36 million pounds worth of contracts as a result.

The shortcomings of the SIA and the significant problems with the licensing system were referred to in the Securiplan court case. GMB has met with representatives of the SIA and will renew our efforts in the light of this further evidence of the organisation's failures. It is clear that political pressure will continue to be placed on the Government to address the problems associated with the SIA, and GMB will ensure that our members voice is heard (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CSEM1, CS13, CS14 and CS15).

Skills For Security

We have been heavily involved in Skills for Security and the development of qualifications for security workers. This work has focused on increasing the skills of our membership in the security sector. Very importantly, it seems that in the future there may be an increased link between training and licensing. GMB have strongly argued to ensure that whilst training opportunities exist, they must not become a barrier to achieving licenses, so putting put jobs at risk.

Cash and Valuables in Transit

GMB continues to lead this high profile campaign about attacks on members in the CVIT Sector (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS9 and CS10). The overall level of attacks remains too high but, as a direct result of our campaign and the political pressure brought to bear on police forces, in some of the

high attack areas we have seen a improvement in the levels of attacks. Our fear is that attacks will rise again in a period of economic down turn. Since the last Congress we have had activists go to Brussels to do a presentation to a European Commission event on Violence at Work. We continue to participate in the Home Office round tables meetings, which are chaired by the Minister, as part of the strategy to deal with attacks.

GMB has been making representations on parking restrictions for CVIT vehicles. As a result of our work the Home Office Minister and the Transport Minister have written to every local authority reminding them of their obligations relating to parking for CVIT Vehicles. We have backed the ministerial advice up with letters for council chief executives and leaders (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS9 and CS10).

A further successful CVIT Conference was held on 27th and 28th January 2009. This was attended by 70 delegates, senior police officers, industrial speakers and the new Under Secretary of State from the Home Office, Allan Campbell, MP.

Very significantly, since the last Congress, the first compensation/welfare scheme for members injured in CVIT attacks was launched in G4S. This is a joint GMB /G4S initiative. The original plans for funding the scheme were devised by Senior Shop Stewards within G4S. By the time we meet at Congress we should have over £1m in the jointly managed fund. Injured members have already benefited from payments. We hope that we will be able to roll this model out across the industry.

i. G4S Cash Services

We have secured a new recognition agreement in Cash Centres; the agreement covers around 900 employees. All Cash Centre staff will benefit for the first time from being part of the negotiations which cover road crews. These negotiations are about to commence. At the time of preparing this report we are in the midst of negotiations for Admin and Clerical Staff in G4S Cash Services.

ii. Loomis

Loomis remains the second largest CVIT Company in the UK. The business environment for Loomis remains very challenging. As a result, there have been job losses and the Company has contracted. We had a very problematic TUPE transfer of Brinks employees following the Loomis acquisition of Brinks. We successfully pursued the arguments on behalf of our members and in the circumstances a positive outcome was achieved.

Complex negotiations have also now been concluded harmonising terms and conditions. This involved getting former Brinks workers onto the higher rates in Loomis.

Loomis employees are still covered by a multi-year pay deal. Given the consolidation in the banks and the effect that the economic downturn is having on the retail sector, this is likely to be a very difficult year for our Loomis members.

iii. Security Plus

Security Plus remains a small family business, employing some six hundred people, whilst growing its business in Scotland and South West. The current economic impact on the retail industry has taken its toll as this is the main focus of their cash in transit work. At the time of writing the Company has implemented a pay freeze across the entire business as a way of avoiding potential job losses. The situation will be reviewed in April. Difficult discussions are currently ongoing to secure access to the workforce to ensure we grow the membership base.

Aviation

In line with commitments to the Section National Committee we organised an Aviation Sector Conference for Stewards and Officers. This attracted the Aviation Minister and the Minister responsible for ID Cards. This brought together Shop Stewards from across the industry to discuss strategic issues.

The Aviation Industry continues to face challenges over environmental issues, consolidation in the industry and also in relation to the economic downturn. Trading conditions in ground handling remain extremely difficult and we are still engaged in a race to the bottom with contractors aggressively competing on price. With increasing regularity, contracts are being lost by companies with Union recognition agreements to those that are hostile to trade union

organisation. This ultimately impacts on pay and conditions for our members. A number of the companies in the Sector have already gone bust and many of our members have been affected by redundancies. At the time of preparing this report we anticipate a number of further announcements about job losses in the industry.

Our campaigns to secure a future for the aviation industry and therefore our members' jobs always need to be sense-checked against our responsibilities on the environment. The Union has supported Future Heathrow in the campaign to ensure that there is a modernisation programme and a third runway at Heathrow airport. However, we have also helped to successfully move the debate over the third runway on, by arguing that it needs to be part of an integrated transport plan including improvements to the rail network servicing the airport and indeed the wider country. GMB supported Government-planned restrictions on noise and clean air protection.

GMB led a high-profile campaign on Aviation Fuel Duty. We organised a successful fringe meeting at the TUC Conference in 2008. This meeting was attended by Ministers for transport and the environment. We have vigorously lobbied GMB MPs and Government over Aviation Fuel Duty. Our work was incredibly successful. Our concern on Aviation Fuel Duty was that it could cripple unionised UK-based long haul carriers whilst actually favouring short haul anti-union operations such as Ryanair. We were also concerned that the initial plans would simply have led to tax avoidance with freight being landed in countries such as France and then being transported to the UK by road. One of our primary considerations in the debate on the Air Passenger Duty was the fact that this could have had a detrimental impact on the construction of the new Airbus aircraft which is the most fuel efficient and noise-friendly available. The Government has, in essence, now effectively adopted the GMB's policy on Aviation Fuel Duty. There is no doubt that our campaign and lobbying has served to protect our members' jobs in aviation. All our work and political campaigning around aviation has hugely heightened the profile of GMB across the sector.

The Union has successfully negotiated a new recognition agreement with Servisair. This new agreement builds on our previous relationship and covers two thousand Servisair employees. We are currently mapping out the Servisair locations to assist our recruitment and organisation work. One of our priorities is to strengthen the Shop Stewards' structure.

In Aviance the Union has been involved in developing new agreements over policies and procedures. The Shop Steward network and membership continues to grow not least because of the high profile campaigning activity around Heathrow.

Within BMI we are involved in difficult negotiations as the Company is reneging on commitments to honour the last year of the three year pay deal. With reductions in the BMI routes there are also redundancies taking place. At the time of writing British Airways has also announced major redundancies as part of a cost-cutting exercise. Our Senior Shop Stewards and officers are involved in tough negotiations to try and minimise the impact of the British Airways restructuring programme.

Freight and Logistics

In line with commitments to the Section National Committee we organised a well attended Logistics, Distribution and Road Transport Shop Stewards Forum. This brought together shop stewards from across the industry to discuss strategic issues. The logistics sector is being hard hit by the recession. Our agreements on security of employment with DHL and Wincanton should provide some protection for our members in these companies during the recession.

DHL

A major mapping exercise of the business is underway. GMB@Work training was undertaken for Senior Shop Stewards. This has not yet fed through into the membership levels. However, with the appointment of many new shop stewards at site level who will also undertake the GMB@Work Training we are confident that progress on membership levels will be made.

Roadchef

The Union has launched a major campaign around Roadchef following the Company's signal that they intended to derecognise us.

Our Campaign has received national publicity. Our organising activity is focusing on sites where we have established shop stewards and a membership base. We have a number of national grievances registered against the Company. Southern Region have legal action in train regarding a TUPE transfer of one of the sites, which was sold to another company.

Private Hire, Chauffeurs and Hackney Carriage Campaign

The National Organising Committee of the Professional Drivers Branches has met on a number of occasions through 2008 and 2009. This is an activist led initiative. At least six Regions are involved in activity and recruitment reports have been received in St Albans, Stevenage, Chichester, Winchester, Burnley, Leeds, Southend-on-Sea, Bracknell, Brighton and Crawley

The General Secretary led an event at the House of Commons on the issue of Driver Safety, amongst the MPs attending was the Minister, Rosie Winterton MP. The Union has been involved in a successful strike in St Albans which included Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. GMB is pursuing action against St Albans City Council via the Local Government Ombudsman. The activists are leading the campaign for CCTV in Private Hire in London. A sick pay scheme has been introduced for professional drivers in the London area. There will be an opportunity to roll this out in due course. The National Officer has made representations to the Transport Minister in relation to the excessive charges now being made on Hackney and Private Hire vehicles on access to ranks at airports and train stations etc. (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS17).

ASDA

i. ASDA Distribution

Since last Congress we have continued to grow the membership in Distribution and to strengthen the shop steward structure. A new recognition agreement was secured at the Teesport site and great credit goes to the activists and officers in the Region for the work that they carried out. At the time of writing we have two more recognition ballots planned. The National Organising Department are supporting us in developing the membership in ASDA Distribution (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS1 and CS2).

In the summer of 2008 Shop Stewards in ASDA Distribution undertook GMB@Work Training. The GMB@Work course had immediate and demonstrable benefits with increases in membership. The activists have recently agreed a new structure for the National Shop Stewards Forum and National Joint Council. Securing these new agreements with the Company represents a significant step forward and it should greatly strengthen our negotiating position at a national level in ASDA Distribution. This should also improve our ability to ensure that individual members are treated with dignity and respect at work (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS5). One particular area where we have challenged the Company is in relation to sickness absence procedures related to Weekly Accident Reviews, or what is known on sites as WAR Committees (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS4). Pay and conditions continue to be negotiated at a local level. The next challenge for us as a trade union is to achieve national collective bargaining across all Distribution sites.

There remains huge pressure on our members in ASDA Distribution over productivity. The retail industry is very competitive and there are always aggressive plans to cut costs. We are currently in discussions with the Company about introducing a scheme which would reward employees where there are improvements in productivity.

The new NJC structure, improved working across the National Shop Stewards and the GMB@Work training leave us better placed than we were in the past to challenge the Company's agenda where it has had a negative effect on our members.

ii. ASDA Stores

The membership in ASDA Stores continues to grow. This continuing trend is thanks to the ongoing hard work of our activists and officers. ASDA stores has been a particular challenging environment for us as a union over the past few years. In 2008 we combined the ASDA Stores Conference with GMB@Work training. Again this led to

a marked improvement in recruitment activity. Our organisational work is well supported by the National Organising Department.

At the time of writing the North West Region is awaiting the outcome of litigation against ASDA over the imposition of Top Rate. The Employment Tribunal case taken by the North West Region has exposed some cynical behaviour on the part of the ASDA Stores Management both in relation to the Trade Union and their imposition of Top Rate. We are at present pursuing arguments with the Company on behalf of Stores members in relation to Equal Value. At the time of compiling this report we believe that there is an argument to compare the relative value of the jobs undertaken in Stores by our members and those undertaken in Distribution.

We have launched a major campaign of trade union rights in stores. The principles of the Campaign are outlined in our Charter for ASDA Stores Workers.

The Union is committed to securing collective bargaining rights and ending discrimination against women workers in ASDA Stores (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS1 and CS2). Health and Safety continues to be a main campaign theme in Distribution and particularly in Stores. For the first time in many years we managed to secure some consultation on the new Colleague Handbook. As part of this consultation we have made strong representations on issues such as health and safety and dignity at work (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS3, CS4 and CS5).

Energy

Energy continues to dominate the headlines. Our members, their families and the industries in which our membership work have been hit hard by soaring energy costs. GMB has continued to press the case that the liberalisation of energy markets has been an absolute failure. Gas has been a key area of focus for our campaigns. We have highlighted market failure in gas, including the impact that speculation in the City has had on driving up prices.

Wider opinion is catching up with our position on energy. It is undeniable that the market approach has left us unprepared for the inevitable decline in North Sea gas reserves. It is now an established fact that the UK has inadequate gas storage and hence we are left in the absurd position whereby the country exports gas to continental Europe in the summer and has to import gas in the winter.

The Union held a very successful fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference on the issue of speculation and energy prices. We have continued to press the case for a balanced energy policy including renewables, nuclear and clean coal (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS6 and CS7). The development of bio or "green gas" is one area over which we have lobbied Government.

Since the last Congress there has been significant changes in UK based energy companies. EDF have purchased British Energy. This clears the way for nuclear new build. In addition to supporting our members in both companies the Commercial Services and Manufacturing Sections have been pressing companies and Government to ensure there are clear commitments to the UK supply chain and jobs when investment in our energy infrastructure takes place.

Given developments in nuclear and the powerful position of French companies in the industry we have been building our relations with the French unions, in particular CGT. We have held several meetings with the CGT. These have been lay activist led meetings and focused on areas of mutual concern such as safety and use of contractor labour.

The contract to run the Sellafield site was won by Nuclear Management Partners Limited. There is likely to significant changes on site. We continue to lobby hard to ensure that Sellafield, which dominates the local economy, has a viable future. The Union has championed plans to put Sellafield at the centre of the planned nuclear renaissance.

Another area of work in which we have been involved is the future of URENCO, a company which enriches Uranium based on Merseyside. The Government part owns URENCO. Again we want to ensure the business has a secure future which protects our members interests.

OFGEM

In 2007 we successfully campaigned against OFGEM interfering in our members pensions in the Gas Distribution industry. In 2008 as part of the Electricity Distribution Price Review OFGEM again returned to the theme of pension provision for our members in the regulated gas and electricity sectors. It was clear that OFGEMs proposals presented a major threat to our members pensions.

GMB has led the campaign to roll back the OFGEM offensive on pensions. Emergency motions were moved by GMB at Labour Party and TUC conferences on the issue of OFGEM interfering in our members pensions and their failure to deal with rocketing energy prices. GMB members of Parliament have been continuously briefed on our concerns and Ministers have been met on the issue. In October 08 GMB was the only union asked by OFGEM to present our concerns to a seminar on the issue of pensions involving all the stakeholders across the regulated energy sectors.

Early in 2009 over 100 GMB activists and stewards from across gas and the electricity industry took part in a lobby of Parliament over the issue of pensions and OFGEM. Speakers included Gary Smith; Lord Larry Whitty; Frank Doran MP; Celia Barlow MP; Colin Burgon MP; Jim McGovern MP; Angela Smith MP and Ellis Broderick, Pension Trustee from Wales and West Utilities.

Our shop stewards deserve great credit for the support they have given to the campaign to defend pensions in the energy sector.

As a result of our efforts, at the time of writing this report it is clear that going through the consultation Ofgem are moving their position and seeking to avoid further conflict with the Union.

The Union has been raising concerns about the performance and failings of OFGEM for a number of years. It is clear that again political opinion is now catching up with GMB. There has been a spate of Early Day Motions tabled in the House of Commons which were very critical of OFGEM, including two which were initiated by GMB. Ministers in the new Department of Energy and Climate Change have apparently been taking a much firmer line with the Regulator by seeking greater focus on energy costs to end users, as demanded by GMB.

National Grid

i. National Grid Industrials

The final year of the GO21 delivered an increase of 4.4% with flow through to uplifts and protected pensionable pay. Negotiations on pay talks are about to start. The GO21 agreement continue to present serious challenges particularly around policing terms in the agreement. The Union is concerned that the Company has cut back too far on resources at a time when work loads have not declined in the way anticipated. At the time of writing this report there is a serious threat to meter work. Ofgem is interfering in metering contracts and some energy companies are carrying out meter work with in-house provision. If National Grid was to lose the metering working in the regulated sector it would have implications for about 500 jobs. The Union is pushing hard on this issue. National Grid Shop Stewards along with others in the gas distribution industry, have been engaged in ongoing discussions with the HSE about safety generally and Carbon Monoxide in particular (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS11).

ii. National Grid Staff

Last year our staff membership settled on a 4.7% increase and negotiations for 2009 are under way. GMB has led a campaign to secure the future of the Newcastle National Grid Site, where over 180 jobs are at risk through Company plans to outsource and offshore the work carried out in Newcastle. The GMB campaign has given us a real opportunity to secure a viable future for the Newcastle operation.

British Gas

i. British Gas Industrials

British Gas Industrial members accepted a 2 year deal for 2008/2009. The first year was an increase of 4.6% to pensionable pay with flow through. The second year guarantees a minimum of 4%. In addition there were significant improvements to allowances and most importantly the move to £30 an hour for overtime worked in the winter months. As of 1st April 2009, we achieved a key goal of breaking the £30K basic for engineers (£35 in

Inner London). The deal was accepted by a 91% majority on a 93% turnout. This huge turnout in the ballot was great credit to our shop stewards.

ii. British Gas Staff

Pay formula for 2009/2010 has delivered an increase of 4% for Level 7 and Level 8 staff. We are concerned that the Company are seeking to take some of the Level 7 population out of collective bargaining. Unfortunately another Trade Union has already agreed to this in a different part of the British Gas business. However, we will vigorously campaign to ensure that all Level 7 and Level 8 staff are covered by collective bargaining. We have led numerous campaigns amongst British Gas Staff over the past year, in particular over pensions as the Company effectively imposed changes to Staff Pensions, at the time of writing we are the only union making a complaint to the Regulator about the way that British Gas conducted themselves.

iii. Apprentices

British Gas had announced plans to take on one thousand apprentices. Due to the economic circumstances this has been delayed. GMB is keen to work with the Company to talk to Government about opportunities to safeguard the apprentice programme going forward.

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT

Manufacturing Section National Committee

Martin Shaw	-	Birmingham & West Midlands
John Dolan	-	GMB Scotland
Ann McLaren	-	GMB Scotland
Brenda Fraser	-	London
Audrey Harry	-	Midland & East Coast
Paul Wheatley	-	Midland & East Coast
Mark Bartlett	-	Midland & East Coast
Ron Waugh	-	North West & Irish (Section President)
Edward Marnell	-	North West & Irish
John McDonnell	-	North West & Irish
Andy McGivern	-	North West & Irish
Mary Hutchinson	-	Northern
Bernard Taylor	-	Northern
Gerry Ferguson	-	Northern
Sheila Bearcroft	-	South Western
Don McGregor	-	South Western
Brian Farr	-	South Western
Brian Burton	-	Southern (Vice President)
Michael Laws	-	Southern
Tommy Hall	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

Manufacturing Section National Officers

Phil Davies	-	National Secretary
Keith Hazlewood	-	National Secretary
Allan Black	-	National Officer

Phil Davies, National Secretary

Introduction

When the media reports that another manufacturing site has closed or is reducing its workforce they fail to report what this means in terms of the human cost and the real cost to the UK economy. How many people are thrown on the scrapheap of unemployment; how many marriage breakdowns; how many people turn to drink or drug abuse; how many homes are repossessed and how many young children suffer abuse because mum or dad may have lost their jobs. These are the questions that the media and politicians fail to address let alone answer.

There is despair within UK manufacturing that has never been seen before. The dignity of skilled workers producing high quality products is being replaced with low paid, low skilled jobs in a zero hours culture. Never before in the UK have we seen such a total disregard for the manufacturing sector as we have under Labour. A disregard that amounts to total betrayal of an industry that built the world's ships. Manufacturing in the UK has supplied the world with products that are at the cutting edge of technology. The workers within UK manufacturing have given so much to the development of the modern world: power stations, the car industry and products supplied to the world's health authority. UK manufacturers developed the motor car industry; lead in glass and ceramics production and build and construct major projects; our designers are sought after by the world. For over 100 years we led the world in textiles.

No other country including America has developed and produced the diversity of products that we produce in the UK. So why are we seeing thousands of skilled workers made redundant at JCB, Hansons, Solaglas and Pilkington. The answer and the reasons are very simple: the greed of the employers to increase profits at the expense of the workers and their families. Household names have moved offshore for one reason only: to exploit workers, to use low health and safety laws and bad labour laws to increase profits. There is a total disrespect for the workers.

The greed of the banks in the UK who are only too pleased to finance UK global companies to set up sweatshops in other parts of the world; the greed of local authorities to gain the lowest possible price for the purchase of goods. Billions of pounds of public procurement sent offshore for the reasons outlined instead of being placed by local authorities in manufacturing companies such as Remploy and the greed of a large number of MPs in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. What other job legitimately allows you to have a second home and pays you to furnish it right down to the cup and saucer that these greedy MPs drink from. Labour was supposed to be the Party to stop sleaze not raise the benefits of MPs.

The greed of the retail shops who raise the factory price by 300% to 600% crippling our manufacturers' ability to sell their products.

Neglect of the government who would rather bail out the banks to the tune of hundreds of billions of pounds than give £50m to save jobs at van manufacturer LDV. Neglect of this government to control prices of energy with our manufacturers paying anything from 40% to 100% more than its world competitors. Neglect by the government to make sure that any funding for training should come down to the sharp end and if we have to make it easy for employers to take on apprentices by financial inducement then so be it.

The current situation of the funding of sector skills councils does not seem to be delivering the goods.

The UK manufacturing industry can be proud of its record. We still lead the way with research and development. Manufacturing needs a hand up not a hand out. Millions of British people need and depend on jobs in manufacturing. UK plc now needs a revitalised manufacturing industry.

The Section Committee has been slow to take shape but after the election of the Section President and Vice President we hope to become a pro-active, campaigning Section representing our members at the highest level.

Finally I would like to thank Keith Hazlewood and Allan Black for their commitment in what is our most difficult time. The Section could not operate without our Section PAs Auriol Ware and Marilene Smith who not only deal with the day to day running of the Section but are always willing to start early and finish late when required to do so. My thanks go to them both.

Construction

The construction industry continues to decline with major projects being held up because of the lack of funds. Thousands of construction workers who eighteen months ago were in demand are now being thrown on the scrapheap. The government's programme of building schools for the future has not really started and it is hoped that this project will help to revitalise the construction industry.

Olympics

The project continues on time and the team running the construction site of the Olympics led by Howard Shipley can be proud of the fact that accidents are at an all time low due to the health and safety regime that has been introduced on the site. Our members who work on the Olympics are subject to health tests and there is an occupational health regime that is second to none.

The construction of the stadium is well on its way and on time and if work continues over the next two years as it has done over the last two years we should see facilities that the UK can be proud of.

Remploy Ltd

At the time of writing this report it is now nearly 12 months since the dismissal of over 3,000 Remploy employees most of whom were disabled. Our members in GMB have reacted to the new challenges with great enthusiasm. The GMB members on the Trade Union Consortium have rebuilt our organisation. We have replaced sacked shop stewards and introduced five senior stewards who have 100% facility time. Training for the stewards is now taking place and we have set up working groups to review and strengthen the terms and conditions.

We have started recruitment in sections of Remploy that are now being developed: CCTV, Employment Services and the managers group are all being targeted and I am pleased to report that membership is now approaching 2,500. Our target by 2010 is 3,000 direct members employed within Remploy.

The company continues to change its failed senior management and directors. The Chief Executive has been replaced and so has the HR Director but we are still seeing more and more senior managers coming into the company who are all being paid high salaries and pensions provided and with the most expensive cars. The trend now is to employ these new senior managers and allow them to work from home. This is ineffective and does not produce high productivity. It is noticeable that most of the senior managers are white males.

Since the mass sackings in March 2008 we have seen a development that Houdini would have been proud of and that is the disappearance of senior managers into what is called the project zone. The PZ is for failed managers and consultants who charge very large fees. Once in the PZ you are given a large, not very environmentally friendly car and an unlimited expense allowance. You can travel the country telling disabled people how to produce. Some of the more important suggestions have been to tell factory managers in Remploy that they need to paint a wall or turn a light off when not in use. This is costing Remploy hundreds of thousands of pounds per year. The latest estimate is £3m per year and when you add this to the £900,000 spent last year on external consultants you can see why the company has already lost £10m in the first ten months since the closures.

The GMB is now in possession of certain documents and we now understand how the dispute over the factory closures was so difficult. It is clear that in late 2004 and during 2006 very careful plans were being laid by the DWP. Ministers were well aware of the closure proposals and in fact it was the DWP that was leading the closure plan. It is clear that a large amount of finance was used to put the plan together. It is not until now that we have clear evidence of a conspiracy to close factory sites. Nearly every month since November 2004 to the closures in March 2008 the Remploy Board of Directors discussed the plans in detail. Senior managers were tasked with delivering the closure plan to the MPs. Six of the main UK charity organisations were contacted and their support was canvassed. We now know that some of these charities who had signed the public letter of support with the Guardian newspaper had been promised free labour. Remploy workers whose factory sites closed but stayed with Remploy on their terms and conditions were promised to these charities with Remploy paying the full employment costs. In fact we now know this to be true with many of our members working in charity shops like Age Concern. Free of charge to the charity shop that has no responsibility whatsoever towards that disabled person. This union can never forgive those politicians who betrayed our disabled members. One MP did however stand up and admit he had been misled and indeed lied to. He had the courage to make this statement to the Minister and was deeply offended that Remploy

had misled him over the closure of York Remploy. Hugh Bayley MP for York found out he was misled after the closure of York and has been active in trying to replace the York factory. Hugh is a decent and honest MP who I am sure will receive our support. The facts of the closure programme are: 29 factory sites closed; redundancy took place in 78 factory sites; 37% of the workforce dismissed; 1,736 hourly paid disabled dismissed; 232 hourly paid disabled dismissed; 240 disabled people taken out of factory sites and placed in unsuitable employment or left to sit at home on full pay. Another 400+ employees were made either compulsory redundant, retired early or took ill health retirement. A human tragedy, nearly 3,000 people forced out of employment many never to work again. So what has the government done for these people? The new Secretary of State, James Purnell has introduced welfare reform, a piece of disgraceful legislation to force single mothers, disabled people and those with social needs to work for benefits. Our Remploy members have not only lost their jobs but could be forced to work for their benefits.

One example brought to my attention by an Officer in the Midland & East Coast Region is of a member who worked for Remploy for over 30 years and who was persuaded to take redundancy in 2008. She has problems remembering anything in detail although she does remember Remploy. She also suffers from epilepsy and her husband suffers mental illness. The closure of the factory has led to them losing their home and they now live with their sister in law who says that Remploy only gave limited help in the last three months of employment. She used to rely on Remploy for her daily meals in the canteen. Remploy let her leave the factory with no life skill and no support and looks towards the GMB to help. In our opinion Remploy still has a duty and responsibility towards her. There are members like this all over the UK who were proud to work for Remploy. Why has this government abandoned them? The GMB and its Officers never will.

The Board of Directors continue to mismanage the company and for the years 2007 to 2008 were paid bonuses in addition to high salaries of £40,000 to £58,000; the DWP's golden handshake for sacking 3,000 people.

The GMB continues to fight for our Remploy members. We are not prepared to abandon what is left of Remploy. At the time of writing this report the company has asked for talks on the closure of more factory sites reducing further the number of the disabled employees within Remploy factory sites. We will not stand for this and no doubt we will report further at Congress. We have to thank all our Regional Secretaries especially Paul McCarthy who have supported our disabled members not only with fine words but financially as well. The General Secretary and the CEC including Mary Turner have always been at the front end of our campaign and we thank them for being there during a very difficult year for our members.

British Furniture Industry

The industry continues to be under pressure; short time and redundancies are the order of the day. The British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) is trying its best as an employers' trade association to stay in the UK and have introduced a buy British furniture campaign. GMB members should look out for the BFM swing ticket in retail stores when buying new furniture.

We intend to work with the BFM and exchange membership details to enable both organisations to draw up a list of furniture manufacturers that are BFM members and have formal or informal agreements with the GMB. We see this as a very important development and a potential to both organisations to increase members and work together for the good of the workers in the industry.

The British Furniture Confederation (BFC) under the Chairmanship of Martin Jordon continues to lobby and campaign for the industry. Madeleine Moon MP continues to fight in Parliament for our members within the industry and within Remploy. Madeleine has continued to raise dozens of questions with Ministers regarding the government's purchasing of furniture which appears to run at around £250m per year. Again this is another use of public procurement which could provide many additional jobs within the industry.

Technology has now probably reached its peak within the industry and there are some employers who are realising that the investment in skilled people is sometimes much better than spending £2m on a new all singing all dancing machine that may be out of date in two years. Environmental issues continue to be high on the agenda for the industry with many manufacturers reducing waste by up to 50%. The whole furniture industry is worth over £6b per year. British furniture is of a high quality and made by highly skilled crafts people.

While average pay in the industry remains high with many skilled operatives earning £20,000 to £25,000 per year the NLA remains very low. The national rate of pay does not reflect the actual rate of pay that our members receive. Other conditions within the agreement remain low; sick pay has hardly moved within the last 10 years and a 39 hour week remains static as it has done for over 20 years. Holidays are 22 plus the statutory Bank Holidays. When it comes to conditions the employers remain in the 1950s while other industries sprint ahead. Why should a young person come into the furniture industry if the total package is lower than other skilled industries? This year's pay and conditions (January 2009) negotiations are still in progress with the members having turned down an offer of 2%. We hope that the employers can start to address some of these minimum conditions if they do the industry may well be attractive to the young.

Glass Industry

The industry continues to decline with the major players making redundancies or working short time. The effect of the slow down in the construction industry has forced some well known companies into receivership. The lack of help with energy is also taking its toll. Employers are seeing energy bills double and even treble. Greenberg Glass has gone into receivership with no consultation and our members have to rely on the insolvency fund to recover wages, holiday pay and redundancy pay. Our members are rightfully asking how UK workers can be subjected to treatment that is totally unacceptable throughout Europe. Some of our members did not receive pay for weeks before and turned up for work only to be told to go home. Where is the protection for our members? Workers who have paid tax and national insurance contributions for years were given no notice and have to depend on benefits that are so low that it has forced those who have no choice onto the breadline. Relationships with the Flat Glass Council continue to improve.

This year's pay negotiations were held against the current manufacturing recession but the union negotiators were able to secure an increase of 3% on all rates of pay, an increase in Death in Service to £22,000 and a new first aid payment of £15 per week payable from 1st January 2009.

GMB members who sit on European Works Councils continue to work for the benefit of UK workers and are active members of these important bodies.

Two major glass manufacturers have disappointed and overreacted to the current difficult economic situation and industrial relations have taken a backward step.

Solaglas

Solaglas has been hit by the recession and have responded in a very strange way to the company making losses. The 2009 pay negotiations have been held up because the French management has instructed their UK negotiators to offer a 2.5% pay increase only to those employees who work within a branch or factory that has broken even or made a profit. This would have the effect of putting worker against worker. We will be meeting the employer to discuss these proposals further. The GMB attitude is that any pay increase should be across the board.

Pilkington

Again another company hit hard by the world recession has decided it must be the workers that have to suffer the consequences of the current economic climate. Redundancies are now taking place where job sharing could be implemented. The company has closed off the final salary pension scheme to new starters and in doing so has created a two tier workforce. Our members in the North West and Irish Region have reacted in a positive way by voting in favour of industrial action to stop this attack on the terms and conditions of the future employees of Pilkington. The Region, local Officer and shop stewards have shown real leadership in trying to provide decent pension facilities for all.

British Sawmilling Industry

One of the oldest industries in the UK with a national agreement that dates back in one form or another for nearly 100 years is going through the worst recession in its history. The construction industry obviously affects how much timber we use. The home improvements industry also has an affect on the use of timber not to mention the furniture industry. As all these industries are deep in the grip of recession the sawmilling industry is at a standstill. Sawmills and timber importers with order books are being stopped from trading because of the insurance companies bad debt

policy. Again high energy costs are proving to be another reason for closures and receiverships. Unfortunately the Employers' Association has reacted in the way that most UK employers do by introducing a pay freeze. The 2009 pay and conditions negotiations resulted in a nil increase. Consideration is being given to withdraw from the agreement and negotiate plant by plant which will increase our membership and lead to a flurry of activity.

Co-Op Funeralcare

From a workers point of view the Co-op is probably the worst company in the UK founded by the Rochdale pioneers to give working people a decent place to shop. Nearly every large town and city in the UK has a Co-operative. The Society used to boast that it could look after working people from the cradle to the grave. Travel shops, banks, biscuit factories, furniture factories and every sort of production of UK goods was once part of the Co-operative's portfolio. Its own adverts on the TV each night congratulates itself on caring about the environment, caring about African farmers rights and helping the less well off people in the world. You would think that a simple right to belonging to a UK trade union of your choice and have that trade union recognised would be enshrined in the principles and policy of the Co-op Funeralcare. Well the so called caring Funeralcare Division of the Co-op derecognised the GMB in Mach 2007. By doing this the company has broken ILO conventions and took away the rights of workers to belong to a recognised trade union. The reason the Co-op give is that they want to deal with fewer unions so why do they still recognise UCATT a union that only has around 30 members in Funeralcare and no other influence in the funeral industry. At the time of derecognition the GMB had around 500 members working in most parts of the UK but mainly in London and the South East. The real reason was that the GMB wanted to see proper pay and conditions for its members. The GMB was not prepared to see its members being bullied and intimidated. Managers within Funeralcare are well paid while those decent and hardworking employees who arrange the funerals and conduct the funerals are given the lowest of wages in an industry where Funeralcare makes massive profits. These profits are never shared equally with those workers at the sharp end and when mistakes are made because the workers are overworked and underpaid manning levels have dropped and more work has been put on the arrangers who not only have to deal with the bereaved but now have to chase up any bad debts with their own community this development must have repercussions within their own area of work. Finally the consumer in this case the family and those responsible for arranging funerals are vulnerable to exploitation and organisations that are independent are needed to monitor the activities of large funeral companies such as Funeralcare. The GMB will continue to support its members and will continue to fight against injustice within the industry.

Institute Of Organ Builders (IBO)

The industry is fairly buoyant and some organ builders have at least two years work. The problems for the industry is keeping skilled workers and making sure that enough young apprentices come through the industry each year. This year's pay negotiations produced an increase of 4.6% on all rates of pay. In light of inflation for 2009 this is looking to be a very good deal. In addition to this we secured an increase in sick pay of 10%.

Textiles

The industry is still buoyant but most productions have now gone offshore. The greed of some very profitable companies is very apparent when you look at Burberry and its closure of the Rotherham plant on the back of the closure in South Wales of another Burberry factory. The Employers seem to have no compassion for British workers and if there is no union present in plants where we are still producing garments in the UK then exploitation of workers takes place on a massive scale. You only have to look at the two factory sites in Manchester exposed by the BBC. Third world conditions and pay were present. Two textile factory sites that supplied household names in the retail industry were paying less than the UK minimum wage; no health and safety and no holiday or sick pay. Why has no one been brought to account? There are registered directors of these companies. What is the Inland Revenue doing? What is the Health & Safety Executive doing? What is the local authority doing? Answer: nothing. For far too long women skilled workers have been exploited in this industry and it is time we did something to help.

We are pleased to report that as a result of Sheila Bearcroft's endeavours we have now set up the GMB Brick Pakistan Fund account to help our brothers and sisters in Pakistan build a future for themselves.

The BCIA pay negotiations took place against a grim economic background but nevertheless we were able to secure a 3% increase. Thanks must be given to our Lay Negotiating Team for all their hard work.

Finally we must register our appreciation to Sheila Bearcroft who is this year's President of the TUC. Well done Sheila we know you will have a brilliant year.

International

We continue to be affiliated to:

- International Federation of Metalworkers (IMF)
- European Federation of Metalworkers (EMF)
- International Chemical & Mining Federation (ICEM)
- European Mining & Chemical Federation (EMCEF)
- International Building Workers (BWI)
- European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)
- International Textiles, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)
- International Union of Foodworkers (IUF)
- European Federation of Foodworkers and Allied Trades (EFFAT)

During the last year we have played an active part when appropriate in all the internationals. We have only attended meetings and conferences when there have been clear benefits to our members. The European office has again given tremendous support to all the Officers and members during the last year. Kathleen Walker Shaw is working closely with Remploy on public procurement and is also helping the British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) with projects that involve the protection of UK jobs.

Keith Hazlewood, National Secretary

Since last year's report, we have experienced closures, job losses and pay cuts brought about by the current recession. We are faced with announcement after announcement in industry after industry with companies and unions working together to minimise the job losses and cut backs. We also have companies that are using the current recession as an excuse to make people redundant, cut backs, closures and attacking final salary pension schemes.

NAECI

In 2007, we had a major review of the Engineering Construction Industry because clients were questioning the validity of the National Agreement and said that we needed to maintain a future for the Industry. An Agreement that was fit for purpose was required.

This was a very lengthy process in order to conclude an acceptable Agreement for the employers, the clients and the workforce throughout the industry. The Agreement as expected, had teething problems because of the changes made and after working with the previous Agreement for so long through this review which was part of the 2007 pay negotiations which resulted in a three year deal taking us into 2010.

In year one there was an increase of 4.4%, in year two an increase of 4.4% and in 2009 an increase of 5.5%. With the current recession and RPI at 1.3% (at the time of writing) it turns out to be not a bad deal.

The Industry like others is suffering from a shortage of skills and employing a substantial amount of non UK labour. This along with increasing and demanding order books can only be addressed by attracting fresh blood and apprentices to the Industry. We currently have across the industry non UK contractors working on various sites up and down the country undermining the negotiated terms and conditions under the National Agreement which we need to address if we are going to maintain the Engineering Construction Industry and the National Agreement. This is also a problem for the employers because these companies are coming in and undermining their positions by undercutting them when bidding for work. So it is an Industry problem that needs resolving by the Industry. We need to put together a strategy for survival of the Industry with the shop stewards and officers.

Thermal Insulation Industry

In 2007 we negotiated a three year deal working out at 20.02% increase and five day's extra holiday over a three year period.

The negotiations demonstrated that there is future work for the Industry including the current new build and maintenance contracts in Engineering construction, the aircraft carrier and type 45 work for the Royal Navy and the 2012 Olympics to name but a few.

The problem in the Industry is much the same as in the Engineering Construction Industry in attracting apprentices which has resulted in companies increasingly having to use non UK labour which in some cases is causing competency issues. Companies from other EU countries are also refusing to give local labour the opportunity to work. This was raised with the Thermal Insulation Contractors Association at a national meeting which was attended by shop stewards, local officers and the employers for which an agreement reached helped address this problem.

The Thermal Insulation Industry has potential for future growth but we need to attract more young people.

Offshore Industry

Last year, I reported on the long standing issue with regards to the interpretation of the Working Time Directive and holiday entitlements for people working in the Offshore Industry being resolved to the 2007 negotiations. I can now confirm that although the Agreement was negotiated with the Offshore Contractors Association and a resolve to the issue of the holiday entitlement offshore, we still have to date, some companies that are not complying with the Agreement by not paying the full holiday entitlement to its employees.

In 2008 we negotiated a one year deal of 4.3% on the basic rate and improvement to sickness benefits. We would not go beyond a one year deal giving the OCA members the opportunity to comply with the agreement reached. I can now confirm that we have submitted the 2009 pay claim and at the first meeting the employers offered us a 0% increase. Our first response was to go back to their members and review the position and put forward a realistic offer; in the meantime we should put the negotiations on hold until such time as all the OCA member companies comply with the 2007 arrangements regarding the Working Time Holiday entitlement and until the current recession buys us a bit of time when things begin to improve and when we start coming out of recession.

The Offshore Industry like many other industries is feeling the effect of the skill shortages and an aging workforce. To address the issue short term we have negotiated an agreement to use Phillipino labour on a top up basis and not instead of UK labour with a couple of companies. The agreement is that the Phillipinos are paid the industry rate and this agreement has worked well so far with no reports of it being abused.

We are constantly trying to increase the membership offshore which so far has been successful mainly at the heliports. We are in the process of arranging other meetings to progress with the 2009 pay negotiations further.

Engineering Industries

As reported in past Congress reports, in general engineering, not a lot has changed; the same sad stories of redundancies, pay cuts and pay freezes to save jobs which this year has been accelerated by the current recession. There is a substantial impact in UK manufacturing. We need to work together with the UK government, employers and the DTI in an attempt to stabilize UK manufacturing and to formulate a survival strategy but until we come out of the recession, this looks almost impossible. We need to still keep working at it.

We are still having to compete on an uneven playing field when tendering for some orders and having to compete with countries like China, Japan and India. We still have the issue of it being easier and quicker to close UK establishments than in other parts of Europe with less impact.

As in the engineering and construction related industries, we are experiencing skills shortages which need addressing by investment in training, and the re-introduction of apprenticeships for the engineering related industries to survive. We also have the problem of the age profile with people leaving the Industry or retiring and not being replaced. There is an ever increasing use of companies employing non UK labour in some cases exploiting our European colleagues by paying under the rate for the job making them a cheaper alternative which we need to address to maintain our current terms and conditions and to make sure our European colleagues are not being exploited.

Shipbuilding

The Shipbuilding Industry is one of mixed fortunes. Firstly, we have the demise of commercial shipbuilding in the UK with only one yard operating and that is on the verge of closure which is a sad day for commercial shipbuilding. On the other hand we in the UK defence shipbuilding industry have the biggest order book ever with the ongoing build of six type 45 destroyers, two super aircraft carriers, and beyond that a programme of ships called Mars all for the Royal Navy and further orders that are being placed. These orders will maintain and create jobs in the UK Shipbuilding Industry for the next decade and beyond. We have companies like BAE systems that is employing apprentices year on year to try and meet this demand which is not only good news for the Industry but also the apprentices and the local community.

The Industries' two major companies, Vosper Thornycroft from Portsmouth and BAE Systems has now joined together calling the company BVT Surface Fleet. It is now working under an alliance between the UK yards in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence under the UK Defence Industrial strategy. This will stabilise the Industry and eliminate the cut throat competition between the yards which has resulted in too many casualties in the past.

The aircraft carriers are being built in five blocks, the reason being because they are too big to be built in any one yard. These five blocks will then be assembled at the Rosyth yard in Scotland. Although the start of this order has been delayed they are still anticipating meeting a completion date of ship one by 2012 and ship two by 2015.

Steel

Last year I reported that the Indian steelmaker Tata outbid a competitor, a Brazilian steelmaker CSM for the UK steel maker Corus. The fierce competition between the bidders causes concerns as to the future investment in the UK. Future bargaining and pension arrangements were also the topics of concerns.

After a meeting with Tata, no decisions had been made of intended changes to existing arrangements at the time of the meeting; we are watching the situation very closely.

Events have now overtaken us and with the current recession, Corus has recently announced the loss of three thousand and five hundred jobs in their steel industry of which two thousand and five hundred are in the UK plants up and down the country. We are in discussions with Corus in an attempt to try and mitigate the situation and will be opposing any compulsory job losses.

Corus are looking at every opportunity in which to make savings. i.e. contractors, sub contractors, bonus payments, shift patterns, closure of blast furnaces running at a capacity of 50% of their normal output, closure of various parts of the plants and of course general closures.

The National Steel Committee is in consultation with the company in an attempt to minimise the impact of these announcements. Pay negotiations last year was of a joint nature for the first time ever with Corus Strip Products and Corus Long Products who sat down together to carry out their pay negotiations. This resulted in a 4% pay increase for a one year deal.

Aerospace

Since my last Congress report there has been very little change within the Aerospace Industry. We are constantly lobbying the UK government to try and save the UK industry by giving it a level playing field and we will continue the lobbying to save jobs across the related aerospace industries.

We have the sad story of some factories closing and work being sent to other locations of the UK and some work being sent outside the UK.

Companies like Airbus, Bombardier and BAE Systems all have to fight hard to maintain current work and equally as difficult in trying to get new work. Bombardier have secured the long awaited 'C' series which in the short term has brought with it difficulties. The long term for the site looks pretty good. The Aerospace Industry is a global Industry and all we have ever asked for is a level playing field when competing for orders which we are finding very difficult to achieve. We will continue to lobby and do whatever we can to secure a presence in the UK for aerospace related industries.

UK Car Manufacturing

Since my last report about the car industry which is serviced by the Birmingham region, there have been major changes made. I reported the closures of MG Rover, Jaguar and Peugeot, all in the West Midlands region. This industry along with many other industries has been severely hit by the recent recession. Over the last six months both the car manufacturing industry and the supply chain which employs thousands of British workers have been hit with devastating blows and announcements of closures, redundancies, attacks on the pension scheme, changes in working patterns, shift patterns; all in an attempt to try and maintain jobs within the UK car industry.

The manufacturers of cars and their components in this country are in an industry of long significance and remain vital for UK manufacturing. It's been a year of announcement after announcement of the way that this industry has been hit as much or if not more than any other industry in the UK.

International and Europeans

It is imperative to keep a presence internationally and in Europe because in the main we deal with multi-national companies and more and more legislation is coming from Europe in industries like shipbreaking. It is important that we have international standards across the world when we see countries like India running ships up on the beach to strip them. We need to work together and formulate ILO working standards.

EMF

The GMB Brussels Office keeps us updated on progress of issues raised at EMF and keeps GMB input on issues like EU green paper on shipbreaking and the Posted workers directive as to which we are looking to get changed to accommodate and protect UK working conditions.

Kathleen Walker Shaw and Sarah King work very hard on all EU issues on behalf of the GMB and use their contacts and influence to do so.

Allan Black, National Officer

Introduction

Since the last Congress the manufacturing industries on my sheet have suffered to one extent or the other from the effects of the current recession. Particularly since the autumn quarter of last year, I have been deluged with HR1 forms telling me about proposed redundancies. This has been against a background of lay offs (sometimes for 21 week periods) projected pay freezes and a small amount of short time working. The depth of the crisis varies somewhat from industry to industry but the pattern is unrelenting and at the time of writing this report, shows no sign of reversing or even slowing down.

Whilst there is some evidence that some employers are using the recession to address long standing issues – emboldened by a demoralised and frightened workforce – there is little doubt that most of the doom and gloom is genuine and reflects plummeting demand for the goods made by GMB members in the beleaguered UK manufacturing sector.

Building Materials

Congress will not be surprised to hear that on my sheet the worst has been borne by those companies in the building materials industries. Given the virtual collapse of the house building market brought about by the greed of the financial institutions, the effects on the materials sector have been disastrous. Dozens if not hundreds of small and medium size companies have simply gone out of existence whilst the large multi-national operators have slashed UK capacity in an attempt to follow down demand and avoid cash being tied up in brick mountains, unsellable cement or whatever. The most worrying aspect of all of this, is of course, that in my experience of building materials when a plant or a part of a plant is “mothballed” (a term used because it has tax advantages) it never comes back on stream, even when the recession ends. The new gap that appears is filled by imports of these basic high bulk/low value goods, imported at a huge environmental cost. A further aspect of this is that as the EU tightens up, no doubt for all the right reasons, on environmental controls, we are seeing the early signs of the greedy multi-nationals looking to export entire plants (and the jobs that go with them) to regimes throughout the world where the EU remit does not run and pollution controls are negligible or non-existent.

Thus since the last Congress GMB members have lost their jobs at Accrington Brickworks (Heidelberg), Westbury Cement (Lafarge) and Todhills Brickworks (Wienerberger) and at others too numerous to identify individually but known to the officers and activists in Congress confronted with the individual human tragedies that each closure implies.

Many of these plants have been operating in these locations for more than a century, location determined by deposits of the necessary minerals. Often they are in rural areas and represent the only manufacturing jobs for miles around. Our members' patiently acquired skills are now either unused or, if they are lucky deployed in national minimum wage jobs in different largely non union sectors.

Process Sector

The Process Sector has in general, fared a little better than building materials although there are still ominous signs of things that may be to come.

The pharmaceutical sector enjoys a little protection from the economic streams because of protection from its patents and because buyers of its products (largely the taxpayer) are not making discretionary purchases. Nonetheless even in this sector job losses and production rationalisation are the order of the day with GMB members impacted in the North West and Northern regions in particular.

Our membership in the paper and package sector has been hit with reduction in hours of work, removal of shifts and so on as the industry is hit by the double whammy of recession induced demand reduction and concerns by all of us to reduce packaging in the food industry for instance.

In industrial gases which I recently assumed responsibility for at national level, we have had a small number of job losses reflecting depot rationalisation and reduced hours in a traditionally high overtime industry.

Food Manufacturing

In this sector where the GMB is the second largest Union with membership in all of the major (and a host of the minor) companies, the picture is more mixed. Apparently the UK population in times of economic recession indulges in comfort eating to a greater extent than usual. Thus sales of snack foods, chocolate, crisps, nuts and biscuits are holding up well. On the other hand impacted by an orgy of national belt tightening high end volumes are being affected as we all trade down in a quest of value for money. This is being worsened as the supermarkets exercise their questionable market power to attack the margins of suppliers as in the tragic loss around Congress last year of the GMB members' jobs at Fenland Foods despite the best efforts of the Midland and East Coast region.

I now want to report briefly on some of the key pay and conditions agreements I am responsible for on behalf of GMB members and particularly on changes since last Congress.

Pay and Conditions

In the light of my general comments on this sector, Congress will not be surprised to hear that those of our members who are fortunate to retain their jobs face a tough time in pay bargaining. Fortunately, in a few instances the 2009 pay rise has been protected as the second (usually RPI related) part of a long term deal. Thus we have had increases of 4% in Hanson Aggregates and around the same in Lafarge Cement. On the other hand and at the other extreme, a couple of companies where we do expect to negotiate in 2009 have made it clear that they will be seeking a pay freeze. Monier Roofing (formerly Redland) and Aggregate Industries (quarries) fall into this category. The rest of the sheet – Building Brick (settlement due May 09), Hanson Brick (settlement due 1st January 2009) and so on will lie somewhere in between but as already mentioned many employers are seeking to “mark our cards” by even more dire predictions as to future levels of demand for our members' products.

Pay and Conditions - Process Industries

There are only a few nationally negotiated collective bargaining agreements left in the whole of this sector. In most cases bargaining is at plant or local level and is therefore, ably dealt with by our local officers and shop stewards. The major national level agreements are:

Astrazeneca

We are, at the time of writing at the end of a long term pay and conditions settlement. Negotiations with the Company on a joint union basis are expected to commence in April/May this year and a verbal update on progress should be available at Congress.

Corrugated Paper and Board

We achieved a reasonable settlement for our small but loyal membership in this industry for 2008/09 of 3.9% effective from 1st September. However, this is one of those industries where at the time of writing and in advance of formal negotiations opening the employers are carrying out a PR exercise to stress how difficult their trading position actually is.

Industrial Gases – Air Products

After a difficult pay round in 2008, brought to an acceptable conclusion by colleagues from the North West region, we are due to embark on an ambitious overhaul of the pay and conditions package. It is my intention to take this on as part of a GMB recruitment initiative in this company.

BOC

A pay deal has been put in place for our BOC membership which protected the real standard of living of existing employees with a 5% increase but created a two tier workforce with new starters being subjected to lower rates of pay.

Whilst our members did vote to accept this offer it leaves a rather bad taste in that apart from its moral flaws it stores up problems for the future.

Pay and Condition – Food Manufacturing

In this sector, with one exception, local bargaining is the order of the day. The exception first.

United Biscuits

A pay settlement was due from 1st January 2009 and at the time of writing there is no offer on the table, the company having withdrawn an offer of 2% when the NNC failed to agree to recommend it to our members. Further meetings/consultations with members are planned and a verbal update will be made at Congress.

Other companies in the sector have tended to engage at national level only on specific issues. Thus for instance RHM (Premier) has been in dialogue about a new sick pay scheme with significant progress being made. Nestle continue to seek agreement on the impact of the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive on their business and so on. All of these companies and indeed all the other major ones in food manufacturing reserve the right to bring issues to national level if they cannot be resolved at plant or factory level and this inevitably leads to a “fire fighting” role for the National Officer.

Recruitment and Retention

Since last Congress I have had several discussions with our colleagues from the National Organising Team based at Edgware. I believe that there is room for recruitment by the GMB in several areas of my sheet. In spite of some concerns about the potential sell-off of building material plants to other parts of the world (see above) it will remain generally the case that these products will be made close to their market to avoid costly transport. I believe that in the quarrying and concrete sectors it is not unrealistic for us to recruit a further 5,000 members and I have drawn up detailed proposals for further NOT consideration as to how this might be done. Similarly but involving larger numbers and by deploying different tactics, I see real scope for membership growth in food manufacturing. Again because of the nature of the product these plants will always be close to their markets. This exercise would be largely one of consolidation of membership where we already have recognition, reps and check off. There ought to be perhaps a further 10,000 membership growth potential here and again this is under discussion with the NOT.

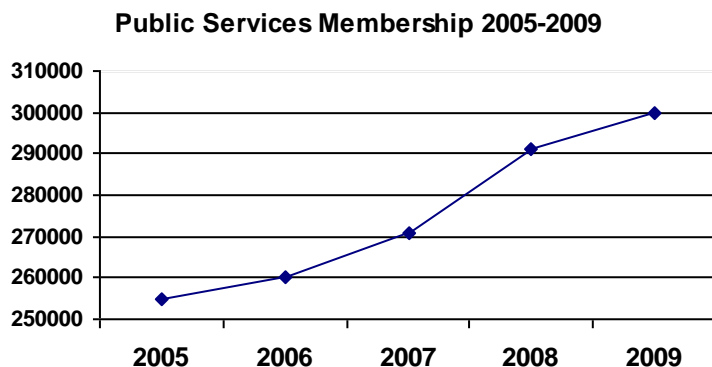
Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to thank all GMB officer colleagues working on the above sheet at regional level. Their commitment, support and comradeship are second to none. Even more importantly I would like to thank the lay members' reps on my sheet who actually make the operation work and who put in endless effort on a voluntary basis for their fellow workers. Their dedication and commitment cannot be overstated. Finally, I record my appreciation of the help, support and humour I get from Marilene Smith at Worple Road, and from Charlie King – soon to enjoy a well deserved retirement – and of course, from my colleagues and friends Keith Hazlewood and Phil Davies.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

1. Public Services Section Membership

The membership of the Public Services Section of the GMB is now significantly above 300,000 and the chart below shows that the Section has a consistent track record of sustainable growth.



The public sector will come under pressure during the economic downturn but it will remain a trade union stronghold and it will continue to offer excellent opportunities for recruiting and organising new GMB members.

In 2009/10 we can expect to go on from strength to strength

For sure there will be a wider range of issues to confront than at any time in the last decade but our shop stewards, branch secretaries and other lay activists supported by their full-time Officers are well placed to deal with those issues working closely with our members.

2. National Committee

The role of the National Committee is to consider and determine policy issues and Public Services Section activities at national level. The Section is fortunate in having an active and committed National Committee chaired by GMB President, Mary Turner. Our National Office staff are Brian Strutton, National Secretary; Sharon Holder and Rehana Azam, National Officers; Mick Hubbard, Productivity Services Officer; Angela Sayer, Section Administrator and PA; and Rita Compton, PA. The Section has been well supported by National Office departments (legal, pensions, political, health and safety, communications); the NAU; the National Organising Team; and the GMB Brussels office; all have contributed to help the Section grow and deliver its objectives.

The National Committee decides actions arising from Congress and Section Conference decisions; receives and scrutinises reports from the National Secretary, National Officers and GMB Regions; as well as matters raised by Committee members themselves. Current issues in national negotiations are discussed in particular detail. Minutes of National Committee meetings are approved by the CEC and distributed to branches via Regions and posted on the GMB website for all members to see. The main points dealt with by the Committee in 2008/9 included:

- Section membership and growth
- Local Government pay negotiations
- NHS Agenda for Change
- NHS Pay Review Body and settlements
- Single status in local government
- Local Government Pension Scheme negotiations
- Equal Pay and Discrimination issues
- Police staffs pay and organisation
- MPO membership

- Higher Education single-table Bargaining
- School Support staff Negotiating Body
- Two-tier workforce issues and training
- Free school meals and Government commitments
- Public Sector Pay Policy
- Industrial Action in local government
- Council Housing campaigning
- The Rent Service restructuring and transfer to VOA
- Further Education national pay implementation
- Public Prisons and the Probation Service restructuring
- The Care Sector including Southern Cross
- Academies, PFI/PPP and Privatisation
- Executive pay in the public sector

The National Committee membership is:

Mary Turner – President	-	London Region
Elizabeth Blackman	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Dana Bruno	-	North West & Irish Region
Linda Clarke	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Gary Doolan	-	London Region
George Fraser	-	London Region
Gordon Gibbs	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
David Hope	-	North West & Irish Region
Pamela Hughes	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
James Jones	-	Northern Region
Kevin Jones	-	South Western Region
Evelyn Martin	-	London Region
June Minnery	-	GMB Scotland
Peter Murphy	-	Southern Region
David Noble	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Lorraine Parker	-	Southern Region
Vivien Smart	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Billy Tonner	-	Southern Region
Michael Widdison	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Peter Dow	-	MPO
Heather Starr	-	MPO
Steve Rice	-	ASU Representative
Richard Passmore	-	NHS NAG Representative
Barry Lambert	-	HE Representative

3. School Support Staff Negotiating Body

As reported at the last GMB Congress, the government had finally agreed to establish a school support staff negotiating body (SSSNB) to design and implement a national pay and conditions framework for all support staff in maintained schools in England. However the need to ensure that schools comply with national pay and conditions has meant that the body had to be established with statutory authority in primary legislation.

The primary legislation is the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill 2009. The formal mechanism to set up the SSSNB is contained in Chapter 4 and Schedule 15. The negotiating body encompasses all support staff (approximately 400,000) across all maintained schools (approximately 20,000) and its remit covers all pay and conditions. The members of the body are the three support staff unions (GMB, Unison, Unite) and employers (local government employers, self governing schools employers, faith school employers) and there is an independent Chair.

Agreements reached following negotiation by the body are, on ratification by the Secretary of State, given statutory force. The Secretary of State has the power to refer agreements back if they are not satisfactory and, in extreme situations, could enforce his own agreement. Whilst unlikely to occur this is a risk - the price for statutory effect.

The Bill setting up the SSSNB is currently going through Parliament and is due to receive Royal Assent (become law) this autumn. It will be an amazing achievement for GMB.

But of course, the real work will be in negotiating the new pay and conditions for support staff. That will be no easy matter across such a huge workforce with such a diverse range of practices to start from. Nevertheless, the SSSNB will be able to establish a common core contract of employment and national pay scales to ensure that all support staff are treated fairly.

4. Health Sector

NHS staff remain under constant threat from privatisation and progressive marketisation. The incontrovertible evidence shows the Government no longer wishes NHS service delivery to be provided solely by directly employed public service workers, but by staff employed by a Foundation Trust, Social Enterprise, private or voluntary organisation.

GMB remains opposed to all forms of privatisation. Members, however, are most annoyed at the way reforms are being implemented at local level. Re-organisations and posts being frozen, but not being replaced, are resulting in a huge increase in the amount of workload NHS staff are now expected to sustain, symptomatic of the Government being driven by dogma by the use of the private sector in delivering public services.

The impact these changes appear to be having on staff is most likely to manifest at election time, coupled with the downturn in economy and the possibility of unemployment, for example bank staff, and repossessions hitting low paid public service workers, being of grave concern.

GMB's campaigning efforts to seek more time and flexibility for NHS organisations to achieve financial balance and ensure cuts are not made which damage local health provisions, have been recognised by the Government and implemented but then dressed-up by them whilst still achieving the objective to continue with their programme of privatisation and marketisation.

GMB remains a key stakeholder, along with other NHS unions and patient groups. However, this level of consultation has little or no influence unless we are engaged at the early stages of health policy development, as we have managed regarding workforce issues associated with:

- Healthcare Acquired Infections
- Implementation of Agenda for Change
- NHS Constitution
- Transforming Community Services

Health Service Group and Ambulance Committee

The role of GMB's Health Service Advisory Group and the Ambulance Committee is to provide detailed advice on the implications of proposed NHS policy in each of these divisions of Health Services and act as a primary consultation forum at regional level.

Both the Health Service Advisory Group and the Ambulance Committee have met twice since last Congress.

Current membership consists of:

Health Service Advisory Group

Phil Baldwin	-	North West & Irish Region
Alan Chetwynd	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Neil Collinson	-	Northern Region

Mick Coppin	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Mary Finn	-	GMB Scotland
Joss Guittard	-	North West & Irish Region
Jean Garside	-	London Region
Tony Hackett	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Martin Jackson	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Gary Lock	-	South Western Region
Lynne Myers	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Jill McCarthy	-	South Western Region
Alan McKinney (temp)	-	North West & Irish Region
Richard Passmore	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Alma Stewart	-	Northern Region
Ray Stewart	-	Southern Region
Maya Venkatasawmy	-	Southern Region
Keri Thompson	-	London Region

Ambulance Committee

Mo Akbar	-	London Region
Dan Ackroyd	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Ally Barron	-	ASU
Ray Carrick	-	ASU
Alan Giles	-	ASU
Kevin Lyons	-	ASU
Ben McGachy	-	ASU
Dave Midgley	-	ASU
Sean Mulligan	-	ASU
Malcolm Parker	-	ASU
Mike Quirk	-	ASU
Steve Rice	-	ASU
John Roberts	-	North West & Irish Region
Tony Stephens	-	ASU
Sharon Thorpe	-	South Western Region
Keith Wellsbury	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Since Congress 2008, the Advisory Group and Ambulance Committee have discussed the following issues:

- NHS Pay
- The NHS Pension Scheme
- Agenda for Change implementation
- Terms and Conditions
- The National Ambulance Partnership Forum
- NHS Contractors staff in England
- NHS Policy/Government Consultation responses
- Skills Pledge
- Apprenticeships in the NHS
- The Annual Staff Survey
- Recruitment and Organisation
- NHS Pilots
- Public Sector Policy, which impact on the Health Service Sector
- NHS Equal Pay claims

NHS Pay

Following a decision by GMB not to sign up to the NHS multi-year deal reached in 2008, plus the financial difficulties experienced by members, caused by rising prices shortly after the deal was signed, GMB sought, along with other constituent unions, for the three-year deal to be re-opened by the Government. The NHS Pay Review Body, in December 2008, declined to recommend the re-opening. The Review Body concluded that, while the wider economic and labour market situation had changed significantly, the changes had not materially affected the relative position of NHS staff. NHS staff will, therefore, receive a 2.4% pay increase from 1 April 2009 and a further 2.25% increase from 1 April 2010. Changes to the pay and grading structure means that staff on Bands one, two, three, four, five and six -- pay points 1 – 13 and 17 – 25 -- will receive higher percentage uplifts.

5. Care Sector

A comprehensive trade union position on social care has been produced by the TUC in response to the 'national debate' on care and support reform. The TUC written submission incorporated a significant contribution by GMB.

A Social Policy Forum event held in November 2008 saw GMB share the platform with Phil Hope MP, Minister for Social Care, at which the National Officer, Sharon Holder, emphasised the impact workforce issues had in creating the problems the 'national debate' was attempting to address: The number one problem being the huge turnover of social care staff because of low pay, overwork and poor career prospects, all of which directly impact on the quality of services.

Care and support in the UK remains woefully under-funded. The TUC event was used also to call on the Government to make a large increase in funding and support a NHS model for social care.

GMB has also submitted responses to the following consultation documents:

- Cabinet Office Adult Social Care Skills Study
- "The Case for Change – Why England needs a new Care and Support System"
- "Putting People First – Working to Make it Happen." Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy.

Priorities in the area of social care and, more specifically, the private care sector, still remain that of recruitment, retention and organisation of Southern Cross Healthcare employees, working closely with the National Organising Team in developing a campaign strategy framework and an implementation plan in conjunction with regions.

In spite of lengthy discussions on the harmonisation of terms and conditions for the same occupations working in different homes, Southern Cross has only recently agreed a timetable to implement the proposed changes.

Meanwhile, a survey of GMB members on the application of meal/rest breaks, conducted over the summer of 2008, found staff shortages a big factor as to why employees received a lack of proper break entitlement, setting out a comprehensive campaign agenda for all regions.

A lay representative National Negotiating Committee has been set up. Since Congress 2008, the Committee has met three times.

Current membership consists of:

Southern Cross National Committee

Elizabeth Charlton	-	Northern Region
Brian Hockley	-	Southern Region
Brian Jenkins	-	North West & Irish Region
Paul Kelly	-	London Region
Joanne Laurie	-	GMB Scotland
Alan O'Connor	-	North West & Irish Region
Helen O'Connor	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Sharon Rawlings	-	South Western Region
John Ryan	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

6. Ministry of Defence

In 2008, Ministry of Defence membership officially transferred to the Public Services Section. Key areas of work since last Congress have centred on the Normalisation programme arising from peace in Northern Ireland and the reduction of civilian staff in the armed forces.

However, Pay remained the top priority. GMB industrial staff employed by the MOD Centre, overwhelmingly voted to accept a three-year pay deal in January. The deal covers the period August 2008, 2009 and 2010, and includes:

- Increases in pay ranging from 14.2% to 17.6% for the lowest paid
- Shorter pay scales, including a 3% pay step each year.
- Faster pay progression
- 2% non-consolidated pay for those on the top of the pay scale
- An increase to the minimum of each skill zone and craft entry point
- Revision to the Apprentice rate
- An increase in London Weighting: £200 for inner and £50 for outer
- Work to commence on addressing non-pay issues, like the position of women in the industrial workforce and the learning and skills agenda to improve career progression

7. Legal Services Commission (LSC)

The GMB's strong organized membership and workplace organiser structure will be significantly challenged in the coming year(s) as the LSC embarks on a major transformation of their business delivery. A major announcement was made in October 2008 to reorganise the business with a significant reduction of the current workforce. Up to 600 LSC employees are currently at risk of redundancy. Upon announcement all the key GMB national departments including the press office and political department were secured to ensure relevant assistance and support is in place during this challenging time, and a detailed plan of work is being undertaken to progress through this period.

Key meetings with senior government department representatives have been secured to ensure all appropriate support is established and achieved. The Welsh MP's have played a significant role in challenging the English Government over their lack of consultation with the Welsh Assembly on the decision to reduce the presence of the LSC and the significant reduction of staff at its Cardiff office. A recent debate in the commons on this subject has now led to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee arranging a meeting in March 2009 inviting key stakeholders including the GMB to give evidence on the decision, with specific reference to the Cardiff office. At the time of writing the GMB will be looking to submit evidence in two areas, one specific to the Cardiff office and the other specific to the overall national position. The GMB South Western region has played a significant part in securing regional support through the Welsh Assembly and other key stakeholders.

All GMB LSC site visits are being planned together with a detailed strategy to consolidate membership. At the time of writing the Leeds, Brighton, Birmingham and Cardiff offices have been visited. Each region has been given a list of LSC employees with a request to consolidate. We secured support from the LSC to fund a joint GMB and FDA conference in January on the restructure.

The national GMB Chair Peter Earley from South Tyneside has continued to lead the representatives and members and offered much support through this challenging time. Rehana Azam recently took responsibility for the sector in the last quarter of 2008.

8. The Prison Service

Negotiations are conducted through the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council (PSJIC). Our members in the service include maintenance, catering, cleaning and other relevant occupational groups within an industrial setting.

The Ministry of Justice has requested the service consider workforce modernisation. A major modernisation in this context could have implications for our members. We have pursued avenues that could have realised some benefits for our members but our initial involvement and assessment has concluded that this may not be successful. Mick Hubbard GMB Policy officer has led all the discussions around the Job Evaluation proposal and submitted a detailed

critique on the areas that concern our PSJIC members. In addition it has been recognized that the Trade Unions side needs to fully participate in discussions to offer appropriate representation of our members, despite the conclusion that modernisation is not going to realize benefits for our members.

Due to historic reasons the trade union side has had a disjointed approach within the PSJIC environment. This lack of discipline has only exasperated the frustrations of the union representatives and unfortunately a culture of apathy has followed. Certainly this culture has to be acknowledged before unnecessary resources are applied to organisation. However there is an engagement with the stewards to strengthen their participation and a commitment to develop a robust internal shop steward structure with a strong emphasis on communication, aiding the challenge in addressing apathy.

Initial discussions with the GMB's shop stewards committee has generated the understanding that they need to fully participate in key industrial issues affecting their members and a clear direction on priorities and the continued culture of dependency is not an option. In addition there has been a clear steer to the TU side in how certain priorities surrounding the workforce modernization need to be managed and pursued. It is fair to say some of the apathy is understandable, as pay settlements have been imposed on our members over the years which have directly resulted in undermining the trade unions. Rehana Azam, took responsibility for the sector in the last quarter of 2008.

9. Higher Education

The last year has continued to be a challenging time within the HE Sector. The Public Sector Conference offered much welcomed support to the sector in its efforts to secure single table bargaining arrangements. The opportunity for some of our HE Reps to participate at the conference reinforced their enthusiasm and commitment that the HE Sector is a key priority within the Public Services Section.

GMB HE sector retains its position to explore opportunities in building a strong organising culture within the sector. It is fair to say the success of the national pilots are under the spotlight and every effort is being made to understand the challenges we need to overcome to better organise in the sector. Some HE Reps participated in the GMB @ Work consolidation training which offered a much needed focus on the methodology that needed to be applied in coordinating activity within their workplaces. Nationally there is a commitment to work with any institution locally to build and support GMB organisation. Such local activity will secure a better understanding of the challenges faced in the sector and assist in building a generic organisation plan for the sector.

Regular HE Briefings have been circulated within the sector together with visits to some regions to discuss key HE priorities. One area that requires some consideration and action is the production of a detailed document for officers who take responsibility for the sector that will offer a detailed insight to the sector. This material is currently in draft format and it is anticipated to be published later this year.

The three year pay deal concluded with the final uplift of 5% implemented in October last year. The 3 year pay deal equated to an overall increase of 15.88%. Although the overall settlement equated well in comparison to other sectors of the economy it needs to be recognised that the level of settlement was much needed to fill the void of previous pay settlements. The priority is now to preserve the terms and conditions of our members and build on previous pay settlements in what is a challenging time ahead for all in the labour market. At the time of writing it is well documented that applications to academia are rising in an environment that is providing uncertainty.

The GMB fully participated in the Review of HE Financial pay data which assessed and evaluated financial pay data within institutions. The review group considered commonly accepted data; universities' and HE colleges' income and expenditure in 2006-07, 2007-08, and forecasts for 2008-09 and later years; the outcomes of the Framework Agreement, the earnings of HE staff following its implementation; and relativities to the earnings of other UK employees. The review drew on independent data sources and published its findings and key recommendations in December 2008. This data could inform subsequent negotiations in the JNCHES machinery for academic year 2009-10 and beyond. Gerry Carr GMB Policy Officer supported the National Officer with this exercise and it is appropriate to record our appreciation to Gerry for his work in the sector. The full report is available on the GMB website. The current signatories to the JNCHES agreement recently submitted key headlines to the 2009/10 pay round. Full details can be found in the January HE briefing.

The New JNCHEs agreement has now been signed and went live last year. UCU continue to remain outside these arrangement, however all parties have recently secured the support of ACAS with the aim of identifying a resolution. Although the Trade Unions currently party to the new agreement could remain outside any discussions via ACAS we anticipate an involvement central to these discussions. The new agreement has taken considerable time and negotiation and the current signatories to the agreement do not want to see this unraveled or for UCU to secure a stronger bargaining arrangement at the detriment to others. The GMB has played a significant part alongside the current signatories in an attempt to encourage UCU to enter in to the new arrangements.

The GMB HE Committee have met regularly and supported all the activities around single table bargaining and all issue relating to pay and conditions. The focus to develop support regionally and the sharing of best practice have been central to all activities.

10. Further Education

In England the vast majority of colleges are members of the Association of Colleges (AOC), an employers' organisation which negotiates with the GMB alongside other recognised trade unions to produce recommendations for individual colleges to adopt. In my last report I highlighted the difficulties of settlements that only carry a recommendation to implement. As a result many colleges in England have fallen behind the nationally agreed pay scales.

GMB FE Reps discussed some of the obstacles they face in challenging their employer on pay and membership development. Over the last year a strong co-ordinated focus by the trade unions has led to a national campaign being launched in January 2009 titled 'Time to Pay Up'. The campaign is simple as the title suggests; no longer can we accept colleges not honoring national settlements. Nationally we wrote to each college under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act requesting details of their positions on pay settlements. The 'pay up' campaign encourages each college rep and union to begin some local activity to discuss the issue of pay, and if used appropriately it will be a fantastic tool to organize membership locally. Union density in colleges is patchy and this campaign is the opportunity we have needed to begin coordinating local activity. All regions have been informed of the campaign together with full details of how the campaign can be applied locally. The trade unions launched a website for the campaign and full details can be accessed either through the GMB website or directly to www.timetopayup.org.uk.

On pay the 2008/09 settlement achieved a 3.2% increase on all salaries and allowances, or the sum of £550 (whichever is greater) in the form of an underpinning.

The £550 underpinning meant that everyone below scale point 15 (£17,469) on the harmonised pay spine received a larger increase than the recommended 3.2% from 1st October 2008. It also meant that the minimum hourly rate of pay increased by 4.32% to £6.91 per hour. However, all this is meaningless if GMB Colleges are not implementing the recommendation. Therefore it is essential the GMB take an active role locally to secure the national pay settlements and begin local membership organization. The National Officer Rehana Azam and National Reps Rory MacQueen and Mick McGarry will welcome any invitation from a region to go through the details of the campaign.

11. Environment Agency

The majority of GMB membership is held by the Southern Region and the two national reps Terry Sadler and Mike Sutton are also based within the region. National negotiations on pay and conditions are carried out through the National Negotiating Group (NNG) where the GMB has one seat occupied by the national rep. The national officer supports the NNG in its discussion on generic issues affecting Environment Agency members.

2008/09 pay negotiations were technical as they were linked to the introduction of a new pay and grading scheme for staff and a basic up to 2% increase for the operation side. Members who participated in the pay ballot returned an acceptance to the offer. At the time of writing the 2009/10 pay claim has been formulated by the trade union side and will be submitted to the Employer shortly.

The National Officer working alongside the national reps have tried to secure engagement across the regions with little success. As a result we have evaluated that until there is a request from regions to organize meetings/forum

nationally, our priorities will remain engaging in the NNG and sub groups underpinned by a strong communication strategy with the regions on all outcomes of these meetings.

12. Police Staff

The terms and conditions of Police Staff are negotiated through the Police Staff Council (PSC). The GMB has one seat on the PSC which is currently vacant due to Robert Wright's resignation from the post. This matter will be resolved shortly through the nominations received from regions for the vacant post. The National Officer working alongside the national rep progresses issues through the PSC.

Much of the year's work was taken up with the pay claim and the final outcome of these discussions led to a 3 year deal agreed by GMB members who participated in the ballot. The 3 year pay deal for 2008/10 offered a 2.6%, 2.6%, and 2.58% increase on all PSC pay points and allowances. Year 2 would see the deletion of the pay point 1 and Year 3 would see the deletion of the pay points 2 and 3. The deletion of the bottom pay points has been seen a significant step to end low pay in the sector. A re-opener clause was included in the deal but current indications on inflation will mean that this will not be applied. In addition to this a strong statement was agreed by the PSC on the view to develop a strategic approach to explore a national grading structure for all Police Staff in England and Wales.

Nationally the GMB are seeking to work with regions locally to strengthen GMB force organization. Midlands and East Coast region invited the National GMB Police Forum to hold their first meeting in the region. It will also be appropriate to record our thanks to Robert Wright, Yorkshire Region of his unfaltering support to the GMB nationally in particular during the period where Yorkshire region was leading the sector nationally.

13. Local Government

The three key issues for local government have been and remain pay, pensions and single status. In addition there has, in 2009, been pressure on local authority finances and consequent effects on jobs.

Local Government Pay

2008 NJC pay negotiations, covering 1.7 million council workers, proved just as challenging as 2007. Local government employers offered 2.2% which, after negotiation, resulted in a formal offer of 2.45% plus bottom loading - at GMB's insistence - making it worth 3.3% for those on the bottom three spinal column points. After much deliberation and an affirmative vote of all members GMB accepted this offer. Unison and Unite took strike action but it could not be sustained. GMB brokered an arrangement whereby pay was referred to ACAS arbitration and in the meantime the final offer was paid "on account". An arbitration hearing took place on 10 February 2009 and at the time of compiling this report the outcome remains unknown.

There is a consequential effect on 2009 pay negotiations which, in any event, take place against the backdrop of tumbling inflation. 2009 negotiations will again start late and many local authorities are using the economic recession as an excuse to lower their budget for pay. 2009 will again be a tough year for local government pay and GMB will, as ever, consult carefully with members over any offer.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The new LGPS that we negotiated and was introduced in April 2008 has been bedding in with the only serious concern being around the application of the 3-tier ill-health pension arrangements. GMB has been monitoring this closely. Most significantly, we have seen general attacks on public sector pensions and that has included the LGPS. This was expected and the government officials, unions, employers and advisers involved in the LGPS have been preparing a sustainability plan to demonstrate the scheme's viability. It is essential that we simultaneously win the debate on pensions - that public sector pensions should not be dumbed down to private sector levels, rather the latter should be levelled up - and be able to show that the LGPS has a responsible, affordable cost structure.

Single Status/Equal Pay

Achieving single status/equal pay in local government continues to be by far the greatest demand on our resources. Single status negotiations with only limited funding have proved very difficult as some traditional bonus earners have found their pay capped or even reduced by imposition - and considerable numbers of administrative and clerical jobs have also been downgraded. There have been great gains for 'manual' women's jobs and significant pay rises plus large equal pay compensation payments have resulted.

GMB backs up its negotiating position with litigation and we lead the union movement with 30,000 equal pay claims for our women members. This is a staggering achievement and shows beyond doubt our commitment to equal pay. But all this has come at a cost as unscrupulous no-win-no-fee lawyers have sought to exploit the situation and persuaded our own members to take cases against us alleging discrimination in collective negotiations.

The Courts upheld one such case dating back to 2004 (the 'Allen' case). Although some others have been dropped or dismissed there are still many outstanding. The final resolution to these cases is critical to the future of collective bargaining in the UK.

BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,832
MANUFACTURING SECTION	15,224
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	25,246
Grade 1 members	38,991
Grade 2 members	11,136
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,175
Male Membership	29,526
Female Membership	24,776
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	9,514
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,266
Membership on Check-off	36,729
Membership on Direct Debit	13,096

Response to Organising Agenda

I am pleased to report that the Organising Agenda within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region continues to be the priority. All Officers, staff and activists within the region are fully on board with our Organising Agenda which I believe shows in the improved recruitment figures and financial membership. The Organising Team still have the same priorities which are to drive the organising agenda amongst the Officers within the region. Each member of the team is allocated a specific area of responsibility within the national and regional projects. They then ensure that that particular project is driven and has cohesion. The region continues to operate a system where each area team dedicates one week out of every four to solely organising which is still done in addition to general day-to-day organising. Also, with regards to the schools campaign, Officers diaries are accessible to a member of the Organising Team and where there are significant free spaces, school visits are allocated into their diaries and the Officers then visit the appropriate school. The GMB@Work Training for new activists and existing activists continues to be delivered in the region throughout 2008. This has proved quite successful and as a result of that training, we have seen a marked improvement in both our recruitment figures but also in the quality of service provided to rank and file members by shop stewards who have attended the training. The use of lay representatives to assist in the area teams to organise, continues to be a success and the use of accompanying representatives to handle first line grievances and disciplinaries continue to be utilised which allows Full Time Officers more opportunities to devote time to organising and servicing the membership. Again, as with my last report, I am very pleased to report that the Organising Agenda continues to be positive throughout the region and all Full Time Officers and staff are totally committed to the Organising Agenda and the success of the region. In line with Motion 21 at Congress 2007, branches continue to adopt branch recruitment plans in accordance with Rule 37 and where requested, the region assists with funding to assist the branch recruitment plan. As a result of the commitment of all involved in the Organising Agenda, it gives me great pleasure to report an increase in financial membership on the twelve month period of two thousand, two hundred and sixty six which I believe is a credit to all Officers, staff and activists within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

Throughout 2008, we have continued to concentrate on the main national targets which were Public Services, where School Support Staff and Catering Staff are providing us with a constant steady stream of members and we are ensuring that when we do make new members in schools, we appoint a person as a contact who we are finding in turn, then become representatives in certain cases. As well as Public Services, G4S and latterly Asda have been targeted and again G4S has brought us a steady flow of new membership. Asda is slightly more difficult with regards to accessing the stores however we have begun to see an increase in our Asda membership and this will remain a target for organising. The other national target has been Southern Cross Care Homes, as mentioned in last years Congress report we have made the Southern Cross week an annual event and in 2008 we held our second Southern Cross week. The continued activity within Southern Cross has seen us increase our membership at the end of December 2008 to 864 members. The Southern Cross strategy has been so successful that we now intend to conduct the same strategy in Wilkinson's Stores on an annual event. As well as the national targets we also have our Regional Project Board and working progress throughout 2008 have included the following companies or organisations; Egbert Taylor, London M&E Ltd, J Lomas, Tewkesbury Park Hotel, Delwin Centre, James Irlam Transport, Access Technologies, Wells Plastics, Iron Mountain Logistics, Northgate Consultants and WSP/May Gurney. The Greenfield targets continue to be pursued and from January 2008 through to December 2008 the following Recognition Agreements were secured; DSL UK Ltd, Gloucestershire Police Support Services and Stafford and Rural Homes.

Overview of Region's Economic & Employment Situation

At the time of writing the region's economic and employment situation can only be described as dire. Towards the end of 2008 we suffered a series of major job losses in the Automotive and Construction Sector which in my opinion was brought on by the frivolous actions of the banks which now leaves us in the midst of a severe recession. Manufacturing remains one of the key employers across the West Midlands with 19,000 manufacturing firms which employ over 360,000 people across the West Midlands, generating sales of 45 billion pounds. With such statistics it would be absolutely disastrous if the Government allowed the recession to bite even further without taking precipitive action to prevent the haemorrhaging in the Manufacturing Sector. Unemployment was above the national average in the West Midlands, the claimant count rising highest in the West Midlands in December 2008. As at the end of December 2008 the average number of claims stood at 4.8%.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	4
Membership Development Officers	NIL
Regional Organisers	16
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	114
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	17
Branch Youth Officers	9

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	1465
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Funeral	9,050

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

During 2008 the regional magazine, Centreport, was transformed into a national magazine with a regional dimension. The magazine continues to be a success in the region and the regional website is also a very popular source of information for the membership. Throughout 2008, press releases have been published in almost all of the regional newspapers with interviews taking place on television and radio on the following subjects; compensation recovered through our legal services, job losses in JCB, GKN, Jaguar Land Rover, TRW and Baggeridge Brick. The regular newsletters continued to be circulated amongst the section membership in Southern Cross, Asda and the School Support Staff. All-in-all I am of the opinion that the media strategy we have established has proven to be very successful in raising both awareness and the profile of the GMB Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

.Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
776	776

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
290	164	1	£3,755,613.91	£1,650,000.00	£5,405,613.91
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		486			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	57
---------------------------	----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
9	3	0	£278,935.30		£278,935.30
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		45			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
107			3

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
11	5	3

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Since last year's Congress the Birmingham and West Midlands Region has been working on disbanding the Regional Equal Rights and Race Committees and setting-up the new Regional Equality Forum (REF), with elections to this body conducted in October 2008. The REF members have been allocated into project groups to look at specific issues around equality and diversity, organising, campaigning and communicating with the Region and the wider community. The focus of the REF is to integrate equality and diversity into everything the union does. The projects are being headed up by the REF Officer and the three National Equality Forum (NEF) representatives Sharon Harding, Tony Hughes and Harpal Jandu. The Region yet again staged a very successful Women's Conference in November, which was very well attended. The REF would like to thank the Regional Secretary for the financial support given to this day. Also a special thanks to Sharon Harding NEF rep for all her hard work prior to the conference and her commitment on the day which helped it run so smoothly.

7. TRAINING

The GMB@Work basic training and the existing reps training have gone very well in the Region. The Education Department would like to thank all those reps, Officers' tutors and staff for helping put 384 reps through training.

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB @ Work	8	71	37	108	864
GMB @ Work existing reps.	7	27	14	41	287
GMB Induction	7	47	18	65	455

(b) GMB specialist courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Equality & Collective Bargaining (up date)	2	5	8	13	26
Intermediate industrial relations	1	8	2	10	10
Employment law up-date	1	12	0	12	12

(c) GMB Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety Stage 1	2	25	4	29	58
Accident investigating	1	9	0	9	9
Advanced health & safety	1	16	0	16	16
Occupational health & safety certificate	1	13	1	14	14

(d) Northern College					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Advanced health & safety	1	4	1	5	5
Stewards refresher course	1	2	0	2	2
Practical employment law	1	1	1	2	2
Understanding Disability Act	1	0	1	1	1

(e) GFTU Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Dealing with Bullying & Harassment	1	2	0	2	2
Leadership skills	3	5	1	6	18
Basics of health and safety	2	4	0	3	8
Risk assessment	1	2	0	2	2
Intro to Political theory	1	1	1	2	2
ICT course	2	3	0	3	6
Advanced negotiating behaviour	1	1	0	1	1
Building trade union organisation	1	1	0	1	1
Trade unions & environment	1	2	0	2	2
Equality reps	2	2	1	3	6
Understanding company accts	1	1	0	1	1
Self management & personal effectiveness	1	2	0	2	2
Organising migrant workers	1	1	0	1	1
Building self esteem / assertiveness / public speaking	3	2	1	3	9
Management of change	1	1	0	1	1
Time management	1	1	0	1	1
Into intro HRM	1	1	0	1	1
Emotional intelligence	1	1	0	1	1

(f) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & safety stage 1	3	8	0	8	24
Union reps 1	2	1	2	3	6
Safety reps occupational diploma	1	1	0	1	1
TUC diploma law	3	2	3	5	15
Stepping up	1	2	0	2	2
Using computers	1	1	0	1	1
ULR training	1	1	0	1	1

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region has continued to implement Union policy with regard to health and safety. The Region continues to offer advice and assistance to our representatives by providing both an information service and workplace visits when requested. The Department has been instrumental in driving health and safety issues forward and raising awareness amongst Officers and representatives.

In the past year the Health and Safety Department has been involved in a number of workplace organising campaigns. At Walsall MBC the GMB reps ran a seminar for the kitchen staff during induction days on accident and near miss reporting. The reps met with over 80 kitchen staff. There have been safety and environment initiatives at Worcester County Council run by Jane McCann the county's senior GMB representative and safety rep of the year 2007. The Region has also been at the forefront of the National Green Working Party, which was set-up at last years

Congress. Workers' Memorial Day was again commemorated with a multi-faith service held at St John's Church close to Regional office and was well attended.

LONDON REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	33,132
MANUFACTURING SECTION	10,514
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	50,329
Grade 1 members	60,507
Grade 2 members	25,077
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	8,391
Male Membership	44,145
Female Membership	49,830
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	14,754
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,276
Membership on Check-off	57,106
Membership on Direct Debit	30,371

During the period January 1st to December 31st 2008 the London Region built on the success of the previous year. With a further increase of 2276 financial members, reflecting the hard work and commitment of all the Officers, Staff, Branch Secretaries, Shop Stewards et al.

Unfortunately we suffered a slight membership decrease in the Commercial Services section which reflects the overall trend. However, we made up for this with an increase in both Manufacturing and Public Services sections. Female membership continued to grow, as did the numbers on check off and direct debit, the largest percentage increase being grade 2 members.

We continue to increase membership in schools based on our pro active campaigning, which we are also pursuing in Wilkinsons, ASDA and Southern Cross, as part of Regional and National targeting.

As with all other Regions we face a very difficult future but we are confident that with sensitive targeting and commitment we will weather the storm.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	2
Membership Development Officers	3
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	8
No. of Branches	120
New Branches	NIL
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	10

Whilst the London Region continues to focus on recruitment we are mindful of the need for consolidation, as well as the protection of the terms and conditions and employment rights of those of our members in companies facing the effects of the economic downturn.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	411.56
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	2187.50
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Funeral	17,104.00

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

GMB London Region continues to issue press releases when it is considered by the relevant Organiser that raising public awareness of a dispute will assist in a settlement. We also get press coverage for any employment issue that can be helped to progress with the use of positive public opinion.

We continue to highlight the work of GMB members in the public sector and the utilities.

We have highlighted the successes of GMB full time Organisers and the benefit of GMB membership such as the reinstatement of GMB London Region member Virgilio Teixeira who was unfairly dismissed from his £20,000 a year job as Head Chef at the Arora International Hotel Heathrow, the sacking of GMB London Region member Tony Goode from M&S for leaking to the press details of the cuts in M&S redundancy scheme. Tony Goode was summarily dismissed in early September 2008 for leaking details of the cuts in the redundant pay scheme. St Albans Council's role in the illegal use of mini cabs in the City. The expansion of Stansted and Heathrow Airports. GMB sponsored the London march in support of the 80th anniversary of the Polish state, which was attended by many London region members and members from other GMB regions, including our member who was sacked from the Grosvenor Hotel for trade union activities. The loss of members jobs as part of the recession and many other disputes in the Region. We have also publicised the work of the Sex Workers Branch in pushing through their agenda and opposition to the Police and Crime Bill. The 2009 Pay claim was launched in January even though the 2008 claim remains unsettled. Pay talks and freezes at BMI and BA and other workplaces and the dispute at Chemilines in Wembley.

The London Region website (www.gmbunion.org.uk) hosts all the press releases that have been issued this year on the NEWS page. They are also shown on the Press page on the national site www.gmb.org.uk

Campaigns

The Thermal Insulation Engineers Fight for Re-instatement of Pleural Plaques Compensation. The press office also assisted with the Lagers further rallies of Parliament to support the reinstatement of compensation for Pleural Plaques.

The campaign against Wembley employer Chemilines has gone to the National Press Office.

Private Hire Drivers Health and Safety - Private hire drivers lone working problems have led to nine deaths since March 2007. The campaign was launched at the start of February 2008 and there was a lobby of Parliament on Workers Memorial Day (28th April 2008). The campaign aims are to get funding for CCTV and shield in cabs. Sheffield has led the way by introducing these and cutting attacks on driver by 72%.

Candid

As part of the GMB Congress Special Report 2006 and Progress Update 2007 – A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward, the first edition of a new look CANDID, the March 2008 edition, was part of the first every national magazine that will be mailed to every GMB member. Four editions of the new look CANDID which comprises an outer 16 pages of GMB London Region news and views and an inner 16 pages will be GMB national news and views have been delivered to GMB all London Region members.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
785	785

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
855	438	2	401 £4,353,067.14	14 £316,919.90	£4,669,987.04
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		1,344			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	296
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
79	27	4	42 £354,461.61	6 £27,611.77	£382,073.38
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		217			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
489	-	£649,869.91	679

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
2	-	7

The London Region continues to monitor advice and performance of the Region's solicitors to ensure that they provide a first rate service to members.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The London Region has not as yet set up the new Equalities Forum format regionally and therefore the individual Race and Equalities and Young Members reports follow.

Around five percent of the total membership of GMB London Region, are designated as young members. That means that they are aged twenty-seven or less. The vast majority of them work in public services, the utilities, water, gas and electricity supply and so tend to be covered by decent Terms and Conditions agreements. We also have

many young activists who work for other trade unions and the Labour Party and other campaigning political pressure groups. They form the basis of the Young Member activist base.

A search of the GMB membership data based revealed that we only have 10 Branch Youth Officers listed and email addresses for only two of those.

A delegation of GMB London Region Young Members attended the GMB Young Members National Conference in November 2008. Unfortunately the delegation was entirely male and did not reach the necessary gender balance. This should in no way undermine or devalue the work and commitment of the individual members of the delegation who have done all the work in the Region. Between them they have set up a dedicated website at www.GMBYOUNGLONDON.unionweb.co.uk and member survey (results not yet available).

The conference heard about the workings of and the high level of success of the GMB@Work agenda from Martin Smith, GMB National Organiser. We were successful in getting Sam Tarry on the GMB delegation for TUC Youth Conference in 2009. They joined the delegates for six other GMB regions in workshops on how to fight the BNP and how to get involved in the ASDA Store campaign and recruit and help organise workers in their local stores. Sam Tarry took responsibility for organizing the after conference bash at a local pub which was very successful.

It is not all campaigning work for GMB young members. They enjoy themselves too. Twelve of them volunteered to go to Glastonbury 2008 as servers for the trade union owned Workers Beer Company to raise money for trade union activities and campaigns. Here is a report from one of them. Glastonbury-goers not anchored to the Pyramid Stage or the Dance Arena, who can brave the walk along the top of the festival site, past The Park and Greenfields areas, and who aren't adverse to partying until dawn before dragging themselves and their friends back to their tents to snatch a couple of hours sleep in time for the bands start up again, will often find themselves in a little corner of vibrant activity, music and theatrics – a mini-festival within a festival. It used to be Lost Vagueness; all posh-frocks and bow ties, table-dancing and roulette. In 2008 it was Shangri La.

GMB sent volunteers from its London and North London groups to Glastonbury this year to help staff the bars in Shangri La, serving drinks to the colourful range of punters frequenting the area till the early hours. As well as the usual Glasto festival camping provisions – tent, Wellington boots, snorkel – the servers were instructed to take along their weirdest and wildest fancy dress items so as to blend in with their surroundings. Arriving on site laden with Hawaiian shirts, neon tights, pirate hats, face paints, glitter and all manner of random get-up, the fourteen GMB members were split between three of the Shangri La bars: Bassline Circus - a futuristic, high energy bar with live acrobats and DJs; Shackney - a two-storey favela-style rum shack with an outdoor dance floor and a VIP lounge upstairs; and Club Da Da - a circus freak show-themed music and cabaret venue. The shifts were 11pm until 5am, on the Friday and Saturday nights (and mornings), with Sunday free to spend the time catching up on some well-earned rest and soaking up the sun (no snorkels necessary), sights and sounds of the festival. GMB young member volunteers working in Shangri La area of Glastonbury earned over £850 for the London Region Members' Hardship Fund - which members can appeal to if they need financial help at any time.

RACE & EQUALITIES REPORT

Local Community:

We are involved with the local community, i.e. Muslim community – CJM (Central Jamia Mosque). There have big gatherings every Friday. As a member of this organisation I always involve myself in their surgeries which offer information and help to people in this community, for example issues relating to immigration, which can be directed to an independent Solicitor, giving people instant help and advice. This community is also heavily involved in any national or international issues, i.e. sending donations to the recent war appeal in Gaza plus other international disaster funds. We have similarly now decided to get involved with the Singh, Hindu and Polish communities giving assistance and advice, this way we can show these communities how the GMB is helpful to the local community and local politics.

Opposition Wins Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Elections:

The Lion Group has beaten the outgoing Falcon group by 90 votes.

More than 7,000 people turned out to vote for the Gurdwara committee, which will oversee management of the Havelock Road temple and its facilities for the next two years. The queue was ½ mile long at busy times. There have

been accusations of misuse and unfair practice by outgoing President Himmat Singh Sohi, which he has denied. This struggle has continued for many years causing disunity amongst the Sikh community in Southall. Raj Gill, GMB activist and employee, is keen to work with community leaders to introduce the GMB/TUC learning agenda to assist on employment advice. We are hopeful of positive responses in order to assist workers in and around west London area.

EEC Elections:

The European Elections will be held in the UK on Thursday 4th June 2009. The count will be held across Europe on the evening of the 7th June. London will have 8 seats in 2009. We will be urging maximum turnout of voters to ensure BNP Candidates are not Elected. Support Hope not Hate UAF and local TC campaigns to defeat racism. Main focal area of BNP activities in West London is Hounslow Middlesex and East London is Barking & Dagenham.

Race & Equalities Committee:

The Race & Equalities Committee held a meeting with the National Equalities and Inclusion Officer, Kamaljeet Jandu, providing guidelines. We have also recently written to all Branch Secretaries, requesting details of the Race & Equalities Official in their branch to update our records. We will be arranging a meeting soon with the Regional Secretary and Branch R & E representatives to make a plan for this coming year.

Two local companies, one company based at Heathrow Airport the other based at West Middlesex Hospital, consist of mainly Punjabi and Polish speaking female workers. In both areas we have tried to improve the quality of working conditions and the environment, i.e. equal treatment, pay, health and safety standards. The workers have been working in a very vulnerable environment with long shift working hours. However the companies are improving terms and conditions, and we have been assisting with the language barrier. We have also recently recruited a new Polish Shop Steward at one of these companies, which again will aid the language difficulty.

Race & Equalities Case File:

Recently we have become involved in a race/violent assault case through the Hounslow Race & Equalities Council. We have recently attended the investigatory meeting with the lady involved and the company, Johnson Controls. This is a very serious matter and the case is still ongoing. We are offering our full support to the member whilst the company investigates and conducts a full enquiry into the incident.

Migrant Workers:

We have several companies at Heathrow Airport employing migrant workers in security positions. Some of these workers experience difficulties renewing their passes as their passports and documents are held up in the system with the Home Office. There is no fast track system to identify these workers who have valid passports and the right to work in this country. As a result of the long delays some are losing their jobs and being put in financial difficulties. The union is trying to support these workers who are unfairly dismissed in these circumstances.

New Project:

We start a new project for recruitment in the West London area and have several food companies to target. With this in mind we may need assistance from the Race Committee to input in the organisation of these work places.

We now have a new site office which opened on the 1st February 2009, at the Brent Indian Association at Wembley. This is where we will run surgeries for the local community, in particular targeting Park Royal and the Wembley area in recruiting and organising the community. The office will be open every Monday and Friday for surgeries and on Saturdays for English and Computer classes.

Activist workshop: Is been proposed in Park Royal venue by some GMB Branch's to organise local industry.

Branch's Social:

The Hotels and Catering, and security Branches held a very successful Latin American Brazilian event at Guanabara Club in November 2008. The GMB Hounslow and G4S also supported the function. The event raised £420 for The Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (3 days)	11	110	36	146	438
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	8	58	30	88	440
GMB@WORK	16	166	73	239	478

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety (5 days)	8	62	22	64	420
Safety Inspections (2 days)	3	23	7	30	60

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
ULR Follow On (3 days)	1	9	3	12	36
Put it in Writing (3 days)	5	27	13	40	120
Negotiation Skills (3 days)	3	25	4	29	87
Say Your Piece (3 days)	2	17	6	23	69
Stress, Bullying, Harassment (3 days)	6	43	13	56	168
Communication Skills (1 day)	5	26	11	37	37
Disc and Grievance (3 days)	4	34	13	47	141

Northern College	2	1	1	2	14
Other regions (not known)	9	4	5	9	N/A
Diversity Works (1 day)	2	22	8	30	30

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The RHSO continues to work closely with all Regional Officers, where issues of health, safety and welfare can be a benefit by preparing bespoke written and/or verbal advice before, during and after to their servicing and recruitment activities, being proactively involved in workplace visits, advising on workplace health and safety inspections, incorporating safety representatives' support and advocacy.

In conjunction with the Regional Education Officer, the Region continually looks to see if we can further improve the existing skill set and knowledge base of GMB representatives which encourages a greater presence at the workplace and thereby aid membership growth and retention.

Allied to in-house regional health, safety and welfare courses a number of representatives have undertaken and successfully passed their NEBOSH General Certificate and IOSH NVQ level 3 occupational Health and Safety training qualifications by obtaining funding through the John Cope Trust

Workers Memorial Day was honoured with a multi trade union and hazard campaigners rally at the Tate Modern and then marching to Rose Court (currently HSE Head office); the rally then marched and concluded at City Hall office of the Mayor of London.

The following regional health, safety and welfare guidance have been sent to safety representatives and branches during 2008 to aid membership recruitment and retention:

- Guidance on 'ACOUSTIC SHOCK';
- Guidance on 'Lone Working in safety';
- Guidance on 'Work-related road safety';
- Guidance on the TUC Safety Reps Survey 2008 Executive Summary;
- Guidance for Safety Reps guide on 'older working';
- Guidance on Asbestos including a workplace inspection checklist;
- Guidance on COSHH including a workplace inspection checklist;
- Guidance for safety representatives on members working with diabetes;
- Guidance on the changes to the Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations (1977) amendments;
- Guidance on Health and Safety Myths; and
- European Parliament discussion on the Working Time opt out update

The Region continues to show a commitment to Health and Safety as an organising and recruiting tool by investing in a dedicated Regional H&S officer; as this enables both action and information to be accessible to officers, safety reps and members in a quick and efficient manner.

MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	54,045
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,586
MANUFACTURING SECTION	16,889
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	23,570
Grade 1 members	36,495
Grade 2 members	11,044
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	6,506
Male Membership	31,680
Female Membership	22,365
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	8,211
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	+482
Membership on Check-off	31,383
Membership on Direct Debit	16,388

Response to Organising Agenda

The Midland and East Coast Region continues to have input and supports the National Organising Agenda. The Region's Organising Team is led by the Membership Development Officer and is overseen by a designated Senior Organiser. The Regional Organising Team is supported by a designated co-ordinator/administrator, which gives us a self sufficient recruitment team.

Membership growth is measured and monitored not only by membership levels but also by the added value of GMB@Work training, thus taking the recruitment/retention/servicing agenda into the workplace.

The main drive is focused within the National targets of Schools, Southern Cross, and Asda which has, in the main, resulted in growth within the Region.

In the past year we have delivered GMB@Work training to new and existing representatives across the Region. The training is supplemented by a Full Time Officer assisting the Education and Training Officer to deliver the GMB@Work training.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

The Midland and East Coast Region continues to support the National Organising Team projects and our involvement in running a recruitment pilot in the NHS has produced excellent results. We have produced a DVD to assist and explain the GMB approach to servicing, representing and recruitment in the NHS.

Each office has a display board to identify our success in our designated targets.

In the Region we still operate a rolling recruitment week in each area of the Region and these are agreed for the year and organised in conjunction with the area team and Regional Organising Team, coupled with the Full Time Officer designating one day per fortnight for organising duties.

Some of the Region's targets outside the National targets are Further Education establishments, and Wilkinson's Stores. We continue to target non members in Local Authorities with levels of up to 50% non members in some Authorities.

Our goal to continue to recruit, retain and service our members is inclusive across all areas, gender and ethnicity within all communities. We continue to push our relevance to migrant workers across the Region.

One observation that can be made is as a result of the new vibrant GMB@Work ethos proves we were correct in not taking up the invitation to join UNITE.

Retired Members Association

Our Retired Members Association continues to motivate others by their continuing campaigning on issues such as protecting pensions, dignified care for the elderly, reduced travel and energy costs, along with reviews of benefits and closure of Post Offices. Our RMA are fondly and respectfully known as the 'The Grey Lions' and not without reason.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Status

The East Midlands is the third largest Region in England covering 15,607 sq km and it is the third most rural region in England (29.5% of the total population live in rural areas). Total population is 4.4 million.

The East Midlands faces particular challenges of its own:

- The effects of globalisation on an area with a strong manufacturing tradition.
- Demographic changes, including an ageing population and migration.
- Lower than average skills.

On some levels the Regional economy is doing well with high employment and relatively high economic growth. But our success is not reflected across all parts of the Region.

Manufacturing businesses throughout the East Midlands are facing severe competition from overseas, and exporting is becoming increasingly difficult for standard services and products. As the pace of technology change speeds up and new industrial economies develop, the future of the manufacturing sector within the Region must be based on the recognition that innovation through the continuous introduction of new and differentiated products and services is key to regional competitiveness.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	1
Regional Organisers	15

Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	90
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	43
Branch Youth Officers	27

The Regional Secretary continues to lead the Region's management team, supported by 3 Senior Organisers who each have individual geographical areas, which are aligned to improve the services we deliver to the members.

The Region has 15 servicing Organisers, supported by a Membership Development Officer and 2 Organising Officers, which form part of the Regional Organising Team who have responsibility for working in the whole of the Region with the Servicing Organisers and Activists. The 3 Senior Organisers each have responsibility for one of the Sections in the GMB, along with other responsibilities, as delegated by the Regional Secretary.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	
Total Disablement	
Working Accident	£3,777.30
Occupational Fatal Accident	£6,000
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	
Funeral	£24,852.50

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Our Region's aim is to raise our profile and relevance and advice to members and the wider community.

Examples are the new regional magazine, Contact, and moving its content to reflect our members and not just on industrial matters. The industrial issues are covered by National and Regional Officers.

We have increased our information flow by creating an e-mail database in Schools and Local Government, along with a text service direct to our members.

Lay membership involvement in Area Forums have proved that a traditional model of meetings is still one of the best ways to mobilise common agendas such as political forums, social forums and industrial forums, thus empowering the lay membership.

Media has played a great part in publicising the GMB involvement on issues important to local members such as closures and redundancies, and responses to political decisions.

Each officer is committed to cascading the GMB view to the general public and wider community. We continue to sponsor local initiatives and support Branches in promoting the GMB. One example being we have placed advertisements in employer handbooks in the NHS, and PCT's, creating increased interest in the GMB.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
825	561

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
817	272	2	543 £5,696,161.98		£5,696,161.98
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		1,344			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	260
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
119	66		53 £279,489.21		£279,489.21
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		532			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
3	14	£1,120.77	7

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
1	1	1

The last batch of Unilever part-time pension claims should hopefully soon be concluded with only 5 now outstanding. A lot of the delay in concluding has been with our Solicitors/GMB having difficulty in obtaining instructions from our members due to non-notification to us of change in their addresses! In the majority of cases that have been settled Unilever confirmed that our members were entitled to additional deferred pension which was to be added to their existing deferred pension.

Through our trained representative we offer free advice and assistance where required on obtaining Welfare Benefits and there has been a significant increase in the number of appeals that our representative has had to deal with over the last year and we expect to see a further increase in Incapacity Benefit appeals since the introduction of the new Employment and Support Allowance that was introduced in October last year.

Again the free will service provided through Thompsons Solicitors continues to be very popular. Earlier in the year we re-launched, through our Regional Contact Magazine, a new paper version for registering a Personal Injury Claim with Thompsons and our members can also now complete a Personal Injury application form online via our regional website. These were introduced in addition to the Freephone Personal Injury Claim Line

number, which continues to be used, so that making a claim for a Personal Injury by our members and their families, is made as widely accessible as possible.

There has, unfortunately through the effects of the downturn in the economy during the latter months of the year, been an influx of claims lodged by our members at Employment Tribunal based on unfair selection for redundancy/unfair dismissal. This is obviously a very difficult time for a lot of our members and it is important that they have the legal services of the union behind them to provide the appropriate support and advice in relation to their employment issues.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee

The Region's RERAC (Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee) has met three times; it should have been four, but due to rail network problems, the meeting in May 2008 had to be cancelled.

We held the Regional Equal Rights Conference at the GMB Regional Office, Nottingham on 6 March 2008. The theme of the conference was Dignity Period, where we launched the ACTSA Dignity Period Campaign. This was also cascaded out to all Branches and workplaces. Quite a substantial number of Branches in the Region have made donations to ACTSA.

We are currently setting up a Regional Equality Forum, following a Congress decision in 2008.

The Region would like to thank RERAC for their contributions and support during the years they have been on the RERAC Committee.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee:

	White	Black	Asian	Other
Male	1			
Female	5	1	1	

Regional Race Advisory Committee

Since our last report the focus of the Regional Race Committee has been on trying to understand and progress the changes that have taken place at a National level.

The establishment of the National Equality Forum in itself caused considerable concern from our Region due to the fact that there was significant objection to the process of selection for the representatives who make up that Committee.

The Region put forward several people who were not contacted with regards to selection and this further aggravated the view that was held by the committee which was that these should have been elected positions rather than selected appointments. However, in the spirit of moving forward the Race Committee and the Regional Equal Rights Committee, having reflected their concerns the Region's RACE and RERAC Officers met with Kamaljeet Jandu to discuss the NEF and the implications for the existing committees. This proved to be very fruitful as there was a much clearer picture of what was happening at a National level, and although Race Committee members and indeed RERAC members maintained reservations about the selection process and accountability, we were satisfied that with the opportunity of having a regional observer attend the NEF we would at least maintain some understanding of what was going on. Doris Benjamin, who was the National Race Committee representative, has taken up the position of regional observer to the NEF with David Lascelles acting as reserve for when Doris is not available.

In terms of the development of a Regional Equalities Forum which is part of the expectation for the GMB's new equalities structure, there was a joint committee meeting that took place on 3rd February 2009 to discuss how the Region would progress along these lines. A number of things were agreed at this meeting, subject to the Regional Secretary's approval:

- That a Regional Equalities Conference would take place in either May or October 2009.

- That the Conference would invite Branches to send a maximum of two delegates.
- That nominations and elections for the Regional Equality Forum would take place at that Conference.
- That the Regional Equality Forum would, at a minimum, reflect the structure of the National Equality Forum, i.e.
 - 2 representatives specialising on gender equality
 - 2 representatives specialising in race
 - 2 representatives specialising in LGBT
 - 2 representatives specialising in disability
 - 2 representatives specialising in migrant workers
- That the joint committees would constitute the Regional Equalities Forum in the interim period and meet prior to the Regional Equality Conference in order to ensure that it is properly organised.
- That the experience and commitment of existing committee members from the Race Committee and RERAC would not be overlooked or allowed to become redundant when the new Regional Equality Forum is established.

It is therefore hoped that by the time Congress takes place, the Regional Equalities Forum will have either been established or at least be well on the way to that completion.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Regional Race Advisory Committee:

	White	Black	Asian	Other
Male	6	1	1	
Female	1	3	1	

7. YOUTH

The young members of the Midland and East Coast Region in 2008 have attempted to consolidate on progress made in activity over the last couple of years. This movement has been in accordance with the shift of priorities to an Organising Agenda across the union as a whole.

The young members section and the Region as a whole fully supported an event called “Love Difference” which took place in Northampton in September 2008. The purpose of the event was to publicise and promote cross-cultural understanding in the community. Primarily this was aimed at young migrant workers who now make up a sizeable proportion of local workforces. GMB contributed to a panel discussion on the benefits of migration in both economic and cultural terms. The GMB stressed the importance of union membership for young migrant workers. The day also included performances of poetry and live music as well as the chance to network with other like-minded community groups.

One area where the GMB in this Region has made significant progress is by taking on the services of two young Polish women, Dominika Jarzynska and Marzena Sek, to help with translation issues. One of the fundamental problems with organising migrant workers is in communication, and both Dominika and Marzena have helped enormously in this department. In some cases there are still difficulties in explaining both what a union is and how it operates, and that it is about collectivism and not just an individual legal advice “company”. Of course such difficulties cannot be solved overnight but the GMB is beginning to address the issue positively.

Unfortunately, for a variety of genuine reasons, this Region was not able to provide a delegation to the GMB young members’ conference in London in November. We believe that the decision not to provide accommodation may have had a negative effect and that when organising such events better consideration should be given to those delegates who come from outside the capital.

On a more positive note, and at the time of writing, this Region has submitted a number of delegates for the TUC Young Members Conference in Eastbourne.

The Region's Young Members Officer, David Shamma, recently attended one of the huge demonstrations in London against the Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people of Gaza. Whilst on the one hand it was great to see a whole host of trade union banners on the march what struck David most was that there were literally thousands of young British Asians in attendance for whom traditional politics were largely an irrelevancy. Perhaps our own Government's shameful silence and inaction in the face of the slaughter of so many Palestinians did not help, but here was a large section of British youth becoming politicized by world events and having no traditional political avenue to go down. If traditional politics are irrelevant then the GMB must engage and participate in areas where other politicians appear afraid to go.

Finally we once again have to point out that blatant age discrimination still exists in the provision of lower pay rates for young workers in the minimum wage legislation. In an era when an economic downturn is being used by some employers to attack working people the fact that this legislation is still unequal is quite frankly a disgrace that must be ended.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB, and GMB@Work (1 day)	10	75	15	90	90
Introduction to GMB, and GMB@Work (2 days)	7	60	19	79	158
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	7	52	16	68	340

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to Health & Safety (3 days)	7	49	15	64	192

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Accompanying Reps (1 weekday)	2	11	5	16	16
Grievance and Disciplinarys (1 weekday)	2	8	3	11	11
Introduction to Pensions (2 weekdays)	1	10	2	12	24

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC courses		77	11	88	
GFTU courses		12	11	23	
Northern College courses		12	2	14	

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

Workplace Organisation and Visits

In the period since last Congress, the RHSO has been involved in a number of visits to workplaces:

- William Hare Ltd (Scarborough) - H&S Review/Health Surveillance
- Rigid Containers (Desborough) - Migrant Workers/ESOL/H&S
- NET (Nottingham Trams) - Risk Assessments/Member safety
- Southern Cross (Bingham) - Risk Assessment of Care Home
- SISIS (Macclesfield) - H&S Inspection
- Kings Mill Hospital (Mansfield) - Risk and Ergonomics Assessment
- Ellis Guildford School (Nottm) - Work-related Stress

The service continues to be explained to all new representatives attending all the Regional training courses.

Enquiries

Regional Office continues to handle health and safety enquiries. In the period since the last report to Congress the following subject areas were raised:

- Asbestos - GMB Regional database scheme
- Working temperatures - What is the minimum?
- Risk Assessments - Employers legal responsibilities
- Work-related Stress - Individual Rights/Absence
- Lone Working - Risk assessment/safe practices
- Working Time - Rest breaks/payment
- Food Hygiene - Concerns over standards

Training

The RHSO has completed the new Workplace Safety Reps Advanced Course and this will be piloted in April 2009.

Other courses planned are short courses based on the health and safety risks faced by vulnerable workers, i.e. migrant workers.

Information Distribution

During 2008 the following Health and Safety matters have been distributed to Safety Reps and Branches:

- January 2008 - Climate Change – The Impact on the Workplace
- February 2008 - Pleural Plaques – The Campaign for Justice
- March 2008 - Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act
- April 2008 - REACH/Changes to Chemical Usage - Workplaces
- May 2008 - Decriminalisation Of Death And Injury At Work
- June 2008 - Opportunity for Greater Involvement
- July 2008 - Health & Safety Offences Bill 2008
- August 2008 - Pleural Plaques Compensation
- September 2008 - Employers Liability Insurance
- October 2008 - HSE Asbestos Campaign
- November 2008 - Mesothelioma
- December 2008 - New HSE Strategy – Be Part of the Solution

The Regional Office continues to offer an e-mailing service to distribute electronic versions of documents dealing with health and safety, on request from representatives. The Region's re-vamped website holds a great deal of Health and Safety information, and additional resources are to be added, including the new Safety Representatives' Toolkit.

A revision and update of the Health and Safety pages on the Regional website is continuing. The Department will always be proactive in responding to any changes in the needs of our safety representatives.

Additional Activity

The RHSO attended the launch of the Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team in September 2008. The organisation has successfully attracted additional funding that allows it to expand into Nottingham and other areas of the East Midlands. The GMB will be supporting the organisation as much as possible.

NORTHERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	74,418
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	19,464
MANUFACTURING SECTION	28,003
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	26,951
Grade 1 members	47,208
Grade 2 members	10,237
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	16,974
Male Membership	46,801
Female Membership	27,618
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	8,517
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	757
Membership on Check-off	40,931
Membership on Direct Debit	14,856

Response to Organising Agenda

Our organising strategy is locked into the GMB@Work organising agenda strategy, with the initial training and support mechanisms directed, in the first instance, to our newly appointed shop stewards, with recruitment at the top of the Agenda, and the training delivered by our Organisers. To date, approximately 255 have received the benefit of the training.

This is to be extended to existing shop stewards and union learning reps. In line with the GMB@Work strategy we are training organisers to deliver the further training of shop stewards, with four officers in the process of achieving the necessary qualification.

Consolidation of members, where we have union recognition, is our priority. Our well trained workplace representatives we are confident will deliver a higher density of membership.

Breaking new ground and extending GMB spheres of influence is running in tandem with the consolidation strategy through the recognition regulations. Officers are encouraged to identify potential targets for building up the membership above the 10% requirement. Organising a petition to pass the 50% requirement, then lodging the application. This has proved extremely successful in securing new recognition agreements.

Officers have dedicated two days per week to the consolidation of membership in organised workplaces, wherein we have potential to recruit.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

We continue the planned approach to recruitment in the National targeted organisation, in conjunction with the National Organising Team in Southern Cross, Schools, Security and ASDA.

We managed to secure recognition in a workplace ballot at ASDA Distribution, Teesport, this, despite the best efforts of the ASDA propaganda machine and more recently at Walkers Logistics, part of the Pepsico Group, which represents a major coup. Again, we beat the propaganda well oiled machine of this multi-national, anti-union company. We continue to recruit in Wilkinson stores with a level of success, which can be improved. Our next major target is another ASDA Distribution site RCD8, Washington, Tyne and Wear. This is our second attempt. Previously we lost by a whisker but won a massive compensation claim for inducement from the employer to drop union membership with compensation near the million mark. We are confident we will win on this occasion.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Situation

The credit crunch and economic slowdown is affecting all sectors of the economy.

The service provider and public sector are all affected by the downturn.

Administration is the only area of growth, with company after company going to the wall, representing a dramatic change from our last report.

However, there are some positive signs on the manufacturing sector, in the longer term, with the prospect of 6,000 jobs through the construction of windmills for farms offshore, bigger than the Eiffel Tower, so we are told, to be built on the ex-shipyards on Tyneside.

This work is likely to commence in 2010.

In the meantime, there are a lot of hard times ahead and further challenges to meet. It is imperative, therefore, we remain focussed and we will prevail.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	127
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	15
Branch Youth Officers	0

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	3,777.90
Occupational Fatal Accident	3,870.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	970.00
Funeral	51,379.00

4 JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Over the last year Northern Region have continued to contribute extensively to the Regional Media. We engage at every opportunity to raise the profile of our union and the services we provide for our members.

We contributed to the three GMB magazines, with a variety of stories including health and safety, education and political. This is a very important way of communicating with our members.

We also produced various newsletters and flyers covering a variety of different workplaces and events.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

.Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
964	964

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
1,149	424		£6,874,338.85		£6,874,338.85
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		2,955			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims Supported by Union	223
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
241	31	5	155 £326,213.40	38 £233,800.00	£560,013.40
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		340			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

(a) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
95	56	36

GMB Northern Legal Services 2008

Throughout 2008, GMB Northern have worked closely with our lawyers to promote GMB Legal Services and raise awareness amongst members of the perils and pitfalls of using non-specialist law firms and claims management “farmers”. These dangers were graphically illustrated in the case of GMB Northern member Andrea Crook. Following her road traffic accident, Mrs Crook was contacted by her insurers who put her in touch with lawyers who got her to sign an authority to “accept no less than £1,600.00.” After contacting GMB for a “second opinion”, Mrs Crook was put in contact with specialist GMB Northern lawyers who subsequently recovered substantially higher damages of £6,500.00.

Through Northern Star and membership campaigns, GMB Northern have worked to increase awareness of the benefits of the Union legal services, and have seen an increase in the numbers of members seeking the assistance of the union. A satisfaction survey was carried out amongst users of the legal service and this revealed widespread satisfaction with the quality of legal advice and representation provided by GMB Northern with more than 90% of members saying they would recommend the service. The survey also showed that over 70% of referrals were via Branch Secretaries, Shop Stewards or as a result of the materials distributed to promote the legal service, demonstrating the effectiveness of the awareness campaign. We aim to build upon the positive findings of the survey by further developing legal services to members in the coming year.

GMB are a campaigning union. One of the legal decisions which we, and our members, find utterly bewildering is the 2007 decision of the House of Lords to deny compensation to those who have developed pleural plaques – permanent damage to the lungs – as a result of their employers negligence. During 2008, GMB continued to campaign for the rights of pleural plaques victims. A parliamentary lobby in October was particularly effective and GMB Northern will continue to actively campaign for the rights of those who suffer injury as a result of asbestos exposure. There are many other battles to fight as the insurance industry continue to attack asbestos victims and deny them compensation for their blighted lives. The GMB's activity as a campaigning union and its legal services are crucial to delivering justice for asbestos victims.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The last year has been a year of change in the organisation in how we handle the whole equalities agenda.

Four people from Northern Region attended the Equalities Champions Event in Nottingham last year. This was a very useful event where we explored how we could take the equality agenda forward within the GMB.

The establishment of the national equalities forum gives us the opportunity to look at the whole equality and diversity agenda in one place, and this will make a huge impact of the effectiveness of the work we do.

The region are currently planning to launch an Equalities Forum in 2009. This should re-engage members to be involved in what is such a crucial area of our work.

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	14	145	28	173	346
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	9	88	9	97	485
GMB@WORK	14	145	28	173	346

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3 Day Grievance & Disciplinary	2	21	1	22	66
1 Day Dignity at Work (KP Foods)	1	4	12	16	16

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5 Day Health & Safety	5	54	10	64	320

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
Northern College	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5 Day Advanced H & S	1	2	1	3	15
4 Day Employment Law	1	5	0	5	20
5 Day Stewards Refresher	1	5	0	5	25

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Regional Health and Safety Officer is now Chair of the regional TUC Health & Safety Forum and the North East Asbestos Support Group. This has contributed to raising the GMB profile on health and safety issues throughout the region. Four health & safety training days were held in 2008 with an average of 80 Safety Representatives in attendance at each event. The RHSO made interventions in a number of workplaces using health and safety issues to help consolidate and enhance membership. In a recent case in Cumbria, in a workplace that we gained recognition in last year, a member had a claim taken up by Thompsons solicitors after having dust in his eyes through faulty eye protection. The outcome was that he was awarded £5,000 compensation. This has helped to increase the membership in this company as well as forcing them to improve their health and safety culture.

The RHSO chaired a very successful Workers Memorial Day event in Gateshead and will chair the event in April 2009 in Hartlepool.

NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	25,519
MANUFACTURING SECTION	25,402
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	40,135
Grade 1 members	61,899
Grade 2 members	16,463
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	10,694
Male Membership	51,759
Female Membership	37,297
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	14,142
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,028 increase
Membership on Check-off	58,109
Membership on Direct Debit	18,362

Response to the Organising Agenda

The North West & Irish Region continues to address the challenges of the merging of two Regions, but we are pleased to report that the vast majority of the membership, activists, officers and staff have embraced the change and are working to take the Region forward.

GMB @Work continues to be core to all activist initial support training, follow on training and officer training.

We are gradually moving away from the old fashioned out-moded large general branches to smaller workplace branches, which puts ownership back to the activists, stewards and members and gives them a far clearer set of objectives and aims that are more transparent and easier to follow any gains/losses and act on them at a much faster pace. Certainly some of our bigger workplace memberships, Manchester City Council, G4S, Cheshire County Council, Wilkinsons and soon Asda Distribution Centres, have found it far more workable and we have seen a renewed enthusiasm amongst activists and many new faces not only coming forward for nominations for Congress, but also relishing being able to take a more active role in the Region.

A major success has been the recognition agreement signed in Northern Ireland with Four Seasons Care Homes which has not only secured a sizeable membership in the 64 homes but also looks likely to expand to cover the whole of the UK.

In accordance with decisions from previous Congresses, the Region has actively promoted lay representative participation at both national and local level and greater emphasis has been placed on their roles and responsibilities which the Region believes will greatly assist in the development of the activist and provide a stronger and better-equipped workforce.

All areas of organisation have been looked at from the perspective of giving value to the organisation of the Region.

We have a leavers' report produced which allows us to secure some retention in a cost effective way and are monitoring expenditures such as administration charges with a view to producing on-going savings for the Region.

A new Regional Website has been developed which is much more user friendly than previously and has had a favourable response. It is particularly useful in highlighting good news stories, major changes in employment rights/laws and profiling Regional/National campaigns.

The merger of the Trade Union formerly known as ASU has been an interesting challenge that has been achieved with considerable patience and persistence and hard work. The GMB @ Work organising agenda was delivered to many former ASU reps and was well received with extremely positive feedback. Further training both nationally and regionally is planned to complete the restructuring of the membership into the various Regions.

All officers have rota'd stand down days and if they are not assigned school visits or Southern Cross homes then they are expected to use the mapping exercises they have undertaken with their activists/reps to consolidate existing workplaces, or work on Regional/National targets, all of which is recorded on weekly activity reports and fed into the Regional Organising Team.

Public Services, in particular local government, continues to dominate our organising agenda with the focal point being single status and equal pay. The regional picture on single status continues to be mixed in that whilst some local authorities, such as Chester City Council, Cheshire County Council, Manchester City Council and Pendle implemented single status a number of years ago, lay representatives and organisers are still involved in negotiations on implementation in a number of authorities including Liverpool City Council, Sefton MBC, Salford and Bolton.

The northwest area of the Region currently has 5,000+ claims for equal pay lodged at Tribunal on behalf of its local government membership. The claims are against most of the area's local authorities with the largest group against Liverpool City Council – approximately 1,500.

Working with the Region's solicitors we are attempting to negotiate settlements above the matrix offers (which have become standard across the region). We continue to use the regional magazine and localised newsletters/bulletins to ensure the GMB's position regarding equal pay is known throughout the Region.

We are continuing to look at the best way to deliver the organising agenda in the NHS by holding meetings with lead reps in the Trusts and also by sending out regular updates on issues such as RPA, Agenda for Change in 2008. He has endeavoured to identify new reps where we have none across both the Trusts and the job groups where we have membership. Meetings were held with NIAS reps from ASU to develop the agenda within this workplace.

Councils across Northern Ireland have been instructed by government to carry out a comprehensive review of how services can be better delivered in the future, with particular emphasis being placed on a more cohesive approach whilst at the same time trying to provide good efficient public services. A huge saving will be achieved by way of the fact that the twenty-six councils presently delivering local government services will be reduced to eleven within the next three years. We have already become already involved in a series of meetings shaping the future terms and conditions for our members whom would be come subjected to these changes.

We are taking every opportunity to ensure that the GMB is better recognised and that we become better strategically placed to avail of recruitment opportunities within the newly formed councils in the future.

The Region has seen continued growth in DHL/G4S and Asda, both in retail and distribution. Recognition agreements have been achieved at Veolia, Blackpool, at Resource in Northern Ireland and at Avon Buses.

Many Greenfield sites are currently being targeted across the whole of Ireland with a long term goal of establishing operational arrangements in the South to allow future plans for growth and expansion to come to fruition.

The Region had been seeing a significant downturn in this section as early as August 2008 and had some concerns that the TUC seemed to be on the back foot somewhat when it came to collating statistics to develop a regional response to any “potential” recession. It really seemed no one took it seriously until the South was affected.

As manufacturing jobs disappeared we are almost seeing a repeat of the demise of the clothing and textile industry and the next 12 months will see extreme challenges in this section.

Recruitment and Campaigns

The Region’s recruitment strategy follows the principles laid down in GMB @ Work and a similar process is followed as that used by the National Organising Team when considering regional recruitment targets.

Despite recognising the progress made we are not complacent and as we move forward we will continue to review and modify our approach to recruitment in an effort to ensure that our policies and practices are reflected in membership growth.

Throughout last year the Region’s recruitment strategy involved a combination of direct Officer recruitment activity as well as branch consolidation involving Officers and activists at all levels. We have recently added two more Officers to our Organising Team bringing us back up to four with full time dedicated admin support and the leadership of a Senior Organiser. The team are all based in our Runcorn office where they plan, prepare and action recruitment activity for both the team itself and all other Officer teams. The Officer teams work mainly in pairs on weekly rota’d stand down days.

Targets are identified by the team and in addition to National OrganisingTeam targets other local targets are fed through by Officers and branches.

Long term Regional Targets last year (Jan – Dec figures) were as follows:

TARGET	MEMBERS RECRUITED
Schools	401 (Sep Dec)
Southern Cross	378
G4S	260
Four Seasons	639 (11 months)
ASDA	479
Wilkinsons	63 (part year)

In 2008 we focused most of our recruitment efforts on Public Services, particularly schools. All Officers will continue to be involved in direct recruitment activity and branch consolidation will remain a priority as will the application of GMB @ Work.

For all the above targets with the exception of schools the Region's figures are in the top quartile of all regions figures nationally.

Economic and Employment Situation

The North West covers an area of 14,165 km² with a population of 6.8 million (working age population is 4.2 million). According to Government Office for the North West, it is "a region of contrasts covering the 5 areas of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire. The region is larger than several EU countries, and has a diverse mix of people representing many ethnic groups. Four-fifths of the region is rural, but around sixty per cent of the population live in the 2 core conurbations of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

The region generates 11% of the UK's Gross Domestic Product, despite a decline in traditional manufacturing and engineering industries. New industries are growing - the Region has the biggest film and television production industry outside London and Manchester Airport is the largest outside the South East. Areas such as Cheshire, southern Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Manchester City centres continue to grow, but many communities have yet to see the fruits of this urban renaissance. This is reflected in the continued presence of North West neighbourhoods high in the Indices of Deprivation (GONW 2007).

The North West is a £106 billion economy (Office for National Statistics 2006). Historically, it has under-performed compared with the UK economy, but in recent years the region has been growing faster than the England average. The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) points out that "the region is home to a diverse range of internationally competitive sectors. These are knowledge-based, widely traded, have international potential and account for around 55% of the North West's GVA. The NWDA invests heavily in these sectors to develop higher value activity, increase business formation, improve productivity, and identify future growth opportunities from converging markets and technologies. The region has created a net additional 150,000 new jobs in the past few years although many of these have been low paid, often part-time jobs, in the service sector.

It is reported that the North West economy declined at it's fastest for at least 12 years during December 2008 with substantial job losses and marked reductions in output. The rate of contraction was faster than the UK average as the crisis in financial and credit markets restricted the flow of new business. Reports said difficulties for the automotive and construction sectors were having a bigger impact on other businesses. Meanwhile Greater Manchester Chamber's quarterly economic survey showed almost a quarter of manufacturers expect to axe staff over the next three months. Confidence has deteriorated generally and service businesses also expect redundancies. Bury Council have issued an HR1 with a loss of 4000 employees with GMB losses expected to be approximately 22- further discussions are taking place. Southway Housing has also started consultation on a restructure where there may be redundancies.

The current national unemployment rate is 6.1% and the national claimant rate is 3.0%. Across the Region the rate is as follows:

Northwest	-	3.5%	Northern Ireland	-	3.3%
-----------	---	------	------------------	---	------

The Region has twenty-eight areas above the national claimant rate.

Blackburn & Darwen	3.8%	Wigan	-	3.8%	
Blackpool	-	4.6%	Wirral	-	4.3%
Bolton	-	3.7%	Ballymoney	-	3.3%
Halton	-	4.7%	Belfast	-	4.5%
Knowsley	-	5.5%	Coleraine	-	3.7%
Liverpool	-	6.3%	Cookstown	-	3.2%
Manchester	-	4.3%	Craigavon	-	3.1%
Oldham	-	3.8%	Derry	-	5.2%
Rochdale	-	4.1%	Down	-	3.2%

Salford	-	3.8%	Limavady	-	5.2%
Sefton	-	4.0%	Moyle	-	4.4%
St Helens	-	4.1%	Newry & Morne	-	3.1%
Tameside	-	3.6%	Omagh	-	3.2%
Warrington	-	3.0%	Strabane	-	5.5%

The Region has seen a significant knock-on effect as a result of losses in JCB on Thomas Storey Fabrications, closure at Rolls Royce, Greenberg Glass, Chemix, Bernsteins going into administration with the loss of 250 jobs and Hansen's Brick mothballing a site due to the virtual halt in construction.

The problems faced by the car industry has also had serious knock-ons with manufacturers who supply seats, cables, components to the industry. On top of this many local authorities are seeking to shed large numbers of staff. It bears repeating that the next 12 months are going to be extremely challenging.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	6
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	26
Organising Officers	0
No. of Branches	256
New Branches	14
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	7

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	-
Total Disablement	-
Working Accident	8,384.95
Occupational Fatal Accident	-
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	-
Funeral	33,408.00

4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

Officers and lay representatives across the Region have successfully used all forms of local media to address and highlight national and regional GMB issues and campaigns. National press releases have been welcomed and are tailored accordingly to fit regional activity and as such we have been regularly called upon to comment on local radio and television. In Northern Ireland the media has been used to cover recent disputes in education and also in relation to William Hill betting shops. This has undoubtedly assisted recruitment in such areas. The media in Northern Ireland has also been utilised to highlight the lack of funding in the independent care sector. This in turn enabled our Members to see that they would directly benefit from any improved funding provided by Government. Such positive initiatives in Northern Ireland have been complemented by the provision of periodical newsletters to members in various sectors of industry and have been warmly welcomed by Members.

The Regional Magazine, Fusion has been extremely well received by Members in the region and has been a powerful vehicle to reinforce and complement national messages and issues such as equal pay as well as highlighting the excellent successes and work of regional lay officials, staff and officers. The magazine has also been a useful tool to highlight GMB services and legal successes. The regional Asda articles and ongoing excellent updates in the magazine have been extremely well received by members and have complemented regular mail shots to Asda members about matters of national and regional importance.

The welcomed production of a simplified TU56 form has made for a faster, more efficient legal system for members at stressful times.

The Region has placed regular advertisements in Big Issue in the North, Congress publications as well the Morning Star conference editions greetings.

The Region was proud to play its part along with the NW TUC in the 2008 European Capital of Culture celebrations in Liverpool. Events sponsored included a photography exhibition of workers through the years, a trade union history walk and sponsorship of a superlambanana.

Regional lay representatives, staff and officers were proud to support, help write, produce and star in a much acclaimed play about an industrial dispute which led to the jailing of 37 shipbuilding workers as it received its premiere showing in the Novas CUC Theatre this year. The play, entitled '30 Days in Walton Jail', is part of a regional GMB proud campaign in support of the jailed workers. The 37 trade unionists, some of whom helped write the play, spent a month in jail as a result of the 1984 dispute. The main thing the campaign sought to highlight is compensation for all workers involved in the 1984 dispute and a public apology from the government for their wrongful imprisonment. The play was warmly received by a packed audience and media across the Region.

The merger of the ASU, former Ambulance Service Union with the GMB gave rise for positive publicity opportunities at the Ambex (Ambulance Service) Conference in Harrogate. Thanks to former senior ASU Officials and GMB Officers combined expertise and new and positive impressive promotional literature and materials, new members were attracted as well as excellent opportunities for networking. Welcome literature was also sent from the Region to every former ASU member and new website material has also supported the excellent combined hard work of lay officials, staff and officers.

The Regional Annual Women's Conference continued to go from strength to strength attracting the President of the National TUC and the President of the GMB and welcomed delegates from around the regions. Local media celebrities provided dramatic, innovative and thought provoking performances on difficult topics such as violence and the devastating effects on lives and how if not tackled they can spill over into the workplace. Many first time delegates welcomed this friendly, relaxed approach to understanding more about the work of the GMB and the role of women in the GMB.

A newly designed, named and updated regional website has been formed and branch websites and newsletters are actively encouraged throughout the Region.

Regional media training is constantly reviewed and offered to support activists and officers.

Excellent media coverage has been captured on a range of national and regional issues. Extensive GMB public service media coverage included local government disputes over pay, council tax collections, cuts in services, loss of jobs at Oldham Council, scrapping of free parking at Preston Council, Trafford Council job cuts, Manchester City Congestion charges campaign, free school meals campaign for primary school children across the UK, temporary agency workers charges in local government, equal pay claims, NHS staff and pay matters/ potential strikes, affordable housing, overspending at Bolton Council and ambulance service mismanagement.

Other extensive media coverage was captured over the following GMB regional matters: Akzo Nobel and Crown Paint job cuts, potential airport strikes, Bolton copper workers pay dispute, Cammell Laird pay dispute, the closure of an historic brickworks at Accrington – Hanson Bricks, Legal Services Commission job losses, pensions, energy windfall taxes on greedy energy privateers superprofits, affordable housing and Labour Party funding.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
1162	1162

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
3	232	Nil	581 £3,352,972.78	Nil	£3,352,972.78
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		2,445			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	39
---------------------------	----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
7	1	Nil	6 £13,824.72	Nil	£13,824.72
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		114			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
5,000 Equal Pay Claims			5,000

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
1	Nil	3

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

It has been another busy and productive year for the Region's RERAC. Attendance has been modest and RERAC has run some very successful campaigns that commenced mid 2007 and came to an end in 2008.

Below is a brief summary of the region's campaigns and events:-

Manchester Pride

This is the third year the Region has been represented at the Manchester Pride event, with RERAC organising and staffing the event throughout. Funding for this event is donated by branches, with the Region subsidising any shortfall. Again this event did modestly increase membership within the Region and raises the profile of our Region within the North West.

Stockport Women's Centre

Stockport Women's Centre provides a safe environment within which women can meet and rebuild their lives, having suffered from domestic violence. The Centre has been very successful in targeting many women that other agencies have found it difficult to reach, due to health, economic, age or social reasons. Branches generously donated

towards this worthy cause, culminating in raising £300 which paid for the women and their families to enjoy the Christmas season with a traditional pantomime. Also donated was a much needed sewing machine for the Centre's Arts & Crafts section. The Centre provided the GMB with very positive publicity in their magazine and within the Centre itself.

Regional Equality Banner

RERAC successfully ran this appeal during 2007/08 and have now commissioned a regional equalities banner which covers all the equality strands.

The banner has already been used at several regional events and the design chosen means that it will still be suitable for the newly formed regional equality forum.

Refuse Campaign

This campaign is ongoing but appears to have lost some of its momentum during 2008, primarily due to various charities competing for old mobile phones. Nevertheless, we will continue as a Region to promote and support this worthy cause.

Women's Conference

Another successful women's conference run by our Education Department. This year's theme was bullying and harassment and the lively agenda included many guest speakers who each spoke covering different angles of the subject, ranging from personal experiences, legal views to a satirical view.

Cultural Cohesion Event

The Region's RERAC and RRAC were given priority to attend the Cultural Cohesion event which was organised by our Education Department in partnership with the TUC. The event was aimed at raising awareness and skills of representatives.

Regional Equality Forum

Initially the Region delayed this hoping for more guidance from the National Forum but work is now underway within the Region to form a new regional Equality Forum that will mirror and complement our new national equality structure. The new Forum will be in place early February 2009.

The Region has been represented at all TUC conferences and events that have taken place, with the exception of the Women's seat but this has been addressed and the North West will be represented in this seat in 2009.

Finally, work is ongoing to update the Equality Section in our regional website and it is hoped by March 09 to complete this, with all the new structures in place. As well as the regional website, the Region's Equality sections have been promoted within the regional magazine and efforts are being made to improve this area also.

Ethnic breakdown in the North West is as follows:

1	black female	1 black male
11	white female	10 white male

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total StudentDays
Introduction to GMB (10 days)	14	141	37	178	1780
GMB/ASU Induction (5 days)	1	20	-	20	100
GMB @ WORK	15	161	37	198	396

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Organisation for Negotiation (3 days)	3	28	1	29	87
Communication (2 days)	1	10	6	16	32
Grievance & Disciplinary (3 days)	3	29	14	43	129
Branch Organisation (1 day)	1	5	2	7	7
Bullying and Harassment (2 days)	3	32	5	37	74
Pensions (2 day)	2	13	2	15	30
Tutor Review Day (1 day)	1	4	6	10	10
Induction for ASU Reps (2 days)	2	25	3	28	56
Women's Inter. Day (1 day)	1	2	20	22	22
TUPE (1 day)	1	19	6	25	25
Two-Tier Workforce (1 day)	3	21	5	26	26

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S Inspection (2 days)	3	28	5	32	64

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Women's Conference (2 days)	1	8	72	80	160
Cultural Cohesion (1 day)	1	16	8	24	24
ULR (5 days)	2	10	2	12	60
First Steps to Tutoring (5 days)	1	3	3	6	30

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Combination of 10 day & short courses		33	6	39	390

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Regional initiatives include working in partnership with employers e.g. Asda, Heinz, Wincanton, Robert McBride. Also supporting Safety reps through workplace visits and raising the profile of the GMB Organising around Health & Safety.

Asda Hyde store piloted a new health and safety initiative introducing signage at the back of house in warehouse. GMB were invited to meet with Training officer/Manager, to discuss safe systems of work. This was a successful visit which builds on a working together approach with Asda, something we or they are not used to doing. Management at the store have welcomed our input and we are looking forward to building on this in the future.

Ongoing projects include, Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) Project, an initiative driven by the HSE, and partnered by GMB, Local Authorities. Greater Manchester Police, G4S and other service providers in the Industry, this project seeks to bring together all stakeholders.

The (CVIT) Project which is a project initiative between HSE, Local authorities, Greater Manchester Police and stakeholders. The project will involve CVIT guards, of which a substantial number will be GMB members. Initially the aim is to work with CVIT companies operating in the Greater Manchester area, but the ultimate aim is to influence the industry nationwide. Nationally there is over 10,000 staff employed as CVIT guards. The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) state that in 2007 there was over 10,000 incidents nationwide involving CVIT. In the past 6 years there have been 145 serious injuries to CVIT guards. The outcome desired and objectives will be looking to make improvements in health, safety and wellbeing of employees engaged in this work. CVIT staff and also staff in financial and retail premises receiving cash.

The theme of this years' Workers Memorial Day, was Occupational Health and a number of events were held across the Region. In Manchester the GMB Safety Rep from Asda, Shaun Buckley, spoke on behalf of the GMB and gave an excellent speech on ongoing issues at his workplace around manual handling problems. The event brought around 200 workers together and Tony Lloyd MP contributed to the event, as always. An event was held at Regional Office and for staff and local reps, led by the Regional President. Reps north of the Region attended a joint union event at Preston City Centre, which was well attended by GMB Union. Local reps and staff at our Holywood Office, held a minutes silence in recognition of those who died at work.

We have for some time been liaising with the Health @ Work Organisation and have been talking to them on initiatives that will address issues within the workplace such as health and well-being and alcohol awareness, diet, smoking. These initiatives involve working constructively with employers on behalf of our members.

GMB SCOTLAND

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	9,939
MANUFACTURING SECTION	13,626
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	36,690
Grade 1 members	41,753
Grade 2 members	13,832
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,670
Male Membership	32,429
Female Membership	27,826
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	7,198
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,482
Membership on Check-off	7,468
Membership on Direct Debit	48,335

2008 resulted in a number of changes being implemented within the Region in order to create a new impetus for Growth.

A detailed examination of our performance was undertaken with support being provided from other Regions in implementing best practice in terms of ways of working by introducing new systems and processes. Also involved in this change programme in providing additional support was Martin Smith from the National Organising Team whose input was valued.

GMB@Work was implemented in the Region throughout 2007 however the changes we made at the beginning of 2008 were to embed the process, engage the wider GMB membership base and to ensure that GMB@Work was our

new DNA. These changes combined with the delivery of new short based and focused Training Programmes, has resulted in our ability to ensure that GMB@Work reaches out across the Region and into the workplace.

Starting off 2009 we have seen an increase in our Shop Stewards Training with a significant throughput of Shop Stewards and Safety Representatives in these early months of the year. Restructuring the Education Department and engaging the TUC in Scotland into the GMB way of working has significantly assisted our delivery programme. We are now able to deliver on a much more flexible approach across a geographically diverse Region.

All of our Organising Team are now fully trained as Co-Tutors and added to this we have an additional number of Organisers trained in the delivery of GMB@Work Training. This now allows us to deliver specific courses in areas of Scotland where previously we had problems holding training courses and attracting Stewards. Innovative approaches have been in agreeing with co-operative employers that we deliver these short 2 day GMB@Work courses on their premises. The integration and planning of this training combined with our National and Regional Targets will be vital for successful growth within GMB Scotland.

Organisation and Retention within existing workplaces is a key focus for Organisers during 2009 which we all know will be a difficult year as we move deeper into recession. Scotland will not be immune from this Global Economic Recession and while at this point we are not feeling the impact to a great degree there is no doubt that indication across all sectors look set to be affected.

The National Targets of Schools, Southern Cross and Asda are fully implemented into the planning and delivery process, with Regional Targets being developed and targeted on an ongoing flexible basis.

GMB continue to be involved in working with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights in pushing the agenda for the recognition of Classroom Assistants in Scotland (School Support Staff).

The Security Sector across Scotland continues to be an area of focus within the Region using specialist knowledge to develop and implement fully GMB@Work Training.

All new Shop Stewards and our existing Shop Stewards have been informed of how to access the Plain English Rule Book carried at 2008 Congress via the GMB Website and many have now undertaken the GMB@Work Training Programme. As has been the case with Contributions, Benefits Increases and Rule Amendments.

Communications is the vital link with our members across the Region and in particular with our key Activists.

Equal Pay continues to be an ongoing area within Public Services for Recruitment opportunities within GMB Scotland where we are seeing the benefits of local initiatives within and around the Inverness and surrounding areas.

GMB Scotland is developing its Sport Section extending beyond Scottish Professional Football Players into Managers and Coaches where we have targeted all Scottish League Managers. We have also extended our scope to cover Football Coaches within the Community opening up new opportunities which we hope to capitalise on during 2009/10. A new initiative within the Sports area has been the creation of a Greenkeepers and Groundsmen Branch as scope exists across a wide range of opportunities from Golf Clubs, Football Clubs and interest has been shown from ex-members of the International Greenkeepers Association where we have been able to recruit some of their key Scottish members who are working at Branch level encouraging their network to join GMB. This initiative is being supported by the Organisation Team.

Migrant Workers - Post Congress 2008 the Region has set about ensuring that GMB Scotland recruits, organises and provides an improved level of service to Migrant Workers. This key area has been integrated and mainstreamed through the Regional Organising Team with one of the Team leading in this initiative. Initiatives taken to date via the setting up of a Migrant Workers Branch have been wide ranging across the Central Belt of Scotland and up to Inverness in the North.

Membership gains have been achieved through our Officer engaging with community based groups. In Falkirk, inroads have been made with firms working in Partnership with the Intercultural Forum Falkirk to gain access to Migrant Workers within the area. We have also provided some limited funding to the Forum and have advertising at

the Forum's premises and we have recruited the workers employed by the Forum providing us with the key linkage to the GMB. Bakkavar also have a plant within the travel to work area where we have secured access to meet with the Migrant Workers again using our members employed in the Falkirk Forum to support us in any language barriers we encounter.

Inroads have been made in the Fife Polish Association who will promote GMB within their Polish/English newspaper. The paper reaches out to a potential 5,000 migrant Polish workers and allows us to provide information in Polish into the community. Interest from Migrant Workers employed in businesses local to Fife is being actively followed up.

Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness are also communities where we have been able to make contact with Migrant Worker groups through the Networks already developed in the Central Belt. These Migrants are mainly employed within Food and Fish Processing and links have been forged with the Fraserburgh based Migrant Workers Association to gain access.

These initiatives are all based on attracting into membership Migrant Workers and by supporting them via the creation of community and workplace leaders supported by ourselves to deliver GMB@Work and to ensure that we create a quality and delivery of service to this group of workers who can and indeed are exploited in many ways.

Our strategy is now to convert these contacts into membership growth supported by workplace and community leaders as stated above. One recent example in one of our traditional Distribution Sites occurred when one Polish Migrant member was facing dismissal and the Branch paid for the services of an Interpreter to assist in the Disciplinary Appeal against dismissal. The outcome was to win the appeal and reinstate our Polish member. This is only a small example of initiatives being driven at local level to ensure that GMB's employment policy on Migrant Workers is delivered.

It must be added that we have received support and an understanding of these situations from our colleagues in Southern Region who have visited GMB Scotland providing an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the potential problems. The opportunity to discuss and debate these issues with Southern Region's Project Workers was invaluable in setting out our Regional Objectives.

GMB has made contact with Polish Associations in Glasgow and Aberdeen and have been part of our approach to ensuring access to Migrant Workers entering into employment within Scotland.

The majority of the companies employing Migrant Workers in Scotland tend to be within Food Processing and therefore within the Commercial Services Section. This of course is not to say that Migrant Workers don't work across all sectors of the Scottish Economy, although, to date the largest concentrations of Migrant Workers are employed within Food and the Tourist Industry as will be seen through the following overview of the Scottish economy.

Having an SNP Devolved Government within Scotland has been a difficult transition, engagement with the SNP has been significant at the level of the Scottish Trades Union Congress however, that is not surprising given that they want to appear very open to discussions with the Unions.

We are now witnessing the reality of the SNP Government as they have now turned away from one of the fundamental manifesto commitments to introduce a local income tax. This combined with less monies being made available to local authorities under the Concordat Settlement will undoubtedly result in cut backs in local government services and impact on jobs.

Scotland is still struggling to deal with the persistent economic inactivity resulting from the recessions of the 80s and 90s and the ineffective labour market policies of the time. The Scottish SNP Government has now set their Economic Strategy and set these out to be achieved by 2011 and are focused on raising the Scottish GDP Growth Rate to UK levels and to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 (The sustainability Golden Rule).

- GMB as a major affiliate within the Scottish Trades Union Congress has been significantly involved in developing the response to "The Future of Manufacturing Industry in Scotland". Providing significant inputs into:

- **Skills and Productivity** - Demanding from Government that a Scottish Skills Strategy needs to be developed and creating a Scottish Skills Forum to oversee the process.
- **Investment** - GMB has been at the forefront of calls on the Scottish Government to establish a Scottish Investment Bank – to support in overcoming market failures and to assist in stimulating new investment.
- **Public Procurement** – To be viewed positively in that Public Procurement Policy assists and supports indigenous manufacturing to support Remploy and other sheltered factories given the current EU legislation and also that the Scottish Procurement Directorate needs to work to identify opportunities and develop supporting strategies.
- **Maximising Opportunities** – The implementation of a modern Scottish Industrial Strategy ensuring the development of new sectors and the maximisation of employment opportunities. This to be combined with State Aid to manufacturing matching the EU average.
- **Monetary Policy** – The state of Scottish Manufacturing Industry to be considered seriously within the Bank of England remit when setting UK interest rates.
- **Scottish Manufacturing Exports** – To ensure Scottish Government Agencies develop expert strategies and to secure the implementation of new regulations at EU level allowing producers of origin sensitive products to benefit from the association with Scottish production. That Scottish Employers together with Government need to recognise and address some of the poor employment practices and low pay that continues to exist within areas of Scottish Manufacturing.
- **Energy** – Scotland requires a Balanced Energy Policy based on diversity of fuel sources critical in this approach is the security of supply. Scotland is well placed to be able to provide an Energy Surplus and also through investment in Renewable Sources create high quality jobs.

The SNP continue to be opposed to any new Nuclear Build in Scotland which will undoubtedly impact in the long term.

Commission on Scottish Devolution (The Calman Commission) - The remit of this Commission is to review the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998 and to recommend any changes to the present constitutional arrangements and Better Serve the people of Scotland, Financial Accountability of the Scottish Parliament and continue to serve the position of Scotland within the United Kingdom. GMB Scotland will be attending a meeting with the Commission in March.

Equal Pay - Equal Pay still dominates our work with our legal support team from Digby Brown Solicitors in co-ordination with our Regional Legal Officer. This work closely involves the Senior Organiser for Public Services and a close liaison with the National Secretary and National Legal Officer.

The recent decision by the Scottish Courts that the “no win no fee” arrangements set up by Stefan Cross Solicitors are void, and have no force or effect in Scotland. This in effect means that the monies deducted by Stephan Cross from individual member’s compensation paid out by the Local Authority can now be claimed back from Cross. We have now instructed Digby Brown, the Region’s Solicitors, to pursue these claims against Cross on behalf of our members for the sums of monies he has deducted. Should he fail to return the individual’s files with a cheque for the sum deducted in terms of his contingency fee agreement, we have instructed Digby’s to institute proceedings against him and to hold him liable for the expense of this action.

This is a significant breakthrough in Scotland and may well lead to significant proceedings against Cross and the return of the monies he has deducted from his clients. We are at the time of this report making our Public Services members aware of this development and would anticipate significant activity from our initiative.

Commercial Services Section

Scottish Power – Energy Networks, Working Time Directive Regulations – Joint Statement

The business and the trade unions jointly recognise it is in the interests of Energy Networks staff that excessive additional hours working are avoided. All parties recognise the importance of staff being fit for work and that periods of broken rest can have an adverse effect. It is also recognised, by the essential nature of our business operations there will be situations that will require excessive additional hours to be worked. In summary, Energy Networks

working arrangements will operate within the framework of the Working Time Regulations 1998 which also takes account of the essential nature of the service we provide. Derogations will only be applied on occasions where abnormal circumstances present a threat to continuity of service or production. In all such circumstances, safety will remain paramount. The business risk assessment process will be utilised where extended periods of work are required to ensure that a necessary review has been undertaken. This is a joint responsibility between staff and manager. Records of the risk assessment require to be kept together with an individual's agreement to undertake the necessary work patterns. Staff should ensure that their working time is recorded and that they are sufficiently rested before any period of duty. Managers are responsible for monitoring working time to ensure that staff do not work excessive hours and for taking action to reduce working hours where necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Regulations.

- There are two particular areas within the Working Time Regulations that have been extensively discussed since implementation. The Business and the Trade Unions have agreed to monitor and guide these areas specifically.
- **Weekly Working Time** - Significant improvements have recently been made using the following continuing initiatives. Accuracy improvements to "hours worked" recording system. Previous systems only recorded hours paid information. Implementation of work patterns that effectively "share the load" amongst all operational staff such as improvement of standby rotas. Close management of out of hours working. Compliance in this area will be reviewed jointly at the quarterly HESAC through examination of management reports.
- **Rest Periods** - It is envisaged that normal work patterns within Energy Networks will enable the majority of employees to take rest entitlements specified in the Working Time Regulations under normal circumstances. Although it is recognised that on most occasions line management and employees are able to agree appropriate rest periods following an extended period of work, the business and trade unions have agreed that the provision of specific guidelines for every situation is impractical. It has been agreed that "rest periods" will be added as a standing agenda item to each of the North and South HESAC forums. Under this agenda item, examples (proposed by either staff or management side) of real "rest period" situations will be discussed, with jointly agreed guidelines for handling future examples then recorded under the minutes and shared with staff involved.

We believe this provides a practical and effective way of ensuring we deliver against the spirit of the working time arrangements that we will continue to review under the auspices of the national HESAC.

British Energy - Our colleagues in the other unions did not want to raise with management any other issue except the best pay rise that could be obtained, with a one year deal and flow-through to the allowances. This put the GMB negotiating team at a disadvantage, as if we had insisted on putting all our items into the pay claim, it was made clear to us that the other unions would not support those items. It would have also created disunity, which we did not want to show in front of the company. A decision was taken that we would withdraw our other items on the following:

Emergency Scheme Payment, Fire Team Leaders Payments, Standby Payment, to receive an increase on top of the agreed flow-through; with parity taking place on shift payment and increase in rates above the agreed flow-through.

Our claim on other conditions for a shorter working week, with no loss of pay and an increase in annual leave, with provision to take into account new starters and existing full-time employees, whilst ensuring no breach of age discrimination legislation. However, we did say that we would do a further campaign amongst our members, and if necessary amongst the workforce as a whole, to see if there was general support for these other item. If so, we would list them for inclusion through the company procedures or for next years pay claim. We were rather taken aback that our colleagues from the other unions did not want to progress or support the inclusion of these items, as some affected their own members and also all unions were asked to do a consultation exercise amongst its members and stewards which GMB carried out in good faith. The joint pay claim from all unions was submitted, and an excellent case was made by the staff side chair for a pay rise that tried to meet the aspirations of the members. A further meeting was held where we were offered 4.2%. This was resoundingly rejected by all unions. Management then offered 4.4% and again this offer was resoundingly rejected by all unions. After much deliberation and many adjournments, the company made their best offer of 5% and flow-throughs to the allowances, with no strings

attached, for one year. It was agreed that we would put this offer to our stewards and members, with a recommendation to accept, as this was the best offer achievable through negotiation.

Scottish Power - Redeployment & Regrading - Joint Statement – Company Negotiating and Consultative Council (CNCC) Policy Development Sub Group, 30 June 2008 The Company's proposals for a consistent Policy on Redeployment, Re-grading and Provisions for Personal Protection of Terms and Conditions have been the subject of detailed consultation and consideration by the Policy Development Sub Group. At a meeting of this Group held on 30 June 2008, it was jointly recognised that the Company had submitted its final draft of this Policy and that there had been significant amendments to the Policy as a result of the feedback from Trade Union and Employee representatives. Accordingly the Company advised the Sub Group of its intention to introduce the Policy without agreement with effect from 1 July 2008. However for employees who had some form of existing personal protection this would be subject to review by their Business/Function and in the event they remained within the scope of the Policy the effective date would be 1 July 2009 for the provisions of the Policy to apply.

In addition where employees were considered to be affected by this Policy from 1 July then this would be subject to review for the period up to 30 September 2008. In the meantime the Policy would be communicated to employees. The Trade Union and Employee Reps indicated that arrangements would be made for a meeting of lay/employee reps to consider in detail the introduction of Policy and their response to it. Further meetings of the Policy Sub Group will be held on 21 August and during December 2008 to consider issues arising from the Policy and receive an update on the progress of the Business/Functional reviews of those employees on existing personal protection arrangements. The Policy was introduced in February 2009.

SMW LTD, Daldowie Site - Pay & Conditions Settlement 2008/2009 The settlement will operate from 1 April 2008 to 31 December 2009 (21 months) and applied to all staff at the Daldowie Site covered by the existing GMB Collective Agreement. The next pay award will not be before 1 January 2010.

- **Year 1** - All salaries and flowthroughs will be increased by 4.1% effective from 1st April 2008. This increase is based on the highest published RPI figure for January/February/March 2008. The bonus scheme will continue to be based on a new SMW Ltd balanced scorecard. The level of bonus paid will be a maximum lump sum payment of up to 5% of individual basic salaries (applicable to Year 2 also).
- **Year 2** - All salaries and flowthroughs will be increased by RPI (based on the highest published figures in January/February/March 2009) effective from 1 April 2009 and an additional percentage increase will be payable, linked to the Generation Scorecard performance for 2008, as follows: 3+ rating 0.1%; 4 rating 0.2%; 4+ rating 0.3% and 5 rating 0.5%.

General – The GMB collective agreement will be superseded by a new GMB collective agreement for SMW Ltd effective from 1 April 2008 which will incorporate the ScottishPower Company Agreement dated 1 January 2008 and all employees covered by the new GMB collective agreement will be covered by all Scottish Power policies and procedures (as published on the HR Intranet).

Scottish Power - Joint Job Evaluation Steering Group Meeting. At the Joint Steering Group Meeting on the 7th October 2008 it was jointly agreed that the Job Evaluation System was robust and fit for purpose. It was also agreed that the Job Evaluation Process that had been recommended by the Job Evaluation Working Group were fit for purpose. The Full Time Officers made the following requests for information to be discussed at the next Job Evaluation Steering Group meeting:

- Management to provide a proposal on the alignment of the Job Evaluation scores to a pay structure.
- Number of employees in each of the benchmarked jobs to be provided
- Number of male/female split per role and grade
- Date proposed for backdating any regrading claim
- Numbers who may be affected by the Redeployment and Regrading Policy
- Proposal

- Management propose to align Job Evaluation Scores to existing pay structure. The proposed breakpoints against the benchmarked roles have been proposed at the mid point between grades. This also incorporates previous agreements on the removal of the bar for the Darts and the live linesperson agreement.
- Numbers of employees provided.
- Male/Female Split provided.
- Management propose to backdate any claim that has been lodged through the negotiating bodies to April 2007. This will only apply to any outstanding appeals which have not been re-evaluated. Any other claims will be backdated to the date the claim has been submitted to the Job Evaluation Working Group.
- Management believe that by proposing the alignment to the existing grading structure the number of employees impacted by the Redeployment and Regrading Policy will be 91 as currently agreed.
- Management propose that once agreement is reached by the Joint Job Evaluation Steering Group on the way forward then ACAS will be contacted to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment.

Oil Sector - OIL companies may soon begin delaying projects in an attempt to take advantage of an expected fall in services costs, senior executives have told. Several executives at exploration companies have predicted that the cost of oil services - such as well drilling - could fall by as much as 50 per cent in large open markets such as the North Sea. Since peaking near \$150 a barrel in late July, crude oil prices have fallen by around two-thirds, a move that is expected to lead to a fall in exploration levels. This in turn is likely to force oil services companies - which carry out the projects to explore for oil and bring projects into production - to drop their costs to win projects, industry figures believe. Graham Stewart, chief executive of Faroe Petroleum, said it was a "likely scenario" that the cost of drilling wells in the North Sea in 2010 and 2011 could fall by 50 per cent as demand for wells drops and oil services companies slash their prices.

Scottish Power - Coal deal Warms Industry - The Scottish mining industry has won a three-year, £40m deal to provide ScottishPower with coal from an open cast mine in Fife. ATH, which is based Doncaster, will supply 800,000 tonnes of coal from its new Muir Dean mine to the energy firm's nearby Longannet power station starting in April. ScottishPower is currently finalising the commissioning of flue gas desulphurisation equipment at Longannet, a project that will significantly extend the operational life of the power station and increase the capability to burn more locally-produced coal, which has a high sulphur content. A ScottishPower spokesman said the desulphurisation equipment will cut emissions that damage the environment by 98%. The Muir Dean mine is expected to produce 500,000 tonnes of coal a year and create more than 100 jobs at full production.

Nuclear Power Study - Alex Salmond, First Minister, agreed to an independent study into whether Scotland needs Nuclear Power. However, the leader of the SNP stressed that the party's stance on atomic energy had not changed.

ASDA Retail - This continues to be the largest opportunity within the Region presenting significant potential however, this has to be balanced against an employer who gives the impression of providing the GMB with access for New Stores at their Best Welcome for new employees however, in reality they are still the same anti-union employer who are owned by the American retail giant Walmart whose practices in the US continue to be challenged by Communities and Unions in the Courts and by Corporate Campaigning. We are slowly making progress by appointing new Shop Stewards and Safety Reps and with Cathy Murphy the Senior Seward for Asda within GMB Scotland we are getting GMB more publicity however, we need to convert all this effort into members and that will be one of our 2009 priorities.

Equal Pay for work of Equal Value continues to be an issue when examining the comparators of the predominance of our female members within Stores when set against the predominantly male workforce in Warehouse Distribution. These cases are being driven by our North West and Irish Region at present as are the claims against Asda's imposition of top rate of pay. These areas continue to be significant in creating the view in Asda colleagues minds that we are a campaigning union and that by joining us we can make the difference they want.

Scotch Whisky Industry - Scotch is and continues to be a major exporter and contributor to the Exchequer in revenue. Over the years the industry has been by and large immune from Global Economic matters with only issues

arising from time to time within some volatile political countries however it is now clear that the Global Economic Recession is impacting on the industry. The industry is still a growing market however there is a significant shift resulting in a slower growth rate.

The industry has seen significant changes in ownership over the course of the last few years with Moët Hennessy taking over Glenmorangie, Pernod Ricard owning the Chivas Allied Group, Bacardi owning Dewars and Whyte and Mackay being owned by the New Delhi liquor baron Vijay Mallya and decisions within Diageo, the largest and most profitable spirits company, increasingly being made outwith Scotland. These are significant shifts within Scotch Whisky and are driving the pace of change in a traditional industry at significant speed. These mergers and acquisitions continue to impact on decisions being made by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission ruling that certain product ranges need to be sold off resulting in major changes across these companies.

GMB continues to be the largest Union within the Scotch Whisky industry however the merger of T&G and Amicus to form Unite has resulted in a more aggressive approach within the Industry.

Whisky is also providing clean renewable power as a consortium of the Distillers build a biomass fuelled combined heat and power Plant near the heart of the whisky industry in Speyside in the North East of Scotland benefiting these companies and local communities.

The acquisition of Whyte and Mackay cost £595 million in May 2007 however the Indian businessman who now owns it looks set to divert up to a 49% stake in his United Spirits Ltd UK based subsidiary which will spark off a new bidding war in the Industry.

At the time of writing this report negotiations with Diageo, the Worlds largest and most profitable spirits company, have been suspended due to difficulties in moving to an acceptable offer. This is a company who recently posted half year results of delivering 3% organic net sales growth, 6% organic operating profit growth and maintained it's financial strength, the Company claim this has led to a need in moderating any significant increases in wage rates.

The gap between Diageo and the Unions is problematic at the moment and when combined with some of the major Bottling Plants going on reduced time working it will be a difficult set of negotiations once they restart.

DHL - This group has now been adopted by the Regional Organising Team who are focused on growing this group and delivering within the workplace. This combined with the work being driven at the level of National Negotiation Committee is resulting in reaching out to DHL Depots across Scotland with the dedicated member of the Organising Team liaising with Scotland's National Rep and an active Branch.

Security - Within the Region we have been building on the National Campaign of CIVT attacks, lobbying politicians in the Scottish Government and a Cross Party basis and in particular focusing on meetings with the responsible Government Minister. This has been combined with approaches to Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Police in particular where parking restrictions and lack of access to pedestrian precincts has meant that our members have been exposed to walking into these areas to collect cash from major high street banks and retailers and in the process being exposed to significant danger to themselves and we believe the general public. This ridiculous situation has arisen due to parking bye-laws prohibiting Cash-in-Transit vehicles accessing these areas, as to do so means that they are fined, the Security Guard then being potentially taken to court for non-payment of these silly practices and losing their job. This can only be described as bureaucracy gone mad however, Calne Waterson has played a significant role in campaigning on this matter with Richard Leonard, GMB Scotland's Political Officer raising this high on the agenda.

Airport Security has also been a target area for growth across Scottish Airports with inroads being difficult but we are now seeing breakthrough in our Northern Airports and the Highlands and Islands where recent negotiations with OCS resulted in an offer of 4.8% which in the current climate should provide a platform for more recruitment.

Major venues where Security is required continues to be a focus of our Commercial Services in Scotland supported by the Regional Organising Team.

Norbert Dentressangle (*previously Christian Salvesen*) - GMB Scotland has one of the largest composite site Distribution Centres in the UK within the Company. The recent TUPE transfer discussions that resulted in the full integration of what was previously Christian Salvesen into Norbert Dentressangle in January 2009 led to a series of National Consultation meetings involving GMB, Unite and USDAW. GMB led these consultation/negotiation meetings which arose due to the issues surrounding Pensions. A whole series of these National Meetings resulted in an outcome which had not been the preferred outcome of Norbert and directly resulted in the provision of an improved pension provision being negotiated. Significant support was provided by Naomi Cook from GMB National Pensions Department throughout this process and resulted in adding significant value, expertise and direction to these difficult discussions. The Bellshill Site near Glasgow has in excess of 1,000 people working on Site.

We now have a Site Agreement covering Warehouse Operators, Drivers, Clerical Admin and Supervisory Grades and this has provided a major profile on Site. The GMB has an excellent Branch Structure on Site with the Branch Secretary being pivotal to recruitment and retention.

This site is a dedicated Morrisons Distribution Site and since moving from a dedicated Safeway Site some years ago as a result of the takeover relationships with the then Salvesen Management and more recently Norbert Management have at times been pretty difficult. The most recent issues being as a result of increased Absence on Site. However, a joint working group are due to report back in a few weeks time as to expected improvements following a joint approach. However the threat of change to the Company Sick Pay Scheme is still a distinct possibility at the time of writing this report.

It has to be said if all our Sites across Scotland were organised as tight as this one by the local Branch we would be growing our membership in this area.

Asda Distribution - We are still having problems in trying to move T&G members at the Falkirk Depot back into the GMB as their only means of gaining recognition, bargaining rights and an opportunity to have representation at the GMB National Structure for Asda Distribution. The Grangemouth Depot while having a significant membership base has potential for growth and will be reviewed very closely as a key growth area during the course of this year as it is clear there are some organisational issues we need to deal with at local level within the Depot.

Asda Stores - The Landscape within Asda Stores continues to be somewhat a war of attrition. The arrangement to access New Stores whilst being provided, still presents problems as it becomes clear from Officers doing these presentations that staff within Stores do appear to have been briefed by management prior to this process making the whole approach become more of a cosmetic exercise. They invite us in we don't get as many or any members signing up leaving Store Managers to claim that their employees are catered for via the Colleague Circles. We are however as a result of increased levels of discipline within Stores being able to create a higher profile as colleagues seek to join for representation and protection. The continuing approach within the Region has been directed primarily across the West of Scotland where we have a higher density membership base. Gaining more Shop Stewards/Safety Reps and building our organisation base from within.

Manufacturing Congress Report

SGL - Following discussions on this year's pay offer the Company nor the GMB Organiser approved of plans to meet members in 2 large groups, and would rather pursue a more appropriate route of addressing smaller groups, which was considered a more effective means of seeking feedback on the details of the offer. The recent pay negotiations between the GMB and SGL management have now been concluded, with a proposed overall increase of 3% over a 12-month deal. In real terms, this results in an overall cost to the business of 7.5%, after consideration of the additional aspects of the offer, as outlined below. Of all the options discussed in process of these negotiations, the GMB support this offer as the most beneficial to our members and, as such, recognise this as the Company's full and final offer.

The outcome of these negotiations led to the following proposals being made for the 2008/09 pay and conditions offer:-

- Offer of percentage increase across basic pay and shift allowance.
- Addressing of DTL differentials.

- Added incremental benefits for use of FLT Licence and First Aid certificate.
- Considers attraction and retention issues, specifically for Elec & Mech trades within the Maintenance Dept.
- FLT/First Aid Certificates
- An annual payment of £200 per person will be paid for holding a valid FLT licence or First Aid Certificate (£200 per certificate) in January of each year.
- An additional £100 will be paid on completion of a refresher or new certificate.
- This will not apply if a FLT Licence is a primary requirement of your position (e.g. FLT Drivers).

Asbestos – Pleural Plaque - Insurance companies are planning a legal challenge to a Bill in the Scottish Parliament that would allow workers exposed to asbestos to claim damages under Scots law if they develop pleural plaques. These are small areas of scarring on the membrane surrounding the lungs. Pleural plaques do not generally cause symptoms or disability and do not cause, or develop into, asbestos-related disease. Compensation for the condition is no longer available in England and Wales following a decision by the law lords last year. The House of Lords judgement is not binding in Scotland but is regarded as highly persuasive. Ministers in England and Wales, as well as Northern Ireland, have been consulting on whether to reverse the House of Lords decision or to set up a compensation scheme, but either option would be massively expensive and changes are not thought likely. However, the Scottish Government has decided to amend the law and the Scottish Parliament is currently debating the Damages (Asbestos-Related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill, which would make asbestos-related pleural plaques an actionable personal injury. In an associated policy memorandum the Scottish Government says: "Although plaques are not in themselves harmful, they do give rise to anxiety because they signify an increased risk of developing very serious illness as a result of exposure to asbestos. In areas associated with Scotland's industrial past, people with pleural plaques are living alongside friends who worked beside them and are witnessing the terrible suffering of those who have contracted serious asbestos-related conditions, including mesothelioma. "This causes many of them terrible anxiety that they will suffer the same fate. The Scottish Government believes that people who have negligently been exposed to asbestos and who are subsequently diagnosed with pleural plaques should be able to raise an action for damages as has been the practice in Scotland for over twenty years. In line with normal procedure, the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP, and the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, Alex Fergusson MSP, has certified that the Asbestos-Related Conditions Bill is within the Parliament's legislative competence. However, an Act of the Scottish Parliament is not law if it is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Association of British Insurers says its members have been advised that the Bill is not compatible with Article 6 of the convention — the right to a fair hearing — or Article 1 of the First Protocol, which protects property rights. It is a little hard to see how the insurers plan to justify these claims and officials could offer no guidance. Since the Bill would merely restore the law in Scotland to what it had been before the law lords' ruling — and still is, on a strict view of precedent — it is difficult to argue that the insurers are being deprived of a "fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law". Similarly, it does not seem that being required to pay claims in Scotland that they would not have to meet in England and Wales is denying these companies the "peaceful enjoyment" of their possessions. It might just be possible to argue that it is not "in the public interest" to deprive them of their possessions — another requirement of Article 1, Protocol 1 — but this, too, seems a little far-fetched. Challenging a Scottish Bill in this way is virtually unprecedented and it is not clear what procedure would be involved. Under the Scotland Act, a law officer can ask the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to decide whether a Bill is within the Parliament's legislative competence.

CVF Carrier Project - History has been both made and uncovered at Babcock Marine's Rosyth Dockyard over the last few weeks, as Rosyth continues to prepare for the arrival of the next generation of aircraft carriers. A multi-million pound contract has been signed with Shanghai Zhenhua Port Machinery Co Ltd (ZPMC), securing the order for a 120m span, 1000t capacity 'Goliath' crane. As the name suggests, the crane is one of the largest in the world and will be a notable addition to the coastline of the Firth of Forth. Standing at 80m tall it is scheduled to arrive at the Rosyth dockyard in Autumn 2010. The huge crane will play a vital role in the delivery of the largest ever aircraft carriers to be constructed in the UK. After assembly it is anticipated that the crane, the biggest single investment at the dockyard for over 10 years, will begin work during winter 2010. Further upgrade work continues throughout the yard, increasing capacity to accommodate the arrival of the new carriers which will arrive in huge blocks at Rosyth. Originally built at the beginning of the 20th Century, Number 1 Dock was extended in the 1960's to accommodate the super sized ships we recognise today, but advances in naval architecture mean that the cross section of the dock is unsuitable to build these state of the art ships. The changes being made to Number 1 Dock have meant that parts of

the dock have been uncovered for the first time in 90 years and the teams involved have found themselves making good use of photographs taken almost 100 years ago to assist them in planning these massive alterations. Work to widen the entrance of the dock is able to begin, now that an extensive cofferdam wall has been put in place. The cofferdam, a real feat of engineering, is a watertight wall constructed to withstand very high pressures. Attached to the seabed, this construction provides a dry working environment in an area which is normally submerged in water. Once that work is complete the direct entrance to the main basin at the yard will be widened by 4m, involving the construction of two further massive cofferdams. There is a vast amount of preparatory work being carried out on the dock ready to start building HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. When the Goliath crane arrives at Rosyth in 2010, it will tower above the yard and represent the scale and enormity of this prestigious project, inspiring all those involved.

Walker Timber Bo'ness - Since November 44 blue collar and 27 staff have been made redundant because of the downturn in timber frame work, as from this week the company will go onto a 4 day week for a period of 5 weeks and then an assessment will be made as to whether it continues.

Burntisland Fabricators - Meeting held with Management and the Trade Unions (FTOs – GMB & UNITE) on the way forward. It is understood that the Company have won an order for 400 windmill bases.

NAECI Scotland - Problems across the UK (including Scotland) on the use of foreign labour on projects when our members are on the dole. Babcock is using non EU labour on a project in Montrose; talks are ongoing to stop this happening. Other areas in the UK are staging unemployed member's protests at the gates of the projects to highlight the problem. Fighting funds and lists are being drawn up in Scotland to defend the jobs.

Public Services Section

The Public Sector Section has been really active this year in representing members through Wage Negotiations, negotiating for Equality, and the introduction of Single Status in Local Government. As well as this GMB Scotland were heavily involved in developing the new Pension Schemes for both the NHS and Local Authorities.

There appeared to be a mood within our membership not to accept further wage awards that were below the rate of inflation and that lead in reality to a drop in Public Sector workers standard of living.

There were disputes that lead to Industrial Action in the Local Authority Craft Agreement which resulted in an improved Pay Offer and a Framework for reducing the working week.

This was followed by a major dispute involving the Local Government workers covered by the Single Status Agreement and again following Industrial Action we secured improvements to the Employers' Offer that matched the rate of inflation in 2008 and is ahead of the rate of inflation for 2009.

Finally, there was also industrial action in Scottish Water following an imposition of a pay award by the Employers'. This action resulted in a significantly improved Offer being achieved for our members.

These disputes were well supported by GMB members with a lot of time and effort being put in by Organisers, Branch Secretaries, Conveners, and Stewards in making the strike days successful. This action spread across the Section was the first time in a long while that members have taken Action and hopefully it will give them confidence in the future not to accept all that the Employer says, confidence to challenge decisions that not only affect their Terms and Conditions, but also affects the way they are treated at work, the type of society they want to live in, the power to change things for the better.

While these disputes are now settled we still have unfinished business in terms of Low Pay within the Public Sector and in particular Scottish Local Government where many thousands of workers are still paid less than £6 per hour. GMB Scotland will be involved this year in a Working Group to look at this issue. We are keen to see this matter dealt with and to see the establishment of a living wage within Local Government. Low Pay affects many part-time women workers in the Public Sector as does pay inequality and GMB Scotland is playing an active role in trying to remove pay inequality in Scotland's Public Sector. We have lodged many Tribunal cases for our members within NHS Scotland and we lead the way in Local Government with more cases lodged than any other Local Government Trade Union.

We are the only Union in Scotland that have taken up second Equal Pay Grievances in Councils that have failed to introduce Single Status on time.

GMB Scotland will continue campaigning on this matter until inequality is removed from not only pay structures, but also from access to training, career progression and the opening of opportunities for all for advancement through promotion and the breaking up of the current gender segregation that currently exists within the Public Sector.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	19
Organising Officers	3
No. of Branches	171
New Branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	26
Branch Youth Officers	0

The process of Reviewing Branches continues across GMB Scotland ensuring that these Branches produce Development Plans and ensure that GMB@Work is integrated into all Branches.

This is an ongoing process.

GMB Scotland during 2008 implemented an Organising Team in line with the other Regions with a number of our new Officers moving into the Team.

These changes have resulted in ongoing reviews of Officers remits which will continue during the course of 2009.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	45,650
Total Disablement	0
Working Accident	4,823
Occupational Fatal Accident	0
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	1,100
Funeral	27,876

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

- 2008 – Campaign Workplaces GMB@Work
- Migrant Workers Campaigns across Central Belt and into the North of Scotland
- Asda Mailings
- Equal Pay Information Campaigning
- Public Sector Pay Dispute Publicity
- Classroom Assistants “Valuable Assets” Campaigning tool in Schools
- CIVT Scottish Parliament, Glasgow City Council
- Local and Free Press Coverage on all major Scottish issues.
- Campaigns support of cuts in Ambulance Service
- Council Expenditure on Temporary Workers Scotland
- Low Pay Public Sector
- Media Coverage Public Sector Pay Dispute
- Lobby Scottish Parliament – Corporate Killing
- British Airways Campaign, Scottish Airports

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
589	589

Cases in which Outcome became known - Digby Brown Solicitors/Thompsons Solicitors

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
550	180	0	368* £2,684,304	2 £24,670	£2,708,974
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		863			

* of which 284 were settled after Court Proceedings were raised.

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	1,967*
---------------------------	--------

* of which 1,817 are new equal pay cases.

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
190	53	4	125	8	£569,381.13* £3,082,385.13**
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		4,909***			

* excluding equal pay

** including equal pay & part settlements received 2008

*** 84 fixed fee and 4,825 equal pay (this includes some multiple job claims for single members)

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
3*			

* Two cases before Scottish EAT and one case before Inner House, Court of Session

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
18	7	14

The summer edition of Insight Magazine saw the re-launch of GMBLaw, GMB Scotland's extended legal services scheme, in association with Digby Brown Solicitors. Over 60,000 new GMBLaw membership cards were forwarded to members. GMB membership already provides legal cover for employment law matters and work related personal injury claims which meet membership criteria. The GMBLaw scheme now provides a free phone service [0800 027 2233] to members, and their families, giving access to immediate, free legal advice on any range of legal issues.

The scheme is easily accessed. Calls are received on a designated line run by Digby Brown Solicitors. Callers are put through immediately to a solicitor who will provide advice. If advice is required on specialist matters, such as family law or criminal law advice, then calls will be put through to one of their associate firms who specialise in such matters.

Legal enquiries need not be work related. Digby Brown will pursue non-work related personal injury and motor accident claims for GMBLaw enquirers on a "no win no fee" basis.

If Union members require legal representation then the scheme will entitle them to discounted rates on a full range of legal services including criminal advice and representation, domestic conveyancing, estate agency, family law and divorce, will and executry services as well as free independent financial advice.

Since the re-launch of the GMBLaw scheme in July 2008, the Solicitors have received over 500 enquiries covering a wide range of legal issues some significant and complex to more straight forward ones.

The provision of free wills to members is an important feature of the scheme and has been hugely popular. Importantly it offers a significant financial saving to members.

An innovative benefit of the GMBLaw scheme is the provision of a series of workplace legal clinics. GMBLaw card holders or those within the household are invited to attend these clinics to receive direct, face to face legal advice.

Clinics have already taken place at various workplaces and have been very well received, covering legal matters like wills, power of attorney and financial planning.

In 2009 we shall actively continue to encourage take up of the benefits of the new GMBLaw scheme by members and their families and we are working closely with our Organisers and Activists to ensure its success.

To that end we have included details of the new GMBLaw scheme in the initial support training materials and the scheme features in the GMB@work training programme.

Equal Pay - The mass public sector Equal Pay Act (EPA) litigations continued to take up the majority of time and resources in 2008 and by the end of the year GMB (Scotland) were supporting some 4,825 members with Employment Tribunal claims - an increase of just under 2,000 from the previous year.

The Scottish claims continued to be bedevilled by preliminary points relating to the soon to be repealed statutory grievance procedures and all are proceeding through the Scottish Tribunals at a painstakingly slow pace.

Preliminary Points – Comparator Issue - In 2008 GMB (Scotland) supported 3 appeals to the EAT and the Inner House of the Court of Session relating to the array of alleged non statutory grievance procedure compliance preliminary points advanced by Local Authorities. The appeals have become known as the Highland Council Test Cases.

In January 2008, the EAT issued its Judgment in the case of Highland Council -v- TGWU, UNISON and GMB, UKEATS/0020/07. This Appeal related to the Councils' argument that a Tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear a claim under the EPA if comparators set out in grievances differed from those in the Tribunal applications. The EAT agreed and, amongst other things, stated that the naming of a comparator was a fundamental prerequisite in any claim under the EPA.

All 3 unions appealed the EAT's decision to Scotland's highest civil court, the Court of Session. The Appeal was heard by the Inner House of the Court of Session who issued their Judgment in June 2008 (Cannop and Others v

The Highland Council CSIH 38) which held that a Tribunal does have jurisdiction to hear EPA claims so long as the complaint underlying both the grievance and the Tribunal application were “essentially the same”. There is now conflicting EAT authority on this point and it is hoped that the matter will be settled when the Court of Appeal hears the Sandwell appeal at the end of February 2009.

Preliminary Point – Collective Grievance Issue - The second appeal to the Scottish EAT in 2008 related to the Local Authorities’ allegations that a Tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear a claim where members were not specifically named in a union collective grievance. In the case of the Highland Council v TGWU, Unison and GMB UKEATS/0048/07, the EAT upheld the appeal.

Fortunately, the vast majority of Local Authorities Councils in Scotland did not plead this point in their Defences. As such, our Employment Solicitors are arguing that the Authorities are not now entitled to take the point – unless they seek the leave of the Tribunal to amend their pleadings which will be opposed. This issue is now the subject of a further recently lodged appeal to the Scottish EAT in the Glasgow City Council litigations.

Residual/Interim Equal Pay Claims - GMB (Scotland) identified in early 2008 that members employed in some 18 Local Authorities had a further entitlement to make EPA claims for residual/interim periods. An Advert was placed in the March 2008 Edition of the GMB (Scotland) Insight Magazine inviting eligible members to make applications for Tribunal assistance on line. Members were asked a series of questions and thereafter the data entered was “exported” collectively enabling Tribunal applications to be lodged with relative ease. This exercise enabled the union to deal with litigations on a mass scale but using far less time and staff resources than the paper method which characterised the administration of 1st Wave Claims.

Setting Up of Employment Advice Surgeries for Organisers - In 2008 GMB (Scotland) agreed to pilot a Scheme which involves cases of unfair dismissal and illegal deduction from wages. The Scheme commenced on 1st January 2009 and its objective is to provide legal, industrial and practical support to Organisers dealing with matters which may result in Tribunal proceedings being lodged. Organisers are attended upon at Advice Surgeries by an experienced Employment Solicitor and telephone appointments are arranged for those Organisers located outwith the central belt.

In 2009 we will closely monitor the progress of this pilot scheme, which is receiving much support from Regional Organisers.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Tackling inequality and diversity across Scotland is one of our key issues within and outwith the workplace.

Following the creation of the single body structure at National level the Region are now in the process of organising a Conference from which we will create the new Regional Structure driving the Equalities and Inclusion Agenda.

Emma Ritch our National Equality Forum member for GMB Scotland plays a prominent role within the Region.

Meetings of the Equalities groups continue to be robust within the Region and continue to debate issues across the wide spectrum of the Equalities and Inclusion debate.

Migrant Workers and Equal Pay have been high on their agenda of Topics as has Sex Workers.

GMB Scotland sent two colleagues to the Equalities Champions Training in Scalby late 2008 who found the whole experience enlightening. One of our Equalities Champions attended the Women’s Summit in London on 9 February 2009 and provided a detailed report as to the level of discussions at which Harriet Harman was a keynote speaker.

- Registered Childcare Places
- Increased Maternity Leave and Pay
- Introduction of Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits, Pensions and increased Child Benefit
- The Establishment of a Minister for Women

All of the above were areas covered in her speech.

Neena Gill and Glenis Willmott provide presentation at this Summit as did Glenys Kinnock MEP.

The focus of the day was geared to Equality being high on the Government Agenda.

The Region hope to attract a broad diverse spectrum of members to the forthcoming Regional Equalities and Inclusion Conference broadening and stimulating the debate and engaging the activists to carry the message back into the workplace and their communities.

We continue to focus on the Equalities and Inclusion GMB Workplan and the five Strategic Priorities.

1. Increased Membership
2. Drive the Equality and Inclusion Bargaining Agenda
3. Campaign on Equality and Inclusion
4. Enhance the Profile
5. Drive Organisational Equality and Inclusion

We will ensure that Equality and Inclusion is integrated into all aspects of our work within the Region with no boundaries.

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)					
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	1	20	6	26	130
GMB@WORK (2 Days)	8	77	17	94	188
Pilot 5 Day Induction incorporating 2 Day GMB@Work	1	7	0	7	35

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects) N/A					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB 3-Day Risk Assessment	2	21	6	27	81

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends - N/A)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses - All TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Union Reps Stage 1 (10 Days)	5	4	1	5	50

Stepping Up Advanced Course for Union Reps (10 Days)	4	3	2	5	50
Health & Safety Stage 1 (10 Days)	12	16	0	16	160
Health & Safety Stage 2 (10 Days)	11	19	3	22	220
TUC Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety (36 Days)	2	2	0	2	72
3 Day Risk Assessment	2	7	4	11	33
Accident Investigation & Reporting (5 Days)	1	3	0	3	15
Musculoskeletal Disorders (2 Days)	1	1	0	1	2
Union Learning Reps (5 Days)	3	1	1	2	10
Training for Equality Reps (3 Days)	1	0	2	2	6
Spanish Stage 1 (10 Days)	1	1	0	1	10

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Safety continues to be one of the key issues within the Region for our Shop Stewards/Health & Safety Representatives in a day to day basis. Our Education Training Programme continues to ensure that all our newly appointed Stewards are trained in Health & Safety and the Environment. Our National Health Representatives continue to work within the NHS in ensuring the protection of our members livelihoods and working environment, working particularly closely with our Ambulance Service membership within Scotland.

Pulling together Health and Safety with our political leverage we have been raising key concerns within Scottish Government on behalf of our security membership employed in CITV and as reported earlier in this report with Glasgow City Council in regard to the increasing level of attacks over the past few years from being shot at, assaults and severe beatings.

The Region has also been working with Affiliates through the Scottish Trade Union Congress and continues to do so in the important Health and Safety issue of Pleural Plaques, being involved in the pursuit of justice in regard to Corporate Culpable Homicide against unscrupulous employers with no regard to working people, only the pursuit of profit. Working with Clydeside Action on Asbestos has been a key role within GMB Scotland working with Tommy Gorman GMB leading figure in the fight against Mesothelioma.

Community issues have also been at the heart of GMB Scotland's campaign on Health and Safety with a key role being played in Dumbarton by the GMB in maintaining key acute emergency provisions at the local hospital.

As in line with the 10 Safety Representatives tasks we continually train our representatives that Health and Safety is an integrated part of GMB@Work and that Recruitment and Organisation vital for a safe and healthy workplace.

9. YOUTH

This year we have seen an upturn within our youth activists group in particular the role the GMB Youth Delegation played at the STUC Youth Conference.

Drew Smith is currently visiting Palestinian Territories as part of the STUC Youth Delegation. Drew will be part of a delegation meeting with Trade Unionists from Israel and the Occupied Territories investigating the merits of supporting a boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against the State of Israel until it complies with International Law and agreed Human Rights principles. This is a significant opportunity for Drew as part of this delegation. The STUC supports a peaceful two state solution for both Israel and Palestine. This visit will provide an overview as to the current critical situation. A report back to the STUC Congress will take place in April 2009 in Perth. At this point Congress will have the opportunity to take a decision on the issue of boycott, disinvestment and sanctions.

Drew as GMB Young member on this historic delegation will brief the Region on his return from Israel/Palestine. These views and opinions will be based on feedback from Trade Unionists. This highlights the active role that youth is playing in helping GMB Scotland to formulate STUC Policy Decision.

SOUTHERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	78,520
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	23,754
MANUFACTURING SECTION	9,437
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	45,329
Grade 1 members	48,247
Grade 2 members	24,054
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	6,219
Male Membership	38,238
Female Membership	40,282
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	13,102
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,402 increase
Membership on Check-off	50,334
Membership on Direct Debit	21,763

Response to Organising Agenda

The Regional Organising Team in its second full year of organisation set itself a target of substantially beating the 12,000 members recruited in the previous calendar year which was itself a record for the Region. At the end of 2008 13,122 members have been enrolled and with transfers from other Regions a total of 13,326 new members were recruited into the Region. To beat the previous record by over 1,000 members demonstrated an outstanding effort by all concerned.

The Region also continued to grow. It grew from 76,118 members in 2007 to 78,520 at the end of 2008. The second year of sustained growth demonstrated that the Region had put well behind it the problems of 2005.

GMB@Work is a core of all organising activity. Having trained Officers in GMB@Work plans are in progress to train all of the Region's staff.

The Region also introduced in 2008 a Best Practice document that sets minimum standards in regard to secretarial and admin duties; diary and management; computer usage and assisting members with enquiries.

In response to the Green Agenda the Region increased its recycling in 2008.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

The ROT Team in conjunction with Area Teams successfully undertook organising/recruitment campaigns in a number of locations, including the South West Area, the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands.

South West Area

Within the Area the campaign saw substantial enrolment surrounding Single Status and Equal Pay in Local Government in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. In addition, in line with the Organising Agenda, a new strata of stewards was established.

Further consolidation of membership has continued within Cornwall County Cornwall to coincide with Unitary Authority status in April 2009, and has placed the GMB reps locally in a good position to secure better facilities arrangements to assist our members.

Within the Area the NHS and its related contractors remains a strong area of membership consolidation where Agenda for Change and how this policy applies to contractors within the NHS remains a key concern. Further resources are being released locally and regionally, to realise the full potential of the NHS in terms of recruitment.

There have been a number of key disputes within the South West Area of the Region and in particular Appledore Shipbuilders where the Region won a dispute over parity with other ship building yards in the UK.

South Coast Area

A joint campaign between the ROT and Area Teams established increased membership on the Isle of Wight which should continue to show developments in 2009.

The Region saw a substantial increase in its Jersey membership which resulted in Recognition Agreements with Jersey Telecom and Jersey Electric.

The Area Team was involved in a successful campaign within SGN which resulted in significant membership growth and the subsequent appointment of a number of workplace representatives. This campaign paved the way for a Recognition Agreement within the Company.

The Region undertook a successful bid to achieve monies from the Union Learning Fund to establish an office with a Learning Project Worker within Gatwick. As a result of this activity the spin-off has been an increase in membership across Gatwick although unfortunately there was also a loss of membership due to major redundancies at Aviance.

Central Area

Within the Area campaigns saw 500 new members and improved GMB organisation in schools.

The majority of ASDA membership is serviced from the Area and over 300 new members in ASDA stores following a successful campaign.

Over 500 members were recruited in G4s which is also co-ordinated through the Area. In this membership growth was achieved through employer inductions, site visits and regular communications. In addition within the Security industry 140 members were enrolled in Securitas.

Following GMB@Work training within Thames Water, 100 new members were enrolled.

The Area has played a very active part in the development of the GMB Migrant Worker organising strategy in Wiltshire. The strategy has been focused on developing workplace organisation among UK employers with large numbers of migrant workers. Efforts were made to consolidate union organisation at Airsprung Beds Ltd, and new organisation established at two local employers, PB Beauty, Trowbridge and TS Tech, Swindon.

The consolidation at Airsprung led to the election of Polish shop stewards working alongside English stewards. As the year ended plans were being put in place for a recruitment drive in 2009.

London South East Area

There have been a number of recruitment initiatives in the following companies: Biffa Waste Management, Connaught Environmental, London Borough of Wandsworth, London Borough of Southwark, Southern Cross and the Environment Agency, Kent County Council, East Sussex County Council and Wilkinsons.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Situation

The Region so far has not suffered substantial job losses as a result of the economic downturn. In fact the Region continues to see an increase in public service membership which is at the heart of the membership growth in 2008.

The Region does anticipate there will be a small decline in membership within Engineering and Manufacturing in the course of the coming year. For example, within the South West Area the tough economic condition has seen a subsequent impact upon our membership. Efforts have been made to help members to re-skill to find other employment through the various education skills programmes from the area, most notably at Pilkington Glass. Within the South Coast Area the manufacturing sector continues to decline with the only bright note being confirmation of the order for aircraft carriers for the MOD. Not only has it secured employment for our members at what is now BVT but continues to provide training and recruitment opportunities at the Portsmouth Shipbuilding and Repair facility on a steady and ongoing basis.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	21
Organising Officers	5
No. of Branches	111
New Branches	6
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	12

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	2,884.30
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Funeral	18,986.50

4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

The Region has continued to achieve substantial publicity around its Private Equity campaign. Although this campaign peaked in 2007 there remained considerable interest in 2008 with speculation surrounding the future of Private Equity in a number of companies as a result of the economic downturn. It is to the GMB Southern Region that a lot of journalists turn for publicity on this issue.

The Region has been involved in publicity on the following issues: Marks and Spencer, Council Housing, Banks, Government handling of the economy, Re-capitalisation of the banking system, Private Equity and Hedge Funds, JCB and Migrant labour.

In common with other Regional magazines, the Region's magazine 'Vision' in 2008 incorporated national pages and the magazine appeared three times.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
625	576

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
547	215	1	315 £3,325,859	2 £7,300	£3,333,159
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		894			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	125
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
125	49	-	45 £210,731	10 £248,812	£459,543
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		70			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
169	4	£1,746,093	28

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
7	6	-

6. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The Regional Equal Rights committee have once again had a busy but successful time, with Representatives from the committee attending the TUC Black Workers conference and the TUC LGBT conference. We attended a number of events promoting the work of the GMB throughout the Region, including more PRIDE events than ever before in London, Brighton, Bournemouth and Plymouth and also Black Pride held in Regents Park. We were unable to attend the RISE festival this year due to circumstances beyond our control. At the events we have attended we have recruited a number of new members and handed out literature, which will hopefully attract more new members.

The National Equal Rights committee held their last meeting in Manchester in March, prior to the formation of the National Equalities Forum (NEF) led by Kamaljeet Jandu, National Equalities & Inclusion Officer.

Southern Region is at the forefront in terms of leading the way on many equality issues, thanks to the support of our Regional Secretary, and we have helped facilitate the development of the newly formed NEF. We have been fortunate to have four Representatives appointed to the Forum and the appointments were made through interviews and past work experience on equalities issues.

Southern Region has, in the past, held separate meetings for Race, LGBT & Equal Rights and recently took the decision to hold one committee meeting covering all areas on the Equalities Agenda, with Alan Fraser, Regional Education & Health & Safety Officer now being the lead Officer for Equalities, and being given the task of supporting the lay members. We would like to express thanks to the Officers who had supported us in the past Kelly Horsburgh, Kevin Mason and Kevin Brandstatter.

The newly formed committee is titled Regional Equalities Forum (REF) in line with the NEF and is attended by representatives from the three previous committees, plus Migrant Workers and Young Members attending. The REF will have bi-monthly meetings to discuss vision and strategy for equalities and how this links to recruitment and organising. It recently held its third meeting which was very successful and has given the members the opportunity to discuss plans for future work.

We held our Regional Equalities Conference in Bournemouth on the 13th and 14th of November and wrote to all Branches encouraging them to nominate individuals to attend. A number of new Branch Equality Officers attended and were elected to the Regional Equalities Forum. The Conference was well attended with the Regional Secretary and the National Equalities & Inclusion Officer both in attendance as keynote speakers.

We now have a larger Equalities Forum with members covering all areas of equalities and critically linking our discussions to practical campaigning work in the Region. This will hopefully enable us to cover aspects of equalities and organising which we have not previously been able to cover. It will also provide us with more activists to assist when working on recruitment and organising events.

The Education Department, Regional Organising Team and the Gatwick Branch organised a one day Respect@Work day for all workers at Gatwick. The event focused on rights at work, improving skills through education and training, with particular emphasis on Migrant Workers. The event helped us to strike up dialogue with members and non-members in which we were able to identify various equality issues, in particular discrimination and harassment at work. This event undoubtedly raised the profile of the GMB Gatwick Branch and has enabled us to follow up new and prospective members as well as consolidate existing members.

The GMB Southern Region continues to do some excellent work on Migrant Workers and our strategy has enabled us to recruit many migrant workers into the GMB. We have dedicated resources in three areas of the Region, namely Wiltshire, Plymouth and the South Coast. This has enabled us to have a co-ordinated and planned approach, which has helped us to link up with indigenous workers and migrant workers in several workplaces, and address various equalities issues. As a result, we have recruited significant new members to the GMB.

7. YOUTH

The Southern Region Young Members' section has seen a growth in potential activists over the past year as online joining among other things has helped boost young membership. A branch analysis also helped clarify where we are best at recruiting young members (ex. Migrant worker branches, retail etc). As a result, this knowledge can help shape campaigns in other areas. For example, the Wilkinsons branch low hours rate has had significant take up from young members. Its adoption across the Region may well help boost activity in areas like ASDA.

The section has also participated in a number of initiatives throughout the year;

Cuba

Southern Region led the way in organising a national GMB young members delegation to Cuba as part of the May Day Brigade. Activists from across the country, including 7 of our own volunteers from around the Region took 2 weeks out to experience life and trade unionism Cuban style.

The trip comprised of voluntary work sessions, visits to schools, hospitals and workplaces, meetings with trade union leaders and culminating in the May Day Demonstration. It proved to be an inspiration and educational trip for all those who went. We all learnt valuable lessons from their highly organised and politicised young people.

While there we also met with other British trade union leaders and strengthened GMB's links with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Indeed since returning delegates have attended the Miami 5 vigil at the American Embassy and participated in a TUC organised Latin American conference.

Equalities Forum

The first conference and meetings of the newly formed equalities forum were held in 2008. Difficulties in finding young member volunteers were finally overcome with the help of a new enthusiastic branch youth officer. It is hoped further delegates will come forward for future events.

The conference also made a number of key recommendations including increasing the age limit to 30, putting forward a proposal regarding membership rates and key strategy ideas involving better use of the internet and the way that we communicate with our young members. Developments like these will prove vital in promoting GMB as the union for young people.

National Young Members Conference

Thankfully the national young members' conference took place again in November 2008. There were a wide selection of workshops which led to varied discussion and some inspirational ideas. Young members had the opportunity to discuss their issues with the General Secretary and following a presentation by Dawn Butler MP, had the chance to ask her some very challenging questions! The evening social that followed proved to be the icing on the cake - thanks to London region.

Youth Project

The Somerset branch is continuing its efforts to boost young member activity through a youth project. The branch secretary has instigated a number of new initiatives designed to improve activist levels amongst young members, boost membership and promote the union as a benefit for the whole family. The section will continue to support the branch in any way that it can.

Workers Beer Company

Activities with the WBC continued as in previous years - volunteers again participated in events across the summer months.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Activists Basic Mandatory Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2-Day GMB@Work	22	211	86	297	594
5-Day Induction Part 1	8	66	32	98	490
5-Day Induction Part 2	8	77	23	100	500
TOTAL	38	354	141	495	1,584

(b) GMB Activists Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Union Learning Reps	7	41	21	62	310
5-Day Union Learning Reps Follow-on	1	7	3	10	50
5-Day Negotiating Skills	2	19	2	21	105

5-Day Introduction to Employment Law	2	17	8	25	125
5-Day Advanced Employment Law	3	16	6	22	110
5-Day Tackling Racism	1	6	2	8	40
3-Day Migrant Workers & the GMB	1	8	4	12	36
3 & 5 Day Accompanying Reps	(3d) 1	12	1	13	39
	(5d) 2	15	2	17	85
5-Day Equal Opportunities	1	4	2	6	30
5-Day Organising & Building the GMB	1	10	1	11	55
TOTAL	22	155	52	207	985

(c) GMB Activists Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Health & Safety Part 1	2	13	6	19	95
5-Day Health & Safety Part 2	1	13	4	17	85
5-Day Advanced Health & Safety	1	6	1	7	35
TOTAL	4	32	11	43	215

(d) Other GMB Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3-Day Political Education (residential)	2	14	10	24	72
5-Day Advanced Pensions (national)	1	3	-	3	15
TOTAL	3	17	10	27	87

(e) TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3-Day Health & Safety Update	1	1	-	1	3
1-Day Skills Pledge	1	1	-	1	1
12-Day Diploma in Occupational Health (36 wk course Term 1=12 wks)	1	-	1	1	12
14-Day Stage 3 H&S (1 yr course Term 1=14 wks)	1	1	-	1	14
TOTAL	4	3	1	4	30

(f) GMB Officers Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2-Day Training the Trainers – National (GMB@Work)	3	25	10	35	70
1-Day Advanced Employment Law	1	5	2	7	7
2-Day Handling the Media	1	11	2	13	26
TOTAL	5	41	14	55	103

GRAND TOTAL	76	602	229	831	3,004
--------------------	-----------	------------	------------	------------	--------------

COMPARED TO 2007 TOTAL	51	406	170	576	2,349
-------------------------------	-----------	------------	------------	------------	--------------

2008 has shown an increase of 44% in the numbers of reps and officers who have attended training courses.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Region continues to engage with our members on all aspects of health and safety. This reinforces the organising agenda as it helps our Reps to have a high profile in the workplace, supported by up to date information.

We continue to offer bespoke training and education tailored to our members needs and that of the industry they work in. We then offer back up support and information to the Reps once they return to their workplace.

We are finding that in this economy downturn that more employers are cutting back on health and safety, making it all the more important to ensure that we in the Southern Region visit workplace sites, and support our Reps to enforce health and safety law.

A clear example of cut backs is in one of our Care Homes, where members are working long hours with the threat of closure if they force through health and safety rights. The GMB are very clear that this practise will not continue and, as a result, non-union members have joined so that they become protected and have a stronger voice.

Trade Union Education is an important part of many health and safety Reps lives and, as such, we continue to provide the courses tailored to their needs. In particular, courses that cover the working time directive, work life balance and stress at work.

Conclusion

Southern Region has had a successful year both in terms of enrolment and growth and is in a strong position to face the difficulties of the downturn in the economic situation.

SOUTH WESTERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	11,574

MANUFACTURING SECTION	10,617
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	26,447
Grade 1 members	32,503
Grade 2 members	11,572
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,563
Male Membership	25,598
Female Membership	23,040
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	5,964
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	28
Membership on Check-off	32,852
Membership on Direct Debit	9,964

The South Western Region continues to fully appreciate the hard work and endeavours of Branch Officials, Shop Stewards, Staff Representatives, Activists, Full Time Officials and Regional Staff.

Due to everyone's efforts over the last 12 months the Union has made a difference to many people and the Region has maintained a high public campaigning profile which has resulted in a 2008 year end regional increase in membership.

Those who continually strive to protect the interests of GMB members, your endeavours are highly valued and the Region says to you all, well done keep the GMB flag flying!

At the time of writing this report, never before have the British people witnessed the significant levels of public funding, finance and resource being made available and brought forward in an attempt to intervene in the free market economy and to bring about much needed stability to support and maintain employment at this critical point in time. Near economic meltdown in the world financial markets will have changed the free market dogma of the unregulated, unfettered "business knows best" mantra so beloved of bankers, private equity asset strippers and far too many politicians.

The Government has had to take bold and unprecedented action to try to salvage savings, jobs and confidence in the banks, which we all have to rely on in today's world. Your Union, GMB, both nationally and regionally, has lobbied the Government for investment in public spending contracts on housing, manufacturing, education, health and capital investment/infrastructure projects to stimulate and encourage employment.

The vital lesson to be learned is that the unregulated markets created by the Tories in finance, pensions and mass privatisation have proven to be disastrous for the British worker.

You might remember when GMB was warning about the greed of the city, the Tories were opposing regulation and controls. Many will remember it was the Tories who privatised the gas, water and electricity industries, putting dividends above the needs of working people. We all know the real beneficiaries of privatisation have been the city money makers and the well known "fat cat" bosses. GMB is of the view that enough is enough. The opportunity must be taken to make the system fairer and more accountable. Politicians must understand that market regulation equals protection for working people.

Recruitment targets and campaigns

The GMB@Work organisation strategy remains central to the Unions membership growth. The Unions purpose is to get a better deal at work by building the Union in numbers and in power in every work place where we have members.

The protection of our member's health in the workplace, the fight for better pay, decent pensions and challenging unfair practices which some employers continue to attempt to impose, must be a constant priority for the GMB. The Region will continue to offer support and assistance in the challenges ahead.

To complement the above the GMB established regional organising teams across the UK in 2006, following the Union's internal review of its organisational structure and recruitment practices.

Each Regional Organising Team (ROT) comprises of seven Full Time Regional Officers, all of whom possess significant experience in recruitment and organisational issues. The team's main functions are to allocate recruitment resources to key national and regional targets, to monitor recruitment performance in line with established targets, and to ensure that all lay representatives have the skills, experience and confidence to discharge their responsibilities in the workplace. On average, each ROT meets five times a year.

The adoption of a more structured and systematic approach to recruitment has had an obvious effect upon GMB membership growth. In fact, membership of the South Western Region alone has increased by over 8,000 members in the last two and a half years.

Despite its unfortunate abbreviation "ROT" the South Western Regional Organising Team will continue to work to make a positive contribution to developing our membership base and to ensuring GMB maintains its position as the preferred union for all employees, irrespective of where they work.

Progress on attaining a single status pay and grading structure across Wales Local Authorities has been slow going, with only a handful of agreements being achieved. This unacceptable lack of progress is one of the main factors that led GMB to undertake mass litigation against Wales' Local Authorities. Around 14,500 equal pay claims have now been lodged at the Cardiff Employment Tribunal, and a further number are still to be issued.

Some Local Authorities, such as Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Swansea and Blaenau Gwent, have recently made offers of settlement to employees in areas with mainly female workers. With one exception these were considered to be insufficient, in terms of monetary value and the conditions attached and GMB members were advised against acceptance. The usual delays inherent in the employment tribunal system have now been compounded by the tactics of Local Authority legal representatives, who raised several defences designed to evade responsibility for years of pay inequality. These tactics result in a poor settlement of offers, against GMB advice, because of financial need and an unwillingness to endure legal action.

The Region will continue its policy of working collaboratively with such partners as the Wales TUC and the Welsh Assembly Government to tackle equal pay problems. This Union will leave no stone unturned in its campaign to achieve fair and equal pay arrangements.

The Region has campaigned relentlessly for the introduction of a separate negotiating body for school support staff, to reflect the ever changing roles and responsibilities undertaken by our members and the crucial part they have played in education reform. GMB believes they deserve fair and consistent pay structures and conditions of employment.

The GMB campaign has influenced ministerial thinking on the matter. Indeed, a new negotiating body has been established to design and implement a pay and conditions framework. The new structure will cover all schools in England except academies and be applicable to approximately 400,000 employees. GMB will be one of three trade union signatories to the new negotiating body and is currently at the forefront of the process.

Unfortunately, the Welsh Assembly Government has yet to decide whether to adopt the English model. A formal consultation exercise is intended to allow the various stakeholders to express their views on the options. The GMB position is unequivocal: all School Support Staff should enjoy a fair remuneration level and other conditions which reflect the fact that they are a vital and integral part of our children's education, regardless of position, status or pay. GMB Officers are shortly due to meet with Assembly Government Ministers, in order to restate our policy position.

Another area of campaigning work the GMB and the South Western Region has been heavily involved in is the issue of procurement.

The Government's guidance on reserving public procurement contracts for supported factories and businesses for people with disabilities, such as Remploy, has now been published.

The GMB's European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw has been heavily involved in revising this guidance during 2008 and the new guidance makes a much more positive case for reserved contracts and point 7.2 of the new guidance says '*As a matter of Government policy, contracting authorities should aim to have at least one or more contracts with a supported factory or business.*' Which the Union worked hard to get extended. The Region has been working very closely with the Welsh Assembly Government on this issue and they have produced similar positive guidance in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions format.

Representing the Wales TUC and the GMB your Regional Secretary Allan Garley has been a member of the Business Procurement Task Force, chaired by Andrew Davies, Minister of Finance and Public Service Delivery and have worked over the last three years to ensure a consistent approach to procurement across the Public Sector in Wales.

One of the initiatives overseen by the Task Force has been to encourage the Public Sector in Wales to engage more with supported factories and businesses. European legislation now clearly allows Member States to reserve contracts for supported factories and businesses.

The GMB has also played a prominent role in the Supported Businesses Sub-Group of the Task Force, which along with representatives from the Public Sector and the legal profession has produced the 'Frequently Asked Questions' guidance, in order to dispel some of the myths and apprehension about applying the legislation.

Allan Garley on behalf of the TUC and GMB wrote the forward and endorsement of this guidance, in which he stressed the need for the Public Sector to significantly increase its support for supported factories and businesses.

"The Wales TUC and my own Trade Union, the GMB, welcomes the publication of this Supported Factories and Businesses 'Frequently Asked Question' document. Over many years we have been actively involved at European level in changing legislation, and at UK level in the production of regulations and their implementation, which allows the public sector to positively promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities in supported factories and businesses by reserving contracts.

The challenges faced by people coping with a disability are immense, and supported factories and businesses play a major and valuable role in providing highly skilled employment and ongoing training, social interaction and mentoring and support to help people with disabilities become more independent and play an active part in the world of work and their communities. The factories and businesses produce state of the art clothing for military and police, quality furniture and fittings, and security support. It is vital that we provide a steady stream of work into supported factories and businesses to maintain and develop this access route for as many people as possible facing such challenges in integrating into the labour market.

Opportunities offered by Article 19 of the EU Directive for reserving contracts for supported factories and businesses, proved us with the legal means of ensuring a steady stream of high quality work and are unique within the world of procurement regulations, because the impact of providing employment for people with disabilities is universally recognised as being of significant financial and social benefit. As a matter of policy, every contracting authority in Wales should aim to have at least one or more contracts with a supported factory or business.

I am pleased to be actively involved with representatives of the public sector and supported factories and businesses in developing initiatives that promote supported factories and businesses. Accordingly, I commend this valuable 'Frequently Asked Questions' guidance document, which is designed to guide and give confidence to the public sector about the use of Article 19 and I now ask that the public sector in Wales re-examines and significantly increases its support for supported factories and businesses."

The GMB campaign for a positive future for Remploy and other supported factories and businesses remains as active as ever and clearly public procurement is the key focus for ensuring their long term success.

The ongoing fight for compensation for workers suffering from asbestos related illness continues. Trade unions have been fighting for compensation for injured workers for some decades. Sometimes it is for the worker injured in an accident, sometimes it is much more insidious and sometimes it is on behalf of tens of thousands of workers whose lives have been blighted by exposure to asbestos.

Thousands of Welsh and UK workers are suffering from exposure to asbestos while working in steelworks, repairing boilers, replacing lagging in ceilings or repairing old pipe work. The undisputed fact is that asbestos continues to be a major hazard. Employers knew of the dangers yet they did nothing until the trade unions started taking them to court.

The workers who develop mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the lungs will die painfully, often within months. Others will suffer the debilitating effects of asbestosis, a fibrosis of the lungs or even lung cancer itself.

Many thousands of others will suffer from pleural plaques, or scarring of the lungs. Often this causes no specific disability, but leaves the worker with anxiety about developing a life-threatening cancer in the future. For over 20 years insurers have been paying compensation to victims of pleural plaques. However, a recent House of Lords decision on a number of pleural plaques cases has found in favour of the employers, a decision entirely to the advantage of the insurance industry who will benefit from this decision by an estimated £1.4 billion.

The GMB considered this judgement to be perverse. A cosseted judiciary, who probably would not recognise asbestos if they came across it, decided that workers doing a heavy manual job are not physically affected by scarring on their lungs. GMB activists have led the protests against this outrageous legal judgement. On the 28th October 2008, the Region organised a bus to take Branch Officials and Activists to attend and take part in the Pleural Plaque Demonstration and Lobby which took place in London.

With regard to the Daniel Dennis Campaign, the Region is able to report that the Court Hearing, to hear the sentencing of the person responsible for the death of Daniel Dennis took place on the 6th May 2008, when a prison sentence of 10 months was given. Daniel's parents, Peter and Anthea now believe that justice has been done, following a five year battle. The Regional Secretary, who was in attendance at the hearing, confirmed that the Region is delighted with this result for the family and all members.

A great honour for the South Western Region is for the period of May 2008 to May 2009 Vaughan Gething was elected President of the Wales Trade Union Congress. Vaughan, who is a member of the GMB's Cardiff and District Branch, is the first black President of the Wales TUC and at just 34 years old is also the youngest President to date.

Vaughan studied law at Aberystwyth and Cardiff Universities and was Student Union President between 1996 and 1998, before progressing to become President of NUS Wales. Vaughan has worked tirelessly during his term of office, making a significant contribution to building on the work of previous years and greatly assisting the Wales TUC in facing up to the organising and recruitment challenges as the economy and workplaces have changed.

Last, but certainly not least, it is great news for the South Western Region and the GMB Union that Sheila Bearcroft has been elected as President of the British TUC. Over many years, Sheila's endeavours on behalf of working people have been unstinting and second to none. "Don't forget to join the Union" were the words that Sheila's father spoke as she set off for her first days work in a South Wales factory over 40 years ago.

Sheila often recalls her father was a miner and it would never have occurred to her not to join the Union. Sheila has come a long way since leaving school at 15 without a qualification to her name, and has since risen through the ranks to become President of the Trade Union Council and will preside as chair over the TUC Conference in September 2009.

I know that Sheila is very honoured to be elected as the President of the TUC, which is the highest accolade a lay member of the Trade Union Movement can achieve. Well done Sheila, your Region and Union is proud of you. Keep the GMB flag flying!

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	2
Membership Development Officers	3
Regional Organisers	14
Organising Officers	0
No. of Branches	198
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	0
Branch Youth Officers	0

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	0
Total Disablement	0
Working Accident	1,619.50
Occupational Fatal Accident	4,517.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0
Funeral	14,901.00

4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

The Region since the last Congress has been at the forefront of the issues relating to the economy. For example, the Region has played a significant role in developing the Welsh Assembly Governments response to the Economic Summit. This has achieved significant publicity and has contributed to organising and recruitment successes. Advertising in respect of the Equal Pay campaign continues to be a very successful recruitment tool.

The Region continues to be at the forefront of campaigns in relation to the issue of the decline in manufacturing within Wales and the South West and has maintained this focus through the National Assembly for Wales, the Wales TUC, South West TUC, Wales Labour Party and South West Labour Party.

The Region has maintained established contacts with all areas of the media, greatly utilising the press releases generated from National Office. Every endeavour is made to ensure all regional issues that effect GMB members are given full exposure via the media whenever possible.

The Region has been actively involved in the affairs and business of the Wales TUC and Wales Labour Party, equally the Region has maintained its activity in the business of the South West TUC and South West Labour Party.

The collaboration of the combined National and Regional Magazine, which is now circulated to every member three times a year, has proven to be very successful, both in terms of keeping members advised of news and current issues as well as being a useful recruitment tool.

Sponsorship

The Region continues its policy of using determining factors with regard to sponsorship being granted, the main factor for sponsorship requests are publicity for the Union and the promotion of Union membership. The Region has maintained its strategy of a reduced and careful budget for sponsorship and advertising.

On the 16th July 2008, the Region contributed and took an active role in The Bevan Foundation 60th Anniversary of National Health Service, which took place in the Senedd, Cardiff Bay. South Western Regional President Sheila Bearcroft and the Regional Secretary were key speakers at the event, which was hosted by Welsh Assembly First Minister Rhodri Morgan.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
521	480

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
473	194	0	279 £1,669,144		£1,669,144
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		897			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	102
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
88	52		17 £231,918		£231,918
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		360			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
Nil			

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
19	5	5

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

During 2008 the Region has continued to progress all areas of equality and has endeavoured to use the structure of systematically getting equality issues over to our members, via Branch Officials, the Equality Forum and through the South Western Regional magazine NEXUS. The Region is pleased to record that several Branches produce their own newsletters where equality issues are highlighted.

The Region maintains its membership and activity on the various Equality, Race, LGBT and Pan Equality Committees on the Wales TUC and South West TUC, along with representation with the Wales Labour Party and South West Labour Party.

The Region retains its Black and Ethnic Minorities seat on the Wales TUC General Council and is delighted to report that following his term as Vice President of the Wales TUC, Vaughan Gething took the Presidential Chair at the Wales TUC Conference in May 2008. As reported last year, (when Vaughan took office as the Vice Chair) he is the first BME member to take on the role of President of the Wales TUC. During his term of Office Vaughan has also been an excellent ambassador for the GMB in areas of equality.

In line with the GMB@Work initiative, new Shop Stewards are encouraged to attend and take an active role in regional conferences, speaking to motions on all aspects of race and equality in the workplace. The GMB continues to have good attendance and representation at all events encompassing equality such as the Wales TUC Challenging Racism Conference in 2008 and the Women's Wales TUC Conference.

The Region is pleased and proud to confirm that Jill Richards, long standing activist on equality issues (now a GMB Organisation Officer) was awarded the Wales TUC Equalities Award at the 2008 Wales TUC Conference.

The Region once again participated in the Diversity Awards Wales 2008 and was pleased to sponsor an award which was presented by Vaughan Gething.

The Region's Equalities Forum has 25 members:

12 females – 1 of ethnic minority

13 males – 2 of ethnic minority

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (10 days)	3	21	10	31	310
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)					
GMB@WORK	7	62	28	90	270

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2 day Grievance & Disciplinary	1	8		8	16

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3 day Risk Assessment & Inspection	2	18	6	24	72
3 day Asbestos Awareness	2	25	3	28	84

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3 day Representing Members	3	17	7	24	72
5 Day Employment Law	1	10	5	15	75

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC Various	23	34	12	46	

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The South Western Region proudly continues to provide a valued Health and Safety service to our representatives and members.

Working closely with our Region's education providers, we have ensured a network of fully trained and committed work place Safety Representatives. The Region successfully continues to encourage Health and Safety Representatives to train to a very high standard by promoting and supporting representatives on IOSH and NEBOSH courses.

Work place activity promoting health and safety issues and prioritising workplace inspections has played an important part in the recruitment of new members which are reflected in the positive 2008 Regions' recruitment figures.

The Regional Health and Safety Officer is also a member of the Regional Organising Team.

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,534
MANUFACTURING SECTION	14,624
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	29,005
Grade 1 members	33,563
Grade 2 members	15,482
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	8,118
Male Membership	29,112
Female Membership	28,051
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	7,841
Increase 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,522
Membership on Check-off	37,611
Membership on Direct Debit	12,281

The Region

2008 saw the growth and development of our region in a number of ways, making it a very satisfactory year indeed.

First and foremost was the style of management bringing accountability, openness, transparency and consistency which has really engaged with people across the region. This in turn has led to people walking tall once more, feeling part of a committed team that is ready for whatever challenges come our way.

This has achieved startling results on the membership front with a growth of almost 2000 members in the year and 200 more people joining us every month than 12 months ago.

GMB@Work is at the heart of everything we do and the Regional Management Team manage their teams of officers, staff, branches and activists to ensure first class delivery and support for our members.

A huge amount of work has been done with branches to revitalise them and encouraging them to play their full part in the democracy of their union. The results speak for themselves with us needing an election to attend Congress and more motions submitted than for many a year.

To support branches further, we have provided branch computers on the proviso that these are used to communicate with their members in the production of newsletters and branch directories. For branches that are not yet computerised, our staff produce these and assist with distribution. This not only bridges the communication gap, but also develops our staff towards the front line support of members which is central to the region's business plan this year.

Another major success story is on the training and education of our activists. In 2008 we not only appointed, but actually trained twice as many representatives as in the previous year. That is probably the most important statistic in this report, because again in line with GMB@Work it is them that are best positioned to service, organise and recruit in the workplace, so we are brilliantly placed going forward.

In line with Congress policy, we continue to do our bit on the green agenda and we have an eco friendly and recycling policy across the region that is strictly adhered to.

Congress also charged us with providing a better service to migrant workers, and I am delighted to report real progress in this area too. We have a project worker employed who is Polish, and he is working closely with our team in recruiting and organising migrant workers and the numbers are already in their hundreds. Added to that he has put on training on health and safety and being active in the union, obviously in their native languages and both were over subscribed.

Managing through clarity, consistency and compassion our agenda is here to stay. The regional team enjoy being part of something successful and are totally committed to the GMB@Work agenda to deliver even more opportunities and growth over the next 12 months.

Economic & Employment Situation

Commercial services section

Until the catastrophic events following the meltdown in the financial services sector in the part of 2008, the situation in the region was quite buoyant with employers reporting no significant downturns in business despite the pessimistic forecasts from 2007.

UK economic growth has generally ground to a halt raising the prospect of a recession in the near future. Inflation did rise significantly as forecast but then tailed off dramatically later in the year. Non food retailers on the high street suffered their worst December on record as consumers reined in their spending putting shopping off until the last minute attracted by the ever downward spiral of sale upon sale with even the likes of M&S affected.

Food and Drink was one of the few sectors to see an increase in sales with supermarket tills singing. 3663 Wakefield closed in August with the loss of seventy jobs with work being distributed amongst sister sites elsewhere. Despite that, the Bradford site suffered seven redundancies with many other employers shaving back on employment costs.

Cadburys Trebor Bassets shed jobs as they seek to place themselves competitively in the market place midway through the year. Wilkinson Stores made the largest announcement of potential redundancies through reorganisation of its store warehousing however protracted discussions are hoped to reduce the impact longer term.

Aviation was badly affected by the economic downturn with more than thirty airlines nationally and a number of tour operators failing. When oil prices peaked in 2008, operating costs spiralled so the recent fall has been a welcome relief to all transport related employers. Redundancies took place at both Doncaster and Leeds/Bradford airports amongst the various service providers such as Servisair etc.

The Hotel Industry is also badly hit as consumer spending contracts with many hotels reporting a lack of visitor numbers at weekends. Leeds and Sheffield particularly were booming but construction of major hotel and other projects has now virtually ceased with half completed hotels littering the city landscapes as companies enter administration.

Legal Services on the other hand, particularly for the professionals in the business recovery, insolvency, debt collection, asset recovery or commercial broking, life is somewhat hectic! The picture is mixed however as there has been a reduction in some demand for legal services leading to downscaling and some legal companies folding.

Within the region, in May Whittles merged with Thompsons and work continues to harmonise terms and conditions of employment. The Legal Services Commission announced their plan to 'reconfigure' its services and negotiations continue to explore the options, particularly at the Leeds site which will potentially close in 2010.

Energy & Utilities Looking at the energy companies, they have suffered a loss of public confidence with the major suppliers cashing in on increasing energy prices passing the cost straight on to consumers leading to one chief executive quoted as saying the colder it gets, the more profit they make revealing the harsh reality of capitalism and privatisation for our members. UK Coal continue to operate deep mine operations investing also in wind power and cashing in on their still massive property portfolio gifted to them by privatisation.

The Security Industry continues to thrive albeit on extremely low margins resulting in low pay and uncertain job security as contracts are pitched at the lowest levels amongst the many providers. The major players such as G4S also suffer as they have lost the contract at Leeds/Bradford airport for 2009. Securitas Guarding also suffered redundancies following the collapse of Woolworths.

Settlements

Settlement levels in the electricity, gas and water sectors continue to generally outstrip the rest of the economy with one or two exceptions.

CE Electric members endured a difficult year for industrial relations with a lengthy dispute eventually leading to an above inflation three year deal accepted by our members.

Asda Stores membership received a 2.5% increase in April with a further 1.5% in October.

Monckton Coke increased basic pay by 3.5% in June and also reduced owed hours on their annualised hours system.

ABB is the contractor supplying maintenance to Monckton Coke and they followed the agreement. Consultations are ongoing regarding transferring the service back in house.

Yorkshire Water Services are in the third year of a five year deal where annual salaries have increased by 4.3%.

Scottish & Southern Energy at Ferrybridge power station begins the first of a three year deal with salaries and related payments rising to 4.6% plus a non consolidated £500 lump sum paid in March.

British Energy at Eggborough power station received a 5% increase.

Membership & Recruitment

Membership in the section once again increased over the year reflecting the remarkable turnaround within the region as a whole which grew by 2.7%. This also as ever reflects the hard work done on the ground in the workplaces by our enthusiastic and committed activists overseen by the officer force who are 100% committed to the GMB@Work agenda of membership growth and building workplace organisation.

The number of new reps being recruited doubled over the year and their enthusiasm in the workplace will be complimented by existing reps who are attending the consolidation courses which will all help offset the effects of the recession looming large for 2009.

British Gas in particular increased membership by 229 new members although the company is expected to cut back on its recruitment into 2009.

Asda Stores are targeted following the four store national strategy, ours being the York, Shipley, Pudsey and (new) Glasshoughton stores. Issues are a plenty to recruit and organise around including the Charter, health & safety, equal pay/equal value grievances and the pension scheme for example. All campaign literature is on the regional website found at www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk

Thanks

Finally, as well as placing on record my thanks and appreciation to all the workplace and full time organisers in the region as I do every year, special mention should be made of Peter Edwards who after over 32 years representing members in Securicor, both at the York CVIT depot and on the national negotiating body, announced his intention to retire from employment at the end of January 2009.

A presentation was made at the NNC and by the branch where he will continue as branch president but the mark of the man is that he will stay on as an accompanying representative representing members in unorganised workplaces at disciplinaries and grievances. Thank you.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing in the region has declined further in the second half of 2008. Dunlop Latex Foam has closed with the loss of two hundred jobs. Ellbee (Leeds), Federal Mogul (Bradford) and many smaller firms have made at least three hundred and forty redundancies in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Dorlux, Halifax were placed into administration in November 2008 with the prospect for 2009 looking bleak.

The distribution sector is looking very vulnerable and this is having a knock on effect in manufacturing.

The future will, if the end of 2008 is anything to go by, be very difficult for the manufacturing industry.

I would like to pay tribute to all the members from Remploy who turned out on a particularly cold day in York for the demonstration and march.

The York factory may have closed however it is not forgotten. Thanks to James Stribley and all his colleagues for their commitment to keeping Remploy factories open in 2008.

The credit crunch will undoubtedly cause more closures in 2009, all in the manufacturing industry must keep up the political pressure to make the Government support the British Manufacturing Industry.

Manufacturing in the region has declined further in the second half of 2008.

Dunlop Latex Foam – Pannal

Factory closure in September 2008 resulting two hundred redundancies.

Ellbee – Leeds

Introduction of short time working and fifty-four redundancies, from September 2008 to December 2008.

Federal Mogul – Bradford

Twelve redundancies announced in November 2008.

Dorlux – Halifax

Went into administration on the 13th November 2008 and was taken over on the 14th November 2008. Case referred to GMB legal dept for failure to consult with the GMB (TUPE).

Angus Fire (Kidde Products)

GMB members accepted an £11 per week increase on their basic pay. There have also been two employees made redundant.

Johnson & Johnson

On the 1st December 2008, Johnson & Johnson sold their Wound Management process at their Gargrave site to a company called Systagenix. This resulted in three hundred and twenty-three Johnson & Johnson employees transferring to Systagenix.

The distribution side of Johnson & Johnson's has been retained by them. Ninety-six employees and approximately thirty agency staff remain employed.

However, the distribution side will be phased out over the next eight months and work will be relocated in Leeds and Belgium. Time scales are yet to be announced.

Shop stewards at Johnson & Johnson have attended the GMB@Work 2 day training and a 1 day TUPE training.

Magnet Ltd

GMB members accepted a 3% pay increase in July 2008.

Remploy

The campaign to "Save the Remploy factories" carried on in 2008. The revised business plan kept the Pontefract factory open and allowed members from the Bradford factory to opportunity to relocate to the Leeds factory. Unfortunately, the York factory closed in March; however, this has not been the end of the campaign as we continue to lobby for the establishment of a Remploy factory in the York area. The climax of that campaign was the high profile march and rally in November.

Brightside and Chesterfield

3% pay award.

5 minutes additional tea break.

Brightside

20 voluntary redundancies under the national modernisation.

Warehouse project implemented.

Chesterfield

No redundancies.

Ferrybridge FGD

Project due to be completed March 09 approximately 80 workers left on site.

Hertel Ltd

4% increase for cleaning staff.

Hanson Brick

The above company responded to the impending recession in the Building Supplies Industry by closing many of its brickworks rather than creating further stockpiles. This led to the workforce at Howley Park being greatly reduced and a change in shift patterns for the remaining members. Thankfully this was mainly achieved via volunteers.

Symphony

The above company have now opened a new factory in Barnsley. Talks are scheduled to establish recognition arrangements at the new site and the protection of employees at the existing Leeds and Rotherham sites.

Haworth Scouring

The above company has substantially cut back its productions targets to reflect the current economic environment leading to large scale redundancies.

Treves/Arcadia/Burberry's

Limited redundancies have also occurred at the above companies. All were made following the appropriate consultation with the GMB so that member's interests were properly protected.

J T Ellis

Advised late December 2008 of failing order book.
Short time working to be introduced in January 2009.
Optimistic that after Easter 2009 company will get back to full production.

Phoenix Brick

Has closed and made all staff (except five for security reasons) redundant and stated that by March they are expecting to be running one of the two kilns again.

Clarkson Osborn, Sheffield

Four redundancies in October 2008.

Firth Rixson Special Steels Ltd, Sheffield

1st October 2008 - 3% increase on all aspects of pay.

Premdor, Barnsley

Redundancies throughout first half of this year.
3% pay increase from 1st October 2008. Anniversary date for pay negotiations changed from 1st April to 1st January.
Next pay negotiations to reflect 1st January 2010.

Sanofi Aventis, Chapeltown, Sheffield

1st January 2009. Increase on basic rates of 3.95%.
Non contractual attendance bonus, 12 months nil absence £500, 6 months 1 period of absence - £150. Second 6 months July - December £150.
Holiday year to change from April - March to January - December.
20 minute paid morning break.
20 minute paid afternoon break.
Unpaid lunch break.

Tinsley Bridge Limited, Sheffield

Due to fall in order books reduction demand of nearly 50%. Through October and November 2008 consulting on twenty-eight redundancies plus entering into short time working from 18th November 2008. Considering using a weeks holiday over Christmas from next year.

Public Services

Membership of the Public Services section within the region stands at 29,005, of these 20,531 are women. Our membership in this section has grown slightly over the past 12 months.

The past year has been a challenging one for members in the Public Sector. The continued restrictions on pay levels at a national level combined with continuous restructure and re-organisation (within local government in particular) have ensured that morale has been at rock bottom. Despite this we have seen our representatives and officers work tirelessly to build GMB membership, improve terms and conditions and protect jobs and services.

Over the past year we have seen a marked increase in the number of new representatives appointed across the public services section and those already in post have been encouraged and supported through GMB@Work training and implementation to step up their own contribution to the GMB cause. Public services branches have also been encouraged to play a greater role in workplace organisation and campaigning.

Local Government

The continued roll out and implementation of single status has been the dominant feature across our local authorities. In the majority of our 13 local councils single status has been introduced without agreement or is set to be imposed on the workforce in the face of GMB opposition.

In Leeds, where GMB is the largest union with over 7,000 members, our members were involved in a sustained industrial dispute in an effort to secure a better set of pay and grading proposals which delivered equality and not at the expense of pay cuts. Our members in refuse and street cleansing services led the campaign with work to rule and strike action however they received huge support from the workforce and the citizens of Leeds during a high profile battle. Although we secured some improvements in the proposals ultimately Leeds City Council imposed the package through termination of contracts.

In Sheffield, Doncaster, Kirklees and Calderdale, our representatives and officers are either still in negotiations over the introduction of single status or are in consultation with GMB members over the final package on offer.

In every local authority our representatives/officers have sought to build GMB membership on the back of the direct consultation with the workforce which is essential in these negotiations.

In every local authority we have pursued vigorously our aspiration of delivering equal pay compensation and equality going forward. Where this has not been possible through negotiation we have campaigned on equal pay and lodged equal pay claims on behalf of our women members with the support of our regional lawyers.

The region's Local Government Core Group – which brings together all senior lay representatives and local government officers to discuss strategy and organisation has met every 2 months throughout the year. This has been an invaluable source of support and direction for all involved in these difficult times.

The Core Group has continued to receive reports and advice on equal pay from our legal advisers and to determine and monitor GMB@Work activity in the councils within the region.

Schools

We have campaigned and organised within schools like never before this year – we recruited 1919 new members in schools during the academic year which is 4 times higher than the previous year. Just as crucial the number of new representatives and contacts appointed within schools has rocketed. Our membership in schools with the region is nudging 8000.

We have nominated 4 school based representatives to the unions National Schools Advisory Committee. We held two conferences for school staff in 2008 and have established a regional schools forum to ensure regular contact with our representatives/contacts in schools is maintained.

West Yorkshire Police

Our membership with the West Yorkshire Police has grown over the year and stands at 444. Our members entered into an industrial dispute during 2008 in defence of the introduction of new shift rotas. The campaign received widespread media coverage and our local representatives played a key role in building union organisation during the dispute. We remain active in trying to defend our members' interests within the West Yorkshire Police Authority.

NHS

Our membership levels in the NHS continue to grow, slowly but surely branch reviews and workplace audits are in progress and beginning to demonstrate a greater awareness of GMB@Work and the need to translate the good work done by our representatives into membership growth and greater organisation.

This is in spite of the very difficult circumstances that our NHS members endure every day whilst at work in the NHS. Not only are staff shortages at dangerous levels, but the added pressure of trying to continue to provide vital services to sick people is causing many of our NHS members to consider finding alternative employment. Those who remain are reporting that they are suffering physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

With reference to private contractors in the NHS, we continue to insist that Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment are implemented. However, many contractors are attempting to resist.

Therefore, further joint guidance has been issued accordingly. There is reluctance from GMB members employed by private contractors to become reps. However, we remain optimistic that this can be resolved in the coming year.

GMB recognition within the NHS remains a contentious issue.

The York Hospital de-recognised the GMB towards the end of 2007. This led to an emergency motion being unanimously passed by the Yorkshire Regional TUC AGM deploring the move and demanding our re-recognition.

This campaign continues and we are working with Unison within the Trust and regionally to ensure the employer cannot play one union off against another.

In Yorkshire Ambulance service our 244 members had their rights to union collective representation unilaterally withdrawn. Check off remains in place and after sustained negotiations with the Trust we expect recognition to be restored.

In these areas and beyond the reaching of a regional accord with Unison has enabled us to put greater pressure on employers who have hitherto tried to divide and conquer the two biggest unions in Public Services within the region.

Southern Cross

We have focused heavily on building organisation within Southern Cross over the past 12 months. Our membership density is now at 35% - up from 8% in May 2006. We have 705 members – up by 482 over the same period. We have re-organised our branch support for our Southern Cross members. We have mapped all homes within the region and we continue to focus officer, ROT and activist resources on this regional and national target.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	15
Organising Officers	4
No. of Branches	110
New Branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	30
Branch Youth Officers	14

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	0.00
Total Disablement	0.00
Working Accident	5,172.20
Occupational Fatal Accident	0.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0.00
Funeral	22,498.00

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The regional magazine is produced three times per year which includes national and regional news and articles. The region also sponsored many charities and organisations during 2008 and these were:

- Anti Bullying – The Young Person’s Guide
- Jane Tomlinson 10K Charity Run
- Upton United FC
- South Yorkshire Festival
- Action for Sick Children
- The Hockey Forum
- The Genesis Appeal
- Children with Leukaemia

- 3 Peaks Challenge (Heart Research)
- Huddersfield Pink Picnic
- Brinsworth Whitehall JFC
- TUC Aid
- TUC Organising Post
- Circus Starr – Wheatfields Hospice
- Children’s Heart Federation
- Bosom Friends & Bradford Cancer Support
- The Great North Run 2008
- St Gemma’s Hospice
- Rawthorpe Amateur Boxing Club
- Bluebell Wood Children’s Hospice
- World Sports Co-operation

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (*Including Criminal Injuries*)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
855	855

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
898	335	4	559 £3,540,208.56	-	£3,540,208.56
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008		2389			

(b) Employment Tribunals (*notified to Legal Department*)

Claims supported by Union	165
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Rejected	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
89	22	14	2	49 £155,526.79	2 £42,650.00	£198,176.79
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008		176				

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
-	-	-	-

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
33	18	53

The legal department is responsible for overseeing the region's comprehensive legal services. Much of the region's legal services are provided by Thompsons Solicitors. The biggest requirement for legal assistance continues to be in the area of personal injury and disease. The legal assistance scheme also includes free legal assistance on work related criminal matters; a road traffic accident scheme; a free will preparation service; discounted rates for family law, probate and conveyancing. Members can access a free 30 minute legal advice session on any other legal question.

Most of the region's employment law work is conducted by the regional GMB legal department, with 'overspill' and, for example, public sector equal pay cases, referred to Thompsons as required. The regional legal department operates a professional and efficient employment tribunal casework management system and provides a first class successful service to members. Unfair dismissal claims made up the largest proportion of cases taken in 2008 with other cases taken under a variety of causes including equal pay, race discrimination and age discrimination. Almost £200,000 was recovered in compensation for GMB members from employment tribunal claims during the course of 2008.

'In house' knowledge and practical experience of handling employment tribunal cases is utilised to provide regular employment law training courses as an integral part of the region's training agenda for lay representatives and activists. Empowering workplace representatives is aided by the department providing or arranging a wide range of employment law training. There is a monthly introduction to GMB legal services and a basic employment rights course as part of the induction of new representatives. Training is also provided in a range of employment law topics such as discrimination law, redundancy; and dispute resolution procedures (including the affect of the Employment Act 2008 on handling grievance and disciplinary issues). The region's full-time officers are also kept abreast of new developments in employment law through the use of bulletins and briefings.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

In August 2008, we held the inaugural Equality and Inclusion Forum meeting. The purpose for the meeting was to combine all of the equality strands, into one forum. The reason we did this were many. The first of which was that the Equal Rights, Race, Disability and other advisory committees were not working. Membership had dropped to an unacceptable level and therefore, the region could not produce a plan of work. We could not be certain that our Advisory Committee members were active in their workplaces. We also wished to ensure that in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region, our Equality Advisory Committees were reinvigorated and also are reflective of the National Equality and Inclusion Forum.

The forum have met quarterly and I am pleased to note increased membership that is now becoming more reflective of the diversity of membership that we have in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. At the time of writing, we are in the process of putting together a plan of work for 2009. We intend to introduce the following:

- Agree the plan of work at the next forum meeting
- Put into action a method of community engagement which will take GMB into the Black and Ethnic Minority communities and workplaces to recruit and organise and also to ensure that they feel they have a valuable contribution to make and GMB is the best union to do this.
- Present the changes to the Equality Bill to forum members
- Ensure that each forum member has a role
- We hope to ensure that the forum takes responsibility for producing a regional newsletter to keep all members informed of the work being done
- To ensure that the regional website is continually updated and equality issues and information is available. This will be linked to the national website
- Be actively involved with the Sheffield Racial Equality Council to promote all forms of discriminatory practices.

The work of this forum is beginning to show benefits. The Remploy rally held in York was a great success. The Remploy members reminded us all of the reasons we are trade unionists. Despite their disability and health problems, they attended the march despite the freezing cold and dense fog to help draw attention to the awful decision to close the Remploy factories in the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region.

7. YOUTH

Following the re launch of the Regional Young Members' Advisory Committee in October 2007 and the initial first steps taken to raise our profile among young workers and students – as conveyed in last year's report - I am pleased to relay that significant progress has been made in 2008, thanks primarily to a new layer of young activists and to the growing support of the region's branches.

Throughout the year RYMAC has met regularly, initially on a monthly basis and then more recently at two monthly intervals. The committee's focus has been to share and develop ideas on how to first attract and then to organise young people into union life and to propose campaigns to support, both inside and outside workplaces and colleges, to generate greater collectivism. In a nutshell our team – led by a core group of five - met seven times as a committee, engaged in a number of organising initiatives, hosted a No Sweat – Anti Exploitation Campaign meeting, hosted an Anti Fascist day of action, both sponsored and promoted the demonstration against the BNP's Red, White & Blue festival, participated in and led debate at a number of TUC committees and conferences, attended GMB Congress, played a leading role in GMB's Young Members' Organising conference, undertook GMB@Work Training and represented the region at a number of music festivals.

At the first meeting of the year in January the committee proposed to develop a bulletin for bar workers with the intention of organising those employed in bars around the Universities in Sheffield – where one of the team was employed. A couple of campaigns were also endorsed – No Sweat, the anti exploitation campaign and Climate Change with respect to raising awareness and supporting events. The GMB national delegation for TUC Youth conference also adopted two statements written by David Grant of Sheffield Municipal and Light (Involving Young Workers in Global Unionism) and Daniel Randall of Club Stewards (Adopting a Campaigning Model for Young Workers) to represent the voice of GMB at the conference. Both David and Daniel attended the conference as delegates.

The Bar Worker bulletin proposal became a reality in February and was designed and produced by Daniel. A Hope Not Hate event was endorsed for March and Colin Kirkham, Regional Education Officer, spoke to the committee about the Regional Secretary's offer for six young activists to undertake the 12 day training programme for new stewards. Whilst none of our key activists are post holders – essentially because they are studying or employed in unrecognised work places - it is felt invaluable to equip them with the necessary tools to both build for recognition and to hit the ground running when they do enter a workplace on completion of their studies.

RYMAC hosted a talk by Mike Treen, from the Unite union of New Zealand, on their successful 'Supersize My Pay' Campaign. The talk focused on Unite's effective strategy of organising young workers in big name fast food outlets such as Macdonalds, Pizza Hut, KFC and Starbucks and their success in ending the age discrimination of New Zealand's National Minimum wage. The meeting was well attended, attracting members and activists from other trade unions and created a great sense of internationalism, This was heightened further by the presence of Axel Persson from CGT - one of the main TU Federations in France. Axel, a young trade union leader shared his experiences of these companies across France and of organising young workers which proved to be an invaluable lesson for us. Axel subsequently was invited to speak at the Young Members' meeting at Congress 2008.

In March, our Regional Young Members' Committee hosted an anti fascist activity day, organised and led by the Hope Not Hate campaign. Approximately 20 people from across the region came together to participate in a two hour workshop which covered topics such as the nature of the British National Party and why trade unions should campaign against fascism. This was followed by a leafleting exercise against the BNP in Heckmondwike. The BNP lost this seat, which goes to show how pivotal both the work of anti fascist organisations and our involvement in such campaigns are. Thanks to all those who were involved across the region in this essential activity. Particular thanks to Leeds General branch for their mobilisation of anti fascist activities in Leeds and Rotherham.

Utilising a number of lessons learned and methods from the Supersize My Pay Campaign, our team conducted the first leafleting exercise around Sheffield University bars in April with the Bar Worker bulletin - which highlights key employment rights and health and safety concerns, encourages staff to contact GMB and outlines who we are and

what GMB stands for. The team made a number of good contacts and further activities were planned. Also in April a letter went to branches requesting that attention be given to the election of a branch youth officer, that post holders' details be forwarded and also offered RYMAC's services in this process. Consequently our branch young members' officer profile went from three people to nine – an increase of 200 per cent.

Throughout the next couple of months the young members' page on the regional website was developed further and work commenced on drafting relevant employment rights/organisational material for young people. RYMAC met in May and July and discussions continued as to how to broaden young member involvement and growth across the region, plus further anti fascist activities were undertaken along with a pledge to support the mobilisation against the BNP's Red, White and Blue festival scheduled for August. In June Daniel and David Grant attended GMB Congress as observers and a team of ten went to Glastonbury to work behind Workers' Beer bars and raise money for further campaigns and activities. Piotr Plonka CTL project worker and RYMAC member also came along to help out on the GMB stall with colleagues from Southern region.

In July RYMAC decided to escalate the Bar Worker campaign to include Sheffield Hallam Students Union and links were made with a key activist at the University. Lengthy discussions were also had about the old 10pence weekly membership rate for working students and where it fitted in today's organising agenda. A proposal was made to adopt the recent promotional rate of 70pence per week which was supported by the Regional Secretary. Daniel was also asked to sit on the GMB National Working Party for climate change.

August saw the demo against the BNP festival endorsed by RYMAC and attended by a number of our Young Activists and a team of eighteen attended Leeds Festival increasing our campaigning fund further in the process. Our involvement with Workers' Beer certainly impressed a number of student employees at Wilkinson and I feel, aided the healthy increase in young GMB membership across the company during the summer months. Two new members from Wilkinson in fact joined the team to help out at the Leeds festival.

Daniel attended TUC Congress in September as a regional delegate. It has to be said that our young activists have been consistent in their involvement with the TUC at all levels throughout the year but particularly with respect to the Regional TUC Young Members' Forum where they have been pro active in attending meetings and taking part in cross union initiatives and discussions concerning young member organisation.

In October the committee met again to assess work undertaken so far and to examine how some of the initiatives they had devised could be developed further – particular focus being given to new and more creative ways of communication, radio and dvd for example, and a commitment was made to support work going forward regarding the organisation of migrant workers. These proposals are still in embryonic form at this stage.

November, whilst we only sent three of a potential five delegates to the GMB Young Members' Organising Conference in November – Yorkshire & North Derbyshire continued to punch above our weight in terms of the contributions made to the main meeting and the numerous workshops that had been organised and with respect to the social and networking aspect of the event.

In December a further communication was sent to branches concerning the election of branch youth officers and encouraging an invite to RYMAC to attend branch to speak to members. Already, as a result of the request, we have a further five Branch Youth Officers in place and a healthy network is taking form. The number of Branch Youth Officers then has gone from three in number at the beginning of the year to fourteen at as of the close of 2008. We still have a long way to go but significant steps have been taken.

Finally, the committee has been tremendous in 2008. People have come and gone but we have had a core of consistent, dedicated trade unionists who have led the discussion and initiatives. Particular thanks and acknowledgement then must go to David Grant, Gareth Hartley, Piotr Plonka, Daniel Randall and Lydia Wilkinson. The key to 2009 will be to take the work beyond the committee and to the branches and the workplaces, to develop the important links that are currently taking shape with branches and therefore grow and broaden young member membership and activism across the region.

8. EDUCATION TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses - Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB@Work	13	126	51	177	354
Introduction to GMB (2 days) inc. on-site 2 day	10	98	26	124	228
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	8	81	21	102	510
Branch Officers (please specify subject)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

(b) On Site Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Risk Assessment	5	33	9	42	210
Disciplinary	5	36	14	50	250
Grievance	5	28	13	41	205
Statutory Disputes	4	27	10	37	148
TUPE	2	11	4	15	30
H & S Inspection	4	29	7	36	144
Age Discrimination	2	15	5	20	40
DDA Disability	2	11	5	16	32
Job Evaluation	1	6	1	7	7
COSHH	2	17	3	20	40
Pensions (2 day)	1	8	4	12	24
Laptop Training	2	17	0	17	34
ULR (3 day)	2	28	22	50	100
GMB@Work (1 day)	3	15	23	38	114

(c) Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S 3 day	8	73	20	93	279

(d) Other Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GFTU weekends					
Time Management	1	1	0	1	3
Getting to Know your Pensions	1	1	0	1	3
Introduction to Human Resources	1	1	0	1	3
Equality Reps	2	1	1	2	6
Basics of Health & Safety	1	1	1	1	3
Negotiating & Influencing in the Workplace	1	1	0	1	3
Building Self Esteem	1	0	5	5	15
Tackling Discrimination	1	1	0	1	3

Effective Communication	1	1	0	1	3
Powerpoint Presentations	1	0	1	1	3
Introduction to Leadership Skills	1	1	0	1	3
Introduction to Leadership Theory	1	1	0	1	3
Tackling Workplace Conflict	1	3	0	3	
Advanced Negotiating Behaviour	1	1	0	1	3
Risk Assessment (5 days)	1	2	0	2	10
Getting Assertive at Work	2	1	1	1	6
Public Speaking	1	1	2	3	9
Trade Union & International Development	1	1	0	1	3
Digital Imaging	1	1	1	2	6
Self Management & Personal Effectiveness	1	1	1	2	6
Organising Migrant Workers	1	1	0	1	3
Desktop Publishing	1	0	1	1	3
Representing your Members	1	1	0	1	3
Emotional Intelligence	1	1	2	3	9
Website Design	1	2	1	3	9
Dealing with Bullying & Harassment	1	4	1	5	15
Stress Management	1	0	1	1	3
Strengthening Leadership Potential	1	1	2	3	9
Diversity Reps Part 2	1	1	0	1	3
Tackling Workplace Hazards	1	2	0	2	6
Discrimination & the Law	1	1	0	1	3
Understanding Company Accounts	1	0	1	1	3
Northern College (5 days)					
Advanced Health & Safety	2	15	1	16	80
Practical Employment Law	1	3	0	3	15
Understanding the DDA (3 days)	1	2	1	3	9
Bargaining Skills	1	3	0	3	15
Stewards Refresher Course	1	2	0	2	10

(e) TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Reps Stage 1 (12 days)	1	5	0	5	60
Reps Stage 2 (10 days)	1	2	0	2	20
H & S Stage 1 (12 days)	5	4	1	5	60
H & S Stage 2 (10 days)	1	3	0	3	30
H & S Update (2 days)	1	2	0	2	4
ICT Project (10 evenings)	1	0	2	2	20
Stepping Up the Advanced Course Stage 2 (12 days)	1	1	0	1	12
Diploma In Occupational H & S (35 days)	2	3	0	3	105
ULR	1	3	0	3	9

Pension Champions (5 days)	1	1	0	1	5
Employment Law Certificate (36 days)	1	1	0	1	36

2008 saw the introduction in January of a new shaped 12-day core induction programme within the region. An increase of recognised post holders has meant an increase in course attendances. New courses that were introduced in 2008 were TUPE, Job Evaluation and COSHH, all one-day internal GMB provision.

The region was also successful in its application for funding to continue its work with regional projects via ULF funding. This has seen a significant increase in post-holding ULR's, thus promoting the trade union learning agenda.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

As from 1 March 2008, the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region has been operating a department dedicated to health and safety. The main focus of the department will be to deliver on the Congress report 'GMB @ Work' by organising and campaigning around health and safety in the workplace and to this end the region's health & safety officer will be working closely with organisers, the regional organising team, branches and activists.

The department now has an email database of health & safety reps numbered in the hundreds, which allows for immediate and direct contact with as many reps as possible; in any event, a high level of contact is maintained with all H&S reps who are informed of developments within health, safety, welfare and the environment on a regular basis.

During May 2008, the department held a successful re-launch of its services and has continued to gather momentum by setting out the aims of the department through a 'Statement of Intent'. This has now been circulated widely and has assisted in raising both the department's profile and setting out the union's expectations in regard to GMB@Work and health and safety representative's role.

Support and guidance is regularly provided to activists and organisers in addition to responding to health and safety related telephone enquiries received daily. Attendance at workplaces to conduct inspections, sit on health and safety committee meetings, and provide further support in an advisory capacity, is a regular occurrence for the health and safety officer, proving an effective means of highlighting and gaining recognition of workplace health and safety issues.

Throughout 2008, the regional health and safety officer delivered two, one day, bi-monthly courses aimed at bolstering the core knowledge and supporting the activities of the region's health and safety representatives; these are 'Workplace Inspections/Understanding the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations' and 'Understanding Risk Assessment and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations'. Both courses tie in with GMB@Work and focus on how H&S reps can use the unique rights afforded them under the SRSC Regs to better organise their workplaces. From May 2008, training also included a one day course on COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health). And as from next year, a course will be developed that focuses on the 'Green Agenda', recognised as a key area with massive potential for workplace organisation. The department also provides tailor-made training in specific areas, or on specific topics upon request, which has been effectively used in securing recognition deals and will be offered to activists to aid them in campaigning for their members' safety and welfare at work more effectively.

As workplace health and safety remains one of the foremost concerns amongst members and is given as one of the main considerations by those who join or remain members of a trade union, an ongoing commitment is made to be actively involved in organising campaigns and promoting the GMB. Assisted by the use of GMB published information tailored to the workplace, and working with the region's teams, the health and safety officer will support our organisers and workplace representatives in the consolidation and retention of existing members and recruitment of new members and in securing recognition at target companies.

10. POLITICAL

It has been a tough six months for the Labour Party with the party lagging behind in the opinion polls. However, Gordon Brown has been head and shoulders above David Cameron since the Labour Party Conference. This renewed faith in our leader has translated into electoral victory with victory against all odds in Dewsbury in a ward bi-election Labour winning the seat.

The region has welcomed two new MP's into membership, Angela Smith the MP for Hillsborough and Linda Riordan the MP for Halifax. Thank you for joining the GMB and welcome!

The region has affiliated to almost all the constituencies in the region, if any branch or member wishes to become a constituency delegate, please contact the Brighthouse Office on 01484 720 022 and I will give you the details of your local Constituency Labour Party Secretary.

The campaign continues in local government with the key seats campaign in Leeds working very well at the 2008 local elections - Leeds held firm with no losses, many thanks to all who have helped in Leeds. Thanks to Cllr James Lewis, Cllr Mark Dobson and Labour Group Lead Cllr Keith Wakefield for their support during the disputes and difficulties in 2008, we are committed to returning Labour to power in Leeds.

The region held its first Political Forum in 2008 with an excellent debate facilitated by Jon Trickett MP.

The year has been a very turbulent time with the fortunes of the party in constant flux. The local elections were a disaster in many areas throughout the region. Wakefield MDC came within one seat of losing a Labour majority for the first time ever.

The campaign against the BNP continued in 2008 with joint campaigns with Hope not Hate next year will be crucial, with the Euro Elections with a real possibility that the BNP could beat Labour. We all must give support to Richard Corbett MEP who is a GMB member. Richard and Glenis Willmott MEP are always there supporting the GMB in our region regardless.

Regardless of your views on the EU we cannot allow the fascist BNP to win in 2009. The region will continue to work with our key allies in the Labour Party to move forward to a socialist future.

Finally I would like to pass on the regions best wishes to Colin Burgon MP and Mike Wood MP, both GMB and socialist die-hards who voted against the Government on trade union issues many times in 2008.