

NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | www.usdaw.org.uk | January/February 2013



Reps sparkled at the annual Usdaw Oscars event held in January

EVERYONE A WINNER

■ Special feature on active reps in Northern Ireland

Activists in the Province are making a huge contribution to membership growth page 24



■ Activist answers Network's questions

South Wales & Western division's Julio Garcia on his role as an active rep at Tesco page 19



■ January saw three high street firms under threat

Hot on the heels of Comet, now Jessops, HMV and Blockbuster face a battle for survival page 04



Ready and able

General secretary John Hannett's comment



As we move into 2013, I am confident that Usdaw is in a strong position to tackle the challenges that lie ahead for us and for our members during the current challenging economic circumstances.

With the Government's commitment to austerity showing no signs of easing, we expect the economic recovery will continue to be a slow drawn out one in 2013, causing further problems for retailers and our members alike. Already we have seen high street names HMV, Jessops and Blockbuster go into administration with thousands of jobs at risk. We will continue to work with companies to avoid redundancies wherever possible, and where this isn't possible we will work towards getting our members the best package we can secure.

Underemployment

For those in employment in 2013, or those looking for work, the issue of underemployment is one that needs to be tackled.

Too many people are having to scrape by on too few hours. Underemployment is starting to gain some prominence, alongside the more usual focus on unemployment and, if the economic recovery and consumer confidence is to be sustained, underemployment will have to be treated with the same importance as unemployment.

We will remain the campaigning union during 2013 and have two key campaigns planned. In March, our Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day will highlight the issue of time off to care. Many of our members are parents and/or carers, juggling work with family commitments.

Later in the year we'll once again be holding Respect for Shopworkers Week as part of our Freedom From Fear campaign.

Respect Week, with its focus on the need for safe workplaces, is always popular with our members and provides a good example of employers working with their employees to tackle an issue of joint concern.

Looking ahead 2013 will be a challenging year but I am confident that Usdaw will continue to deliver during tough times.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers

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This year will be very challenging but I am confident that we are in a good position to deliver for our members during tough times ?

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Awards Night

REPS ARE THE WINNERS AT GLITZY EVENT

Activists from across the seven divisions gathered in Manchester in January at a top hotel to find out who won the eight national awards. More than 800 nominations were entered with more than 60 making it to the national event hosted by senior union officials and special guest TUC leader Frances O'Grady

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January was the toughest on the high street for years with Jessops, HMV and Blockbuster teetering on the brink of extinction with more than 10,000 jobs at risk.

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Members are getting the chance to improve their skills as union learning reps work hard to take the lifelong learning agenda into their workplaces.

13 Education & training

Divisional get-togethers are proving a real tonic for reps and giving them the chance to network with fellow activists and get advice from senior union officials.

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Reps are being urged to get involved in the Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day on Wednesday 6 March and the theme this year is Time To Care.

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Usdaw's new strategy to support all of its reps will be put to the test this year even more than ever, but it's clear reps are responding positively to the challenge.

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Usdaw's membership in Northern Ireland has grown rapidly and it's all down to the hard-working teams of reps who have put the Province back on the map. *Network* caught up with five of them.

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General secretary John Hannett reflects on a tough 2012 for members and reps and looks ahead to the challenges of 2013 and his quest to keep Usdaw as the fastest growing UK union.

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IN BRIEF



List of retailers going bust lengthens

The number of retailers filing for bankruptcy continued to rise last year with 194 biting the corporate dust. Comet, the largest casualty, along with JJB Sports, Blacks and many others accounted for more than 50,000 job losses in the sector.



Jessops is first 2013 retail casualty

Troubled high street camera retailer Jessops went into administration in early January. More than 1,400 jobs were lost as the administrators closed all 187 stores within four weeks. In recent years, Jessops has been hit by increasing competition from supermarkets and the internet.

Union to takeover at sandwich chain

Some staff at sandwich and coffee chain Pret A Manger have formed a staff union to demand higher wages. The Pret A Manger Staff Union (Pamsu) is looking to organize across the company's 300 shops which last year reported record sales of £377m. The firm opened its first store in London in 1986. (www.pamsu.org/)

'Ignorance' fuels benefit hostility

COALITION PREJUDICED

People who least understand how the welfare system works and how much people get are more likely to support the Coalition's drive to cut benefits, a new survey commissioned by the TUC has shown.

The TUC's poll, carried out in the run-up to Christmas, found widespread ignorance about spending on welfare, the reality of unemployment, the generosity of benefits and the level of fraud.

New TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "The Coalition should not conduct policy, particularly when it hits some of the most vulnerable



people in society, on the basis of prejudice and ignorance. And it is plainly immoral to spread such prejudice purely for Party-political gain, as ministers and their advisers are doing, by deliberately misleading people about the value of benefits and who gets them.

"When people learn more about benefits, support moves away from Coalition policy. Some ministers seem to see

the benefit up-rating cap as a party political trap, but to counter that all you need to do is expose what the proposals really mean.

"The truth remains that benefits are far from generous, the vast majority of the jobless are desperate for work and most benefit spending goes either on pensions or on benefits for those in jobs or who aren't able to work."

Beware pension 'liberation'

Members are being warned not to fall prey to companies offering to 'liberate' money from their pension schemes.

In recent weeks several members have contacted the pensions section at central office after they were approached, out of the blue, by companies offering to help them transfer an old deferred pension to a different scheme and to take some cash from it now.

Pensions officer Debra Blow said: "These schemes work by the company involved taking control of your entire pension fund and transferring it to a separate scheme of their choosing.

"The company running that scheme then agrees to loan

you up to half of the transferred amount as cash, which will need to be repaid in full before you retire.

"Fees are taken from the transfer value before the member receives anything. Usually the promotional materials for these schemes do not state the exact level of fees or charges, but some reports we have seen say these could be up to 30 per cent of your pension pot.

"These 'transfer' schemes which offer those under age 55 a pension loan now should be treated with great caution. They are certainly illegal and might in the worst case be fraud.

"The law allows those over 55 years of age to start taking money from a deferred pension

without the need to transfer it to another scheme or with the involvement of a third party."

Contact Usdaw's pension team if you need help on 0161 249 2400 or email: pensions@usdaw.org.uk



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CALL TO TAKE RETAIL CRIME MORE SERIOUSLY

USDAW'S FREEDOM FROM FEAR CAMPAIGN STILL RELEVANT

Tens of thousands of retail staff are being subject to assault, threatening behaviour and verbal abuse, a new report has shown.

The latest evidence from employers' group the British Retail Consortium (BRC), as part of its annual Retail Crime Survey, has shown that the number of incidents of crime rose across all categories except violence against staff and robbery. In total crime cost the sector £1.6 billion but 'dramatically fewer incidents are being reported to police'.

General secretary John Hannett said: "While we welcome the reduction in the number of incidents of violence against staff, 2012 still saw more than 28,700 retail workers attacked, threatened or verbally

abused during the year – totally unacceptable. Every worker deserves to be treated with respect and should not have to put up with aggressive and abusive behaviour.

"We agree with the BRC that there is also a massive problem of under-reporting in the sector. It's clear that both employees and employers feel the police are not treating retail crime as seriously as they should be. It's vital that we restore confidence in the police when dealing with retail crime. Our own figures show incidents of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour are still all too commonplace. We also know shoplifting is often a flashpoint and the most common trigger for violence against staff.



"To add insult to injury the Coalition has recently rushed through changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme which will see shopworkers, who are innocent victims of violent crime, receive little or no compensation for their injuries and trauma. In addition the Coalition has also cut police numbers significantly which further exposes vulnerable staff.

"We will continue to work with employers, the police – particularly the new Police & Crime Commissioners, and local authorities, as part of our Freedom From Fear campaign, to minimise risks, encourage reporting of all incidents and ensure staff are fully protected. Retail crime is not a victimless crime and abuse is definitely not part of the job."

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IN BRIEF

Wages outstripped by high inflation

Inflation has cost the average worker £4,000 in the last three years, says the TUC.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Unless inflation falls are matched by stronger pay growth, 2013 will be the fourth year in a row that people have suffered real wage cuts. We won't have a sustainable economic recovery without healthier pay rises.

"The hike in energy bills is particularly tough on the poorest households, who spend over a quarter of their income on utility payments.

"But rather than help these families, the Government has just voted to make their financial situation even worse by capping rises in vital benefits and tax credits from this April."



More gloom as Blockbuster falters

DVD rental firm Blockbuster has become the latest UK high street firm to go into administration after struggling against online competitors.

The chain has 528 stores and employs 4,190 staff. Deloitte, the accountancy firm which will now take over running the firm, said Blockbuster UK would keep trading while it tries to find a buyer. However, 160 stores are set to close immediately as *Network* went to press.

TESCO IN XMAS TURNAROUND

Tesco has reported its strongest growth in UK Christmas sales for three years.

The country's biggest retailer reported that sales excluding new store openings, VAT and petrol grew 1.8 per cent in the six weeks to 5 January, compared with the same period last year.

It said food sales had been particularly strong, with customers responding to 'a much stronger seasonal offering'. Tesco also said its online food sales were up 18 per cent. Elsewhere:

■ Morrisons reported a 'disappointing' 2.5 per cent fall in sales for the six weeks



to 30 December, ■ Sainsbury's announced a 0.9 per cent rise in sales, although it covered a longer, 14 week period to 5 January, ■ Marks & Spencer's like-for-like sales were down 1.8 per cent in the 13 weeks to 29 December, although food sales rose 0.3 per cent and

Iceland's sales grew 5 per cent in November and December.

Meanwhile the hard discounters showed healthy growth with Aldi reporting an increase in sales of 30 per cent in the 12 weeks up to December 23 while Lidl sales grew almost 11 per cent.

HMV takeover but jobs at risk

Restructuring firm Hilco has taken effective control of music and DVD retailer HMV.

Hilco, which already owns HMV Canada, has bought the debt of HMV from the group's lenders, Lloyds and Royal Bank of Scotland.

The debt deal gives Hilco effective control of HMV. More than 4,000 jobs remain under threat after HMV appointed an administrator in January, making it the second high profile casualty on the high street already this year.

Deloitte kept HMV's 230 stores in the UK and the Republic of Ireland open, and nine shops under the Fopp brand, while it assessed the prospects for the business and sought potential buyers.

Trading in HMV shares on the London Stock Exchange were suspended in mid-January.

The firm, the last remaining national music retailer, later reversed an earlier decision not to accept gift vouchers.

HMV has struggled against online retailing.



Robbie Segal remembered

Former executive councillor for the Southern division Robbie Segal died in December after battling Motor Neurone Disease for a number of years. She was 64.

Robbie, who worked at Tesco, had been active in Usdaw for many years and was elected onto the executive council for the first time in 2000 and was re-elected in 2003, 2006 and 2009.

She also stood unsuccessfully in the national elections for general secretary in 2008 and for president in 2009.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Robbie was very well respected by the members she represented in the division.

"Her death is a sad loss to the union movement. Our condolences go to her family at this very sad time."



COALITION CUTS – WORKERS LOSE

Usdaw has slammed the Coalition's Benefits Up-rating Bill which will cost families with two children more than £1,000 in the next three years.

The one per cent cap on increases to tax credits and child benefit at a time when inflation is predicted to be between at least 2-3% will make a massive difference to families on low and middle incomes.

"These are the cruellest of cuts at a time when families are struggling to make ends meet," said General Secretary John Hannett. "How can the Coalition justify taking money out of the pockets of families on low incomes who rely on in-work benefits to provide the basic necessities for their children."

Usdaw's calculations show that by 2015-16, a family with one child will have lost £784, those with two children will lose £1,091 and families with three children a massive £1,398 as their tax credits and child benefit fail to increase with the cost of living.

Families on low and middle incomes have already lost out from previous freezes for three years to Child Benefit and Working Tax Credit.

The Treasury has admitted that a lone parent or a couple with one parent working full-time on the minimum wage would receive £660 less in Working Tax Credit from April 2013 than they would have done if tax credits had continued to rise in line with RPI and that a family with two children will have received over £500 less in Child Benefit by April 2014 due to the freeze.

John Hannett added: "Working people on low and middle incomes have already borne a disproportionate cost from the Government's cuts. The freeze on Working Tax

People without children

Year	Loss from Tax Credits	
	£ Single people	£ Couples
2013-14	-55	-80
2014-15	-95	-150
2015-16	-130	-210
Total Loss	-280	-440

Families with one child

Year	£ Loss from Tax Credits	£ Loss from Child Benefit	Total Loss £
2013-14	-115	-23	-138
2014-15	-230	-39	-269
2015-16	-325	-52	-377
Total Loss	-670	-114	-784

Families with two children

Year	£ Loss from Tax Credits	£ Loss from Child Benefit	Total Loss £
2013-14	-150	-40	-190
2014-15	-310	-65	-375
2015-16	-440	-86	-526
Total Loss	-900	-191	-1,091

Credit and on Child Benefit has already substantially cut the incomes of working people at a time when the cost of basic necessities like food and fuel has been rising so sharply.

"Many of our members are reporting that they struggle to afford to feed their families and heat their homes. That cannot be right for people who are already working as many hours as they can.

"The further cuts announced in the Benefits Up-rating Bill are a kick in the teeth for working people that will fill many households with despair. Our members cannot understand how this Government can give a tax cut to millionaires at the same time as cutting the support that working people rely on to keep them above the breadline."

Paul, an Usdaw member from Kent who lives with his partner and two children aged

four and two, works on the night shift in a warehouse to support his family, said:

"My pay isn't brilliant. It just about covers our outgoings and like most families at the minute, we need our tax credits to get us through week to week. My partner and I are really worried about the changes and that we will not be able to afford to live.

"My family and families like mine are urging the Government not to crucify working families. Right now, it is a big enough struggle. If these plans to cut tax credits over the next couple of years go ahead, then I worry that I will be forced into joining the queue at my local job centre because I would be better off."

The Bill has already passed the Commons stage of its parliamentary journey and was due to go to the Lords as *Network* went to press.

IN BRIEF

Jobs under threat at Midlands Co-op

Usdaw held 'constructive' talks with management at Midlands Co-operative Society after it announced the planned closure of its Fashion & Home business putting more than 450 jobs at risk.

Sites across the Midlands division are under threat as well as the Chesterfield store and warehouse in the North East.

Usdaw is looking to avoid compulsory redundancies and is seeking to redeploy as many staff as possible within the Co-op.

Discounter Lidl looks to expand

Lidl is to create 1,000 new jobs in the UK as part of a multi-million pound investment which will see it open 35-50 new stores in 2013.

The supermarket said it will be hiring across all parts of the business, from store managers to store assistants. Lidl currently has 600 stores across England, Scotland and Wales and employs more than 11,000 staff. In the 12 weeks to 23 December, Lidl UK increased its sales by 10.8 per cent while growing its market share by 0.2 percentage points to 2.8 per cent.

Festive cheer for Shop Direct

Shop Direct enjoyed a five per cent increase in total sales over the festive season as sales via mobile devices rose 150 per cent on the same period last year. In the six weeks to 29 December 2012, 80 per cent of total sales were completed online, up from 74 per cent in 2011.

AND THE WINNERS ARE – USDAW REPS!

The national Organising Awards night, now in its eighth year, saw Usdaw congratulate hard-working reps for their commitment, dedication and loyalty in 2012, *Network* reports

Some of the union's most active reps were honoured in January at the glitzy annual national Organising Awards held at a top Manchester hotel.

More than 60 divisional nominees, chosen from a total of 800 nominations, made it through to vie for one of the eight national winner categories.

General secretary **John Hannett** was master of ceremonies and he was joined by deputy general secretary

Paddy Lillis, president **Jeff Broome** and special guest **Frances O'Grady**, the newly elected leader of the TUC.

"The trade union movement is nothing without its reps," said John. "Our 10,000-strong army of reps have made us the fastest growing union in the UK and this night is about saying a big 'thank you' to every single one of them.

"Of course not all of our reps can be here on the night, but given that we had 800 nominations to choose from, and to bring that figure down

to eight per division shows the strength in depth we have.

"You only have to look back to 2004, when membership was just 340,000 to our most recent figure of 425,000, to realise how far we have come. Workers need their union more than ever and we'll continue to stand up for workers' rights.

"We had a remarkable year in 2012 with every division showing increased membership despite the hostile industrial, economic, and political climate. These

are very challenging times but our reps are giving it their all and this night is all about recognising their enormous contribution."

TUC general secretary **Frances O'Grady** made a point of speaking up for the families of reps. "We need to acknowledge the role played by husbands, wives, partners and the families of reps who give us their vital support and keep us going," she said. "Unions generally don't do enough to celebrate the contribution of their reps and families but tonight does just that. Who needs the Oscars when you've got nights like these? Usdaw is a modern campaigning union and a union that wins."



National winners celebrate at the Usdaw Organising Awards



**South Wales and Western Division (A)**

Standing (l-r): Roger Anderson, Daniel Langwost, Barbara Wilson, Mike Walker and Mark Kelly. **Seated (l-r):** Elliot Osborne, Raktima Bhadra Sarkar, Nick Ireland, Janette Parker and Dennis Stinchcombe

**Eastern Division (C)**

Standing (l-r): Simon Vincent, Mark Putman, Dave McCrossen, Norrie Slater, Anthony Kent and John Bond. **Seated (l-r):** Faisal Janjua, Liz Gumble, John Barron, Sarah Langton and Sally Tilley

Roll of Honour

national winners in gold (divisions in brackets)

Individual Organising

Simon Ayres (A)
Sally Tilley (C)
Pollie Simpson (E)
Eamonn Flynn (F)
Lesley Douglas (G)
Paul Groves (H)
Sue Morris (K)

Individual Recruitment

Mark Kelly (A)
Liz Gumble (C)
Andrew Farmer (E)
Shirley Savage (F)
Kerry Gordon (G)
Jacqueline Dalton (H)
Jacqueline Barrett (K)

Union Learning Rep

Mike Sanders (A)
NFT Learning Reps
London Colney (C)
Jon-Paul McEwan (E)
Jayne Chapman (F)
William Rankin (G)
John Palmer (H)
Carl Sutcliffe (K)

Equalities Rep

Raktima Bhadra Sarkar (A)
Sarah Langton (C)
Nash Kumar (E)
Kayleigh Soper (F)
Stuart Bunyan (G)
Gregory Charles (H)
North West Divisional
Equalities Forum (K)

Most Promising New Activist

David Buletson (A)
Mika Flynn (C)
Adam Beddow (E)
Reece Goscinski (F)
Allan Wilson (G)
Jeyda Besim (H)
Carrie Manley (K)

Health and Safety Rep

Roger Anderson and
Wendy Lucas (A)
Mark Putman (C)
Robert Shrimpton (E)
Paul Cope (F)
Allison Black (G)
Grant Warren (H)
Jim Young (K)

Campaigns

Janette Parker (A)
Eastern Divisional Political Committee (C)
Midlands Divisional Equalities Forum (E)
Angie Swift (F)
Esther Stewart and Bridget Norwood (G)
Carrie Fineran, Barry Jolliffe and Lorraine Jolliffe (H)
Jane Rogers (K)

Team Recruitment and Organising

Greencore Reps Evercreech (A)
Ocado Reps Hatfield (C)
Tayto Reps Corby (E)
Tesco Extra Reps Seacroft (F)
Tesco Reps Carluke (G)
DHL Reps Dartford (H)
Shop Direct Reps Preston (K)



What the winners said....

Lifelong trade unionist **Jim Young** won the Health & Safety Award. "I was shocked when they read my name out. I didn't expect it at all," said the Yodel sort centre worker from Shaw in Oldham.

"It was brilliant just to be there, to win the national award was a bonus. It was an excellent night. I've always been in the union wherever I've worked. I've been with Usdaw ten years and to be honest I feel slightly embarrassed at winning the national award, the competition was very strong."

There were joint winners of the Union Learning Rep Award with Scotland's **William**

Rankin and the North West's **Carl Sutcliffe** sharing the honours.

Bakery worker William was busy applauding his counterpart and did not hear his name called out. "I couldn't believe it. Getting the national award topped off a great night."

"It was good to meet other reps from across the UK in such lovely surroundings. I'd certainly recommend it to my fellow reps."

Carl, the learning centre co-ordinator at Shop Direct in Oldham was equally surprised. "It was fantastic to win, a great feeling but completely unexpected," he said.

"It was my first time at the

(Continued on page 10)

RECOGNITION FOR



Midlands Division (E)

Standing (l-r): Pollie Simpson, Rob Parry, Maureen Bowen, Nash Kumar, Denise McCusker, Ronnie McGrath, Andrew Farmer and Gavin Dadley. **Seated (l-r):** Gareth Davies, Robert Shrimpton, Joan Samuels, Jon-Paul McEwan and Adam Beddow



North Eastern Division (F)

Standing (l-r): Paul Cope, Eamonn Flynn, David Chadwick Taylor, Kayleigh Soper, Angela Partington, Joanne Thomas, Cathy Godfrey and Charlotte Armitage-Smith. **Seated (l-r):** Reece Goscinski, Jayne Chapman, Shirley Savage, Angie Swift, and Karen Longoni



Scottish Division (G)

Standing (l-r): Stewart Forrest, Isabel Fyfe, Esther Stewart, Bridget Norwood, Stuart Bunyan, Allan Wilson, William Rankin, Peter Devine and Lawrence Wason. **Seated (l-r):** Lesley Douglas, Allison Black, Clare Jamieson, Ian Mehmet, Christine Pratt and Susan Coultis

(Continued from page 9)

event and what a thoroughly enjoyable night it was. Recognising the reps like this works wonders and it is the right thing to do to show the union's appreciation of its reps."

It was second time lucky for Tesco team leader **Pollie Simpson** who won the Individual Organising Award. "I came last year as a nominee for the Campaigns Award so this year was extra special," she said. "It's such a friendly event I really enjoyed it. Everyone got on really well, the hotel is lovely and all-in-all it's a wonderful night."

Esther Stewart and **Bridget Norwood** won the Campaigns Award for their sterling efforts to oppose the closure of their Vion-owned factory Hall's of Broxburn. Convenor Esther said: "Around 800 members have lost their jobs at our place so it was a very difficult year. We were over the moon to get the recognition from the union, I just wish it had been under different circumstances."

"Nevertheless, we thoroughly enjoyed the evening, it was our second time and it was great to win."

Denise McCusker and **Ronnie McGrath** picked up the Team Recruitment and Organising Award for all their hard work at the Tayto site in Corby. "The news of the win has gone down really well at the factory," said machine operator Denise. "Loved the night, didn't expect to win, everyone else

sounded better than us, but it was a great feeling when we heard our names called out."

Tayto rep and process worker **Ronnie McGrath** had a 'fantastic' night. "I really enjoyed it and the night was organised with military precision. I was impressed," he said. "I have to mention the other member of our reps' team **Neil Barby** who has done a great job. I'm a relatively new rep but I'm keen to get more involved."

"We were very surprised to win especially with such stiff competition."

Experienced Tesco rep **Liz Gumble** won the Individual Recruitment Award. The checkout operator at the Potters Bar store is currently on stand-down duties and completed Academy1 in 2010 and Academy2 in 2011.

"I was really pleased because there are so many excellent nominees, it made me feel proud to win," she said. "It was a long walk to the stage, quite nerve-wracking but in a positive way."

"It was a lovely night and it was good to meet up with former Academy colleagues. I'll definitely be encouraging my fellow reps to put their name forward for next year."

■ Unfortunately **Mika Flynn** winner of the Most Promising New Activist Award and winner of the Equalities Award **Gregory Charles** were unable to attend the event.

TOP REPS



Southern Division (H)

Standing (l-r): Paul Groves, Jim Carty, Sandor Varga, Amy Murphy, Sujata Patel and John Barstow. **Seated (l-r):** Juraj Zilik, Sue Merrell, Carrie Fineran, Jeyda Besim and Grant Warren



North West Division (K)

Standing (l-r): Jackie McNeill, Jan Jervis, Dave Gill, Carl Sutcliffe, Jim Young, Linda Craven and Mike Aylward. **Seated (l-r):** Jacqueline Barrett, Janet Ryan, Carrie Manley, Karina Keeney and Beverley Maudsley

“ Our reps are giving it their all and this night is all about recognising their contribution ”



More pictures from the awards can be seen online at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery



Winning team.... (l-r) Jeff Broome, Paddy Lillis, Esther Stewart, John Hannett and Frances O'Grady

It was a double win for Scotland's Esther Stewart who won the VIP raffle prize of a visit to the offices of global union UNI (Union Network International) whose headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.



WIDER HORIZONS

Union learning reps are making a big impression in stores up and down the country as they promote the opportunities available through lifelong learning

Members at the Tesco Old Swan store had a ticket to learn when the National Careers Service Information Bus stopped off in Merseyside last November to promote learning in the community.

Mobile Union Learning Rep (MULR) Rob Upton jumped on board to help promote online learning. He advised members on how to get the best out of the internet and also gave advice on how the

new universal credit will affect them.

"The event did exactly what it was set out to do," said 63 year-old Rob who works as a security guard for Tesco and as a MULR with Usdaw.

"This was the first time we'd used the careers bus and it was a success. We have future visits planned for this year and with an added agenda to promote skills in maths and English in time for the apprenticeship sign up in September."



New members and potential reps were recruited when experienced rep Anas Ghaffar and new rep Farrah Niazi combined to organize a Lifelong Learning Awareness day for the first time at the Tesco store in Slough.

"It was a very successful day and got the message across that it's never too late to learn," said Farrah. "We recruited ten new members and another seven said they were interested in being reps."

"Staff completed lifelong learning surveys and also signed up for the online home study course."

"The event highlighted the union and the many benefits for members as well as lifelong learning. "We also had the support of the division's Learning Project Co-ordinator Peter Chalklin who helped us to organise the event, which was not only appreciated by the staff but also our store manager and personnel manager who were equally impressed."

It was a team effort to promote lifelong learning at the Tesco Extra Brooklands store in Weybridge, Surrey, last year.

Academy rep Gill Morley joined forces with project worker Peter Chalklin and mobile union learning rep Mitch Pressnell to help reps organise an awareness day.

"The event was very successful and it highlighted the union in a really positive way with both staff and management," said Gill who spent six months on Academy1 last year.

"On the day staff filled in

learning questionnaires and also enrolled on the online study course. We also signed up five new members and a number of possible future reps.

"The day was a great learning curve for me as well as the store reps. We also promoted the Drivers' Distress Fund, explained how it works and gave the dotcom drivers leaflets to take away."

"Store reps Victoria Sorinwa and William Akadi were both excellent. They were very enthusiastic about the learning opportunities on offer and encouraged staff to find out more about what's available."



Learning together

Hundreds of reps made the effort to attend reps' get-togethers where activists can learn from each other, share ideas and get the latest updates from officials



Co-op reps at the get-together at Horley in Surrey



Morrisons
reps in the
Scottish
division

Matthew O'Dell, 23, Mid Counties Co-op rep

"We split into groups and looked at different issues. It was great to meet reps from other stores and compare and share ideas on how we all deal with problems. It was also useful to have Jim Carty and Sue Pryn from the union guiding us through the sessions."



Morrisons,
Sainsbury's and
Co-op reps in
York

Manisha Patel, 23, rep at Morrisons Leominster

"I was very impressed at how organised it was and how friendly everyone was, I soon settled in and came away with lots of information and enthusiasm to get more involved."



Patrick McNulty, 43, rep at Morrisons Belshill

"The weekend encouraged me to get more involved. A couple of weeks later I joined other Usdaw activists in the STUC rally 'There is a Better Way' a future that works. And I've also applied for the Organising Academy."



Morrisons reps in Bristol

Sajjad Khan, 29, rep at Sainsbury's Keighley in Bradford

"I got a lot out of it. It was a great opportunity having union officials, including deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis, and management from the company on hand so that we could ask them questions. I came away more confident and enthusiastic about my role as a rep."



MEP EURO BULLETIN

Glenis Willmott is Labour's leader in the European Parliament and the MEP for the East Midlands. Here she addresses two of the key European issues for Usdaw members

“ Last November, European workers held their biggest ever co-ordinated action as part of the ETUC Day of Action and Solidarity under the slogan ‘For Jobs and Solidarity in Europe. No to Austerity’.

They staged a series of strikes and protests against the brutal austerity measures that are resulting in soaring unemployment, swingeing cuts to public services, tax hikes and attacks on workers' rights by governments that refuse to acknowledge that there is any other way.

Across Europe, 26 million people are now without jobs, including six million young people. In the UK almost a million young people are unemployed. In countries like Spain and Greece, the picture is even worse, with more than a quarter of Greeks and Spaniards out of work and a youth unemployment rate of more than

56 per cent.

The action shows a clear and growing demand for a new direction. Labour MEPs and our allies in the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group in the European Parliament also have an alternative vision for Europe – one that puts investment in jobs and growth, solidarity and better regulation of the markets at its heart.

As part of our alternative vision, we are campaigning hard for a European Youth Jobs Guarantee to tackle crippling youth unemployment. In December 2012 the European Commission announced a package of measures to ensure that every young person gets a quality offer of employment or training after leaving school or becoming unemployed. We have welcomed this as a step in the right direction, but we need a wider EU jobs and growth strategy. ”



Don't be fooled by Cameron – he wants to cut your rights at work

“ Unfortunately, many European leaders (including our own) seem to believe that the only way to ensure growth in the economy is by targeting workers' rights. Make no mistake that when David Cameron talks about repatriating powers from Europe, he means taking rights away from working people.

Speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr show at the beginning of January, the Prime Minister said, “The working time directive in my view should never have been introduced”. He is talking about the law that, for the first time, limited the length of time British workers could be obliged to work and provided them with a guaranteed right

to paid holiday.

European employer and trade union representatives have been reviewing the working time directive, with a deadline to reach agreement on changes by the end of 2012. This could affect the UK ‘opt out’, which allows workers to voluntarily work beyond the 48-hour weekly working time limit, and rules on ‘on call’ time and ‘compensatory rest’, although any new laws will not take effect for some time.

Instead of reining back workers' rights, Labour MEPs are fighting for better laws to protect workers' health and safety and tackle unequal treatment and discrimination. And we want to make sure that when we pass European rules they are properly

applied and enforced in the UK.

For example, we know that some employers and temporary work agencies are exploiting the so-called ‘Swedish derogation’ in the UK Agency Workers Regulations. This allows hirers to legally avoid paying agency workers the same as directly-employed workers when a 12-week qualification period kicks in by employing them on ‘Pay by Assignment’ contracts. Unions report that some agency workers have received as little as one hour's work per week on the national minimum wage between contracts.

We are putting pressure on the European Commission to act on this issue. But we are

currently in a minority. There are 189 Socialist and Democratic MEPs out of a total of 754. And just 13 out of 73 UK representatives in the Parliament are Labour MEPs; partly as a result of protest votes at the last European elections in 2009 which saw 13 UKIP and two BNP MEPs elected.

It is perhaps no wonder that Euroscepticism is riding high in the UK at present. The Europe we have is not the one we want. But we can help to change it by working together to make sure that, at the next Euro elections in 2014, we elect Labour MEPs who will fight back against austerity and work alongside trade unions to defend workers' rights. ”

Why Time To Care is important for reps

“ At some point in their working lives, the majority of our members will need some time off work to care for someone. This could range from a few hours, a couple of days, a period of several weeks or even longer.

That’s why we are using this year’s Spotlight Day to reach out to members who need time off work to care. As well as making sure members know their rights, we are campaigning to make sure these rights are effective.

All reps should have received their Time To Care



mailing sent direct to their home address. This is the ideal ‘starter pack’ and contains everything reps need to get involved.

Needing time off to care is an issue for all our members. Over three quarters of our members are parents and/or carers, who juggle work with family commitments. Many of our members will become carers at some point in the future.

We know many of our members struggle to get the time off work they need in the event of family illness. So it’s important that our members know both their basic statutory and their contractual rights

and our reps play a key part in that process.

Rest assured Usdaw will also be lobbying MPs for improvements in these rights over the coming years.

I hope you can find time to promote the campaign and inform members and potential members about their rights.



Spotlight Day: Aims

TO SUPPORT REPS AND MEMBERS BY:

Making sure they know they have rights to time off work to care for a close relative or other family member. For more information please see Usdaw’s leaflet *Time off for Family Emergencies – Know your rights* (Leaflet 349).

Ensuring that reps understand and recognise what rights members have and help them enforce those rights.

Ushaw is lobbying the Government to:

- Introduce a right to paid family leave as we know that taking unpaid time off can be a real struggle for many working people.
- Protect the benefits that families with disabled children rely on. Studies show that it costs three times as much to raise a disabled child. Benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Tax Credits are particularly important to members with a disabled child.

Providing clear information for parents of disabled children, who face additional hurdles, on getting time off work and finding out about the help that’s available. Usdaw’s leaflet *Supporting Families with Disabled Children* (Leaflet 393).



Spotlight Day: What you can do

- ✓ Put the poster (pages 16 & 17) on your noticeboard.
- ✓ Order leaflets and distribute them to colleagues.
- ✓ Use the survey to find out how much your members know about the benefit changes.
- ✓ Use the postcard and pledge card to contact your MP.

- ✓ Organise a campaign stand with union information and merchandise on March 6 (or any day that week).

Remember to take some pictures and send them into Network at network@usdaw.org.uk



If your company agrees to you setting up a stand, invite your local MP or councillors to show their support.

Spotlight Day: What's available

www.usdaw.org.uk/timetocare

Leaflets

- ◆ Support for reps when members need time off work for family reasons (No.394)
- ◆ Time off for Family Emergencies – know your rights (No.349)
- ◆ Supporting Families with Disabled Children (No.393)
- ◆ Working Carers – know your rights (No.343)
- ◆ Flexible Working – your right to have a say in the hours you work (No.346)

Other publications and merchandise

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| ◆ Survey Form | ◆ Chocolate Lollies |
| ◆ Postcard & Contact Card | ◆ T-Shirts |
| ◆ A4 Poster | ◆ Paper Hats |
| ◆ Stickers | ◆ Promotional Watches |
| ◆ Carrier Bags | ◆ Keyrings |
| | ◆ Sweets |

You can order from the stationery department at central office:
E: stationerysection@usdaw.org.uk
P: 0161 224 2804

Or freepost:

Stationery Dept, Usdaw,
Freepost Nat19525,
Manchester M14 7DJ



Useful contacts

Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL)

P: 0800 882 200

P: 0800 243 355 (Textphone)

W: www.direct.gov.uk/benefit-enquiry-line

Contact a Family (Charity)

Free for parents and families 10am – 4pm, Mon-Fri

P: 0808 808 3555

P: 0808 808 3556 (Textphone)

E: helpline@cafamily.org.uk

W: www.cafamily.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

For information about local offices visit:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk or



Time to



Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers
www.usdaw.org.uk

Have you ever needed time off work to look after a family member?

- Did you know you have a legal right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when a family member needs your care and support?
- Usdaw may have negotiated extra rights with your employer to support you when you need time off work to care for someone.
- Speak to your Usdaw Rep to find out more. You can also contact the Usdaw helpline or visit the website.

Usdaw wants to make sure that all our members and their families get the right support when they need it.

Helpline: 0845 60 60 640*

website: www.usdaw.org.uk

email: parentsandcarers@usdaw.org.uk

Scan here**

to view the latest news and resources from our campaign.



www.usdaw.org.uk/timetocare

Improving workers' lives – Winning for members



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

South Wales and Western division's **Julio Garcia** answers our questions on his experiences as a rep

FACT FILE & TRIVIA

FAST FACTS

- **Employer** Tesco
- **Occupation** Team Leader, nights
- **Age** 34
- **Lives** Redruth, Cornwall
- **Branch** Penwith Kerrier A48
- **Usdaw Activist** Since 2010
- **Union positions** Union rep, health and safety rep

MY FAVOURITE...

- **Music...** Bob Marley
- **Book...** The Confession by John Grisham
- **TV...** Daily Politics, Kaiser Report
- **I spend my spare time...**
..with my family. The best moment of my life has been marrying my wife and having our kids.



Want to be the next activist in-depth?

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk

Why did you become an Usdaw rep?

I believe in equal opportunities for everyone and fair and good working conditions and a safe environment to work in.

What's good about being active?

It gives me the chance to have an input in some decisions. I am kept informed and so can keep my members informed. It also gives me the opportunity to help and advise my members and the opportunity to learn and develop new skills.

..any downsides?

There aren't any.

Been on any training courses?

The shop steward and health and safety courses. They were very well run and very helpful and informative and gave me the opportunity to mix with other reps and also gave me the tools to do my role as a rep.

As a rep dealing with issues day to day I'm learning and growing all the time.

I also attended the Black Members weekend in Manchester last year. I really enjoyed it, I learned so much and met some very nice people. I'd certainly recommend it.

What's surprised you about being an Usdaw rep?

The thing that's surprised me most is that people think I know everything!

And another is how far I've come since I became a rep two years ago.

Have you changed at all since becoming a rep?

I'm much more confident and able to deal with problems and this makes it easier for me to communicate and speak with people, especially management. And if I don't know the answer to something I know where and who to ask for help.

What issues are important to your members?

All the Government cuts, and the Autumn Statement did little to help working families on low incomes. The Tories keep saying we are all in this together – in reality – I don't think so.

What law would you introduce as PM?

Zero tolerance to all kinds of discrimination. This is another area where the union can help, we campaign all the time on equality issues and raise the issues with MPs and the Government.

How would you improve Usdaw?

Get more people involved and active at all ages and levels, they don't have to be reps, they can get involved in recruitment, leafleting, campaigning, anything. It's great fun.

What's next for you?

I would like to get more involved outside of my workplace and more experienced. There is so much on offer, stand-down, the Academy, summer school, ADM, I want to try them all.

“ Let's get more people involved in recruitment, leafleting, campaigning. They don't have to be reps. It's great fun. ”

YOUR MEMBER SERVICES

Usdaw works with all of its affinity partners to get you and your family the best deals available. Find out now if your union membership can save you money. For more information visit:



 www.usdaw.org.uk/offers

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£25 annual book token
conditions apply

Save between **£15** and **£25** per month for between 10 and 25 years.



For more information visit
www.usdaw.org.uk/suresave
or call freephone 0800 781 6877

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Usdaw members can make great savings on the following UK attractions and theme parks:
Alton Towers Resort, Chessington World of Adventures Resort, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Manchester, LEGOLAND Windsor Resort, Madame Tussauds London, SEA LIFE centres & Sanctuaries, the Dungeons, THORPE PARK and Warwick Castle.
To find out more or to book call **0871 222 4001** and quote **REWARDS** for your special discount or visit www.usdaw.org.uk/merlin



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Our caring staff are on hand to give you individual support, care and reassurance when it matters most.

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Please see website or call for full terms and conditions.

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Visit your local branch or britannia.co.uk/usdaw

*Our lines are open 8am-8pm weekdays and 9am-12noon Saturdays. Calls may be recorded and/or monitored. Calls from landline phones are free however mobile providers may charge. Britannia is the trading name of the Co-operative Bank plc. Registered office: PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP. Registered in England and Wales No. 990937.

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To find out if you are due a refund, go to www.taxrebates.com/ref/usdaw, call the application information line **0845 058 2288** or send a SAE for an application form to:
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Finance available



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or call 0845 122 6916

FREE DEBT ADVICE

Free debt advice has a new name

StepChange Debt Charity is the new name for the Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS). They continue to offer the best in free debt advice and solutions to Usdaw members.

You don't have to face debt problems on your own. With the help of the UK's leading debt charity, you can get your finances back on track. For free and impartial debt advice, call now, or use their unique online Debt Remedy tool.

Call: **0800 980 8271**
Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm and Sat 9am to 3pm
Online: www.stepchange.org/usdaw



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www.frankieandbennys.com

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

The Midlands division has both a new divisional officer and a new training officer while the education department has also welcomed a new training officer to the North East division

Gavin Dudley is the new divisional officer in the Midlands

following the retirement of his predecessor Gary Holz.

Redditch-based Gavin makes the step up from deputy divisional officer, a position he has held since 2009 having first been appointed to the staff as an area organiser in 1997 at the old Nottingham office.

Gavin joined the union in 1987 and started off his Usdaw career when he was an activist at the Ashby Northern dairies site in the early '90s taking on the role of senior steward in 1992.

"I'm delighted to be able to carry on from where Gary left off," said Gavin, 48. "Gary did a great job and was hugely

respected by everyone in the division. He will be missed. I worked closely with Gary over a number of years and he was a great mentor to me. It's a slightly daunting prospect as he'll be a hard act to follow, but I'm looking forward to the challenges.

"I consider myself very fortunate to be able to work for the union.

"I've been a member of Usdaw for just over 25 years now and I'm very proud to have been given the opportunity to lead the great team of members, reps and staff that we have in the Midlands.

"I'll be working closely with my new deputy divisional officer Gareth Davies and the rest of the organising team in the division."



New training officers by the double

Stephanie Peacock

Former teacher Stephanie Peacock is the new training officer in the North Eastern division and is based at the Leeds office.

The 25 year-old brings with her a passion for education, trade unionism and politics and has been closely involved in the Labour Party for a number of years.

"I was the youth rep on the Labour Party National Executive Council for four years and I also worked for MPs Sylvia Heal and John Cryer in the Midlands and Westminster respectively," she said.

Stephanie graduated in history from the Queen Mary University of London and is currently working towards her Masters in educational

leadership from the Institute of Education, University of London. She spent two years teaching history and politics in Camden North London.

"I'm delighted to have joined Usdaw and see it as a great opportunity to combine my interests in both education and unions.

"I'm really enjoying it. Everyone in the education department has been very supportive and friendly."

Warren Scott

Law graduate and Usdaw Academy graduate Warren Scott is the new training officer for the Midlands division after taking up his new position in mid-November last year.

The former Tesco team leader had joined Usdaw in



2006 when he worked part-time while a student at the University of Ulster and went full-time in 2009. He was a rep, branch secretary, divisional councillor and completed Academy1 in 2010 and Academy2 last year.

"I was thrilled to get the training officer's job and I'm really enjoying it," said the 25 year-old, who has relocated



from Belfast to Redditch.

"I've plenty of experience of dealing with the issues our reps face on a day-to-day basis so I can certainly empathise with them.

"I always wanted to be a teacher so this is an ideal role for me. I'm getting a lot out of it and looking forward to working with the reps and my colleagues."

ACTION ALL AREAS

Usdaw is the only UK union to run its own Academy1&2 setup and its unparalleled success has been the springboard for many reps to acquire new skills and deliver for their members



Terry Brookes

Six months of hard work on Academy1 has seen Terry Brookes conquer his nerves, get more active and become politically involved too.

“The Academy was a real eye opener,” said the 55 year-old Tesco Express customer assistant from Grays in Essex.

“Before my secondment I was nervous

about going into other stores to recruit. But the whole experience, along with the training, and time spent speaking to different groups of people has helped me get rid of my fears.

“I’m like a different person, better prepared, more confident and self assured.

“I returned to work with a greater knowledge of the union as well as a better idea of why I got involved in the first place – it made me more aware of the real me!

“I’ve built my store membership back up to 100 per cent and I’ve also recruited new members in the seven other Express stores I’m responsible for.

“I feel much more able in my role and I’ve recently been elected branch chair which is a new and fresh challenge for me.

“I’ve also become active in my local Labour Party and regularly go out and about campaigning.

“I’d certainly recommend the Academy to anyone who takes their union role seriously. But be warned it’s not a six-month jolly – it’s hard work – you get out of it what you put in.”

Susan Stoddart



IN NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED: 26 JANUARY 2013

South Wales & Western.....	50,453
Eastern.....	62,047
Midlands.....	56,813
North Eastern.....	57,384
Scottish.....	45,013
Southern.....	58,024
North West.....	93,931
TOTAL.....	423,665

Darren Bussey



Driver Darren Bussey's six months in the Academy1 fast lane has helped him develop into a more experienced and confident rep.

The 47 year-old from Leeds works for pharmaceutical company Alliance Healthcare and has been a rep for two years.

"Coming from a transport background the Academy gave me a broader understanding of different workplaces

including retail," said Darren.

"The experience has taught me how to listen and have a better understanding of different issues in different workplaces and I'm certainly more confident and proactive dealing with management.

"I'm better organised and also communicate and work more closely with the site's other two reps in production Jill Cannon and Mandy Kendall.

"It's always been a bit difficult to liaise regularly

with them both because I represent transport and I'm out on the road a lot, so it's great to see us now working together as a team.

"I'm delighted to say we've signed up 14 new members since I've been back.

"Overall the Academy has given me the confidence to believe in myself and look at every opportunity that comes my way. I've applied for the politics option at this year's summer school². No way would I have considered that two years ago."

David Clift

Sata rep Dave Clift made a big impact during his time with Academy1 raising the union's profile, running campaigns and signing up new members when he visited Morrisons stores across Cornwall.

"My time with the Academy made me realise just how much potential there is in the division to sign up my colleagues and help them to become more active in the union," said 40 year-old Dave who returned to his own store in Bodmin after his six-months secondment.

"I was made very welcome in every store I visited and had a positive response from both staff and management. I left knowing that staff and managers knew exactly what Usdaw is and what it can do for them.

"It was a brilliant learning curve for me, I got so much out of it. I was lucky enough to have a lot of support from other activists and fellow Academy rep Henry Adams, organising officer Debbie Holland and my area organiser Suzie Green.

"We had the best success when we organised and ran campaign days such as Legal Plus or Freedom From Fear. Everyone could relate to the campaigns and didn't realise the union were involved in issues like these, so it was a real eye-opener for staff when they made the connection."

The Academy is not for the faint-hearted, according to 47 year-old part-time customer service assistant Susan Stoddart, who works for Midlands Co-op.

"The overall experience was a good one and exactly the challenge I needed, but you need to stay focused and be able to think on your feet," said Susan. "Every workplace is different. Although mine all come under the umbrella of retail they each have their own set of issues.

"I joined the union and got involved because I wanted to make a difference. The Academy has changed me on a personal level and given me the courage

to stand my ground and motivate members into realising they have to get involved to help themselves and their colleagues.

"What's next? Well, I'll be getting more involved with my branch as I've recently been elected branch secretary and I'm looking forward to the branch officers' training course in March.

"I'm also looking forward to putting all my training and skills to the test in my new role as a Co-op cluster rep. I'll be looking after a group of stores in my area and getting to know the staff and recruiting as many new members as I can as well as nurturing any potential new reps."



REPS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Northern Ireland has seen membership grow from 10,800 to more than 16,000 in the last six years an almost 50 per cent rise, *Network* caught up with some key reps



Mike Aylward
North West
divisional officer

“ It could be suggested that Northern Ireland, for many years, was punching below its weight.

It was also clear that if we wished to grow the union we had to campaign more vigorously across Northern Ireland.

It needed a concerted and united effort by reps and officials to ensure that the Northern Ireland membership not only

grew considerably, but that Usdaw became more relevant across the Province.

We also had to play an active part across the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and ensure that, where we had agreements, they worked appropriately for our members.

Due to investment by Usdaw in its reps, we have been able to ensure that they have the

knowledge, expertise and confidence to represent our members.

Now, not only has Usdaw raised its profile within Northern Ireland but our Northern Ireland membership has raised its profile within Usdaw. We have seen significant growth and we have the determination, during the coming years, to see Usdaw grow even further. ”

NICK FREEMAN

During his seven years as a rep Tesco's Nick Freeman has made the most of the union's training opportunities. "When it comes to developing reps Usdaw is second to none," said the 47 year-old who works at the Portadown store in Co. Armagh.

"I've been supported and encouraged by everyone in the division to develop my skills further. My self-belief has grown and given me the confidence to get more involved."

Nick's long list of union activity includes development workshops and training courses, three trips to the Annual Delegate Meeting, two summer schools, Academy1&2, organising and running numerous campaigns and many hours of stand-down in other stores.

"All of these experiences have given me a greater understanding of the issues and helped me improve my skills in recruiting and organising.

"Stand-down helps you put your skills to the test away from your own workplace and comfort zone, it's also a bit of an eye-opener.

"And then once you get to Academy1 you're flying, it's the best experience ever and then Academy2 allows you to develop your recruitment and organising skills even further. I was also lucky enough to be elected as a delegate to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in Killarney in 2011.

"My advice to any rep is to sign up for the training courses, get involved in your workplace and your division – and you won't go wrong."

JAMIE HEGARTY

One of the country's new recruits is 20 year-old Poundland supervisor Jamie Hegarty who joined the union three years ago and became a rep last July.

She works at the Strabane store in Co. Tyrone and is one of only five Poundland shop stewards in Northern Ireland.

"I enjoy being a rep and helping my colleagues," said Jamie. "I joined because I'd get professional help and support if I had a problem at work and because the benefits were good.

"Being involved with the union has been a great experience and helped build my confidence and knowledge.

"I attended the Retail Trades Conference in Manchester last October and the Northern Ireland conference in Belfast in November. Both events gave me a clearer picture of how the union works and how much influence the union has in different companies and workplaces across the whole of the UK

"After each union event I told my colleagues what went on and what I had learned. Again, I never thought I'd have the confidence to do that.

"I've made a lot of new friends too and it's been helpful listening to other people's experiences and seeing how many different issues and areas the union gets involved in.

"I'd like to see more members signing up as reps in Poundland. At the moment we have around 400 members and there is talk that the company is expanding over here so there is huge potential to recruit more members and more reps."

MAY HARRIS

Ladbroke's first-ever Usdaw rep May Harris is proving to be an odds-on winner with her members in Northern Ireland.

May took on the role of shop steward in 2010, a year after Usdaw secured a groundbreaking recognition and collective bargaining agreement with the company and two years after she joined the union.

Although the union's membership within Ladbroke's in Northern Ireland is split into three cluster areas of stores where a rep is required, May remains the one and only rep looking after members in the Belfast Area District.

"With the union I don't feel alone," said the 57 year-old cashier from Belfast. "Both members and managers respect the job I do as a rep and I enjoy it because I like helping people.

"I joined the union because of the way we were being treated by Ladbroke's and I needed backing and someone on my side.

"Normally I'd describe myself as a pretty quiet person but since becoming a rep and with the support of the union I have no problem standing up and speaking out on behalf of my members.

"I've been involved with three disciplinaries so far and I've won every one of them. A record I'm very proud of.

"It's been a great experience although it can get a bit lonely. I'd like to see membership grow within Ladbroke's and especially see more members getting active and signing up to be reps."



May Harris



Nick Freeman



Jamie Hegarty



Jackie McNeill



Ku Baiden

KU BAIDEN

Asda customer service assistant Ku Baiden has taken advantage of every opportunity that's come her way since becoming a rep two years ago. The 33 year-old mother-of-two from Antrim is a rep, health and safety rep, branch chair and also a member of the division's equalities forum.

"I'm growing all the time and loving every minute," said Ku. "I learn something new with every union event I get involved in whether it be a training course, conference, weekend workshop or a campaign day.

"I've learned a lot from the more experienced reps particularly Jackie McNeill who I've always respected.

"I'm more involved in issues outside of my workplace too and it was great to be a part of Northern Ireland's first ever Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) weekend last August.

"I attended the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) for the second time last year and our branch submitted a proposition which I spoke on. I have to

admit it was a bit daunting, but I was very proud of myself for standing up in front of all those people.

"I'd like to see more members from Northern Ireland attending their branch meetings so they can be put forward to go to the ADM, as it is a very important part of the democracy of the union.

"All of this experience has helped me to become a better rep for my members and encouraged me to do more and learn more with the union."

JACKIE MCNEILL

Co-op rep Jackie McNeill has been an activist for 15 years and is known by her members as 'the union woman'.

"When I look back to when I joined in 1997 I'd never have dreamt I'd come this far," said the 50 year-old from Co. Antrim.

"And here I am waiting to hear if I've won Usdaw's nomination for the Women's seat on the TUC.

"I've had so many opportunities and been encouraged all the way by the officials here and over in Warrington.

Their support and guidance has helped make me the person I am today, that is, confident and self-assured.

"As well as shop steward, I'm also secretary of my branch, chair of the divisional council, and vice-chair of the divisional equalities forum, I've represented Usdaw at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions where I spoke on the Freedom From Fear campaign.

"I've attended summer school 1&2, and been on both Academy 1&2. As part of our equalities work I've been involved with Belfast Pride for the last two years and this year we held our first LGBT get-together in Northern Ireland. In 2010 I was delighted to receive the divisional award for my work with equalities.

"I feel honoured when members ask for my advice, especially younger workers.

"I'll never stop encouraging workers to join the union. And I'll always remember my late father's words as I was growing up, 'if there's a union make sure you join'. These words are embedded in my brain to this day."

Question time

General secretary John Hannett has spent almost nine years in the leadership hot seat and is as determined as ever to keep building a strong and vibrant union

Q We've had five years of continual economic gloom – a recession, then a double-dip recession – yet Usdaw keeps growing. How do you explain that phenomenon?

“ We continue to operate in a challenging situation – both economically and politically. Employers are under pressure and set on taking costs out of the business.

Times are tough and our members are being hit hard. Job losses in the public sector are hitting consumer spending and this has hit the retail and



distribution sectors. We've also had job losses in our own sectors with JJB Sports, Peacocks and Comet going into liquidation. Yet despite all the challenges currently facing our sectors we have a good news story to tell.

Membership continues to grow, why? It's not accidental, it's because we have a dedicated army of well-informed reps, a team of supportive officials and the vast majority of our members are satisfied with our services.

We continue to be the fastest growing UK trade union by far with our membership currently standing at 423,665. We recruited more than 75,000 members last year

growing our membership by 11,567 with comparative growth over the last year standing at 12,993. And we have continued to increase our density in Tesco, the Co-op and Morrisons.

Our Membership Weeks were successful once again last year resulting in an additional 6,000 new members being recruited.

We have continued to expand our Academy, which engages, develops and motivates our best activists and also increased our stand-down rep hours. Our Academy and stand-down reps have done a great job and recruited an impressive 35,920 members last year.

We introduced a new initiative in June 2012 to reduce the number of reps who quit their role within their first few months but more importantly to ensure that all of our reps are effectively supported and developed.

Reps were issued with a new shop stewards pack and we've also introduced new procedures to ensure that all reps are inducted into their role and are trained as quickly as possible.

The challenge is to not only maintain but also to build on our membership growth, not for the sake of it, but to increase our influence both at work and in parliament to improve the terms and conditions of our members.



Q In tough times union members always ask – What is the union doing for me? – What's your answer to that?

“ In terms of pay, negotiations in this economic climate remain difficult. No one is achieving inflation or anywhere near inflation deals – in fact many workers are facing pay freezes, particularly in the public sector.

However, we continue to achieve pay awards for our members of around 2.5 per cent which is slightly above average settlements across the private sector and well above settlements in the whole of the economy that reflect the public sector wage freeze.

Our legal services are second-to-none and have resulted in recovery of compensation for members with employment claims of almost £2.8 million last year up from £1.37 million for the same

period in 2011. Firstcall Usdaw continues to deliver for our members, with 6,034 new personal injury cases in 2012 with £15.5 million in compensation recovered for our members.

On a daily basis reps are helping members overcome problems and sort out issues at work as part and parcel of their everyday lives. In fact these 'small' but significant wins are the bread and butter issues for our members and cannot be over-estimated – whether that's sorting out shift changes, pay queries, representing members at grievances/ disciplinarys or offering advice on employment rights. It's precisely in the tough times that workers need their union more than ever.

Q Politically, Labour has been out of power for two and a half years. Can Labour win in 2015?

“ Labour did win six by-elections last year and that was an encouraging sign that the electorate can see through the Coalition's austerity policies.

There is a lot of hard work to be done in terms of persuading the voters that there is an alternative. We know our members are going to be hammered over the next few

years as in-work benefits are frozen and/or cut in real terms. Disposable income will fall, so how that is meant to help the economy is anybody's guess.

We want to see investment in jobs and growth and an end to hard-working families having to pay for the mistakes of the bankers.



Q The chancellor has forecast another five years of economic gloom, how do you see the next few years for Usdaw and its members?

“ Complacency is not in our vocabulary. While the economic situation remains difficult for our members, our strategic planning will serve us well in focussing on the things that matter.

We will remain ‘the Campaigning Union’ with successful workplace and e-campaigning techniques delivering for our members.

We have been exploring how we

recruit and engage young workers and, following a series of focus groups in the divisions, we will be introducing some new materials in 2013 and building on our solid base of youth activists.

All of us have a part to play and if we continue to harness our professional approach, dedication, determination and commitment, I’m confident we can meet the challenges facing us in 2013.



CV

Joined Usdaw: 1972. Rep: 1973. Appointed Area Organiser: 1985. Appointed National Officer: 1990. Elected Deputy General Secretary: 1997. Elected General Secretary: 2004 & re-elected in: 2008. Member of the Labour Party’s NEC from: 1998 to 2005. Member of the Low Pay Commission since 2007. Member of the TUC’s General Council & Executive Committee. ACAS Council Member since 2010

Q During the last few years you have made communicating with members and reps a priority, why is that so important to you?

“ Why would we ignore our most important assets? Usdaw is nothing without its members and reps and their opinions are vital.

We need to know when we get things right and, just as importantly, when we don’t.

I’m delighted to say our latest reps’ survey results have shown a significant

improvement with 94 per cent saying that they are proud to be an Usdaw rep.

Reps feel better supported and that Usdaw makes a difference to the working lives of their members and 58 per cent attend regular team meetings.

Similarly, the members’ survey showed an increase in

satisfaction with being a member and the services the union provides, with 73 per cent prepared to recommend Usdaw membership to their friends or colleagues.

Constant communication with our members and reps will rightly form an important part of our ongoing strategy.

People have seen through and been let down by the LibDems, so at the next election it will be a straight fight between Labour and the Tories and I’m confident Labour can win.



ADVICE FOR SAFETY REPS

Usdaw's health and safety officer Doug Russell gives his top ten tips on how reps can make the most of their essential role and also looks forward to this year's Workers' Memorial Day

Be active

Active health and safety reps are one of the best ways to show members (and potential members) the value of being in the union.

As an H&S rep, you have legal functions to inspect the workplace and to investigate causes of accidents and potential hazards. The tips on these pages give you some ideas on how to maximise the use of these legal functions for the benefit of members and your employer.

Plan ahead

Sit down now and plan your diary for the year ahead. Enter dates for regular inspections of the workplace. Also include dates for rep team meetings, H&S committee meetings, branch meetings or other important events.

Attend meetings

Make sure you attend rep team meetings, H&S committees, store forums or colleague councils when you are entitled to do so. Other people may have other priorities but it's your job to make sure that safety items that concern our members get on the agenda.

Inspect your workplace

Inspection of the workplace is one of the fundamental legal functions of union safety reps.

Routine inspections on a regular basis are a great way to check that things are running properly and that your employer's H&S policies and procedures

are working. They also give you an opportunity to talk to the workers you represent to pick up on any concerns they may have.

Make sure to follow up your inspections with a report that identifies any outstanding issues.

Use the union noticeboard

In most workplaces the union noticeboard is the main way of getting messages across to members and to potential members about what the union does. Use the noticeboard to make sure that workers know how to get in touch. But also keep it active and informative. There are campaigns and events during

the year which the union supports such as International Workers Memorial Day on 28 April and Respect Week where reps can use the union's materials to promote health and safety messages.

Keep your paperwork in order

It helps to be methodical in your work. Keeping your paperwork in an organised way helps maximise the use of your time. Keep copies of checklists you use for workplace inspections. When you use the HS2 or HS3 forms to report hazards or investigate accidents keep them for further reference. Keep minutes of safety committees and notes of meetings with management on H&S issues.



Keep up-to-date

The world of health and safety is changing all the time. Make sure that all the Usdaw safety reps you know are getting their own copies of Network, which continues to be the main way of communicating to activists. But also take advantage of any training available to you through Usdaw or the TUC.

If you have access to email and the internet, sign up for email alerts from the union and use the H&S forum and web pages on the website. Share information with your fellow reps whenever you can.



www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety



Talk to the workers you represent

Your primary function is to represent the workers. You need to talk to them to make sure they know who you are and to find out their concerns. There is nothing wrong with talking to non-members as well as members. H&S problems don't discriminate between the two. But when talking to non-members have some membership forms handy!

Keep in touch with your fellow reps

If there are other union reps in your workplace, keep in touch. In workplaces where there are only a few reps, shop steward and safety rep duties are often shared but even where there are separate reps it is important that you all work together as a team. All union reps need to work together on recruitment to encourage potential members to join. If you are the only union rep in your workplace keep in touch with other reps in your union branch or in your employer to share support and experience.



Work with your managers

Despite the fact that most Usdaw members work in what this Government calls 'low risk' areas, most employers who recognise the union do take their H&S responsibilities seriously and do have policies and procedures in place.

A lot of the time the job of the rep means working with managers to make sure that these procedures are being followed in your own workplace.

Of course, you may not always agree and there may be times when you need to use the procedures to sort out problems. But in general, H&S works best where there is mutual respect between managers and reps, and the best way to gain respect from managers is to be well-organised as a rep.

Promote workers' memorial day in April



International Workers' Memorial Day (WMD) on 28 April, is when the international trade union and labour movement commemorates all those who are killed by workplace accidents and disease with the slogan 'Remember the Dead: Fight for the Living'.

Udaw has been supporting WMD since 1995. This year WMD falls on the Sunday at the start of Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). Purple commemorative ribbons and leaflets about the day will be available at conference and the event will be commemorated at conference as in previous years.

For members and reps who are not attending ADM, we ask you to get involved – either by

promoting the day in your own workplace or by attending one of the local events organised around the country by trades councils or Hazards campaigners.

Details of local events should be available on the TUC website:

www.tuc.org.uk

An Usdaw leaflet for use in workplaces will be available in March. A range of materials including purple knotted ribbons, car stickers, t-shirts and posters can be ordered from the Hazards Campaign: www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/wmd/index.htm

If any reps are getting involved in street stalls or displays and want more Usdaw materials please contact the health and safety section in central office.

Inspections plummet but HSE wants fewer

Even though there has been a massive drop in visits by Local Authority health and safety inspectors, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is consulting on a new code that would further restrict visits to 'low risk' premises.

Figures released in an HSE document show an 86 per cent drop in Local Authority (LA) unannounced proactive inspections for 2012/13.

HSE estimate there will be around 16,400 inspections this year compared to 117,000 in 2009/10. It is not clear whether this fall is a result of budget cuts or the Government's call for fewer inspections of 'low risk' premises, which are mainly found in LA-enforced sectors such as retail.

In January 2013, the HSE launched a consultation on a

new Local Authority Enforcement Code, which will 'deliver the Government expectation that lower risk premises should not be subject to proactive, unannounced inspections'.

The code includes a restricted list of 'high risk' activities/sectors where proactive inspection would be allowed.

Udaw is concerned that this list is far too narrow and excludes many common hazards such as back injuries from manual handling and slips and trips.

The union encourages safety reps and members active on local councils to respond to the consultation. The deadline for responses is 1 March 2013.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd247.htm>

Email Doug Russell on: healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

SEND YOUR LETTERS AND PICTURES TO: Network Editor, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ or email network@usdaw.org.uk

HEARING AIDS

Sign-up to Learn

**£50
star letter
winner**

Last year 24 Tesco staff completed a deaf awareness course, learning basic sign language and communication skills in the workplace.

This ten week course, run in Tesco Lincoln 2's training room over two evenings a week, was so successful that a follow on British Sign Language (BSL) level one course began.

The nine colleagues who did the course in their own time undertook 26 weeks of classroom based learning and had to pass three videoed exams to demonstrate their sign language skills.

Happily all nine passed their exams and qualified with a BSL level one qualification. Many have already put it into good use and have used it to communicate with some of our deaf

customers both at work and in their day-to-day lives.

Huge congratulations go to Carol Houlden, Tanya Wingell, Carol Ingamells, Jessica Taylor, Mark Carrington, Debbie Mayer and Dee Davies. Rachael Pearce from the Market Rasen store and Sheena Townsend from the Horncastle store.

I am so proud of what you have all achieved and look forward to seeing you qualify in BSL2 later this year. A big thank you to our tutor Andy Rowe from South Nottingham college for his endless patience and fantastic tutoring skills.

POLLIE SIMPSON
ULR, Tesco Lincoln 2

OBITUARY

Activist Colin Hall

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you of the passing of our dear friend and comrade Colin Raymond Hall.

Colin joined Usdaw in 1984 and held the positions of shop steward and health and safety representative over a 20 year period. He was vice chair then branch chair of Corby Industrial E10 from 2001 up until 2011 when he left RS Components in Corby.

Colin was a staunch member of the local Labour party and was a regular attendee of ADM as a branch delegate.

Colin was a family man and leaves wife Gill and daughter Nicola.

I am sure your readers would join us in sending our condolences to Colin's family, friends and former work colleagues.

MARK HALFPENNY
Branch secretary, Corby Industrial E10

ATTACK ON EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS MONITOR

Keeping track of the Coalition's dire record

There is now a free online resource, launched by the Institute of Employment Rights.

The interactive Coalition timeline provides users with a novel way of tracking the ideological moves of the Government and is particularly useful for trade union members and trade union education officials.

The timeline is updated every week and users can receive email updates by joining the mailing list.

We hope Usdaw's members find it helpful in their continued fight against attacks on workers' rights:

www.ier.org.uk/resources/coalition-timeline

SARAH GLENISTER
Institute of Employment Rights



PICTURE ROUND-UP: Keeping your cool during Respect week





1. Colleagues from Tesco Hastings complete the Six Book Challenge. 2. Jean Carroll (left) from Bury Tesco. 3. Marjory Hastings (centre) from Tesco Kilmarnock. 4. Martin Ward (right) retires as A165 secretary after 17 years. Also celebrating 30 years membership (not pictured) are Kathleen Corson from Tesco Ayr Extra and Sandra Pickavance from Morrisons in St. Helens.

Staff retirements

North West division's Gary Lord has just completed 'the best eight years of his life' as an area organiser based at the Warrington office.



Gary Lord

The 55 year-old retired in late November last year ending an 18-year association with Usdaw. Prior to his appointment in 2004 Gary spent five years as the

convenor at the former Tibbett and Britten site in Runcorn, Cheshire. He had been a rep there for five years before that.

"It's been a privilege to have worked for Usdaw," he said. "I've loved every minute of it. I've had great support especially from my former mentor deputy divisional officer Tony Bennett and divisional officer Mike Aylward.

"I've seen Usdaw become more and more professional over the last eight years and it's been great to be part of it. We are the envy of other unions.

"I'll miss all of my colleagues and the reps and members, but it's the right time for me to move on. I'm thinking about volunteering for Citizens Advice and I'm looking forward to spending a lot of time with my first grandson."

General secretary John Hannett said: "Gary brought his strong organisational and representation skills and experience with him when he joined the staff and he did a great job.

"We all wish him well for what hopefully will be a productive and happy retirement."

Lifelong learning project worker Phil Gander, 63, retired last November.



Phil Gander

The former Tesco shop steward, a familiar face in the Eastern division over the last four years, has helped and encouraged hundreds of members and union learning reps to get involved.

"It was a fantastic moment to join the union's staff at the age of 58 and be given this golden opportunity so late in life," said Phil. "I've enjoyed every minute.

"Usdaw's training is second to none, I've benefitted both as a rep and with the Academy. It's been a great honour for me to be able to help other reps achieve their potential too.

"I've worked with some fantastic people in the division. Together we've made lifelong learning an integral part of our organising agenda. I wish them all well and thank them all for their support.

"Of course I'll miss my work, but I'm looking forward to the slower pace of life, a bit of fishing and walking and also spending time with my wife and children and watching my grandchildren grow up."

General secretary John Hannett said: "Our project workers like Phil do a fantastic job encouraging thousands of members to take the opportunity to change their lives through lifelong learning.

"We thank Phil for all his hard work and commitment and wish him a long and happy retirement."

KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOUR

Raising money for Cystic Fibrosis

We are running/walking/crawling 100km for The Knight Foundation For Cystic Fibrosis because of the help they gave our friend.

Tommo was a great friend and we miss him very much. When he passed away last September we felt we wanted to do something to raise money for Tom's chosen charity.

Foolishly, myself and some friends decided we would enter the London to Brighton Challenge, a 100km run/walk. It's going to be tough but we're

training hard, and doing it in memory of our great pal.

For more info on what we're doing and to make a donation please visit:

www.justgiving.com/tommo-forever

Thank you.

JAMIE GULL
Area organiser,
London office



LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION...

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Tesco Galashiels | 7. Isaac Newton Shopping Centre, Grantham |
| 2. Tesco Irlam | 8. Tesco Bishop's Stortford |
| 3. Tesco Woodford Green | 9. Tesco Ystradgynlais |
| 4. Tesco Rawtenstall | 10. Tesco Congleton |
| 5. Sainsbury's Garstang | 11. Tesco Newtonabbey |
| 6. Co-op Erdington | |



Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers

“We are delighted to team up with StepChange Debt Charity to offer free debt advice and solutions, and we are sure that this professional service will be of great benefit to our members.”

John Hannett,
General Secretary, Usdaw

FREE DEBT ADVICE HAS A NEW NAME

StepChange Debt Charity is the new name for the Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS). We're delighted to continue this partnership, as it means that any Usdaw member in financial difficulty has immediate access to the very best debt help and advice.

If you're worried about your financial situation or your debts are out of control, it can make it difficult to think clearly and make the right decisions. You're not alone, and our continued partnership with StepChange Debt Charity means that clear advice and a recommended solution is only one step away.

Why not take your first step to a debt-free future and contact StepChange Debt Charity? Call to speak to an expert advisor for free, confidential debt advice or visit www.usdaw.org.uk/stepchange to use their online debt advice tool – Debt Remedy.

Call: **0800 980 8271**

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 3pm

Online: **www.stepchange.org**



StepChange
Debt Charity