Join us on the march and rally on 18 October #18OCT
THE TRADES Union Congress in early September heralded the start of the conference season. While political choice always lends itself to totemic references to “watershed decisions”, it is not an exaggeration this time round. As Profile went to press, the Scottish referendum vote had just been announced. Political party conferences follow and a general election lies ahead.

Current debates are crucial to the future of UK citizens and although Prospect is politically unaffiliated, we are still centre stage. We have contributed a factual narrative to the referendum debate; our Prospect Pledge campaign has gained momentum in Westminster, the Scottish Parliament, and the Wales and Northern Ireland assemblies. Our representatives are speaking up in debates about their communities and their workplaces.

But regardless of future constitutional shape, there is one constant – what economic model will a future government adopt and deliver?

**Job quality and security**

Reducing unemployment is welcome, but we also need a debate about job quality and security: A lower-skill, short-termist, under-invested economy is where we have been, but not where we should be going.

Unions are not the only organisations raising these issues. Income inequality is now an issue for international monetary institutions. The interest in the work of French economist Thomas Piketty, author of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, reflects the same concerns.

Suddenly, the decline of collective bargaining – and its impact on workplace voice and wage share – is appearing on the agendas of some policymakers.

**A voice at work**

We will play our full part in the TUC march on 18 October, which focuses on Britain needing a pay rise. At the party conferences we will be raising our Good Work agenda, the importance of professional careers and reward.

Just as importantly, the UK needs a voice at work. UK employers need to learn that a preference for engagement solely on their terms is not the way to navigate complex markets and improve productivity.

Employees need engagement and a voice – but not just when it suits employers to hear it.

Prospect aims to make this our “loud” issue, because we have plenty of experience of members being asked for their opinion on matters that improve the outcomes for their employers, but rather less when it comes to matters that concern employees.

Economics of the future, or the past? Voice and pay? These are the questions we will put to all political parties over the coming months, because the choices we make now will affect us all for a generation.

**Mike Clancy**

Prospect General Secretary
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Cover pic: Prospect members on strike at the National Library of Wales (Photographer: Iwan ap Dafydd)

Stop quibbling and consult on jobs, Prospect tells airline

Prospect has urged Monarch Airlines to consult the union instead of imposing hefty job losses and cuts to terms and conditions to try to stem its financial crisis.

The company wants to make 160 engineering staff redundant in the Monarch Aircraft Engineering Limited business – part of a wider drive to lose 30% of its workforce and shave 35% from the remaining staff budget by changing pay and pensions and improving productivity.

This follows a decision not to plug a hole in the company’s pension scheme, reported to be between £158m and £300m.

A Sunday Times report suggested that if staff fail to agree to the cuts, the company could hand the scheme to the Pension Protection Fund.

If so, payouts for staff yet to retire could be capped at £25,000, wiping thousands off funds built up over years. A year ago many Prospect members transferred from Flybe to the airline and were assured their pensions were secure.

Monarch has asked staff not to speculate over the group’s position on social media or risk putting off investors. Prospect negotiator John Ferrett said in the absence of proper communication, speculation was bound to occur.

Despite Prospect being the largest union in the licensed engineers community, Monarch had repeatedly ignored calls to dismiss should have been explored.

As Grant’s work involved certifying aircraft in the south west and Wales, it was unreasonable not to consider a remote working pattern allowing him limited attendance at Gatwick, as had happened when other regional CAA offices closed.

The tribunal agreed and held that enforcing the mobility clause in an “arbitrary manner”, when the employee could not comply, was an unfair dismissal. It also said dismissal was unlawful under the Equality Act.

The tribunal found his disability made relocation unfeasible and dismissal was a consequence of this.

It concluded it would have been “practical and reasonable” to enable him to work remotely or to consider other flexible working solutions.

Marion Scovell, Prospect legal officer, said: “The case demonstrates that employers should always consider alternatives to forced relocation, even where there is a mobility clause in the contract.

“This is particularly so where a worker is disabled and is unable to transfer.”
**Strong support for Wales library walkout over pay**

The National Library of Wales was closed to the public on 10 September following a mass walkout by staff in a dispute over pay and their concerns over the library’s future.

The 281 staff have not received a consolidated pay rise since 2009 and Prospect, representing specialist staff, said this amounted to a 20% pay cut in real terms. As a result, 92.8% of Prospect’s members had voted in favour of industrial action. Two other unions – the FDA and PCS – also went on strike.

Rob Phillips, chair of the Prospect All Wales Forum, was on the picket line and said: “There was a real sense of camaraderie. The library has been suffering over the last year or so with very low morale, but the atmosphere on the day was really positive. It felt like we were doing something worthwhile and were glad to be taking action.”

“A few people have said to me since the strike, ‘there’s a different feeling here now,’” Phillips, an archivist, added that they were delighted with the public’s support.

“In the days since the strike, many have asked how they can show their solidarity,” said Phillips.

“You don’t become an archivist or librarian for the cash, you do it because you think it’s important. We passionately believe in the work that the national library does in preserving the written memory of Wales.”

Uncompetitive wages make it difficult to attract new staff and skills and specialist expertise are being lost. This toxic combination puts the future of the institution in danger, members believe.

Phillips and his colleagues are in this battle for the long-term. “We want to keep the pressure on the library and we’re looking at a rolling programme of action short of a strike over the next few months until we get a consolidated pay offer,” he said.

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**MINING PROFESSIONALS SAY ‘YES’ TO MERGER**

Members of a union for mining professionals voted overwhelmingly in September to merge with Prospect.

On a turnout of 51.5%, 96.1% of members of the British Association of Colliery Management – Technical, Energy and Administration Management (BACM-TEAM) voted for the transfer.

BACM represents engineers as well as staff working in information technology, finance, pensions administration, distribution, manufacturing and utilities.

It has 450 working members and 1,400 retired members. Subject to the completion of the transfer administration, they are set to become part of the wider Prospect family from 1 November 2014.

BACM general secretary Pat Carragher said: “The decision is an overwhelming endorsement of our national executive committee’s determination that its members’ future was best protected by a merger with Prospect.”

Prospect deputy general secretary Garry Graham said: “This is a great result and promises an exciting future. It reinforces Prospect’s position as the union of choice for professionals working in all areas of the energy industry.

“Prospect does not have the distractions of political affiliation; our relationships are with members and employers, which makes the union a credible voice in the energy debate at a crucial time.”

Although no salaried BACM staff will transfer, Carragher will join Prospect on a fixed-term contract till March 2015 to ensure a smooth transition.

BACM will become a branch within Prospect’s energy sector, served from the Wakefield office by negotiator Mike MacDonald.
Prospect is urging members in the civil service who currently pay their union subscriptions through check off to switch to direct debit.

Under check off, union subscriptions are deducted from members’ pay at source.

Prospect deputy general secretary Leslie Manasseh said: “The Cabinet Office has instructed all government departments to review check off and some have decided to terminate it. We do not know if others will follow suit, but there is a distinct possibility that your employer will effectively cancel your union membership over the next few months.

“The best way to ensure that you stay with Prospect and keep your union benefits is to switch to direct debit. Prospect’s system operates to the highest standards and complies fully with the direct debit regulations and guarantees.”

Members can make the switch by:
■ going online at www.prospect.org.uk/direct_debit – you will need to register first
■ printing off a form from https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2009/00784 and sending it back to us using Freepost
■ calling our membership department on 01932 577007.

Ray worked at Prospect’s London headquarters for more than 10 years and, as one member of staff wrote in a condolence book placed on reception: “You knew every one of us and we all knew you.”

Tributes recalled his passion for West Ham football club and described him as “a true ray of sunshine”, “one in a million”, “an encourager” and “someone who never failed to put a smile on my face with your nice comments and happy personality”.

Ray was born in east London. His family originated from Jamaica and he spent many holidays there. Our hearts go out to his mother Gloria, father Gilbert, brother Clive, sister Sandra and all his friends and family. He will be sorely missed.
Temporary reprieve fails to protect Kew

More than a third of science staff at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst Place will lose their jobs in the next three years, despite a temporary funding reprieve, Prospect has warned.

THE DAY after deputy prime minister Nick Clegg restored £1.5m that had been cut from Kew’s budget, its 200 permanent science staff learned that 42 posts (22%) are to go as a result of cuts and future funding uncertainty.

Kew also proposes introducing 30 three-year fixed-term career development research fellowships. Staff will be forced to compete with universities for already limited academic research funding grants or face redundancy if unsuccessful.

Prospect negotiator Julie Flanagan said: “We urge Kew to consider the serious implications of the radical changes being proposed and the artificially short timescale to deliver them.”

Moving to more commercial activity and forcing the organisation to compete for funding with academic institutions were “fundamentally flawed” approaches, she added.

The cuts would harm Kew’s capacity to support global conservation, help the world’s rural poor, tackle food security and biosecurity and deal with the impacts of habitat loss and global environmental change.

She urged supporters to keep up the pressure. More signatures for the petition are being collected.

“We urge Kew to consider the serious implications of the radical changes being proposed”

Minister’s one-off handout will help, but will not resolve the £5m gap in Kew’s budget for 2014-15. Nor will it protect Kew from further planned cuts. Meanwhile Kew is trying desperately to increase its income from commercial activity.

Flanagan said: “We urge Kew to consider the serious implications of the radical changes being proposed and the artificially short timescale to deliver them.”

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She urged supporters to keep up the pressure. More signatures for the petition are being collected. Please sign it at bit.ly/save_kew

TOP TUC ROLE FOR LESLIE MANASSEH

Prospect’s Leslie Manasseh has been elected as TUC president for the coming year. He faces a busy and challenging time ahead as he combines his responsibilities in Prospect with a wider trade union role.

And with a general election looming, Leslie will serve at a critical time in British and trade union history.

He wants the TUC to reach out to working people and make the case for an alternative to relentless austerity and attacks on the public sector and workplace rights.

“As wages have been steadily falling as a proportion of national wealth, so working people are being denied a fair share and many families struggle to cope with rising prices,” he said.

“Unions remain one of the few ways that ordinary working people can challenge the concentration of power, wealth and privilege in the hands of a few and ensure a more democratic, fairer society.”

In the early 1980s Leslie worked for the then Society of Civil and Public Servants. He became deputy general secretary of telecoms union Connect before it merged with Prospect in 2010.

Manifesto sets Good Work agenda

Prospect kicked off its election campaigning this autumn by launching its own Manifesto for Good Work, finalised after months of consultation with members.

The union was set to take its campaign to the Labour Party conference in October, with general secretary Mike Clancy addressing a fringe meeting organised by campaign group Unions 21.

Prospect has also contributed to a wider Unions 21 document – Securing the Good Work Economy – being launched at that event.

In December Prospect will hold a public event with the Work Foundation – look out for details.

See page 21 for a blog by Sue Ferns. Download the manifesto from: bit.ly/gwmanifesto

IN BRIEF

HOMEWORKERS’ GUIDANCE – If you work from home you may be interested in new guidance from the ACAS conciliation service – see the news story on Prospect’s website at bit.ly/homeworking_acas

General information is available from bit.ly/Prosp_heworker

OFFICE MOVE – Prospect’s Isle of Man office moved in August. The new address is: 10-13 Chesterfield House, Victoria Street, Douglas IM1 2LR; tel 01624 625800.
Pay and union rights were central themes at this year’s TUC conference, in the run-up to the 2015 general election. Marie McGrath reports from Liverpool

More than 500 delegates from 54 unions met in September to debate and decide how unions can act and organise to defend their members and set out a vision for a better way.

Prospect delegates intervened in many debates, including on health and safety at work, heritage cuts, corporate governance and British shipping.

Watch videos, download the agenda and read more reports at bit.ly/tuc_2014. The Twitter hashtag is #TUC14

Grim forecast for shipping

Pay for marine surveyors has fallen so far behind the UK market rate that at-risk vessels may not be inspected, Prospect rep Tom James warned TUC delegates.

James, who works for BAE Systems, was seconding a motion from Nautilus highlighting the dangers of deregulation and staff shortages in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, which regulates the shipping industry.

The MCA’s director of maritime safety and standards had said earlier this year that current pay rates were about 30-50% lower than the UK market rate for people with the necessary maritime skills and experience.

The situation was being made worse by proposed new contracts for surveyors reducing overtime rates and out-of-hours payments.

“If there is no long-term resolution to pay, and in particular, out-of-hours payments, the MCA may well find itself unable to discharge its responsibilities under European Union directives to inspect at-risk vessels,” he said.

“This could result in large fines being levied against the UK government by the EU.”

Mike Jess (Nautilus) said the MCA was facing a double whammy of budget cutbacks and political pressure to bend to the demands of ship owners. The agency itself had expressed concerns about its ability to uphold standards.

The MCA had just consulted on plans to abolish four regulations introduced in response to the inquiry into 1987’s Herald of Free Enterprise disaster – including a requirement for lockers containing emergency escape equipment to be installed on the decks of ships.

“Britannia rules the waves? Not these days. It’s more a case of Britannia waives the rules!” said Jess.

Full story: bit.ly/marine_cuts

Mapping out a better way

Pay and union rights were central themes at this year’s TUC conference, in the run-up to the 2015 general election. Marie McGrath reports from Liverpool

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Restore investment in UK’s heritage assets

The government should increase public investment in the heritage sector, reversing the trend of recent years, and ensure we can pass on a vibrant legacy to future generations, conference agreed.

Prospect deputy general secretary Leslie Manasseh told delegates: “We all know the benefits of exploring culture, being able to see the rarest of great works of art, walking in the footsteps of history and enjoying unique gardens. We don’t need evidence to tell us that this is good for us.”

Manasseh said the UK’s heritage sector:

● provides leisure and learning opportunities for millions
● showcases internationally acclaimed science and creativity
● is the source of wonder and enjoyment for many millions of people
● provides jobs for many thousands
● hugely boosts the UK’s global reputation.

“Despite this, it is under threat from a government which loudly proclaims the value to society of a thriving world of arts and culture, but whose actions represent death by a thousand cuts,” Manasseh said.

“The austerity programme has been eating into the foundations of institutions which have taken centuries to build.”

He highlighted Prospect’s recent report, Heritage in a cold climate, available from bit.ly/cold_climate.

Full story: bit.ly/heritage_funds

Britannia rules the waves? Not these days. It’s more a case of Britannia waives the rules!” said Jess.

Full story: bit.ly/marine_cuts
Reverse H&S attacks

THEY IS no evidence to back the government’s assertion that health and safety is a “burden on business” and constrains entrepreneurism, said Prospect president Alan Grey.

He highlighted Prospect’s 40@40 campaign, including a booklet containing stories that serve as a reminder of “the potentially devastating impact when things go wrong but also the business benefits when things go right”.

They are from health and safety inspectors whose voices are rarely heard, yet are enlivened around the globe for their professionalism, regulatory intelligence and discretion, he said.

Grey said the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act had stood the test of time and that health and safety culture typically perform better, the government had:
- cut state funding for HSE by over 40%,
- dramatically cut inspections,
- cut support and guidance for employers and safety reps and ditched valuable codes of practice,
- cut reporting requirements and the vital sources of intelligence for smart targeting by HSE,
- made access to compensation much harder for injured workers.

“We must demand that an incoming government next May gives health and safety in the workplace the priority it deserves and HSE the resources it needs to deliver,” he concluded.

Full story: bit.ly/tuc_40at40

Equality check for bank governor

PROSPECT DELEGATE Lorna Daniel raised a smile from the governor of the Bank of England during delegates’ questioning after his speech to the TUC conference.

Lorna, from Devonport dockyard in Plymouth, asked: “Last July when you announced that Jane Austen would be featuring on the £10 bank note you also made a welcome commitment that future bank notes should celebrate the full diversity of great British historical figures and their contributions in a wide range of fields.

“Do you think this commitment to greater diversity should include the composition of the monetary policy committee?”

Mark Carney said it was striking that when he joined the bank 15 months ago the gender balance in the senior ranks of the institution “was not what I would have expected”.

While the government decides who is on the monetary policy committee, he could influence the composition of the bank’s workforce. Of its graduate intake in 2013, 25% were female, compared to just under 50% in August 2014. A fifth of the bank’s 50 senior managers had been women in 2013, now down to a third.

Carney said a diverse workforce “will make us much, much more effective”.

Read Mark Carney’s full speech at: bit.ly/carney_tuc

IN BRIEF

GOVERNANCE – Good work, mandatory equal pay audits and pay ratios are as important as maximising profits, shareholder returns and boardroom pay, said vice-president Denise McGuire. She was seconding a motion from the £10 bank note you also marked a welcome commitment that future bank notes should celebrate the full diversity of great British historical figures and their contributions in a wide range of fields.

“Do you think this commitment to greater diversity should include the composition of the monetary policy committee?”

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Read Mark Carney’s full speech at: bit.ly/carney_tuc

FLOODS AND FRACKING – Delegates praised the work of Environment Agency staff during the winter of 2013-14. But one sentence in an amendment turned the motion about flood resilience into a debate about fracking. General secretary Mike Clancy said Prospect was neither for nor against fracking, believing this should be decided by “evidence and analysis.” Full story: bit.ly/tuc_energy_pol

DIVERSITY AND TALENT – The civil service could do more to develop apprentices of all ages in a wider range of functions, said Mick Upfield. He raised concerns about a new talent action plan and called for the ban on all-male shortlists to be extended beyond the senior civil service. Full story: bit.ly/talent_pathway

BARGAINING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR – A report of a Prospect fringe meeting led by Mike Clancy will be covered in the next issue of Profile.
Under the radar?

*Castles in the Sky*, a BBC drama starring Eddie Izzard, explored the exciting hinterland of one of Britain’s unsung wartime heroes – Robert Watson-Watt who, with his team of government scientists, invented radar and helped win the Battle of Britain. Any keen student of Prospect history will also be interested to know that Watson-Watt was president of our predecessor the Institution of Professional Civil Servants from 1934-36. He probably campaigned to improve pay rates for specialist staff in the Air Ministry – although in his day job he also found the time in 1935 to tell the ministry of his proposed system for detecting and locating aircraft by radio methods. The rest is history.

Back in the day

Congratulations to Peter Clements, Sellafield branch president, who has just celebrated 40 years since his first day at work on 2 September, 1974. How times have changed! His original letter of employment shows that he took home the princely sum of £9.43 a week.

Pregnant pause

Live TV reports of TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady’s rousing conference speech – in which she asked whether we should settle for a naster, poorer, Downton Abbey style society – were interrupted by the royal baby newsflash. Great tweet from the delegate who commented: “Bored of royal baby tweets already? Follow #TUC14 for interesting debates about a fairer Britain. Every baby should be born equal.”

Hard times in the land of ‘opportunity’

Thanks to our reader who sent us the link to a short video, *Where is America’s money going?*, showing how the wealth of the country is really divided – www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRdcaB44-CQ. Perhaps the TUC’s campaign should be renamed: “The world needs a pay rise…”

SERIOUS rock

Steph Bridgman, an executive assistant based in Prospect’s Chertsey office, not only bangs the drum for the union – she also keeps the beat for Surrey-based rock trio, *The Wicked Venetians*. Formed in early 2013, their style, according to the dudes who know these things, is a bit Muse, Foo Fighters etc. Check out their debut EP My heart was in the wrong place, available to download on iTunes at http://bit.ly/wicked-venetians_buy.

Flying high

Paul Winstanley is moving into the international arena. The chair of Prospect’s air traffic control officers’ branch is the first ATCO to be elected chair of the air traffic services committee of the International Transport Workers’ Federation. Paul will serve for four years and also represent ATCOs on the civil aviation section of the International Transport Federation.

Getting down to earth

Love gardening? Then you’ll love the free mySoil app, which can tell you all you need to know about the soil in your garden from the palm of your hand. It’s a collaboration between the British Geological Survey, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and Met Office – all Prospect recognised organisations – and the European Commission. Use the European soil properties map to discover what’s beneath your feet and submit your own soil information to help build a community dataset – http://bgs.ac.uk/mysoil/

Long in the tooth

“My union, my voice” is the theme for TUC Young Workers month in November. It will highlight the issues facing young workers and promote union campaigns, membership and activity. While we have an ageing workforce, we’re not sure we agree with the young delegate at TUC conference who described his audience as “woolly mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers”. bit.ly/young_workers_month. #YWM14

Why did you join Prospect?

I have been a union member all my working life and I felt that the added protections offered far outweighed the risks of going it alone.

What are the best and worst aspects of your job?

Best is the satisfaction from helping others in need when called upon. Worst is probably dealing with the aftermath of serious or fatal road traffic collisions. Sometimes being first on the scene can be harrowing. You never really get used to some of the scenes, you just learn to deal with them in your own way.

Tell us about *The Motorway: Life in the Fast Lane*?

It is a BBC2 four-part series based on the background organisation required to keep the M6 motorway through the Midlands running 24/7, 365 days a year. It includes stories from various stakeholders, including the Highways Agency.

What did it involve?

A producer/cameraman followed me and my partner for approximately 12 eight-hour shifts, filming everything we did and asking lots of relevant questions about what we were doing.

What was your impression?

Did you learn anything new?

The show is very well put together from what I’ve seen so far. I learnt how difficult and tiring it is to be constantly under the spotlight while trying to provide factual and relevant answers to what may have seemed like daft questions at the time.

What is the biggest challenge facing you and your colleagues at the moment?

It is the imposition of a flexible roster within the traffic officer service. Our shifts can be subject to change from the fixed pattern that we used to have. For example, we can be expected to work six afternoons in a row as opposed to three earlies and then three afternoons. This effectively takes away any reasonable work life balance we used to enjoy.

How would you persuade a young person to join a union?

They should be made fully aware of the benefits, for example, free legal experts at hand, representation in the event of any disciplinary action and collective bargaining in relation to wages etc. For me this would then make it a no brainer!
If proof was needed that simple ideas are the best, look no further than the brainchild of two Highways Agency Prospect members who are helping colleagues work safely and more effectively.

TRAFFIC OFFICERS Paul Barratt and Wendy Penkethman have completed the mammoth task of charting the M6 motorway in the area looked after by the outstation in Salmesbury, East Lancashire.

They have produced a network information pack for colleagues responding to incidents at any point along the motorway, including details of:
- the sites of emergency phone boxes
- the names of over-bridges
- where there are two, three and four-lane stretches
- potential hazards
- notable geographical features such as bridges and nearby railway tracks or culverts.

The information is divided up according to marker points every 100 metres along the motorway and the pack includes junction plans and colour photographs.

Masters of their route

Above, Paul and Wendy take a break in the garden

The aim is to prepare colleagues who may be called to an incident on a section of motorway they are unfamiliar with.

“For example,” says Wendy, “if they are notified about a pedestrian on the motorway but cannot find them at the reported location it is useful to know if there is a steep drop behind the traffic barrier, or a culvert, in case they have fallen.”

They had the idea after a flexible roster was introduced that meant traffic officers working in areas they were unfamiliar with. The packs have all the forms and documents carried in HA vehicles in one easily accessible location.

The idea has won high praise from within the HA. It was shortlisted out of 150 nominations for the agency’s “You make it happen” awards – just missing the top prize.

The pair would like to extend the project to other north-west outstation areas and HA’s head of roads, John McTaggart, has expressed an interest in seeing it rolled out nationally. Talks are also taking place about the possibility of sharing the information with local police.

WARNING AGAINST ROAD TOLLS

PROSPECT IS urging members to sign a petition opposing changes to the Highways Agency that could open the door to road tolls.

The proposals are contained in the Infrastructure Bill set to continue through the House of Lords when parliament returns in the autumn.

Prospect warned that the changes, including the creation of a strategic highways company outside the direct oversight of parliament, amount to a precursor to privatisation.

The petition reads: “The network has been valued at £111bn and would be a prize capture for foreign sovereign wealth funds, as has the nation’s water companies. "The new owners – whoever they may be – will inevitably want to sweat their asset by imposing road tolls."

Before the parliamentary recess, Prospect wrote to every member of the House of Lords outlining members’ fears and calling for extended capital spending periods to provide the agency with more freedom in planning.

Cyril Day, president of Prospect’s Highways Agency section, said everyone, including the Labour opposition, could understand the benefits of long-term secure funding to end the stop-go funding of the past.

“However, neither the government nor the agency has been able to explain why these benefits can only be achieved through a change of status, particularly given the constraints and controls the draft legislation gives to the secretary of state.

“We can only conclude that there is a hidden political agenda for future privatisation and staff are rightly concerned for their future employment prospects.”

Sign the petition at: bit.ly/HApetition
FIVE PROSPECT members working with Babcock at Rosyth Dockyard were among 25 black and ethnic-minority trade unionists who attended a groundbreaking new course in Glasgow this summer.

The course was one of several backed by the European Social Fund to explore the barriers faced by BME workers who want to progress their careers by moving into management roles.

Following on from the success of the “Moving Into Management” courses that ran in 2013, the ESF has again worked with the Scottish TUC black workers’ committee and the GMB union to meet demand from learners for a more advanced second stage.

The learners travelled to the STUC Centre in Glasgow from workplaces across Scotland.

Walter Macadam, project manager, said: “We are determined that trade union members be given every opportunity to enhance their personal development at work.”

The courses are delivered by Gillian Neish of Neish Training. She said: “This is a talented and committed group of people, with a variety of skills and qualifications.

“It is a real loss to our communities that many have not yet been given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. However, the course is not about victims.

“Participants were able to support each other as they shared experiences and ideas and developed strategies and action plans to achieve their ambitions.”

Feedback from participants was positive. Gozie Joe-Adigwe, chair of the STUC black workers’ committee, said: “The course has opened my eyes in the most subtle but significant way around the topic of racial equality and power.”

Prospect members attending from Babcock Rosyth branch included Jeanina Hutchinson and Linda Ndebueze. They said: “Our thanks go to Prospect, which publicised the course and was involved in organising it alongside other unions.

“The course was specifically aimed at all BME workers who live and work in Scotland.

“It brought together a diverse range of individuals with differing backgrounds and from different parts of the world. We were able to rediscover our unique identities and capabilities in what is still to us a new country.

“It also gave us more insight into equality, understanding that in Scotland everyone is equal, irrespective of your gender, race or ethnicity.

“With that in mind we can aspire to achieve greater things because of our respective skills, knowledge and passion. We can’t recommend the course highly enough to all BME workers. It promises to be life-changing, and everyone has so much to gain.”

Other Prospect attendees were Roxana Gavril, Mavis Amadi and national executive committee member Satnam Ner.

We can aspire to achieve greater things because of our respective skills, knowledge and passion... everyone has so much to gain’

Celebrate Black History Month

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

Martin Luther King’s words, which are as true today as they were in 1963, feature on a Prospect poster for workplace noticeboards.

The union is encouraging branches to celebrate the heritage of black and Asian communities within UK society by organising events around Black History Month in October.

Find national listings, videos and more information at bit.ly/BHM_2014

Download the Prospect race equality poster (pictured above) from bit.ly/race_equality

Rosyth Dockyard staff on course to overcome the barriers for BME workers
Prospect’s young professionals plan autumn campaign

Debbie Wilson tells Katherine Beirne about plans to extend the voice of young members in Prospect and more widely

NOVEMBER IS Young Workers’ Month – an ideal opportunity to encourage Prospect’s younger members to become more active in the union.

That is the message from Debbie Wilson (above), chair of the Sellafield branch young professionals’ network and Prospect’s representative on the TUC’s young workers’ forum.

“So far the forum has highlighted that we need to do more in Prospect and that is why the Sellafield branch put an emergency motion to this year’s national conference proposing an organising strategy for young professionals,” says Debbie.

A YPN in every branch

“Our young professionals’ networks are vitally important – not only for succession planning but also to bring issues that affect young members to each branch’s agenda.

“The day-to-day workload of running a branch can mean that the broader issues which may make union membership more relevant to young professionals can be missed – issues such as career pathways or progression.”

Debbie believes that every branch needs its own YPN – this means younger workers can agree approaches to the problems they face and then feed them through into the wider branch structure.

“November is therefore an ideal time for branches to review what they can offer younger members.”

A residential event for young members is also being held in November to flesh out and implement measures to put the emergency motion in place – see box, right.

Fair pay

Meanwhile, the TUC has identified fair pay and political education as two key areas for action during Young Workers’ Month.

On fair pay, Debbie says the TUC is encouraging young workers from all unions to get involved in its “Britain needs a pay rise” campaign and join the marches in London, Glasgow and Belfast on 18 October.

This will build on the young workers’ day of action that took place in Fair Pay Fortnight earlier this year.

Fair Pay Fortnight also saw young professionals, including some in Prospect, question TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady about issues that concern them. You can view a report of the Q&A session on the Stronger Unions blog at bit.ly/young_QAs

Political education

Work on political education has also seen the TUC pair up with “Bite the ballot”. This not-for-profit organisation is not affiliated to any political party and aims to inspire young people to be counted and have a voice in politics.

Campaign packs with information on issues such as voter registration are being developed and regional events are planned. If you would like to get involved, or find out more, please get in touch with your nearest TUC contact.

- Midlands: Rob Johnston – rjohnston@tuc.org.uk
- North: Beth Farhat – bfarhat@tuc.org.uk
- Yorks and Humber: Neil Foster – nfoster@tuc.org.uk
- Southern and Eastern: Laure Heselden – lheselden@tuc.org.uk
- South West: Kit Leary – kleary@tuc.org.uk
- North West: James McKenna – jmckenna@tuc.org.uk

The two day/one night event will be held at Quorn Grange in Leicestershire on Sunday 23 and Monday 24 November, with a social event on the Sunday night.

Please register your interest in the event or being on the committee with Tom Sidwell (pictured), Prospect’s new full-time organiser based in Lutterworth. Tom will be taking main responsibility for the young professionals’ network. Email him at tom.sidwell@prospect.org.uk and book early to avoid disappointment. If there are more requests than places, we will allocate them to ensure a fair gender and geographical balance.
A lifetime of firsts
Prospect is fortunate to have amazing members who do incredible things for their employers, themselves and their communities, writes Graham Stewart

BARBARA JAMES is one of these people. Now 76 years old and living in North Wales, she has written her extraordinary life story in a book, *Itching to climb*. The proceeds from sales will go to the National Eczema Society – she has battled with the condition throughout her life.

Her eczema is triggered by water. Barbara says that even as a child in a pram, drops of rain were enough to make her itch. “It’s something you learn to live with,” she says.

Her life changed for ever in 1957 when a PE teacher introduced her to the Snowdonia hills and what would become Plas y Brenin, the national mountain centre based at Capel Curig in North Wales.

Barbara became a full-time mountain instructor and rescue first-aider at Ogwen Cottage mountain school. This was at a time when there were few female mountaineers or instructors making first ascents of Grade V1/V (really difficult) climbs in the Dolomites.

In the 1970s, after a divorce, Barbara became probably the first and only civilian female to train infantry soldiers for the Ministry of Defence. She saw an advert in the *Times Educational Supplement* for a Burnham lecturer post to train young soldiers based in Folkestone.

She got the job and her first teaching subject was the theory of weapons. It was a one-week course so she became a competent shot with the rifle. She visited infantry deployed in Gibraltar, Cyprus, Germany – where, before the wall fell, a colonel took her through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin.

Her life after work has been just as busy and intense. Barbara was the first solo female explorer in the Falkland Islands.

In 1988 a friend told her that anyone can learn to fly a plane, if they have enough money. So Barbara booked flying lessons as a 50th birthday present to herself and celebrated her pilot’s licence by flying 40 hours solo around Florida.

She rented an apartment in Adeje, Tenerife, for 15 years. But she stopped her visits 18 months ago. “Everything was changing in the village where I stayed and I was getting chest infections from the regular flights, so I thought it was time to stop.”

Back in Wales, Barbara gives regular presentations about her life and work and writes and raises money for her charity. Barbara, we salute you.

*Itching to climb*, with a foreword by Sir Chris Bonington, is available for £9.99 at bit.ly/itching-to-climb. You can also visit Barbara’s website: www.itchingtoclimb.com

Bradwell reunion

Former workers from Bradwell Power Station will hold a reunion on Sunday 5 October at 2pm in Bradwell Village Hall, Bradwell on Sea, Essex. Refreshments provided.

For more information, please contact Barbara Webber on 01621 816393 or jennifer.jones46@btinternet.com
HUNDREDS OF unwanted spectacles have been donated to help people in developing countries who need help with their vision, thanks to Prospect rep Annie Greenaway.

“I was on a Prospect training course and learnt about the opportunity to take something like this forward in our workplaces,” said Annie, a trainee forensic psychologist at the National Offender Management Service.

Despite not wearing glasses herself, the very idea of someone being seriously disadvantaged, simply because they were unable to see, struck a chord.

“Having a pair of glasses could be the difference between someone being able to function, get around and do a job,” she said.

After discussion with colleagues, they decided to put a collection bin in the reception of a Ministry of Justice building at Clive House in London.

The bin was designed with the help of a colleague with an architecture and engineering background and then made and finished to a high standard by One3One Solutions, an enterprise that creates business opportunities for prisoners.

As a result, the glasses fall through the bin with a stepladder effect rather than crashing straight to the bottom. There’s also padding inside for protection and the removable front glass provides easy access.

The scheme was launched in August 2013. It was so successful, the bin was moved across the road to another Ministry of Justice site nine months later.

“I have been staggered by the success. We’ve had to empty the bin on several occasions,” said Annie, adding that management has been extremely supportive.

“One member of staff gave at least 20 pairs because his wife had passed away and she was into really fashionable glasses. This really captured people’s imaginations.”

The glasses have been donated to Vision Aid Overseas and will be distributed to their projects in the developing world, where more than 200 million people need spectacles to lead an ordinary life.

If you would like to organise a similar scheme in your workplace, please email beverley.hall@prospect.org.uk

UNION LEARNING REP CHANGES LIVES – Success for Amey contract cleaners at the National Physical Laboratory, who passed their English courses this summer. Prospect branch secretary and union learning rep Gill Coggins launched the programme for many who have English as a second language. Inspired and supported by tutor Malcolm Seward from the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, the students are progressing to higher learning this September. See the February 2014 issue of Profile for further details.

WEE MAN’S BIG RUN

JOE FINNERTY, who lost his dad Chris to mesothelioma in April 2014, is doing the Great Scottish run half marathon in October to raise funds for Clydeside Action on Asbestos.

Chris worked for Prospect, and the EMA, for 36 years (see Profile, June 2014).

Joe said: “I am raising money in an attempt to ensure that fewer people experience the pain that my family have gone through, and as a testimony to how great a man my dad truly was. “Any donations to help me achieve my goal of raising £1,000 will be greatly appreciated and are completely secure.”

Clydeside Action on Asbestos, widely credited as being the first asbestos support group in the UK, is a registered charity which was formed in 1984 to provide advice and assistance to those who suffer from asbestos-related disease and their families.

www.justgiving.com/JOSEPH-FINNERTY1

Fun week

For you, by you – the charity for civil servants – is organising a fun week from 6 October. It combines having fun, raising awareness and generating income to help civil servants in need. Find out more at bit.ly/ fun-week
Prospect members tell Penny Ververs why they are marching for a pay rise for ordinary working people

PROSPECT IS BACKING the TUC’s “Britain needs a pay rise” march and rally on Saturday 18 October in central London.

General secretary Mike Clancy said: “Please join us, so we can build a real recovery to last in which everybody shares.

“Bring your friends, your families, your neighbours and your workmates, so that we make this a big and brilliant demonstration.”

The march will assemble from 11am on the Embankment near Blackfriars station.

It will move off at noon, and march via Northumberland Avenue, Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly to Hyde Park for a rally.

● email oct18@prospect.org.uk to let us know you’ll be attending

● See a brand new Prospect video and get more details at bit.ly/demo_info

● Find a place on a coach via the False Economy website – bit.ly/demo_coach

● TUC pages: http://britainneedsapayrise.org/

● Scottish unions are holding a “Create a Just Scotland” demo on the same day – bit.ly/just_scot – and Irish unions will hold a “Pay rise for all” march in Belfast.

“A DOWNTON ABBEY-STYLE SOCIETY, IN WHICH THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE VAST MAJORITY ARE SACRIFICED TO PROTECT THE HIGH LIVING OF THE WELL TO DO…”

TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady (left) summed up the importance of the march at the TUC conference in Liverpool this month:

“So, come the election, we face a choice. Are we going to settle for a nastier and poorer Britain?

“A Downton Abbey-style society, in which the living standards of the vast majority are sacrificed to protect the high living of the well to do? Where the blame is heaped on the most vulnerable – migrants and claimants – while the powerful and the privileged sit pretty?

“Or are we going to seize our opportunity, and build a new and fair economy that provides the people of this country with good, skilled, secure jobs? A civilised society, that provides a decent welfare safety net, and the nurseries and adult social care that families need. And a true democracy in which we all enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms, and we have a real say in how our lives are run.”

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH – JOIN US ON 18 OCT
‘IT WILL BE AN ENJOYABLE AND UPLIFTING DAY OUT’

I HAVE seen the strife experienced by colleagues and friends, especially in the state sector, who have received zero to minimal pay increments over the past few years.

My step-daughter Eve (above with Alan) is in her first term as a qualified teacher. Despite the responsibility of educating the next generation, her starting salary is low and it will take her many years to work her way up. She leaves home at 7am, returning at 7pm, when she still has to prep for the next day. The protest will remind the nation that we are not out of this recession and people are still struggling. The more people who participate, the more the event will be enhanced. It will be an enjoyable and uplifting day out, where you can engage with like-minded people who care about creating a richer environment for their families, friends and fellow citizens.

Alan Gooden, first line people manager, BT Technology Service & Operations Business, Leicester

‘PEACEFUL PROTEST HAS BROUGHT MORE PROGRESS THAN WAR’

WE CAN’T wait for the governor of the Bank of England’s fantasy that employers will share the rewards of an improving economy out of the goodness of their hearts. It’s time for action. We have the most illegitimate government since the 1930s, entirely focused on the needs of big money. The Man* has also driven an agenda of making people – mostly in the Anglo-Saxon world – cynical about politics and any notion of collective action. Peaceful protest has brought about more progress in the last 20 years than war, so we should give it a go.

As (former Labour leader) Michael Foot said: “It’s always better to do something than nothing” and it’s your right to protest – as well as party.

Richard Avis, system architect, IT industry, London

* slang for those who wield power and influence without public accountability

‘SHARING WEALTH WOULD LEAD TO A BETTER SOCIETY FOR ALL’

A LARGE cross section of society are trying their absolute hardest and basically running to stand still financially. My sister used to be an archaeologist and my brother-in-law a lorry driver. They now work teaching swimming and transporting prisoners. Neither has a permanent contract – both can be told “no work today”. They’ve gone backwards and I don’t believe that this is right.

Hopefully protesting will show the powers that be that a lot of people care. I have not been in a union very long and I’ve never done anything like this before and it’s a day out and a chance to meet other people.

Tamar Parker, mechanical engineer for an engineering contractor, Portsmouth

‘THE COST OF PROPPING UP THE ECONOMY IS BEING BORNE BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR’

AS a public sector employee, I want to air my frustration over being a fall guy for the excesses of the banking and business sectors that have brought this country to its knees. The cost of propping up the economy is being borne by the public sector and the wider workforce by frozen wages, redundancies and erosion of our pensions.

At the same time, the villains continue to benefit from their greed or avoid paying their fair share of tax. If you, too, are concerned about your pay, job or pension, come and join us on 18 October and let’s say so together.

John Moody, radiation protection specialist, Public Health England, Harwell

‘BRITAIN NEEDS PROPERLY PAID PERMANENT JOBS’

AS THE Scottish referendum has demonstrated, when you get people on the streets making their feelings known, governments start acting. Suddenly the politicians are falling over each other to offer devo max. The government says we are in recovery and salaries are looking good, but in my experience many of those who have got jobs are very low paid. It’s fine and dandy for the little enclave of rich bankers but not for anyone else.

We’ve got to make our feelings known because this government is living in cloud cuckoo land. It’s not just a pay rise Britain needs, but jobs that are properly paid and permanent. When you get that people go out and spend money and you can get the economy rolling.

Rod Dowler, former BT employee, still an active Prospect rep

‘I’VE SEEN THE KNOCK-ON EFFECT… PEOPLE GETTING INTO DEBT AND HAVING TO USE FOOD BANKS’

I’LL BE coming to the TUC demonstration to say that Britain needs a pay rise. Unemployment may officially be going down but many workers have seen their wages fall in real terms over recent years and lots of those who are struggling to cope are in work, because work isn’t paying like it should.

As a local councillor I’ve seen the knock-on effect of this, with people getting into debt and having to use food banks just to cope with everyday expenses.

Employers are keeping wages down to save costs, but the growing inequality in wages will not create a stable economy. The “recovery” is not being experienced by all.

We need to send a message to employers and government that we are not prepared to put up with decreasing wages and the erosion of our rights at work.

Prospect members are part of a wider movement, one whose strength lies in its numbers and in its solidarity, so let’s show our strength on 18 October.

Katherine Dunne, European project officer National Physical Laboratory, London and vice-president, Prospect NPL branch

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* slang for those who wield power and influence without public accountability
James Bee talks to Graham Stewart about why more and more Scottish referees are joining Prospect and what they hope to achieve

JAMES BEE is a man in demand. He has been in the eye of the media this summer as the key person negotiating with the Scottish Football Association over match fees for referees. Prospect caught up with him.

Although just retired from refereeing duties, he remains chair of the Scottish Senior Football Referees’ Association, as well as being a Prospect rep.

James also works for East Lothian council in the housing and environment department. He lives in Edinburgh with his wife and daughter, who although only 13, is already 5'10", says James.

When asked about how he got involved with sport, he jokes: "A lot of people get involved in refereeing because they got injured or were just rubbish at football. I was rubbish. I started officiating at the age of 21 and worked my way up through the ranks."

Sport and unions are not always an obvious pairing, despite sport being a growing part of Prospect’s membership areas, but James explained how he joined.

"My first introduction to Prospect and how it could help referees was when I discussed the subject with an English referee at a FIFA tournament in France.

"In the last few years it has become increasingly obvious that the landscape within football was changing dramatically and referees were becoming more involved in legal, disciplinary, finance and employment matters.

"Our own representative body was beginning to find we were dealing with subjects above our normal level of understanding. On the glowing recommendation we received from English referees, we invited Prospect to assist us and its help thus far has been invaluable."

James and other Scottish referees in membership are in talks with the Scottish FA over recognition for Prospect.

He says: "I think it’s difficult for some organisations and cultures to embrace change until they fully understand what is involved or are shown how it could actually benefit them as well as the other party.

“What makes it more complicated in the world of football refereeing is that the ‘employer’ in this case does not, quite rightly, recognise referees as ‘employees’. ‘Referees are deemed to be ‘workers’ within the meaning of the Working Time Regulations and only an ‘employee’ for the purposes of the Equality Act.

“I do have confidence in the football bodies within Scotland. They are forward thinking, and I remain hopeful that they will see the benefits of recognising Prospect in the near future."

It is clear that the help of Prospect and referees south of the border has been helpful. “We understand that Prospect enjoys an excellent working relationship with the Professional Game Match Officials in England and has been successful in negotiating improved conditions for referees.

“We are also aware that Prospect has successfully represented members in high-profile disciplinary cases and made the case for increased respect for referees.

“In addition to the support and assistance we obviously receive from the staff at Prospect Scotland, particularly from negotiator Malcolm Currie, national secretary Alan Leighton’s knowledge and guidance has been extremely helpful."

On the subject of media attention, James is level headed. He says: "No-one on the committee of our own representative body has been keen to step into the spotlight or court the media and we would have preferred not to make pay talks, and other subjects, public.

“Unfortunately some newspapers and media sites published an article which was clearly designed to paint referees in a negative light and portray us as opportunistic, to put it mildly. "Thankfully, another national newspaper provided us with the chance to set the record straight. Again though, we’d much rather engage in proper discussion and work together with the football authorities to find a positive outcome for all.”

For the future James is sanguine. “Personally I’m quite enjoying my ‘retirement’, at the age of 46, from active refereeing after 25 years."

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For the future James is sanguine. “Personally I’m quite enjoying my ‘retirement’, at the age of 46, from active refereeing after 25 years.

“I must admit though, I’ve learned a tremendous amount in the last year or two since I made contact with Prospect and have become much more involved and passionate about workers’ rights generally. Who knows where it might lead?”
Where the grass is greener

Gardeners at the National Trust’s Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland are among those joining Prospect. BocLy digs deeper to find out why

PROSPECT’S NATIONAL Trust branch is calling on more gardeners across the UK to become members, not only to offer them a greater voice in the workplace but also to underline their professional standing.

“It’s not just about terms and conditions but also professional integrity and recognition of skills,” says Paul Stewart (right), president of the branch and garden manager at Mount Stewart gardens in County Down.

“Trade unions defend the status of people’s jobs and that’s as true of horticulturalists as it is of engineers, curators, managers or any other profession.”

Stewart bemoans the fact that horticulture was recently removed from the school performance tables. “Horticulture is an art and science. Prospect is standing up for those professional standards and the status of horticulturists,” he says.

“If it becomes part of the political zeitgeist that eroding our professional standing is tolerable, then down the line employers will also think it is acceptable to erode our pay, terms and conditions.”

As a trade union, it is important that we represent horticulturalists’ professional interests at a political level and at a local level but we can only do that in tandem with maintaining and growing strong membership.”

His experience at Mount Stewart is that a strong union membership can have a positive influence on a workplace. Most staff there, from senior management to the front line, are members, he says.

“I think we have a spirit of fairness in how the property is managed and that’s reflected in our success. It’s one of the few National Trust properties in Northern Ireland that is in credit and makes a net profit. We have high expectations of ourselves and each other. It’s a great team.”

Stewart believes that while not the whole story, union membership makes an important contribution to the “standard of professionalism, fairness and integrity” at Mount Stewart.

Many people make an active choice to join a trade union, but Stewart chuckles that he was “born into it”.

“It’s important that we represent horticulturalists’ professional interests at a political level and at a local level but we can only do that with strong membership”

WORKING IN A QUIRKY WONDERLAND

LISTED AS one of the world’s best 10 gardens by the Daily Telegraph, the success of Mount Stewart goes far beyond its strong union membership.

Designed by Edith, Lady Londonderry in the 1920s, the original landscaping was carried out by former WW1 soldiers to provide them with employment.

Even today, training is offered to local long-term unemployed people – several of them have even gone on to secure employment at Mount Stewart and with other employers.

This quirky and idiosyncratic garden now holds one of the most extensive plant collections outside of botanical gardens and its education programme, website and social media presence have all won awards.

Paul Stewart says of his workplace: “Visiting the gardens is like going through Alice in Wonderland’s looking glass. It’s a delight.”
Tools for building Prospect

Prospect has put together an activity pack for reps and members who want to raise the union’s profile in their workplace.

A range of recruitment and campaign materials – from Good Work to the Prospect Pledge – can be used to generate debate and activity across all sectors of the union.

You can mix and match the resources, but the basic pack contains:

- **Member recruit member leaflets** (general and sector versions covering aviation, defence, energy, education, IT and telecoms)
- **Benefits and services leaflets** (general and for Aspect and Communications Media and Digital sectors)
- **Young workers’ recruitment leaflet**
- **‘Moving on’ leaflet** for those changing jobs or retiring
- **‘I’m a member, ask me how to join’ desk cards**
- **Blank A4 noticeboard poster**
- **Member recruit member poster**
- **Noticeboard sticker.**

You can order supplies by emailing your nearest national or regional organiser. Please specify your sector and the number of leaflets you need.

Visit www.prospect.org.uk/campaigns_and_events to find out more about the Prospect Pledge and Good Work campaigns. You can order posters, manifestos and pledge cards via your organisers.

**Your Prospect organisers**

**Agriculture, Health & Transport**
Sharon Brown (London)  
sharon.brown@prospect.org.uk

**Communications, Media & Digital**
Ben Bellamy (Lutterworth)  
ben.bellamy@prospect.org.uk
Mary Hurley (Lutterworth)  
mary.hurley@prospect.org.uk
Rob Lauder (Wimbledon)  
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**Defence, Security & Channel Islands**
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**Heritage, Law & Energy**
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**Senior organiser**
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AS WE move into the party conference season, there will rightly be a lot more talk about election manifesto commitments on issues like the NHS, taxation, social care, education and the shrinking role of the state.

However, just as important – but less likely to receive attention and airtime – are policies around the quality and future of work.

Although the economy has started to recover, all is not well in the world of work. GDP has only just returned to the 2008 pre-recession level. Productivity and real wages have both fallen, with employment growth mainly in low-paid service sectors.

The UK has one of the worst records among OECD countries for utilising skills at work effectively. The quality of working life continues to deteriorate, both in the public and private sectors, with rising levels of stress and mental ill-health.

People want to do work that is enjoyable, stretching and fulfilling, and they want their families and communities to have these opportunities, too. When Prospect consulted its own members, people identified four priorities for improvement:

- giving employees a voice
- fair pay and reward
- better management of change
- engagement and respect of employees.

As pointed out by think tank The Smith Institute, which is conducting its own inquiry into making work better, over the last 30 years “there has been a decline in the level of control people experience at work, the extent of their ability to participate (both individually and collectively) in decision-making processes and a consequent decline in the level of trust in senior managers”. ([bit.ly/makingworkbetter](bit.ly/makingworkbetter))

The same organisation has found that worker voice in the UK is at a woeful level – one of the poorest in Europe. Only Lithuania is worse.

As a politically independent trade union, Prospect does not tell members how to vote. But any political party aspiring to government should have a compelling narrative of what makes work good in the run-up to the election. **Sue Ferns** explains

‘First, Britain needs more good jobs in high-performing workplaces to rebalance the economy. Second, driving positive change at work is without doubt a vote-winning agenda’

The government as an employer should lead by example in relation to its own directly employed staff. Public procurement policies must improve supply chain practices, including investment in high quality training and skills and a decent working environment.

We want politicians to work with government departments, companies and other stakeholders to devise measures of good work; give them equal weight to the financial metrics that currently predominate, and mandate corporate reporting on this basis.

We would also like to see a commitment to legislating for works councils, which help promote genuine collaboration and consultation on strategic decisions.

We invite all politicians to set out their vision of a good workplace and a good job, and to be prepared to debate that vision in public.

There are two compelling reasons why they should do so: first, Britain needs more good jobs in high-performing workplaces to rebalance the economy. Second, driving positive change at work is without doubt a vote-winning agenda.

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You can download Prospect’s manifesto document from [bit.ly/gwmanif](bit.ly/gwmanif)
Exempting self-employed will threaten lives, warns Prospect

The proposals make it more likely that self-employed workers will harm or kill themselves or others and create confusion among the self-employed and those who work with them. It added that if enacted, the proposals “will make it more likely that self-employed workers will harm or kill themselves or others and create confusion among the self-employed and those who work with them.”

The submission also pointed out that the legislative drafting is confusing and inconsistent with the wording of the Deregulation Bill, with the former referring to “activities” and the bill to “undertakings.” Prospect believes that the impact assessment assumptions are flawed.

Cancer rights at work

FEWER THAN 50% of people diagnosed with cancer were aware that the Equality Act protects them from discrimination in the workplace, according to a recent survey. Macmillan’s Rights at Work campaign aims to raise awareness among people with cancer of their rights in the workplace.

HSE tests reporting portal for union reps

The Health and Safety Executive is piloting a new reporting portal specifically for trade union health and safety representatives.

Under the scheme, unions can contact HSE about something that has either caused, or has the potential to cause, significant harm by completing a form.

The pilot is the result of requests from unions, including Prospect, to ensure safety reps have a superior status over the public when reporting serious health and safety concerns to HSE.

Prospect’s health and safety officer Sarah Page said: “This is a very positive development and includes a new opportunity for HSE to gather intelligence.

“Unions have the option of providing a pen picture of health and safety management within an organisation without necessarily reporting a concern.”

Page urged safety reps to ensure that full-time officers are involved in any reporting activity. “Prospect has committed to exhausting the union’s internal negotiating machinery before contacting HSE. So reps who act prematurely could jeopardise a development unions wish to see becoming permanent.

“Our reps must therefore make contact with their negotiator or me for prior advice.”

Speak up, stay safe

SPEAK UP, Stay Safe, a British Safety Council film produced for the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics as part of the induction programme for volunteers, was recently shortlisted for an international award. In the film a young volunteer learns how to identify and speak up about risks she sees while working during the London 2012 Olympics.

PROPOSALS TO exempt self-employed people from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 unless they are on a prescribed list are confusing and unworkable, says Prospect.

They will reduce protection for workers; create business burdens for the self-employed that currently do not exist; and go way beyond recommendations made by Professor Ragnar Löfstedt in his 2011 review for the government.

The Health and Safety Executive’s consultation includes definitions of activities where self-employed people will continue to have duties under the 1974 Act. All other activities will be exempt from the duty.

Prospect said it had never accepted the legitimacy of the risk definitions that were introduced, without consultation, by the then minister Chris Grayling in 2011. In a submission to HSE, the union said the proposals “will make it more likely that self-employed workers will harm or kill themselves or others and create confusion among the self-employed and those who work with them.”

The proposals will also:

- be a cost to NHS social support systems
- increase regulation (not least for those who will have to untangle it to interpret it)
- be complex and therefore expensive for HSE to communicate.

Prospect deputy general secretary Garry Graham said: “Exempting self-employed people from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is an assault on a legal framework that is internationally acclaimed and a counterproductive blow to 40 years of serving and improving the protection of workers’ lives.

“It is telling that these changes are not only opposed by trade unions, but by many of the employers we deal with who sometimes use self-employed contractors. Ideology instead of evidence will lead to confusion and dilute safety standards.”

The Health and Safety Executive’s is piloting a new reporting portal specifically for trade union health and safety representatives.

Potential for confusion: the TUC has concerns, for example, about self-employed gardeners, asking: “...are they exempt when they are cutting the lawn but not exempt when trimming a shrub?”

COST RECOVERY UNDER SCRUTINY

FEE FOR Intervention, the controversial cost recovery scheme introduced by the Health and Safety Executive in October 2012, is at odds with the experience and wisdom of HSE inspectors, says Sarah Page, Prospect’s health and safety officer. Read her blog on FFIs first two years: bit.ly/FFI_blog

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The new portal is at: bit.ly/repshs

See Prospect’s web pages at: bit.ly/toolkit_hs
Is your workplace dyslexia friendly?

SEVERAL MILLION working adults have dyslexia, which can cause problems with performance, organisation of work and time management.

It is a hidden disability thought to affect around 10% of people, 4% of them severely. It can vary from mild to severe and arises in people with all levels of intellectual ability.

Those who have it are in good company. Scientist Albert Einstein, inventor Thomas Edison, ballet dancer Darcey Bussell, crime writer Agatha Christie, Apple founder Steve Jobs and Microsoft founder Bill Gates are just a few of the names on a long list of famous dyslexics on the British Dyslexia Association website.

Contrary to popular misconception, dyslexia is not only about literacy, although weaknesses in literacy can often be the most visible sign.

Dyslexia affects the way information is processed, stored and retrieved, with problems of memory, speed of processing, time perception, organisation and sequencing.

It is a recognised disability under the Equality Act 2010 if the effect is substantial and long-term. As with any other disability, employers should ensure people are not treated unfavourably and are offered reasonable adjustments or support.

Unfortunately employees can face real difficulties at work including disciplinary action, unless their dyslexia is diagnosed and appropriate adjustments made.

Prospect reps have a vital role in supporting members with dyslexia and negotiating solutions with their employer. The TUC recently updated its guide, Dyslexia in the Workplace, which explains the condition and offers helpful advice on how to sort out work-related problems. The British Dyslexia Association has a checklist on its website to help people work out if they have the condition – see bit.ly/bda_checklist

Reasonable adjustments

There is also advice on identifying reasonable adjustments that could be made in the workplace. A few examples include:

- giving verbal as well as written instructions to those affected
- providing screen-reading software
- changing the colours of paper or screens
- allocating private workspaces to help avoid distractions
- providing sat navs for those who drive for their job.

bit.ly/bda_adjust
bit.ly/bda_employers

RESOURCES

- TUC’s Dyslexia in the Workplace guide: bit.ly/TUC_dyslexia
- Prospect’s briefing on neurodiversity and discrimination: https://library.prospect.org.uk//download/2013/01208
- The TSSA transport union runs a neurodiversity programme with lots of useful information and case studies: bit.ly/tssa_neuro

‘We need radical change from employers’

Prospect member John Timms, a former project manager at BT Innovate and Design, has personal experience of dyslexia.

He believes many employers misunderstand what reasonable adjustments in the workplace would allow people with dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions to work most effectively.

Recently elected to Prospect’s equal opportunities committee, he says: “I look forward to contributing to its work, using my experiences as a dyslexic person and an active union member.”

John saw BT do much to support its many employees who are dyslexic, but adds: “I believe that radical change is needed to get the most from these very diverse and capable people and allow them to flourish and develop.

“Company leaders should look at how dyslexic people inside and outside their organisations have contributed new ideas and ways of working, or have developed successful businesses using their entrepreneurial talents.

“Then they should consider how they could usefully change their own organisations and empower such people to reach their full potential and maximise their contributions.”

Prospect reps have a key role to play. “They can help by disseminating authoritative information about dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions in the workplace; training new reps; and continuing to hold employers to account. I would also like to see Prospect lobbying for change with other unions.”

John was a delegate at this year’s TUC disability conference, where he was impressed by the transport union TSSA’s stand featuring neurodiversity.

“We agreed it would beneficial to co-operate more closely with TSSA and build on and re-use some of the ideas and material they had developed,” he says.
THOUSANDS OF members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) will soon be sent details of an option for their future pension provision.

The final agreements for reform of the main unfunded public sector pensions provided for new schemes to be introduced from April 2015. The new arrangement in the civil service will be a career-average scheme called Alpha, with the same retirement date as State Pension Age.*

Members who were in the PCSPS on 1 April 2012 and were within 10 years of the scheme’s pension age on that date will stay in their existing scheme. This group were aged 50 or above and in the Classic, Classic Plus or Premium schemes, or aged 55 or above and in the Nuvos scheme. They will not be able to move to Alpha.

However, members of the PCSPS who were between 10-13.5 years of pension age on 1 April 2012 and were within 10 years of the scheme’s pension age on that date will stay in their existing scheme. This group were aged 50 or above and in the Classic, Classic Plus or Premium schemes, or aged 55 or above and in the Nuvos scheme. They will not be able to move to Alpha.

Members who were between 10-13.5 years of pension age on 1 April 2012 and were within 10 years of the scheme’s pension age on that date will stay in their existing scheme. This group were aged 50 or above and in the Classic, Classic Plus or Premium schemes, or aged 55 or above and in the Nuvos scheme. They will not be able to move to Alpha.

Members of the PCSPS who were more than 13.5 years from pension age on 1 April 2012 or who joined subsequently will join Alpha from April 2015. They will not have an option to stay in their existing scheme.

The option window for those members with a choice opens in October 2014 and closes in December 2014.

This is an important choice and members should not assume that one option is better than another without carefully examining their individual circumstances.

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Pensions officer Neil Walsh will address members’ meetings in workplaces and city centres throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Walsh will conduct teleconferences for members unable to attend a meeting.

Dedicated material will be available to members on the website (including a FAQ section).

A dedicated email address has been set up for members to submit queries – pensionreview@prospect.org.uk. Affected members should look out for an email spelling out what help is available in the run-up to the option window opening.

“Prospect is offering vital support for civil servants facing a critical decision,” said deputy general secretary Leslie Manasseh. “Only members of the union can take advantage of it. So please encourage non-members in the relevant age group to join the union in time to benefit.”

Once the option window is closed Prospect will roll out further presentations and briefings to members on what the introduction of Alpha will mean to them.

* see www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension to calculate your State Pension Age

YOUR QUESTIONS

What pension schemes are giving this option?
The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and some schemes that are by-analogy to this scheme (but not the Research Councils’ Pension Scheme at this time).

Who will be given an option?
Members of the Classic, Classic Plus or Premium sections who were in service on 1 April 2012 and born between 2 April 1962 and 1 September 1965 (inclusive) and members of Nuvos who were in service on 1 April 2012 and born between 2 April 1957 and 1 September 1960 (inclusive).

What are the options?
1. Stay in the current section of the PCSPS for a period of time.
2. Move to the new Alpha pension scheme from April 2015.

What is the length of time for remaining in the current section of the PCSPS?
This can vary from two months to six years and 10 months. The closer to the 10-year cut-off date for remaining in the existing scheme, the longer the period of protection.

When will the option open?
October 2014.

When will the option close?
December 2014.

Surely I will be better off staying in my existing scheme with a lower pension age for as long as possible?
Not necessarily. Many people will benefit from important features of the Alpha scheme such as the more generous accrual rate. We urge you to study the options and take advantage of the support Prospect is offering before choosing.
MOD members reject 2014 offer

PROSPECT MEMBERS in the Ministry of Defence, angry and frustrated at the continued erosion of living standards due to government pay constraints, are determined to show MOD that this issue cannot be ignored.

The union’s MOD group rejected the department’s final offer for 2014 pay, which implements a 1% increase to the pay bill. MOD says the offer will be implemented in September, without the agreement of any of the unions.

A Prospect survey has revealed that members support the union’s attitude to the 2014 pay review and strongly back the union campaign for pay that recognises the skills and contribution of defence staff.

Assistant secretary Steph Marston said: “The attempt to address serious pay anomalies by denying consolidated pay increases to long-serving members of staff and holding down the scale maxima is misguided.

“The reality is that continuing government-imposed pay restraint leaves MOD unable to resolve acute pay progression and market comparability issues. We need a review of how defence staff are rewarded.”

The MOD offer gives a flat rate basic pay increase to everyone below the maximum of their scale, equivalent to 1% of the average pay for that scale.

People on the minimum of the scale will get a further 0.5% increase. Anyone on the maximum of their pay scale will get only an unconsolidated payment of 1%, and the maxima will be frozen.

Meanwhile, bonus payments worth an aggregate 1.7% of the pay bill will be distributed solely to MOD people who got a box 1 ‘exceeded’ marking for 2013-14. Marston said: “If you believe that your pay is less than that of comparable colleagues, Prospect will advise you on how best to address that situation.

“Contact your branch to find out what information is required to support equal pay claims.”

Prospect has raised serious concerns about the results of forced distribution in the performance management round, including evidence of unlawful discrimination and more favourable outcomes for people in higher pay bands.

Meetings are being organised to discuss the 2014 pay award, what members can do to make their concerns known to MOD and how they can get involved in the campaign for a new approach to defence pay – look out for events and activities near you.

PAY ROUND-UP

MEMBERS ACROSS the civil service are being consulted on 2014 pay offers.

At the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the National Measurement Office, members are voting on whether to accept or reject an offer worth 1%.

Negotiator Julie Flanagan said the branch’s priorities during pay negotiations were that all staff should receive at least a 1% consolidated increase and that progression should feature as far as possible.

“We also made strong representations that all pay enhancements should be increased in line with the basic award. By awarding flat rate increases, the offer does not meet our objective of delivering at least 1% to all members.”

Meanwhile members at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are to be consulted on a future pay and reward strategy and whether they would be prepared to take some action over the pay freeze.

The branch recognises that Defra has sought to give 90% of its staff a 1% pay award in a mix of consolidated and non-consolidated pay. However, national secretary Geraldine O’Connell said that despite the extra flexibility provided by the pay pilot in the department, “there is no disguising the fact that the offer is a pay cut for members”.

PAY INCREASES BY INDUSTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2014 %</th>
<th>Last 12 months %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity/voluntary body</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil service</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and research</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other industries</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prospect accounts 2013

Prospect is required by law to publish a statement to members for the year ending 31 December 2013.

The accounts for the year to 31 December 2013 show a net surplus of income against expenditure of £391,000 before the pension scheme liability. After taking into account the aggregate positive movement in the pension schemes (Prospect and Connect) liabilities of £1,868,000, a surplus of £1,177,000 was transferred to the General Fund. The total income for the year was £17,819,000. The total expenditure (before taking into account the aggregate negative movement in the pension schemes liability) for the same period was £16,862,000. The pension schemes at the end of 2013 showed an aggregate deficit calculated on the FRS17 basis of £8,555,000 (it should be noted that the full actuarial valuation for the Prospect pension scheme at 31 December 2011 showed a deficit of £14,500,000 and for the Connect pension scheme on 1 July 2011 the deficit was £3,324,000).

Income

Income from subscriptions was £16,532,000 after the transfer of £75,000 to the Prospect political fund. Prior to that transfer the gross subscription income was £16,607,000.

Total income from investments was £798,000. This is made up of £489,000 from net dividend income and interest received; a surplus from sales of investments of £188,000 and an increase on the provision against investments of £9,000 to reflect the market value of investments in the past year.

Rental income was £289,000 and other income was £194,000 which includes: £2,000 from credit card royalties; £75,000 from Membership Services; £58,000 net VAT refund for 2012-13 and £49,000 being net journal income.

Expenditure

Total expenditure was £16,862,000.

Committees and conferences. Costs of £216,000 were for expenditure incurred for Prospect’s national committees and Prospect’s sector conferences.

Local democratic organisation and education. Costs of £1,013,000 include expenditure for equipment, printing, stationery, telephones; computer services; research publications and subscriptions; editorial publishing and publicity; general legal and professional fees.

Benefits to members. Costs of £1,279,000 include £479,000 for affiliation fees and donations of £12,000; £485,000 for the cost of Prospect’s journals; £79,000 for death benefit; £119,000 being costs associated with Prospect’s website and intranet; £51,000 for recruitment/organisation expenditure; and £49,000 net costs associated with the running of the members’ legal, medical and professional aid scheme.

Prospect political funds. During the year, in order to comply with the relevant legislation, Prospect conducted a ballot of members on the continuation of the political fund and the result of the ballot was an overwhelming vote in favour. Subsequently, on 1 June 2013, the funds from both Prospect and Connect sector political funds were transferred into a single fund. 102,597 members paid in a total income of £140,000 was charged against the Prospect political fund in 2013.

Elected office salary and benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M Clancy</td>
<td>General Secretary</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>106,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pension contributions</td>
<td>21,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Car Benefit</td>
<td>2,638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The president and members of the national executive committee are reimbursed for any out of pocket expenditure incurred by them in the performance of their duties on behalf of the union, as is the general secretary. No member of the NEC is paid any allowance or receives any salary or taxable benefits from Prospect.

At December 31, 2013 Prospect membership was 115,636. The number of women in membership was 29,082.

The surplus for the year before the pension scheme liability was £951,000.

Movement in pension scheme liability £1,868,000

The member may raise any such concerns with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, they should consider obtaining independent legal advice.
The Prospect finance statement and accounts for 2013 were approved by the NEC and Prospect auditors in February. This statement to members is made to comply with the terms of the 1993 Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act. Copies of the Prospect Annual Report can be obtained from central services at New Prospect House.

AUDITORS’ REPORT

We have audited the financial statements of Prospect for the year ended 31 December 2013, set out on pages 3 to 17. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the Union’s members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Union’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union and the Union’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Union’s national executive committee and auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the National Executive Committee, the Union’s NEC is responsible for the preparation of financial statements which give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and international standards on auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board’s ethical standards for auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Union’s circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Union’s national executive committee; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Union’s affairs as at 31 December 2013 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended) to report to you by exception in respect of the following matters if, in our opinion:

- A satisfactory system of control over transactions has not been maintained.
- The Union has not kept proper accounting records.
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the books of account.
- We have not received all the information and explanations we need for our audit.

We have nothing to report to you in respect of the above matters.

H W Fisher & Company
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
27 February 2014
Brazil lessons: own goal for the civil service?

The cauldron of Brazil 2014 was one large, graphic demonstration of the effectiveness of different styles of team working, motivation, sustainable employee (player) engagement and resilience in organisations: all human resource buzzwords.

England had a decent side on paper, one that could have progressed further, but they were not a team; they didn’t have a shared sense of purpose or belief in what they were doing.

They were crippled by fear of failure: Gerrard was allowed to do the team talk before the Uruguay match and told and the players how awful it would be if they lost: reminding them: “...it could be a terrible, long frustrating summer if we don’t get it right.

“There is no hiding place for a player when you go out of a tournament earlier than you expect.”

Courage of dying teenager was inspiration

I was inspired by the late Stephen Sutton’s courageous battle with cancer and his remarkable fundraising achievements for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

As a consequence I have arranged to donate part of the royalties of the new edition of my novel Alby and Me (first published 2007) to the trust, £1 for every book sold.

It is the story of the special friendship of two teenage boys, set on a tough English housing estate in the late 1940s, and what happens when one of them is stricken with cancer.

I drew on my own experience of cancer in writing Alby and Me and despite the subject, the story is upbeat and contains a lot of humour.

The younger players were made to realise what was “at stake” and “how important” the game was. By contrast the Costa Rica coach Jorge Luis Pinto said: “We play without fear. We face three world champions and we take them all on. What we feel is joy and motivation.” And boy, did it show.

Some teams, notably Brazil and Uruguay, placed all their hopes on exceptional performers (can you see where this is going yet?) and came up short. Germany, on the other hand, were a proper, coherent team, playing with purpose: the sum of their parts.

Teams need to build a strong sense of identity, where members of the team see themselves as part of that team rather than a group of individuals.

But a successful team cannot be willed into being from above: there needs to be a climate of trust and openness, where team members can express themselves, understand their role, and feel their contribution is important.

Only then can a team perform and develop resilience to overcome their fear of failure: they need “to dare to lose to win”, to use the maxim of Norwegian sports psychologist, Willi Rainio.

In large parts of the civil service, staff feel increasingly undervalued. The new performance management model is not about team success but tries to single out individuals.

It is based around fear of failure: fear of failing into “must improve” (fear of getting booed off the pitch). There is no reward worth talking about built into the system, even for the loyal hard workers. Talent is stifled or leaves.

The sense of purpose that used to be so strong in the service is on the wane, and there is no climate of trust: ministers and senior management no longer appear to value staff or their opinions. Lessons for us all from Brazil 2014.

Steve Kay, Sheffield

Find out more about the Teenage Cancer Trust and how to support it: www.teenagecancertrust.org

John Bird, Solihull

Alby and Me is published by Feedaread.com, £6.99 (ISBN 9781784075743)

Why corporation tax system is broken

In June I attended a conference on international tax competition in business taxation in Oxford, organised by Professor Michael Devereux of the Oxford University Centre for Business Taxation.

The purpose was to discuss international business taxation and proposals being put forward by the G20 countries and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development.

From the beginning I was struck by the candour of some of the participants. They all agreed that the present system was untenable, leading inexorably downhill with companies “gambling the system” by extensive use of tax havens and also governments, in a frantic “race to the bottom”, progressively dropping their corporation tax rates in an attempt to stop companies relocating offshore.

A number of speakers detailed the failings in the existing system, including the recent failed, takeover attempt of AstraZeneca by Pfizer, which was mainly driven by the UK’s new 5% “patent box” corporate tax rate for company research and development projects.

The present G20/OECD initiative calls for the introduction of a unitary tax.

This obliges companies to produce country-by-country accounts, giving details of where the value has been added along the chain so tax can be applied to this increase in value in the country it occurred. The complication is how to divide the tax liability between different countries.

Michael Devereux introduced the idea of levying corporate tax at the one immovable point in the finan-
cial chain where it cannot be shifted between tax jurisdictions – the final customer – called Destination-Based (corporate) Tax (DBT).

Applying this DBT as, in effect, a sales tax only on the final sale to the customer removes all incentives for companies to duck and dive by using tax havens etc. It also removes any incentive for countries to outbid each other with lower and lower rates of corporation tax.

Countries would only collect their own DBT from their own citizens and, of course, set their own DBT rates. This would resemble the State Sales taxes used by individual states in the US to raise their tax revenues. I am sure there are problems with DBT but I was inspired to find out that there is a universal understanding that the existing multinational corporation tax system is broken and that many academics and other professionals are determined to come up with a workable solution and relieve the present pressure on government revenues caused by existing massive tax avoidance.

Martin Chew, London

Made to retire too soon

I read in the Daily Express (August 1) that older workers are staying on in increasing numbers and earning higher salary increases than younger workers. Employers recognise the contribution that older workers make to the workforce with their knowledge and experience.

Eleven years ago I was forced into early retirement by the Ministry of Defence. It makes me wonder why all the clever people at the top of government and the MOD were so short-sighted about the contributions made by older workers. Didn’t they recognise the quality of the people they were throwing on to the scrapheap?

It was Mrs Thatcher’s government in 1992 that insisted that we adhered to the normal retirement age of 60. This was carried on by Mr Blair’s government from 1997.

One anomaly was never explained. Why was the decision taken to reverse the retirement of military officers at 60, who were on a similar normal retirement to us in the civil service? They never had to go an industrial tribunal or ask the Law Lords to make a decision on them being retained until 65. Could it be because they employed a Ms Cherie Booth QC as their legal mouthpiece?

I wrote at the time about the unfairness of the government and the MOD. Prospect was unable to get them to change their minds.

To be honest, I think the decision had been made and no one could have got the reversal of the decision, except the wonderful QC retained by the retired military officers. I wonder if there is any chance she might take the job at this late stage?

Phillip Davies, Abingdon

Make government see sense over Kew

I and six other members of my family have added our names to your petition to save Kew – my wife Ann; my brother Professor John van Issum and his wife Rachael; my son Dr Christopher van Issum, who is an eye surgeon in Bristol; his wife Karin; and our grandson Richard.

I myself used to work for the Patent Office and am now in Prospect’s overseas retired members’ branch.

Richard is a pharmacologist in France with a particular interest in mushrooms. He believes that the Kew cuts will limit knowledge that could benefit pharmacologists – the French are keen on collecting mushrooms and research into toxic varieties is essential.

About 25-30 years ago John was a senior lecturer at Berkshire College of Horticulture and often took students to Kew. The UK government was giving in to French pressure on agriculture at the time, especially in relation to fruit growing, and John had doubts about a future in horticulture. He retrained in law and is now a professor in London.

After the cuts that George Osborne and David Cameron have made to university teaching staff, we have little confidence that they will use their limited understanding to save Kew. Perhaps they should see Christopher for eye surgery to open their eyes!

Dr Bernard van Issum, Feigeres, France

Meet the oversized VOs from Prospect's 'Women in the Workplace' campaign - and tweet your support!

Like the image above? Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to show your support.

Phillip Davies, Abingdon

Check out @prospectunion tweets and retweets on page 28
You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters shown in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the letter in the central square. No letter can be used more than once in each word. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words allowed.

ACROSS
7 Retiree perhaps, one in boarding-house (9)
8 Second child of four in group (5)
10 Help animal first (6)
11 Crook, he has been in prison twice (3–5)
12 Like some bread and butter perhaps that had become stuck (6)
14 Making an effort to be difficult (6)
16 Close call dropping ring (4)
17 One cross after endless suffering at curve (5)
18 Fluted interior of instrument (4)
19 Iris has less than one liquid container (6)
21 Remove carbon from French coal (6)
24 One car is overturned in the outline (8)
26 So correctly moreover (2,4)
27 Inexperienced environmentalist (5)
28 Severity of south wind, it followed before end of day (9)

DOWN
1 Leading entertainer during Lent had sumptuous meal (5)
2 Parts Ian exchanged for candidate (8)
3 One cannot go lower than this (6)
4 Attend strike (4)
5 Ordinary shares in the union (6)
6 Motherliness of bird, it appeared during month in spring (9)
9 Eddy, cavort extraordinarily within (6)
13 Old-fashioned journalist dealt out (5)
15 Cleric had organised service for the young (9)
17 One leaving the country famished (6)
18 Unenthusiastic doctor fighting leading militants (8)
20 Information the German had on sex (6)
22 Cunning airmen in large town I left (6)
23 Polish settler (5)
25 Burden on under-secretary (4)

Fill in the missing number.

1 11 99 22 11 13 99 70 13 14 99

What familiar phrase or saying is represented here?

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