



# **Graham Goddard**

**November 26, 1957 - October 19, 2009**

**Unite deputy general secretary**

***Some personal tributes***

# Undoubted ability

## ***A tribute to Graham Goddard from his United Engineering Forgings comrades***

Graham started work for GKN Shardlows as an apprentice in the 1970s serving his time as a tool room apprentice and he quickly became involved in the day to day trade union activities in a well organised factory. He was elected as the tool room shop steward whilst still in his early 20s and quickly became an active member of the shop stewards sub-committee.

He progressed in the sub-committee by being minute secretary, deputy chair, chair, deputy convenor and in the early 1990s he was elected as convenor. During this period he was also active outside the factory by being on various committees including the Sheffield District Committee from 1984.

During this period the company changed names and ownership many times and finally became UEF Sheffield and in that time Graham was a very active member of the group combine committee travelling all over the country to the meetings of that committee.

Following his election as convenor he was able to continue the tradition of Shardlows convenors by continuing to improve the wages and conditions of the workforce and with the support of the workforce supported many outside factories in their fight for improvements, two of the most notable ones being the financial and moral support of the Keaton's workforce in their seven year battle for their rights and the long and bitter dispute endured by the sacked William Cooke workers.

When UEF went into administration he stood up to the bully boy administrators KPMG and prevented them from making any redundancies at the Sheffield plant by telling them that they would have no factory to try and sell if they made any redundancies.

In September of 2001 he led the Sheffield workforce along with workers from Ayr, Bromsgrove and Lincoln on the first of many demonstrations in support of the UEF pension campaign.

When the Sheffield plant was bought by an Italian millionaire (Bifranghi UK) he negotiated a new improved contract which gave the workforce a substantial pay increase, a new employer financed pension scheme and a death in service benefit comparable to the previous scheme.

Following the election of Derek Simpson as Amicus general secretary he accepted a position as regional officer. It was not long before his ability and personality enabled him to move to higher positions in the Union including Yorkshire and Humberside and NW regional secretary and then he moved



UEF pension protest in Sedgefield

to London as deputy general secretary with responsibility for the finance sector and during that time he was able to exercise more and more pressure to assist the pension campaign.

The current position of the PPF and FAS schemes owe a great deal to the efforts put in by Graham and the support given to him by many other people. His undoubted ability would have made him a frontrunner in the forthcoming elections for our new Unite general secretary and his untimely death will create a gap that will be hard to fill. Rest in peace Comrade.

### ***Sheffield Comrades***

## Capable and gifted

It was with sadness I learned of the passing of Graham Goddard a good friend and colleague of 30 years in the trade union movement

Graham was one of the most capable and gifted people I ever met and man who would have been successful in whatever vocation he chose to follow.

Graham was convenor at Shardlows (UEF) in Sheffield where he was a leading campaigner in the fight for justice for UEF workers and others who had lost their company pensions even through his rise the ranks to deputy general of the amicus side of unite the union he kept up the fight for our pensions.

Graham fought his illness with courage and dignity and his death is a huge loss not only to the trade union movement and his friends but most of all to his family, God bless them.

***Willie Riggans  
Retired convenor, Scottish Stampings, Ayr***

# Trade union leader and socialist

Where do you start when reflecting on the life of a person that meant so much to so many people? Graham Goddard was one of the kindest, caring, thoughtful, generous and decent people you could ever wish to meet.

Graham was much more than a DGS for Unite the Union. He was a dedicated socialist who passionately believed in doing all he could to enhance the lives of working people. He detested the inequality and devastation that capitalism delivered, having seen first hand the demise of manufacturing, employment and society during the Thatcher years of the 1980s in his home county of Yorkshire.

I first met Graham when we both enrolled for a university part-time course at Keele University in the late 1990s. I was from 'down south' and he from Yorkshire, yet despite our accent differences and often intense ridicule of each other's 'twangs', our commitment to the trade union and labour movement drew us together. We would spend much of our residential weekends, albeit late into the night, discussing every political subject or issue imaginable and planning the future direction of the movement.

While we remained friends after university, it was not until I was appointed to a full time post with the AEEU, which later became Amicus, and he became a regional officer that we

were once again reunited. Although Graham moved up the organisation quickly and eventually became deputy general secretary this never changed him and he was always eager to mix and mingle with workers and members, discussing the issues that affected them on a daily basis. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him.

Whilst Graham's personal fight to improve the lives of working people and their families has been tragically cut short, his dreams and hopes for what the trade union movement might achieve and the example he set remains an inspiration to trade unionists every where. His family can be justifiably proud of the contribution he made during his short life, which undoubtedly enhanced the lives of so many others.

Graham will be a sad loss to the movement, the union and to his friends and comrades and of course Siobhan and Ted who he loved so much.

In the words of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson "Some people's lives are worthy of taking the time to say goodbye to", without doubt this could not be more true than in the case of the very special comrade Graham Goddard.

**Jon Hayward**

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## First amongst equals

Graham Goddard was a man first amongst equals. He was a caring considerate and very much a measured man who cared about others and deplored inequality.

His trade union background is a pretty formidable one from shop steward to deputy general secretary is commendable in itself but the job of work Graham carried out, the vision he had for Unite to be a strong progressive union are the qualities which earned Graham the right to hold such high position within the union.

Graham started and ran one of the unions most successful campaigns when he with his United Engineering Forging comrades stood up to a system which would have seen them plus thousands of others lose their right to take as deferred wages a pension after a life time of work. He fought back against a system that saw people after losing their job through company insolvency stand to lose their life's saving which they had built up in their company pension.

The campaign took five years to win and during those five years many miles were walked in protest demonstrations, hundreds of hours spent lobbying government ministers, Graham's determination was so great he created a mood of confidence in those around him who worked and supported the campaign.

On December 17, 2007 a deal was struck which saw the

government commit £12bn pounds to secure pension benefits up to 90 per cent for over 140,000 people throughout the UK, you would think that this in its self was a victory worth savouring but Graham was determined that when the economic circumstances were right then the outstanding 10 per cent would have been fought for.

The following two paragraphs are not a tribute to Graham from a source you would normally expect. They are from Jeff Prestridge of the Daily Mail who wrote on Graham's endeavour to achieve pension justice.

"Finally, I would also like to give a special mention to Graham Goddard, who was the person who first alerted me in 2002 to the alarming consequences of a company failing with a works pension in place with insufficient assets to meet all its obligations.

"It was Mr Goddard, a trade union convenor at United Engineering Forgings, in Sheffield who persuaded me to take up the cudgels on behalf of people like him. To Mr Goddard, a big thank you. A big pensions injustice has been corrected."

We all owe it to Graham's memory to continue to fight for the struggles of working class people, to fight against inequality and injustice, to protect and defend the values of a decent man Graham Goddard.

**Brian Gallagher**



Graham at Remploy Rally



Graham at WMD event



Graham at Peugeot lobby



Peugeot campaign Downing Street