



AMICUS GRAPHICAL, PAPER & MEDIA SECTOR

E-BULLETIN NO. 9

Recognition Agreed at the Trinity Mirror Birmingham

After years of campaigning, formal recognition has finally been secured at the Fort in Birmingham, the print production and distribution site for the Trinity Mirror Newspaper Group in the Midlands.

The agreement signed with the company gives collective bargaining rights for production staff as well as electricians and engineers, the vast majority of whom are Amicus members.

Amicus Branch Officer Ted Scott said, "The company were constructive in their approach and I look forward to a good working relationship in the future."

Discussions about a recognition agreement with the company began several years ago but got nowhere

because of the poor level of membership.

However once Amicus Organiser Alison Jones got involved, with the support of Ted Scott and the local reps, membership soared and recognition was then inevitable. Alison said it was a pleasure to work with the reps and it is a credit to them that the membership levels are so high.

Steve Sibbald Amicus National Officer for newspapers said, "This is more good news for the industry. This agreement follows close on the heels of recent agreements signed with Newsquest and the Johnston press group. We will keep ploughing on until the whole industry is once again organised and with the kind of hard work and commitment that this team has put into this campaign, that shouldn't be too long."

PAPER & PACKAGING

21st Century Logistics dispute settled

The long running dispute between Amicus and the Kent based paper warehousing and distribution company, 21st Century Logistics has been settled following further discussion on the union's claim for extended bargaining rights.

Amicus had been awarded collective bargaining rights by the Government's Central Arbitration Council (CAC), however, Amicus members wanted wider rights to collective bargaining and union recognition than had been awarded by the CAC. Industrial action took place in the form of one day strikes which were due to be stepped up.

Further discussions between Amicus National Papermaking and Packaging Officer Peter Ellis and the company agreed

to a revised recognition agreement.

Commenting on the agreement Peter Ellis said, "We are pleased that the dispute has been resolved and we now hope to build a much better working relationship with the company."

Amicus Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke added, "The terms of recognition that are awarded by the CAC are far too narrow and restrictive. They don't reflect what actually happens in dealing with day to day industrial relations between a group of workers and an employer. The current 'default' recognition agreement that is awarded by the CAC for instance does not include the statutory rights to bargain on training. Given the support the Government is giving to this issue, this is disappointing."

INDUSTRY NEWS

Monotype buys Linotype in typeface merger

Two of the oldest names in the printing industry have merged. Monotype, the owner of font designs such as Gill Sans and Times New Roman, has bought Linotype for an undisclosed sum, whose designs include Helvetica and Frutiger only five months after the font library business was put up for sale.

Linotype, formerly a subsidiary of Heidelberg, has now become a subsidiary of Monotype. Both firms said they wanted to capitalise on their end-user markets, the expanding market in Asia as well as developing fonts for mobile phones. Both firms have created typefaces for famous corporate brands including Marks & Spencer and Porsche.

COMMERCIAL PRINTING & PACKAGING

“Job losses - Worst I can remember” says AGS Tony Burke

Mounting job losses in the printing, packaging and paper sector are “the worst I can remember” said Tony Burke.

“We had a tough time in the 1980s, with job losses and closures but the current shake out appears to be unending. In recent weeks we have seen closures and job losses at a number of national companies including Alcan, Smurfit-Kappa, Pillans & Waddies and Jarrolds who face an uncertain future.

“There are also many small and medium sized businesses that are shedding jobs. We are doing all we can to help our members and trying to save jobs wherever possible. Manufacturing is being decimated in the UK. These were good jobs and our members are being left to the ravages of the market and will have to look outside of the industry to find work.”

Alcan have announced the closure of their Midsommer Norton site. Peter Ellis Amicus National Officer for Paper and Packaging sector said, “This is a body blow to our members, their families and to the packaging and paper industry in the South West. Our members are angry and bitter at this proposal.

“Our first priority will be to consult with our union reps as soon as possible and subsequently will be seeking urgent meetings with the company.

“We are not convinced by the company's claims that alternative options to closure have been tried and we will be insisting that

every possible option and alternative is explored before closure is considered.

“I am extremely disappointed that the company has decided to close this site and will be taking it up with the European Works Council. These are high quality jobs and are very important to the local economy. It is depressing that Alcan have found it difficult to continue at this site and that this is yet another indication of the meltdown in manufacturing in the UK.”

At Pillans & Waddies in Livingston, Scotland, 170 jobs are to go. Receiver Ernst & Young closed the Livingston firm after it was unable to sell the commercial print company. This was despite around 30 parties showing an interest in the business in the two weeks since it went into receivership in mid-July.

At SIG Combi-Block in the North East, Amicus and the company have been in consultation for several months exploring ways and means of avoiding closure of the UK site. Three factories in Europe were put at risk largely due to a shrinking market for cartons and a trend towards plastic containers. The increasing cost of raw materials and reduced profit margins added to the problem.

Malcolm Appleby Amicus Official said, “Production will still continue until the end of September 2006 and Amicus is continuing to press for an enhanced package for our members affected by the closure, which is yet another setback to manufacturing in the North East of England.”

LEARNING & SKILLS

Amicus to work in partnership with Proskills

Amicus has said that 'skills are at the heart of the drive for the future' of the Print Industry and have agreed a new three way partnership on Skills. Amicus already works closely with employers and the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF) but now have also formed a close working relationship with the Sector Skills Council, Proskills.

By working together Amicus and Proskills can make a real difference and make the most of the Government's aim to increase productivity through increased skills and training. Amicus via the Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) network encourages and supports employees back into learning. Proskills encourages employers to train and develop their staff.

Amicus have full-time Learning Organisers devoted to skills development with the help of an extensive network of ULRs. They provide advice and support on skills matters to everyone, not just union members. In many cases people have been out of learning for many years; technology and progress passes them by which can lead to problems for both the individual and their employers business and this is where the ULRs come in. The specially trained reps are usually a trusted colleague or friend and they can give people the confidence and support needed to get them back into learning.

Amicus Head of Organising Learning and Skills for the Graphical, Paper & Media Sector, Bernard Rutter is a full member of the Proskills board and works hard to maximise the impact of Amicus, the Printing Industry and Proskills, along with David Tarren, Amicus National Training Adviser.

They are both members of Proskills Print and as a result a number of joint initiatives are emerging.

Bernard Rutter said, “The learning and skills strategies that are being developed between Amicus, the BPIF and Proskills are groundbreaking. Our aims are the same - to involve and encourage employers and employees to develop and implement the skills in our sector that will enable us to continue to be a major player in the global print market.”

Terry Watts, Proskills CEO said, “As an outsider now working with the Printing industry, it is refreshing to see a union working so hard to support and develop the skills infrastructure and to see this drive welcomed by many employers. This does impact positively on individuals' careers which in the longer term is good for the prosperity of the printing industry.

“Proskills are proud to be working in partnership with Amicus and have a very clear joint agenda; the right skills make businesses more competitive which leads to sustainable businesses and employment in the UK.”

Amicus will be helping to gather the views of employers on skills by encouraging them to add their voice in the current “Sector Skills Agreement” consultation (see www.proskills.co.uk/SSA for more information). In some cases ULRs will be sitting down with their employer to discuss skills and will report back to Proskills on their findings.

For further information visit Amicus GPM National Skills Initiative at <http://www.amicustheunion.org/Default.aspx?page=1648>

INTERNATIONAL

Wal-Mart forced to recognise second trade union in China

The anti-union USA based chain store Wal-Mart has been forced to recognise a second trade union in China.

The supermarket giant is notoriously hostile towards union representation in its stores but has given in to pressure in the Chinese city of Shenzhen after 42 employees voted to form a union and chose its leaders. The move comes just a week after staff at an outlet in Quanzhou formed Wal-Mart's first Chinese union after pressure from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) - the Chinese equivalent of the TUC.

Guo Wencai, director of ACFTU, said they would push for all 60 Wal-Mart stores in China to gain union recognition. China is in

the process of overhauling its labour laws to give greater rights to workers.

A new labour contract law will soon usher in a new era of employment rights. It will impact companies around the world that have taken advantage of low levels of business regulation to move into China. It will create a system of inspection and supervision of working conditions, and employers will be required to negotiate an agreement with unions if they plan to lay off more than 50 workers. The law is expected to come into full effect in March 2007.

The legislation marks the first time the legislative process has been open to consultation from trade unions and business.

PENSIONS

Pressure mounts on government to pay £15bn in compensation to workers who lost occupational pensions

The government is facing increasing pressure to pay up to £15bn in compensation to workers who lost their pensions after it was heavily criticised by an influential group of MPs.

A report by the public administration select committee has concluded that the government misled employees over the security of occupational pension schemes and has since been more concerned with denials than compensation.

The committee gave its full backing to similar conclusions by the parliamentary ombudsman, Ann Abraham, who investigated the plight of 85,000 workers who lost pensions when their employers folded.

Her report, published in March, concluded government maladministration had meant workers were not fully aware of risks and called for victims to be fully compensated for lost pensions and to be awarded damages for their suffering. Ministers refused to accept her findings and said they would not use taxpayers' cash to compensate workers. The committee said ministers' rejection of the ombudsman's findings raised "fundamental constitutional issues".

EQUALITIES

Amicus supports Brighton Pride event

Amicus sponsored the Brighton Pride event for the third year which took place on 5th August.

Amicus has a long history and is committed to promoting LGBT rights within the workplace and beyond. As well as helping to fund this successful annual event, Amicus members and officials from all over the south east took part in the parade.

Published by Amicus, 35 King Street, Covent Garden,
London, WC2E 8JG Tel 020 7420 8900

This e-bulletin can also be downloaded from www.amicustheunion.org/gpm

Remploy workers

At a recent meeting between the Remploy Consortium of trade unions (including Amicus) and members of the Remploy Board of Directors including the Chief Executive the Terms of Reference for dealing with the modernisation of Remploy were agreed.

Phil Davies, GMB National Secretary speaking for the trade unions said, "This was a long and difficult meeting but the trade unions have agreed Term of Reference with the Remploy Board. The trade unions have warned the Remploy Board that savings can be made but not at the cost of disabled peoples jobs. We simply will not allow wholesale closure of Remploy factories."

NEWSPAPERS & MEDIA

Guardian racks up £49.9m loss

Guardian Newspapers has posted total losses of £49.9m in the financial year in which it made the move to its unique Berliner format.

In results for the year to 2 April 2006, turnover for the company that publishes The Guardian and The Observer rose 1.5% to £237.4m. The firm blamed a weak advertising market and costly marketing activities in the national newspaper market for an operating loss of £19.3m. However, exceptional costs due to the £100m installation of Berliner-format MAN Roland presses at Newsfax in London and Trafford Park Printers in Manchester pushed total losses to £49.9m.

