



Amicus and TGWU members say Yes to Merger

Amicus and T&G members have voted to merge creating Britain and Ireland's newest and biggest trade union with around two million members.

In the ballot to approve the creation of the UK and Ireland's biggest union, Amicus members voted 70.1% for merger; the TGWU gave the go-ahead by 86.4% for merger. Both unions achieved a 27% turnout. The new union will come into being on May 1. It will cover a huge range of industries and services including manufacturing, transport, financial services, print, paper and media, IT, construction, aviation, energy, food, as well as public services and the voluntary sector amongst many others.

Derek Simpson, Amicus' General Secretary, said: *"The new union will be the greatest campaigning force on behalf of ordinary people that has ever existed. It is a precursor to the creation of a single global trade union movement capable of challenging the might of multinationals that seek to play workforces and governments off against each other to reduce jobs and hard won pay and conditions."*



Derek Simpson & Tony Woodley, Amicus & TGWU General Secretaries

The new union will be committed to organising workers. Once the merger is finalised, the new Joint Executive Council, drawn equally from the T&G and Amicus executives, will supervise the drawing up of a final rule book for the new union. This will come into effect in November 2008, when the integration of the two unions into one should be complete.

Amicus Assistant General Secretary, Tony Burke, said: *"I want to thank all of our National and Branch full time officers, our FOC's/MOC's/shop stewards and reps who campaigned for a yes vote in the Amicus GPM Sector. We look forward to working with our TGWU colleagues who work in packaging, papermaking and newspapers in our new union."*

UNION RIGHTS AT WORK Voluntary recognition deal at Eagle Envelopes

Amicus has secured a voluntary recognition agreement for over 60 staff at Eagle Envelopes in Walsall. This agreement will give collective bargaining rights for both the production and the office employees at the site. Amicus and Eagle Envelopes,

now part of the Antalis Group, are looking forward to a productive and positive working relationship.

The negotiations surrounding recognition were conducted once ACAS had verified the union membership.

Alison Jones, Amicus Organiser said, *"This agreement is a product of our reps commitment and enthusiasm and demonstrates that members want an active union in their workplace. Our reps are now looking forward to starting their Amicus training."*

BPIF – AMICUS PAY DEAL

Amicus and BPIF reach 2007 pay deal

Amicus and the BPIF have reached a basis of settlement for this year's National Agreement, in the commercial printing industry with cash rises of between £7.13 and £8.70 per week.

The Amicus' negotiating panel, made up of full time officers and lay reps working under the agreement is recommending the deal in a ballot of members working under the BPIF Agreement.

Tony Burke said: *"We are strongly recommending the deal to our members. Against the background of a*

difficult time in the industry the agreement is the best achievable by negotiation. The deal equates to 3.3% on basic rates and with inflation predicted to fall during the year the deal is in line or ahead of other agreements reached in the graphical sector and in manufacturing.

"We will be advising all full time officers to ensure that members working under the agreement are made aware of the deal and that members get the increase."

Proposed increases

- Craft/Class I: £8.70; Class II: £7.83; Class III: £7.13
- Machine classification extra rates increase 3.3%
- Minimum earnings guarantee will now be £237.95

The increase will also attract shift premiums dependent on the shift pattern worked under the National Agreement or house agreement and will also be calculable for overtime premiums.



NEWS AND MAGAZINE WHOLESALE

WH Smith rejects Amicus' proposals to save final salary pensions

Following the recent WH Smith announcement of its intention to close its final salary scheme once and for all, the company has rejected alternative proposals from Amicus to maintain the scheme.

Amicus proposed several measures to safeguard workers' pensions going forward which were rejected by the company. The management's priority is to fund the deficit, and to offer pensions on the cheap by offering to pay sums which amount to only a 3.5% maximum contribution to the pension of a low-paid worker.

The company is cutting future service contributions by as much as 70% and using the savings to pay off the deficit not just for the active members but for the pensioners as well.

Amicus National Officer, Ann Field, said: *"This is disgraceful treatment of long-serving loyal workers who have stood by the company during some very difficult times. Those employees are calling on the management to think again and come up with a plan for to save their pensions."*

CAC awards collective bargaining at Ritrama, Manchester

Amicus has won collective bargaining recognition at self-adhesive labels company Ritrama. The government's Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) ruled that Amicus will represent its members in negotiations. The majority of staff at the Eccles, Manchester-based company supported union recognition. Ritrama has been given 30 days to "conclude a formal recognition agreement" with Amicus.

Tony Burke said: *"We are pleased with the CAC decision and I want to thank our members at Ritrama who have waited three years to get union rights. We hope the company will now listen to its workforce and sit down with us and work towards building a relationship, which will benefit the company and its employees."* Ritrama has sites in Italy, the US, Spain and the UK.

NEWSPAPERS

Anger at Trinity Mirror Cardiff job cuts

Following months of speculation, Trinity Mirror Printing at Cardiff has announced proposals for a major restructure at its Tidal Sidings Press which could result in significant job losses.

The company claims that the restructure is necessary to cut costs and maximise efficiency in order to strengthen its longer term operation at the site.

The wide-ranging proposals affect the entire organisational structure including the number of jobs, roles, working patterns and pay levels. In total, 20% of posts would be lost.

Andrea Jones, Amicus Regional Officer said: *"We have only just been presented with the report, but the initial responses from our members have highlighted some concerns. In particular, losing such a significant number of posts has the potential to create serious health and safety risks. We are addressing these issues as a matter of urgency. The company will be challenged where the proposals are seen to be unworkable or present a risk."*

INFORMATION & CONSULTATION

Macmillan Publishers - guilty of "breaching workers rights"

Macmillan Publishers, the global publishing company, has been found in breach of employment legislation after a complaint was made to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) by Amicus.

Amicus made the complaint as part of a long running campaign to get the company to set up an Information & Consultation Forum as they are obliged to under new European and UK legislation. Amicus represents publishing and warehouse employees at various Macmillan sites in London, Oxford, Basingstoke and Swansea has had to lodge three separate complaints with the CAC since November 2005 to force the company to recognise the rights of its 1350 UK employees.

Amicus' complaint has been upheld on every occasion. One decision led to the CAC issuing a 'declaration of union recognition', giving Swansea warehouse workers collective bargaining rights after the company failed to enter into voluntary agreement talks. The most recent ruling forces the company to establish an employee elected Information and Consultation (I&C) body under the 2004 Information and Consultation Regulations. This ruling covers every employee of Macmillan's in the UK.

Tony Burke said: *"We are disappointed that the company has not at all entered*

into the spirit of the legislation. The company has now been ordered to set up proper procedures to establish an I&C Forum and elect employee representatives for the purpose of this legislation.

"Amicus has reached a number of I&C Agreements in the print, papermaking and media industries. The company's we have reached agreements with agree that in this day and age employees should be informed and consulted about what is happening in their company and at their workplace. We have also encountered a number of companies who are unwilling to enter into discussions with us in the hope that the matter will go away. Well, its not and Amicus will use the I&C legislation to get our members their rights at work."

Jamie Major, Amicus Senior Organiser, said: *"Amicus members within Macmillan's have had to fight hard at every stage and we are pleased to say they have won another victory, although it would have been better had the company sat down with us and negotiated an I&C Agreement. We would now encourage Amicus members to become candidates in the forthcoming elections and ask that all employees support candidates that they can trust to hold the company to account."*

LEARNING & SKILLS

£1.1m training scheme for London printers

London printers have been offered a £1.1m training scheme with the launch of PrintLondon. The scheme has secured £558,000 of funding for the next two years from the London Development Agency (LDA), which will be aimed at offering print firms in London subsidised training and business audits. One of the conditions of the scheme is that firms have to match any funding provided. PrintLondon is aiming to help London printers to take advantage of the potential work for the 2012 Olympics by companies achieve the necessary accreditations to qualify on tender lists.

Tony Newbury will represent Amicus on PrintLondon. Training will be provided to companies primarily by Vision in Print and BPIF Business and will include help with achieving accreditations, improving health and safety performance, human resources, business development and technical issues.

PENSIONS

CUP row over pensions freeze

Management at Cambridge University Press (CUP) have rejected a formal grievance brought by pension fund members through Amicus, about changes to their pension that have been imposed without consultation.

Amicus Regional Officer, Ian Maidlow, said: *"CUP have failed to make a convincing case for such draconian changes being necessary. Additionally, they have refused to honour a previous promise to consult over proposals such as these."*

"One of many issues that has angered fund members is the inequity with the senior staff pension scheme, which will still retain an index-linked element. Ian commented: "Decency compels Cambridge University Press to make the same provision for other staff too. Clearly they believe their executives are more in need of inflation-proofing for their pensions than those staff who earn lower salaries." he added.

Staff are outraged by management seeking to force agreement to the change by withholding pay increases from those who refuse to sign their consent to it. People who have been promoted or given a pay rise in recognition of their ability and hard work are being penalised for not agreeing to pension changes about which they were not consulted.



OBITUARY

Ken Haughton, 1922-2007

We are sad to report the death of former National Officer Ken Haughton, who died aged 84 on 27 February. Ken was a National Officer of the National Graphical Association which merged with SOGAT to form the GPMU.

Born in Salford on 22 March, 1922, Ken was apprenticed as a lithographic printer and during World War Two he served in the army in the Middle East, printing maps. On being de-mobbed he returned to the printing industry in Manchester and he became a full-time officer in the Manchester branch of the Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers. He rose to the position of Assistant General Secretary of the ASLP and became a National official of the NGA when the ASLP merged with the NGA in 1965.

Ken was responsible for the Litho sector of the union until his retirement in 1987 and was well known in the printing industry and among union activists, especially for his use of 'cricketing terms' when giving reports to the NEC and members meetings. Those who knew him will fondly recall Ken opening his reports with introductions such as: *"It looked like we on a sticky wicket, so we put the management into bat and bowled them some fast ones to the leg-side. They took some singles off us, but we soon caught them out of their crease!"*

IRELAND

Brendan Byrne, Amicus GPM Sector Dublin and Wicklow Branch Secretary was the subject of the cover story in the January issue of the main trade magazine for the Irish printing and packaging industry - 'The Irish Printer'.

In a wide ranging interview with the magazine Brendan discussed the future of the Irish printing industry, competition from low cost print areas such as central and eastern Europe, the problems of manufacturing in Ireland and his daily work in representing Amicus members in the industry in Dublin.

This was the first time an Amicus official has appeared in an in-depth interview in the magazine.

PAPER & TISSUE

SCA buys P & G European tissue sites

Swedish hygiene and paper product maker SCA has signed a deal to buy all of Procter & Gamble's European tissue operations for 512 million euros. SCA said the acquisition will give it the Tempo brand, the market leader in paper handkerchiefs in Western Europe and Hong Kong. It will also get an exclusive license in Europe for the Bounty paper towel and Charmin toilet tissue brands.

SCA said savings from the purchase of a business with annual net sales of nearly 500 million euros "are expected to be considerable". Last month, SCA said it would invest 1 billion Swedish crowns (approx £71.9million) in a new tissue paper machine at its Barton, Alabama, plant in the United States.

Procter & Gamble's five European plants, which together employ about 1,100 people, are included in the acquisition. The plants are in Old Trafford, Manchester in England; Witzhausen and Neuss in Germany; Orleans in France and Lucca in Italy.



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