

Connections

Positive Partnership in HBOS

Issue 1
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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of 'Connections' – the journal for Unite (Amicus Section) union members working in HBOS.

In this edition there are two major developments to report for our members in HBOS:

1. The signing of the HBOS Partnership Agreement – an important initiative that ensures positive engagement between HBOS and the unions.
2. The importance of the recent Amicus and T&G merger which has created Unite the Union.



CONTENTS

PARTNERSHIP	5
AMICUS & T&G MERGER	6
EQUALITY MATTERS!	7
WORKPLACE REPS LAUNCH	8
12 GOOD REASONS TO JOIN UNITE	9
UNION TV	10
MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS	11

Your Unite team



Wendy Dunsmore, Unite National Secretary said: "I have been involved in HBOS (and previously Bank of Scotland) for over 7 years as well as leading negotiations in other areas of the finance sector. I was heavily involved in the harmonisation of terms and conditions following the merger between Bank of Scotland and Halifax, this has given me an excellent understanding of the way HBOS does business."

Unite has a dedicated team of officials within HBOS. They are:

**Wendy Dunsmore
and Gwyn Bates.**

Unite also have two seconded reps. They are:

- Colin Percy - Scotland across all divisions
- Amanda Whele - England and Wales.

If you would like to hear more about our campaigns or have any queries or comments, please contact us:

Wendy Dunsmore
Amicus/Unite, John Smith House, 145-165 West
Regent Street, Glasgow G2 4RZ
Tel: 0141 248 7131 Fax: 0141 221 3898
Email: wendy.dunsmore@amicustheunion.org

Gwyn Bates
Amicus/Unite, Transport House,
1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HA
Tel: 02920 382209 Fax: 02920 382209
Email: gwyn.bates@amicustheunion.org

Colin Percy
Amicus/Unite Office, HBOS, Queen Street, Glasgow G2
Tel: 0141 308 7844 Fax: 0141 308 7848
Mobile: 078100 55857
Email: Colin.Percy@Halifax.co.uk

Amanda Whele (from 21 May 2007)
Amicus Office, Capital House, Queenspark Rd,
Handbridge, Chester CH4 7AD
Tel: 01244 895032 Fax: 01244 693948
Mobile: 0790 0678068
Email: Amanda_Whele@HBOSplc.com

**Support email address of
Amicussupport.hbos@amicustheunion.org**



Gwyn Bates, Unite National Secretary said: "I have been working and supporting members in Birmingham Midlands and Retail Division before coming full-time into the HBOS team in 2006. I have been lead negotiator in the UK Building Societies and also NatWest prior to the RBoS takeover. I am currently the Chair of the 'Alliance for Finance' - a grouping of finance sector trade unions"

Partnership Agreement



The Partnership Agreement is officially launched: (left to right) Dennis Stevenson (chairman), David Fisher (Group HR), John Hallett (Group HR), Brendan Barber (gen sec, TUC), John Teasdale (Group HR), Andy Hornby (chief executive), Graham Goddard (Unite), Wendy Dunsmore (Unite) and Ged Nichols (Accord).

To launch the partnership agreement HBOS Chief Executive Andy Hornby and Chairman Lord Dennis Stevenson met with the Unite Deputy General Secretary, Graham Goddard who is Head of the Finance Sector and Wendy Dunsmore. Also attending were Brendan Barbour, TUC, Ged Nichols, Accord and Linda Kelly, Partnership Institute.

This agreement is groundbreaking within the finance sector and commits the company and the union to:

- Positive support for growth of union membership
- A HBOS wide workplace representatives facility that recognises the value of union involvement in reps performance reviews
- Early union involvement in the decision-making process – this will make a difference for Unite members as HBOS will now proactively seek the unions view, therefore allowing us to influence business strategy and its implementation
- Regular meetings with Head of Business Areas to discuss future strategy

Amicus membership has remained stable over the past few years. This is particularly encouraging as the level of change within the

company has meant new and old colleagues understand and support the belief of unions in the workplace.

Graham Goddard said: "Employers like HBOS who meaningfully engage with unions and recommend union membership have to be applauded. Unite will use this commitment to demonstrate how good industrial relations benefits all."

Andy Hornby added:

"HBOS prides itself on working closely with our unions and this partnership agreement marks a further step forward. With our commitment to grow union membership, there will be even better colleague representation and decision making."

Unlike the vast majority of employers, HBOS will encourage colleagues to join the union for their future protection. Moreover they believe that the best way of hearing the voice of colleagues is through the unions. Have a say in your future – join Unite the Union today. If you are aware of colleagues who are not in the Union, encourage them to join - the stronger our membership, the stronger our voice.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I have worked for HBOS (and previously Bank of Scotland) for almost 27 years and currently work in Group Technology as a Lead Change Manager in the Group & International Customer Team.

I joined Unite (and its predecessors) when I joined the Bank and started to get involved not long after. I have watched both the Bank and the union evolve over the years and although at times the relationship has been difficult, it has generally been positive.

I believe the company and the union do have similar goals, although with different reasons and emphasis. Unite wants the company to be successful so that our members have job security and a fair total reward proposition. A successful company will attract further business which could see the creation of further jobs. This is an exciting phase in our relationship.

With the advent of local workplace reps and the recent merger between Amicus and the T&G, Unite's voice is heard at all levels within HBOS. It also gives us a presence outside HBOS with links to bodies like the Scottish Executive, Holyrood and Westminster. This can only benefit our members.

If you are a member of Unite already I would encourage you to consider becoming more active in Unite whether that is as a Rep or in some other practical way and to encourage any non-members to join Unite.

Glenn Miller
glenn_miller@bankofscotland.co.uk

UNITE THE UNION IS HERE – FOR YOU



Picture by Joanne O'Brien

The historic merger between Amicus and the T&G has created Unite – a multi sector union with over 2.3 million members. The finance section remains one of the largest sectors within Unite and is rapidly growing.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

UNITE LOCALLY – A new workplace reps structure that ensures local issues are dealt with locally – your voice heard in the workplace.

UNITE IN THE DIVISIONS – elected reps meet and are consulted by HBOS

Divisional Employee Relations HR, senior management and Executives, on a very regular basis on your behalf – your voice heard in your Division.

UNITE IN HBOS GROUP– full time professional officers and elected reps conduct all the major negotiations on pay, job security, terms and conditions of your employment contract. We also meet with Group Employee Relations regularly to discuss issues such as 'Dignity at Work', equality, diversity & inclusion, health and safety, HR policies and a whole range of other colleague issues – Your voice heard in HBOS.

UNITE NATIONALLY – the campaigning

union throughout the whole of the finance sector. Our experience is if it happens in one bank, the likelihood is it will happen in all banks. We bring professionalism, experience and comprehensive finance sector knowledge to all negotiations to make change as painless as possible for colleagues which also assist the company. Your voice in the finance sector.

UNITE POLITICALLY - currently exploring possibilities with HBOS to lobby Government to extend the successful Childcare Voucher Scheme to include elderly Care Vouchers. Unite (Amicus section) sponsor over 112 MPs, 20 peers, 11 MEPs and growing numbers of MSPs and Welsh Assembly members – your voice politically.

UNITE INTERNATIONALLY – as organisations become multi-nationals, it is important that Unite work with other unions on a global scale. Unite is in regular contact with the Finance Sector Union (FSU) in Australia. This is the Union that is recognised by Bank West, which is wholly owned by HBOS. Unite has an International Department that campaigns on a number of issues. To find out more, log on to www.amicustheunion.org and click on 'International'.

AND NOT FORGETTING YOUR VOICE, FRIEND AND REPRESENTATIVE WHEN YOU REQUIRE SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE.

EQUALITY MATTERS

Unite views 'equalities' as a key priority. Unite is delighted that HBOS has signed up to the Unite 'Equal Pay Charter'. This commits the company to:

- Equality for all HBOS employees
- Annual equal pay audits in partnership with Unite
- An action plan to address any issues highlighted in the equal pay audits, this plan will be agreed with Unite.
- Establish a joint working group to develop a programme of work designed to improve pay and opportunities.
- Unlike some employers who have signed the charter based on gender issues alone, HBOS has signed the charter covering all areas of the diversity agenda.

Siobhan Edean, Unite Equalities Officer said: "HBOS is one of the finance sector front runners in the 'Equal Pay Charter'. The union will welcome any employer who seeks to eradicate the pay gap for all colleagues including women, members with disabilities and those from ethnic backgrounds."

Here are some examples of our achievements in the fields of equalities:

JOB SHARE REGISTER IN RETAIL

Over the past 18 months, the unions have worked with Retail to introduce a 'Job Share Register'. This is an important part of our Equality Strategy as it helps colleagues, particularly those with caring responsibilities, to join the register with the intention of finding a job share partner so that they can still pursue their career. Unite has come across a number of individuals who have had to 'voluntarily' take a step back from their career due to other commitments. This register should now go some way to helping members in future. We are now pursuing that the Register be extended throughout the whole of HBOS.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

HBOS are undertaking a detailed review of access to flexible working in HBOS. Andy Hornby, HBOS CEO's vision is that: "Flexible working is about developing a way



of working that gives freedom, choice and control over where, when and how we work. Increasing use of flexible working will support us all in delivering our business objectives while having the time to do other things that are important in our lives – whatever our personal circumstances."

Unite the Union is committed to working together with HBOS to bring this vision to life for all colleagues. The HBOS flexible working policy, developed with the Union, is a strong policy for all colleagues and not just for those who are covered by legislation .e.g. those with caring responsibilities. Unite continues to work with HBOS to ensure that all people managers to receive the necessary support from HR to work through a flexible working request.

HBOS are currently developing a flexible working promotional launch in late summer which should benefit colleagues and business areas alike. Other initiatives that Unite is currently discussing with HBOS are policies on:

- fertility treatment leave
- menopause facilities
- domestic violence procedures

DIGNITY AT WORK

Following HBOS signing up to the Unite 'Dignity at Work Charter' – an initiative set up

between Unite and the Department of Trade & Industry – talks are taking place at divisional level on how to ensure that all colleagues are treated with dignity and respect at work.

As part of their philosophy HBOS were only too pleased to commit to:

- building a culture in which respect for individuals is regarded as an essential part of conduct of all those who work in HBOS
- working in partnership to devise and promote the HBOS Dignity at Work Charter which will incorporate international and UK good practice standards
- working with Unite to promote high standards expected of all colleagues in all workplaces through the union's representatives structure

Charlotte Sweeney, HBOS Head of Diversity stated "HBOS will work with the Union to ensure that all our colleagues are treated with dignity and respect at work. We do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour and treatment of others and provide mechanisms through the company and unions to allow colleagues to raise concerns through the appropriate channels"

Unite and HBOS will not tolerate or condone bullies at work. If you wish to discuss any issues that concern you, contact your local/seconded rep.

WANTED WORKPLACE REPS

With the advent of a new workplace reps structure Unite is seeking to recruit interested colleagues.



John Teasdale, Head of Group Employee Relations stated: "HBOS recognises and welcomes Unite as an important stakeholder within the Company and the introduction of the workplace reps structure will be positively viewed as helping the Company improve the way we do business."

Unite Reps are members working in all areas of HBOS. Reps can be full-time, part-time, term-time or shift workers. Reps will:

- Support and advise on a wide variety of work-related issues including redeployment, sickness absence and grievance processes,
- Represent members who have individual issues,
- Promote Unite and actively recruit new members to the union and

- Resolve local issues locally.

Full training will be provided. Considerable work has already been done to ensure that workplace reps will be properly recognised. The Company have agreed that reps will:

- Receive full support including paid time off for union activities,
- Reasonably adjust targets and
- Positively recognise your value and enhanced negotiating and influencing skills through your appraisal

Elections for Workplace Reps will take place over the summer and throughout 2007. If you are interested in becoming a rep, contact us direct and we will be happy to discuss the role - contact details on page 4 or alternatively email us at Amicussupport.hbos@amicustheunion.org



12 good reasons to join Unite

It's easy to join Unite.

Either contact us writing,
phoning or emailing.

Alternative join online

today at

www.amicustheunion.org/

[Join-On-Line-Here](#)

1. 20,000 new members from the finance sector joined Unite in 2006.
2. The UK largest trade union with over 2 million members (200,000 of which work in the finance sector)
3. Because of our expertise across the sector, Unite brings industry best practice to the negotiating table
4. Unite offers professional support and advice to all members
5. Unite represents members at disciplinary, grievance, health, wellbeing and attendance meetings
6. Unite can provide legal assistance if necessary
7. Unite negotiates on all areas of employment including pay, contracts, job security, equality & diversity, health & safety and dignity at work
8. HBOS consults with Unite on its restructuring programmes. This means that at time of major change in your workplace, Unite is your collective voice
9. Unite has a large research and legal team that not only assists members individually and collectively at work but seeks to influence government departments who are considering introducing legislation that could threaten and/or undermine our members' job security
10. Unite offer a wide range of skill based courses that are free to members. We will run courses to train workplace reps. To encourage learning in the workplace, we are working with each of the divisions to establish a Union Learning Reps Agreement
11. Fringe benefits and services such as discounts on holidays, home, travel insurance and our ever-increasingly popular services of 24 hour legal helpline for member and immediate family and free will writing facility
12. Even if you leave HBOS, Unite is your union for life whether that's still in the finance sector (we are recognised by all the major Banks, many Insurance companies, Building Societies etc) or in virtually any other industry in the UK and Ireland.

UNION TV

Unite the union is expanding its message by broadcasting to the world. However objective some television journalists may try to be, they rarely have the time or space to do real justice to the employees' side of an argument.

Unions might get 30 seconds' worth of coverage in a bulletin about a dispute or a big industrial issue – if they're lucky. Invariably union members feel that only employers get a fair crack of the media whip.

Well, Unite is doing something about it. Enter Union TV, a medium which is unashamedly 'biased' as Richard O'Brien, Amicus director of communications, puts it. Available via the union's website – www.amicustheunion.org – Union TV will give the public a thorough insight into what members are thinking. More importantly, it will aim to give our grassroots trade unionists all the latest information relevant to them.

"It will provide our members with the news which applies to their workplace. We have always been able to do that with magazines, but this will be an additional means of communication which will be cheap, easy and effective," says Richard.



"There will be current affairs and stories that resonate in the workplace. It won't be from the point of view of the boss or the big owners of the media such as Rupert Murdoch. Members will hear views like their own from people like them and workplace reps.



“We intend to give them information they can use in the workplace. We will be giving them ammunition so that they can deal with the situations that confront them.

“We will also be bringing them news of victories. Elsewhere they only hear bad news.”

The union movement has come a long way over the last 30 years. In the past, only employers had a professional approach to communication. Often the public only got to hear about a union's views through the newspapers which were dominated by right-wing press barons. Gradually, unions developed fully-staffed press offices prepared to be pro-active as well as reactive and began to publish magazines produced by professional journalists. The internet is another key tool of communication which unions in general and Unite in particular, use to communicate with its members and the wider public. While essential for communicating with members, traditional publications can be expensive, says Richard. The union is taking advantage of the increasing cheapness and availability of electronic hardware which makes the production of visual material much easier.

Unite TV can be seen on the website, or it can be downloaded as a Podcast on to an MP4. It is hoped there will be regular weekly outputs. The service will make sure your views are heard loud and clear.

AVAILABLE VIA THE UNION'S WEBSITE, WWW.AMICUSTHEUNION.ORG - UNION TV GIVES GRASSROOTS MEMBERS ALL THE LATEST INFORMATION RELEVANT.

Unite TV will give members tools they can use in the workplace. It can be viewed via the website, or it can be downloaded as a podcast.

UNITE ASSURED – making the most from your Unite Membership

Introducing our new website – Unite Assured, giving you benefits and services.

Our new website, Unite Assured is at www.amicusassured.org it is dedicated to giving you, your family and friends specially discounted benefits and services.

Other benefits and services

- Credit card
- Debt Service
- Eye care
- Financial Planning
- Health care
- Holiday offers
- Home insurance
- Household
- Legal
- Motor insurance
- Pensions annuity desk
- Pet insurance
- Travel insurance

LAUNCHES TO BE SEEN ON UNITE ASSURED:

• NEW - WINE SERVICE

Our new fantastic discounted wine service comes with FREE delivery to your door.

• NEW - EMERGENCY SERVICE

Lost/stolen mobile, credit cards, keys? No worries, this service will disable your mobile phone, cancel and re-order lost cards, help arrange transport home.

• NEW - SUPPLIER OF TRAVEL EXTRAS

Up to 35% off UK airport car parking, hotels and more.

There are more details to be seen on these services:

legal services, free will-writing, on Unite Assured, www.amicusassured.org

ARE YOU WHERE WE THINK YOU ARE?



Dear UNITE...

**WE
HAVE
MOVED**



HBOS colleagues can still get in touch with the Union in the normal ways - by writing, emailing or call us. For those with

internet access, the best way of keeping your details up to date is to go the 'My Amicus' section of our website – www.amicustheunion.org.

It is vital that you keep us up to date if you move to another part of HBOS or simply change location. Even a change of name or home address is important.

You can also access information about Unite in HBOS from the website.

You will find lists of our current reps there as well as copies of our previous bulletins. Follow the 'Sectors' link from the homepage, following through 'Finance and Business Services' to 'Amicus in your Organisation'.