

# newspaper

www.nujppr.org.uk



## NEC Vacancy – SE England

■ A vacancy has arisen for one NEC seat in the south east of England. Nominations will be taken at the branch meeting on 5 March.

## Anita wins the day

■ Branch member and NUJ national treasurer Anita Halpin won the recent election for our sector seat. The four NEC London seats were won by – Tom Davies (London Freelance branch); Nick Serpell (BBC); Phil Sutcliffe (London Freelance branch) and Pierre Vicary (BBC).

## Barking & Dagenham

■ A NUJ chapel has been formed by press office staff at Barking and Dagenham Council in east London, the branch has been told. The move follows an increase in membership after last November's *Stand Up for Journalism Day* and a visit to the offices by Fiona Swarbrick the sector's assistant organiser. FOC Dan Ward said that being in the NUJ was the best way to get their professional interests represented. The branch also expressed its appreciation to Fiona for her work in recruiting and setting up the chapel.

# Lively branch talk

■ The next branch meeting on Wednesday 5 March will consider our attitude to conference motions. This gives you a chance to shape union policy over a wide range of issues and to instruct branch delegates on how to vote on particular motions. It is important that members are able to influence union policy and this is your chance to have your say.

Meanwhile speaking at the February branch meeting Nick Serpell London NUJ NEC and BBC branch member, reported that the threat of strike action at the BBC has receded following talks between the broadcasting unions and BBC management. An agreement had been reached in principle that could prevent industrial action over 1,800 redundancies planned as part of the latest cost cutting drive by the BBC director general, Mark Thompson (pictured above). In addition the unions had succeeded in keeping the unpredictability allowance (UPA) which compensates



members' salaries for unsocial hours, but Nick was sure that the management would want to have another go at getting rid of the allowance at a later date.

BBC staff union members will still have a vote in March on the provisional agreement that has been thrashed out over compulsory redundancies, allowances and pensions. The ballot ends on 27 March and if the provisional agreement is rejected the votes of the earlier strike ballot would be counted and industrial action could take place.

However, the threat of compulsory redundancies still remained in BBC current affairs and talks between the

union and management are continuing. Nick also highlighted the continuing privatisation at the Corporation, as BBC Resources looks set to be split up and sold to a number of bidders. The deal to sell Resources, the corporation's studios, post

production and outside broadcast operation, is entering the final negotiation stage, but according to reports has been hampered by concerns over pensions.

Pinewood Shepperton, the studio business chaired by Michael Grade, ITV's executive chair, is understood to be one of the companies in final talks with the BBC.

The discussion finished on a positive note with members agreeing that a wide campaign both within the union and to the general public was needed to defend the public service broadcaster in the lead up to the next review of the BBC's Charter and digital switchover in 2012.

## Mordechai Vanunu: another postponement

■ Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear whistleblower and NUJ honorary member, was to appear in court in the middle of February, but there was another postponement; this time a small fall of snow(!) was mentioned as reason for the delay.

The hearing was to sort out the issue of Mordechai's community service, which had been agreed as an alternative to the possible six month prison sentence for talking to foreigners.

However, problems arose with this agreement: there turned out to be no community service in East Jerusalem, and there are still the restrictions that stop Mordechai leaving East Jerusalem without permission.

Apart from this, Mordechai says he would be in danger in West Jerusalem and that he didn't agree to work there.

The postponed court hearing will be to resolve these conflicting issues, if it can!

● You can read a fuller version of this update on the branch web site at: [www.nujppr.org.uk](http://www.nujppr.org.uk)

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## Branch meetings

All on a Wednesday  
5 March; 9 April; 7  
May; 4 June; 2 July  
branch outing;  
August no meeting; 3  
September; 1 October;  
5 November and 3  
December

All meetings start at  
6.30pm running to  
no later than 8.30pm  
(refreshments available)  
and are held at NUJ,  
308 Gray's Inn Road,  
London WC1.

The nearest  
tube/station is  
Kings Cross/St Pancras.

# TUC condemns attempt to kill Iraqi journalists' leader

The TUC has joined Iraqi unions and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in condemning the attempt to assassinate the President of the Iraqi Union of Journalists in Baghdad on Saturday 23 February 2008.

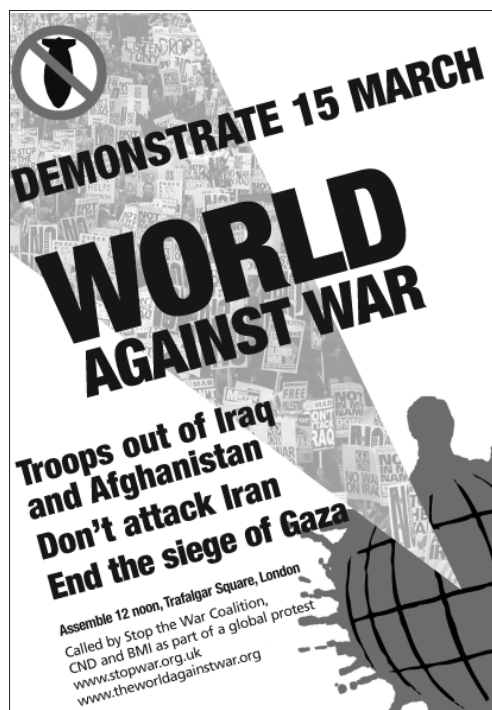
Shihab Al-Timimi, 75, is in hospital in a critical but stable condition after he suffered three bullet wounds in the stomach, shoulder and face when his car was attacked following a meeting of the union leadership in the Al Wazeiriyah district in the centre of the city. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said: 'This latest attack upon Iraqi trade unionists is a reminder that the main force for a secular, democratic and non-sectarian Iraq – the trade union movement – is under

threat. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government continues to persecute trade unionists when it should be protecting and supporting them.'

A delegation from the Iraqi transport union were touring the UK in February, and during their visit briefed FCO Minister

Kim Howells MP and the TUC General Secretary on the Iraqi Government's attacks on trade union freedom and refusal to replace Saddam Hussein's repressive trade union laws with ILO-compliant legislation.

● www.ifj.org



# The real big brother? (part 2)

In July 2007 we reported the plight of branch member Andrew Wood, who in April 2005 was working as a media co-ordinator (press officer) for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT). Andrew explained that: 'At that time the publisher Reed Elsevier had bought a company (which it later announced it was selling) that organises arms fairs, including the bi-annual Docklands arms fair. I

attended Reed's AGM in London along with other CAAT staff... As I and another member left we were repeatedly photographed by police in a very intrusive manner. We were not arrested and no offence was alleged: quite why we were photographed was not clear. We were stopped by the police and they used subterfuge to try and obtain my details. You can imagine the anxiety I felt...'

Following an abortive complaint to the

Police Complaints Commission a application was made for a judicial review on the grounds that their rights to privacy and freedom of assembly had been breached by the police action.

The case is to be heard on 1/2 May 2008 and is supported by Liberty, CAAT and this branch.

A web site has now been set up 'which describes a judicial review of surveillance, by police, of a person going about their

## Welcome for Temporary Agency Bill

The NUJ has welcomed parliamentary progress on the *Temporary Agency Workers Bill*. The Bill aims to provide protection and equal treatment for temporary and agency workers. .

The second reading took place on February 22 supported by 147 MPs. It now goes to its Committee Stage.

NUJ General Secretary, Jeremy Dear, said: 'At present more than a million workers lack some of the basic employment protections that most people take for granted. This Bill has the potential to ensure that people on temporary contracts receive the same benefits and protection as the staff member sitting next to them.'

Help keep up the pressure on MPs by making sure your local member supports the bill when it comes back to the Commons for its third reading.

lawful business, and engaged in political activity.' The claim (no. 8624/2005) was lodged in October 2005 by the claimant, Andrew Wood. The defendant is the Commissioner for the policing of the Metropolis.

The claimant believes the police action was unlawful and breaches their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

● You can visit the web site at: [www.judicialreview.org.uk](http://www.judicialreview.org.uk)