



RE-ACT

Worcestershire Retired Members Section Newsletter 2, Autumn 2025

Welcome

Welcome to our second RMS newsletter. Branch funding prevented us posting the Spring one so this may be the first you've received. Postage costs are high. **If you have received this by post but have an email address that could be used instead, please let us know enquiries@unisonworcestershireshire.co.uk.** It is really important that no members are digitally excluded, but we only want to post information to members wishing to receive it (our previous mailing resulted in a number of 'returns to sender.'



PLEASE LET BRANCH KNOW If you want to stay on the RMS postal mailing list

Telephone: 01905 26186

Griffith House, 30 Loves Grove, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR1 3BU

We now have our own retired members email retiredmembers@unisonworcestershireshire.co.uk. Use this for general comments and suggestions, or for contributions for future newsletters.

UNISON believes retired members should continue to benefit from their union membership and actively participate in union activities. Retired members enjoy benefits like legal advice, welfare support, discounts and offers on products and services. They contribute to campaigns and the union's democratic processes at all levels, bringing a wealth of knowledge and personal experience. A revised 'UNISON Retired Members Branch Secretary Handbook' is now available online <https://shop.unison.site/content/uploads/2025/10/955.pdf>. This resource is helpful for all RMS members who want to get more involved.

With 167,000 members, UNISON's retired members organisation proves that trade union values don't stop at retirement

Jane Evans, Retired Members Secretary

RMS Activities and news



Thank you to Patricia Jones for representing RMS and branch by laying the UNISON wreath at the Worcestershire County Council Remembrance event. Patricia was joined at Wildwood by Branch Secretary Andy Buncle and Assistant Branch Secretary Matthew Shiner.

And thanks again to Mike Hayzelden for organising meals and trips for RMS members. The Spring and Autumn meals, at the Royal Oak, Broadwas on Teme are popular, with 20 to 24 attendees. Look out for news about the 2026 spring meal. The pensioner's carvery is great value and there's another menu with vegetarian and other options.



The June RMS trip to Cirencester (Roman *Corinium*) was a great success with members enjoying a hot, sunny day exploring (though much of the summer was to be like that!). The visit focussed on the small, lively, Farmer's Market set up in front of the great church porch.

Many members visited the *Corinium* Museum of Roman antiquities. The Great Yew Hedge to Cirencester Park, opposite the museum (see

photo) has for many years donated the annual clippings (now there's a job!) to the pharmaceutical trade as extracts are used in some cancer treatment drugs. Serendipitously, further along the road and at a site opposite the hedge was a plaque commemorating the attendance of Edward Jenner in 1750s, when it was the site of the grammar school (1240 to 1880). Jenner was the pioneer of the smallpox vaccine and immunology.



In August RMS travelled to Monmouth, the Wye Valley and Chepstow. The town hall at Monmouth contained a delightful museum, based around the Georgian Court Room on the first floor. The town is the birthplace of Henry V, Plantagenet and future hero or Agincourt. Henry was born in Wales to ensure

he could legitimately become the Prince of Wales; following Edward I who ensured his first born was born in Carnarvon. Members then had a gentle amble down the Wye Valley, dipping in and out of the English-



Welsh border as they crossed to and fro over the river. Nearing Chepstow, they passed the magnificent Tintern Abbey ruins, but unfortunately could not stop and visit this time. Arriving in Chepstow the coach had to take a turn around the ring road, the well known Chepstow arch being too tight for any bus or lorry to fit through. The car park was close to the fine iron bridge and the castle. Just opposite the castle car park is the small, town

museum, in a fine Georgian house. For those who visited, this was a fascinating, eclectic mix of local trade displays, local history and a geological history of the Wye valley, with a short film explaining features from a boat trip down the Wye.

The driver on both trips was Dave (thanks Dave!) who apparently fulminated about the 20mph speed limit in Welsh urban areas! The automatic selector gearbox continually dropped to 1st gear! The Oakham Treasures trip, scheduled for July, unfortunately had to be cancelled because of low numbers, but some members joined Mike's History Society trip to Milestones, Basingstoke.

With summer behind us and the days drawing in, the monthly talks organised by Jacquie Davies provide an enjoyable and educational social activity, Talks are on Wednesday afternoons at Perdiswell Young



People's Leisure Club (Droitwich Road WR3 7SN) starting at 2pm. Admission costs £5, with tea/coffee and biscuits included. RMS members are very welcome to bring friends and family. The October and November talks were both very interesting. Forthcoming talks are listed below. For further details contact Jacquie Davies on 01527 546243. Hope to see you in January!.



| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| 15th October 2025 | Alison Harris | MacMillan nursing in Worcestershire: the story of Ida Parkinson the first MacMillan nurse in Worcestershire |
| 19th November 2025 | Richard Churchley | Snippets from Worcestershire newspapers before 1850 |
| 21st January 2026 | Louise Robinson | Death masks and phrenology: use of 19th century death masks as a basis to explore the pseudoscience of phrenology |
| 18th February 2026 | Colin Millett | Wonder of Worcester: History of Worcester Porcelain Factory |
| 18th March 2026 | Ray Sturdy | Antartica: Voyage south to explore the scenary & experience the variety of wildlife there |
| 15th April 2026 | David Chatterley | Victorian brass needle cases: History of the needle industry in Redditch |

AGM 3.30

Retired members Conference

In October, Odette and myself represented Branch at the Retired Members conference in Brighton and were delighted to meet another Worcestershire RMS member there. Bryony O'Hara is a member of the WM Regional Retired Members Committee and Communications Lead for WM Regional LGBT+ members SOG, as well as being a member of the Disabled members SOG.

The conference opened with a powerful panel discussion on pensioner poverty. Speakers included: Neil Duncan-Jordan, the independent MP for Poole; Morgan Vine from the charity Independent Age (a national charity providing a free helpline, advice and information to those living on low income <https://www.independentage.org/>); Jack Jones from the TUC; and UNISON's head of pensions, Glyn Jenkins. Delegates heard that 1.9 million pensioners in the UK now live in poverty – a shocking figure for the world's sixth richest country. The point was made, and



emphasized throughout the conference, that “today’s workers are tomorrow’s pensioners.” If you work in poverty you retire in poverty; apparently 80% of people working now are in poor pension schemes, particularly low paid women. We all have shared interests in universal health services and decent income. Solutions discussed included tackling high housing and energy costs and simplifying pension credit applications, while addressing low pay and encouraging pension contributions earlier in working life.

The need for training was highlighted at last year’s conference and training is now being developed. Trial workshops have taken place (unfortunately over-subscribed so I was not able to attend) and further training sessions are being organized. These will be aimed at anyone who wants to get involved, not just secretaries. The Branch Retired member’s Secretary Handbook has also been revised (see above). This was last revised in 2017 so included a picture of UNISON’s former General Secretary Dave Prentis, who was one of the retired members at conference!



Odette and I attended a campaign meeting promoting Andrea Egan’s campaign as UNISON General Secretary, standing against Christina McAnea as a candidate for change (travel issues prevented Christina McAnea from attending conference). Andrea previously served as UNISON President and is Secretary for Bolton Local Government Branch so has a lay member’s solid grasp of the issues faced by members and branches. You can find out more about

Andrea’s campaign here: <https://andrea4gs.org.uk/> and Christina’s campaign here: <https://votechristina.org.uk/about/>. **The ballot opens on 29th October 2025 and runs until 25th November. The results will be announced on 17th December 2025.**

A number of motions, and amendments to motions, were submitted by Regional Committee (“Taxation of pensioners”) and branches within the region (Birmingham branch, “Withdrawal of immigration visas and resultant impact on social care”, “NHS budgeting and outsourcing,” “Isolation and loneliness of the elderly”). The Regional committee encourage all branches to be active and engaged - perhaps this is something we could consider for next year’s conference?

Many Motions focused on dignity in retirement: affordable housing, quality social care (including the impact of withdrawing immigration visas), retaining the triple lock, the inequality of the Old State Pension (worth £2,805 less than the New State Pension), and tackling loneliness and digital exclusion. Delegates criticised the Labour government’s scrapping of the winter fuel allowance for most pensioners and its handling of the WASPI women’s campaign. There were some moving speeches in support of a motion on Older Black Men’s Health, recognising the inequalities they face. Other Motions reflected broader concerns; Gaza, the far right and Reform, Industrial Action & Workers Rights, Climate Change (Pension Divestment) and Human Rights. The speeches opposing Reform called for retired members to support ‘Stand Up To Racism’ and recognized the good work of Trades Union Councils. To quote Rosie MacGregor, chair of the national retired members committee,

“Showing solidarity is one of the key areas where retired members can remain active by assisting in campaigning, attending rallies, fundraising and visiting picket lines.”

Next year’s conference will be held in Glasgow on 13th-14th October

Worcester Trades Union Council News

Worcester Trades Union Council (WTUC) is made up of delegates from affiliated local Trades Union branches – including our UNISON branch. WTUC aims to promote solidarity in disputes, campaigns on a variety of issues and provides a link between the workplace and the wider community. I became a delegate on the council as Branch Secretary, and have remained actively involved since I retired; the



Branch Retired members' Secretary Handbook states that we should "assist and support other unions, organisations, charities or individuals as deemed appropriate locally," and a number of the delegates from other unions are also retired.

Following the success of our 2025 **International Women's Day** event in Worcester, WTUC Women's Committee are planning our 2026 event. This will take place on **Saturday 7th March**, so put that date in your diaries! We would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved on

the day. The venue is yet to be confirmed, but will be in Worcester City Centre.

WTUC actively supports **Worcester Palestine Support Group**. WPSG 'Don't Buy Apartheid' events explain what products to boycott, and always lead to lots of positive conversations with members of the public. WTUC also support **Stand Up To Racism**. Their November event (see flier below) is intended to bring together those who are concerned about the recent increase in far-right activity; providing



an opportunity to meet up, socialise, discuss and plan. This event features talks, workshops on a range of topics, live music, poetry and refreshments. WTUC will also be supporting the 'Reclaim the Night' march on **Thursday 27th November**. Meet in **Angel Place at 6pm**. I will be with the drummers. Come and say hello if you are there! (Depending on when this newsletter is mailed out, these events may of course have already happened!)



WTUC recently convened a meeting of affiliated

Trade Unions, to discuss the need for a political voice for working



people, They asked:

'Are we and our trade unions getting an effective voice from political parties, and what other options are there?

STAND UP TO RACISM
Worcestershire

Worcestershire no place for hate
Building opposition to the far right across our county

Speakers

- Emma Birks
Asylum Matters
- Sean McCauley
Worcs NEU
- Brian Darwood
Worcester City Welcomes Refugees

Music

Music and poetry performances

Workshops

Including:

- Craftivists
- Placard & banner making
- Confident conversations around migration
- Conversations in the workplace and the community to counter the far right

Food

Asian Street food, cakes, drinks,

22 November 11 - 3

VENUE TO BE ANNOUNCED - DISABLED ACCESS

Sponsored by: National Education Union, TUC

FREE ENTRY
For tickets scan the QR code

Organised by WSUTR and WTUC