



## REPS' POLO SHIRTS

If you are a CWU rep, get yourself a CWU rep's polo shirt.

Great QR code on the sleeve for recruitment.

Recruit, build the union and look great.

Contact your branch now, who are taking orders.

## FOOTBALL – OUR GAME OR THEIRS?

Has the chasm between football's rulers and ruled always existed? Mickael Correia's *A People's History of Football* attempts to answer this and other questions...

**C**orreia's book must be one of the broadest ever written about football's impact on ordinary people's lives. Based around his experiences in over 15 countries, the author writes with a fan's enthusiasm about scores of fan cultures, with studies of teams, fan groups, and confrontations inside football institutions.

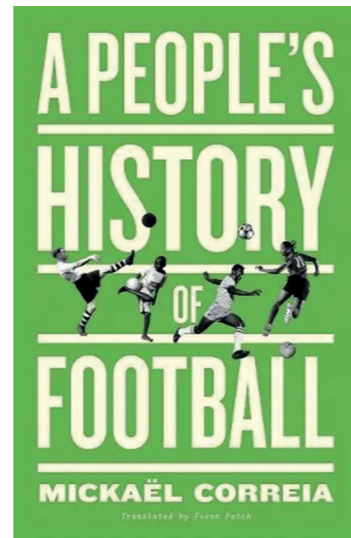
He discusses everything from how jailed militants of the African National Congress (ANC) formed football clubs in apartheid prison to footballers across Europe (including Germany) who fought against Nazism. And he also writes about the growth of women's football across the world – particularly its defiant stance against the football establishment in France.

These colourful stories illustrate a core idea of Correia's book, that of there being two 'spirits' in the world of football: the football of the market economy that the rich feel in their wallets, and the football normal people feel in their hearts. To Correia, this 'other football' has been a 'crucible of resistance' in the fights against dictatorships, colonialists and capitalists across the world.

Correia has created a fascinating and enjoyable work – football fans will get a great kick out of it.

• *A People's History of Football* by Mickael Correia is published by Pluto Press, (ISBN:978 0 7453 4686 1)

• Win a copy of Correia's book (see below)



## COULD YOU BE A MAY WORDSEARCH WINNER?

Can you find these May flowers in the grid:

- Iris**
- Orchid**
- Forget me not**
- Lilac**
- Peony**
- Lilly of the valley**

And these regular May events:

- Whitsun**
- FA Cup Final**
- Morris Dancing**

Take a photo of your solution, send to [info@cwu.org](mailto:info@cwu.org) with your bonus word answer. And the first five correct solutions – with the bonus word – that we receive will win a copy of Mickael Correia's *A People's History of Football*.

Best of luck!

BONUS WORD

“WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST MAY EVENT IN THE UK IN 1926?”

O O C S X D R K S I A M E M G L V P E L  
 D L O R C H I D D A I A G I Y D L V W E  
 G T Z S P F N E H M R I Q J P E O N Y E  
 D J D D X I G G E N E R A L S T R I K E  
 B V X E H E S K T R K K M Z C M A D X L  
 G P U L F T G B K Z H U Y M X D O Y C F  
 Z L F Y O S S O N D C W W M L I L A C K  
 Q I J H O D U E F C O Q J I P L P G C J  
 P R H C X I E M B M L H L H N M J D H X  
 J W C S D X T J P N G U C G S P F E C G  
 H G X P N L L L U T C D V R M T J Y Q Z  
 T E T Y W F A C U P F I N A L K K W S U  
 T Y O X L I L L Y O F T H E V A L L E Y  
 K Y K Y G R D A Y R W F E N P P E S E W  
 D J K S K O D Z J Z X T R N I X G G G V  
 L I L U P A F O R G E T M E N O T V W Z  
 X R H M O R R I S D A N C I N G B L T C  
 N I A U H H J Q H Q K H M Q M Z X Q I P  
 L S C K D A X P O K O F E C J I J S O T  
 W H I T S U N V K S E G S L R Y S W I B



FOR CWU MEMBERS WORKING IN RM GROUP AND THE WIDER P&L SECTOR...

ISSUE FOUR, MAY 2024

## SOLIDARITY OF A UNION – AS IMPORTANT TODAY AS EVER

DGSP Martin Walsh tells *Your Voice* about how he first became a union rep back in the early 1990s at a large delivery office in west London...

**'V'**ictoria Delivery Office employed over 400 postal workers covering earlies, lates and nights then," Martin says, adding that he was 25 years old when, in 1991, he decided to volunteer to be a union rep in what was then the UCW (Union of Communication Workers) before the merger with the telecoms workers' union that created today's CWU.

"I honestly believe it was one of the most rewarding things I ever did," he continues, explaining that the prevailing industrial relations situation at the time was extremely challenging for postmen and women and that he saw his role as "helping to protect my workmates and colleagues from what was a hostile management culture."

"In my early days, postal workers worked six days per week Monday through to Saturday and we worked in a culture of low pay and high overtime levels," Martin says, but adds that the workforce stood together and fought long and hard, collectively, to improve their working conditions. "Back then, we had several area disputes, both unofficial and official. And some of the best days at work in those early days were enjoyed on the picket line."

### DEFENDING MEMBERS THROUGH CHANGE...

Martin goes on to cite some of the key national agreements that the union has been a party to over the period since he became active himself, mentioning the *Way Forward* (2000), *Pay & Modernisation* (2007) and *Business Transformation* (2010) and makes the point that "change has always been controversial, whether that was because of the Way Forward, Pay & Modernisation which introduced absorption or Business Transformation which removed door-to-door (D2D) payments and introduced longer Saturdays."

But our DGSP stresses that, whatever new challenges UK postal workers face, "the solidarity of being in a union is as important today as it ever



**"THE STRONGER THE CWU, THE BETTER WE CAN ALL STAND TOGETHER WHATEVER THE FUTURE HOLDS."**

### OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR STRENGTH...

Recruitment to keep our numbers high, along with organisation to keep this union strong – remain more important than ever, particularly at a time like the present.

When you meet new work colleagues, if they haven't yet joined the CWU, please ask them to scan the QR code on here...



...it takes them direct to the CWU's online joining page.

If you're already a member and want to become more involved, tell your unit rep or branch and you'll get all the help and support you need.

If you're wondering what it's like to be a rep, look inside this Edition and read the interviews with CWU reps Gareth, Vanessa, Craig and Nazrul.

All from different parts of the UK, but all with the same motivation – just like Martin Walsh our DGSP, they all wanted to help and support their workmates and colleagues.

**INSIDE: FOCUS ON FRONTLINE REPS**

**BACK COVER: NEW REPS' POLO SHIRTS & BOOK COMPETITION**

was" and that "there's only one body which postal workers can look to for support and to ensure their terms and conditions are best protected through change – and that's the CWU."

### ROYAL MAIL OWNERSHIP & OUR FUTURE...

Significant developments around the ownership of Royal Mail are being reported as we are able to via our more immediate communications platforms and Martin says: "Please look out for latest statements from either myself or our general secretary Dave Ward on all our channels."

"Our principled position remains as it has been, that we want Royal Mail to return to public ownership. However, the fact is that the company is in the private sector at this time and therefore is subject to share sales and share purchase, but I want to re-assure all members that whatever occurs in this regard, the CWU remains very much present, by your side and always on your side to protect your terms and conditions."

Our DGSP continues: "Our union's policy agenda, the range of resolutions we adopted at Annual Conference last month, our strategic aims and aspirations in terms of members' best interests will remain in place and will continue to guide and shape our work going forward. So please don't listen to any scaremongering or doom-mongering."

## FOCUS ON FRONTLINE REPS

# REPS: THE BACKBONE OF THE CWU

Your Voice met several reps at their first RMG Conference this year, Gareth, Vanessa, Craig and Nazrul agreed to be interviewed about their work as CWU reps...

**GARETH CROSSMAN**  
NEWCASTLE AMAL BRANCH



**VANESSA FOSTER**  
KENT INVICTA BRANCH



**G**areth took up the role of delivery unit rep at the Newcastle West office just before the Covid crisis in early 2020...

"I'd actually been the sub-rep for the previous three years," he says, adding that the deputy role had been something he had taken on "back when we were in the Four Pillars campaign." Then in 2020, the unit rep moved on to a different job at the city's mail centre and Gareth was asked to step up as his replacement.

"You feel a sense of commitment and wanting to do the right thing for people in the office," he replies, when asked why he took it on. "And when Covid came quite soon after, it was all a huge task all of a sudden. It was a daily struggle finding the right balance between keeping everyone safe and wanting to get the job done for the public. But we did all work together very well during that period."

"But then the wheels came off after Covid, they gave all that money away to shareholders and then soon after that we were into the national dispute. That was a very, very difficult time."

Gareth continues: "The revisions they put in were terrible, but we've battled and battled and in the last month we've got eight walks put back in. As a rep I'd say it's the biggest 'small win' for our members here. Today I finished on my time, also on Monday although yesterday a tiny bit over. It's the first time in over a year that's happened. So, you feel like something achieved."

The big challenges at present and coming up are, he says: "Obviously the rumours of a potential takeover and the future of the USO. This would have a huge effect on us in deliveries. Also, we've got new starters getting paid less on the same job – which is why they're walking out."

"Being a rep is hard work. Sometimes it can get to you, but there are days when you go home and feel you've done well, got an AR quashed, got a conduct stopped etc.," says Gareth. "I would encourage people to step forward. If you're considering it, you already know it's the right thing to do."

"And if you've already got a unit rep, why not volunteer as a sub-rep? That's so helpful. My sub-rep Gavin does a fantastic job helping me."

**V**anessa (pictured above right) started work at Sittingbourne Delivery Office in Kent during the Covid crisis three years ago and is now a CWU women's rep...

"I started as a casual, then became a permanent member of staff as a reserve, delivering parcels, progressing to an LAT route in the afternoons." She says, "With our new starters who get put onto afternoon parcels duties, I help train them to do the scanning of parcels, vehicle checks, and mentoring over three days."

Vanessa tells *Your Voice* that she's been in the role of a Kent Invicta Branch women's officer since before the 2022 national strikes, explaining: "I'd been posting comments online to help others and our IR rep John Kavanagh asked me if I wanted to take on this position, which includes equality. We also have Claire Malyon (pictured above left) in our delivery office, who holds the positions of Kent Invicta Branch women's lead and South East Region women's lead, so support is there from both her and John."

"I think it's a good thing to have a delivery office women's rep – although I don't get official facility time like our IR rep – but it is something that helps with our women members who sometimes have issues that they may not want to speak to a man about in the first instance. I'm one of these people that other people speak to and ask for help from – some of them sometimes call me 'mum'! I don't mind at all – I haven't got kids, so they're like my family."

Among the people Vanessa has helped include a colleague with a serious illness who was mistakenly put into a Stage One absence procedure. "I spoke to management about it and then reported it to our IR rep John; he took the issue up and got it quashed," she says, and goes on to cite another instance when a member spoke to her in confidence about a highly sensitive matter, saying: "I was able to point the member in the right direction to a person and helpline who helped to resolve the matter."

Her message to members interested in becoming more involved with the CWU is "go ahead and step up. I've had great support from our reps and our branch secretary Dave Banbury and Shelley Banbury too. The support is there and there's something for everyone to contribute."

**CRAIG STEWART**  
NORTHERN IRELAND POSTAL AMAL BRANCH



**I** see my role as trying to look after people's needs in the office. It's massively important that workers have a voice," says Craig Stewart, unit rep at Bangor Delivery Office in County Down...

In post for "about a year now," Craig stood for election as deputy unit rep in the early part of 2022 and then stepped up to his current position when the existing rep was elected to an area role. As regards training, he points out that there were no courses during the dispute, but that he has completed one course recently which was organised in Belfast.

"I'd say most of the problems we're facing come from things they imposed during the dispute," he says, adding: "We're working through them and making progress bit-by-bit. Biggest issue right now here at Bangor are duty lengths/delivery spans. There's new management here and it's difficult to judge yet, but I'm hoping we'll get a better working relationship."

His relationship with members is positive, he says, describing them as "great – very solid" and adds that he is holding gate meetings to update them on the latest national issues as well as local matters. Another big issue is the treatment of new starters by the company – specifically the worsened terms and conditions that the employer unilaterally introduced during the dispute, despite the opposition of the CWU.

"It's never a good thing to have a two-tier workforce," he says. "We fought for many years to get equal terms and I'm hopeful we can overcome this as well. I'm glad we passed policy on this at Conference and it's good that it's a top priority for the union. At Bangor, we've had new starters leaving because of this, but we try to get them to join the CWU and then we can fight to improve things."

"When I speak to new people, I explain that we're there as a protection for the workers – a sort of buffer zone – some join easily and others take time to come round to it, but we keep on trying."

"I've enjoyed so far being a rep – it's a lot of work, but it is worth it 100 per cent. And we need more new reps coming through. We lost a lot of good people during and after the dispute and we need new reps at quite a few places."

**NAZRUL KHAN**  
MOUNT PLEASANT INTERNATIONAL BRANCH



**F**ive years ago, Nazrul took a petition round his colleagues at Mount Pleasant mail centre in north London, which started him on the path to becoming a rep...

"The petition was over the matter of increasing hours of attendance for part-time staff and I sent it to the mail centre manager and to our area processing rep (APR)," he recalls, adding: "We got a good and conclusive resolution on the matter and following that, the APR Lloyd Harris asked me if I'd be interested in being a union rep."

"I was thinking I wanted to help members. If management are mistreating them, I could help members and provide them support. And so, a few months later, I stood and got elected as late shift rep."

Nazrul tells *Your Voice* that the biggest challenge for him as a rep over the recent period has been the supernumeraries issue – which was sparked by management imposing unagreed changes during the national dispute.

At Mount Pleasant, Nazrul explains that "this put about 100 people on to the supernumerary category – out of a total of around 400."

With sustained hard work, the CWU reps here have managed to get this figure down to 44, he continues and adds: "We're trying so hard to get a resolution on this matter and colleagues into a job. And with bumping starting, we think we can make some more progress on this for our members."

Yet more challenges are on the way, Nazrul says, citing ongoing discussions over alignments and re-signs, which "we're working through as best we can. We're strongly pushing this with management for re-signs, so our members have more opportunities."

Being a workplace rep is something he very much values, saying that it is crucial to the wellbeing of members to keep up and maintain the ongoing strength and organisational presence of the union in the workplace. "I remember how Lloyd encouraged me and I try to encourage others to step up and volunteer to be reps too," he says.

"I say if you become a rep, you can help and there are a lot of opportunities for new reps to learn and be trained in the CWU. I attended several rep training courses and I came back to Mount Pleasant afterwards with more confidence and more knowledge."

"If I can do it, so can you."

**SCAN ME! Join the union**

