

THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDTH YEAR

100



John Birdsell

ON November 5 the Engineers' consultative ballot decisively rejected BT's pay offer, and on November 10 the Clerical Group both rejected the offer and voted for industrial action.

On February 11 the Engineers voted to accept BT's new offer, and on February 16 the Clerical Group began to consult their members on their new offer.

One hundred days of dispute, and the first national strike in the Union's 100 year history with, on January 27, 28 and 29, nearly all the members, Clerical and Engineering (excluding the Post and Giro, and BT subsidiaries), out on the streets.

This JOURNAL reports on the day by day events on this page, and pages 32 to 35. Area by area reports are featured on pages 35 to 43.

As LINK is being published shortly Clerical coverage is limited, but specific items include ● The offer, front page ● 3-day strike call, page 32 ● The main pay grades, centre pages ● Talks continue, page 38 ● Return to work deal, back page.

Specific engineering features include ● this page, financial advice and how pay triggers work ● facing page, why Executive recommended the offer ● pay details, page 34 ● Centre spread features include the main pay grades, how the country voted, Derek Bourn on how the offer changed, Brian Harper on the return to work arrangements, and Tony

JAN 9: BT PLAY IT TOUGH

BRITISH Telecom decided to play it tough before the industrial action even started. Manchester's paper, bottom left, reported, January 9, that BT had rejected Union offers on emergency cover. But then the snow began to fall, and managers began to change their minds. The Arctic weather hit the East coast badly and already, top left, January 15, managers were having to cut customers off to protect services.

A day later, January 16, suspensions started, with consequent walkouts over the weekend and on the following Monday, January 19. The snow was still around when Nottingham, above, came out on January 20, and management then ensured most members stayed out. By February 9 however the weather and management had thawed, a new offer was on the table, and the Executive were, right, setting out their reasons for acceptance. Members also felt they regained in the dispute things management had taken away from them — a loss set out very graphically, below, in Southport member John Buckley's cartoon.

Field on questions members have raised ● Jim Moher writes on legal implications, page 43 ● back page, BT subsidiaries.

PAY talks started effectively soon after the 1985 pay round ended with negotiations on grading. In April 1986 the NCU and the STE put in a claim for a "substantial" in-

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FEB 9: NEW OFFER

FEBRUARY 9: Why the Executive recommended the offer.

1. The new offer is substantially better than the offer rejected by the Union in January. The amount of money has been improved, all payments are consolidated, the strings have been substantially reduced and all the payments are available to all our members.
2. The Union has re-established the principle of pay settlements without strings. The offer for 1987 is completely without strings.
3. The ETG grading package involves two payments to all in 1987 and 1988 of 0.8 per cent and 1.6 per cent.
4. The cumulative pay increases by June 1987 are 5.9 per cent and by June 1988 are 12.7 per cent and that will form

the starting point for the July 1988 settlement.

5. Discrimination has gone. All the increases are offered to all our members.

6. BT have accepted the Union's view that permanent change should be rewarded with permanent payments. They have abandoned their proposals for one-off cash payments, only partially consolidated. All payments will be by percentage increases on basic rates.

7. BT were proposing that some efficiency payments would be triggered locally when changes were introduced. The Union argued this was not in members' interests and BT now agrees that the payments should be controlled nationally to avoid delays.

8. BT have dropped their proposal to extend the working day to 7.00 a.m.-6.45 p.m. They wish to discuss with the Union proposals for scheduled overtime to cover the needs of the customer. We are not opposed to national talks on

the scheduling of reasonable amounts of overtime where there are identified customer requirements, but we have made it clear that this is not part of the proposed 1986 pay and efficiency agreement.

9. BT have dropped the review of the Tel O grade from the proposed pay deal.

10. BT have dropped the review of recruitment qualifications from the proposed pay deal.

11. BT have dropped the requirement for exceptional recruitment to the TO grade from the proposed pay deal.

12. BT have dropped accelerated promotion from T2A to ST from the proposed pay deal.

13. BT have agreed the Union's demand that the Allied Grades should have an equal pay award in return for accepting the new MT Workshop Assistant grade, new responsibilities for MT Workshop Supervisors and increased flexibility in the duties of the Supplies grades.

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Chaos on the line forecast

BRITISH Telecom survived a crisis weekend after a walkout by 900 Norfolk telephone engineers — but warned of serious disruption as the strike spreads across the county.

Norfolk phones walkout

with union instructions over a pay dispute, refused to work over the weekend. About 900 engineers in Norfolk walked out in sympathy on Friday and up to 185 more at King's Lynn are expected to join the stoppage today. Mass meetings are planned at Westwick Road car park in Norwich and at Lynn Workers Club this morning.

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crease. A special *JOURNAL* on grading was circulated to Engineers in May and discussed at Conference.

BT made no reply on the pay claim until after Conference, but then offered on June 19 — in effect — nothing, without strings. Talks continued, ending up on September 16 with BT's "final offer" to the Engineers decisively rejected on November 5 by more than 3 to 1. The Clerical offer was rejected by a similar margin.

This should have come as no surprise to BT. July's *JOURNAL* had reported BT seemed to be stalling in making an offer, and that BT Chairman Sir George Jefferson had just had his salary hiked 55 per cent to £172,206.

August's *JOURNAL* said BT's offers had been rejected by both Groups, and management were wanting wide ranging strings. September's *JOURNAL* said a

marginal improvement in the offer had been rejected as inadequate, and *LINK* (September/October) reflected the Clerical Executive's anger at the offer.

In the Engineers' ballot the Executive said they wanted to keep BT round the table, but BT's only response was to cease talking to all unions collectively.

In the meantime the Clerical Group began to plan its industrial action while the Engineers prepared for a second ballot, under the 1984 Act, on taking industrial action themselves.

BT however had not moved. On December 11 half year profits were announced of over £1 billion pre-tax, with dividends up 11.7 per cent.

On December 15, with an even higher turnout, the Engineers voted 4 to 1 for industrial action. "We've had enough" was the headline in the Clerical *LINK* (November/December) and their action started, November 24, with a national walkout.

On December 17 the STE voted 2 to 1 for industrial action, and on December 19 a leaflet went out to

'40,000 strike' as Telecom dispute flares

THE British Telecom dispute escalated dramatically yesterday. By KEITH AITKEN, Labour Correspondent. their keys, their passes and equipment off them. What a

Engineering members announcing a withdrawal of goodwill from January 5 and a national overtime ban and work to rule from January 12.

Clerical action was continuing with an Action Room staffed to handle Branch queries. With no progress in talks the Engineers withdrew goodwill and co-operation on January 5. Press interest had however been building up from the New Year.

Work to rule guidelines were sent out on January 7 and Branches advised that stoppages of up to 24 hours should take place if anyone was sent home. BT also came up with another "final offer" which was rejected.

On January 8 General Secretary John Golding told the Press: "We have negotiated patiently for eight months... management have given us very shabby treatment... industrial action will be stepped up".

The Union said the door was always open for talks. STE also announced industrial action starting from January 12.

On January 9 it became clear management were also stepping up their actions. Offers of emergency cover were rejected in various areas. Letters started to circulate saying "Are you prepared to work as directed?" and steps were taken to bring in more overtime.

On January 10 some papers reported Stock Exchange fears about the effects of the dispute. In



● Engineers on the picket line at the satellite earth station at Goonhilly had unexpected dangers to face. According to local paper, the *Helston Packet* they interviewed the NCU officer Dave Gilbert in front of a sign warning pedestrians of dangers in the area.



● Police were called in to investigate cut telephone cables in Carlisle. NCU Branch Secretary Jeff Graham deplored the attack and said there was no way the culprits were his members. Shortly after five men appeared in court... none was a BT employee.

Clerical staff join growing phone dispute

THE BRITISH Telecom dispute is leading to a major escalation in sales, with clerical staff set to join their engineering colleagues on strike. By MARK HUTCHINGS. Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Overseas support has come from the Geneva-based Postal Telegraph. A nationwide three-day stoppage.

THE DISPUTE GROWS, and headlines and photos tell the story, Far left, Jan 19 Norfolk: 900 engineers walk out over weekend following suspensions, adding to the chaos already caused by the Arctic weather. Left, Jan 20 Scotland: Up to 40,000 engineers had walked out over suspensions, and the figure was expected to rise. Top, Jan 21 Leicester: Derby's Bob Laxton talks members at a mass meeting. Left, Jan 21 Birmingham: Drivers' pickets outside Hockley Depot (Photo John Harris, IFL). Above, Jan 22 Cardiff: Walk-outs and lock-outs had spread round the country.

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JANUARY 22: CLERICAL members have been called out on a three day strike from Tuesday. The strike on January 27, 28 and 29 is in support of the claim for a substantial pay rise — without strings.

More and more Clerical members have become involved in action in recent days. Some have been locked out by management, some are out in protest over BT's suspension of Clerical Branch officers or other members, and some have refused to cross picket lines.

"It is essential that all members support the strike and show clearly the strength of the members' demands on the 1986 pay claim", said Clerical Deputy General Secretary Jeannie Drake.

"The Clerical Group Executive Council has made every negotiating effort", she said. "It is the inflexibility of BT that has prevented progress".

The Clerical Executive reported in the *Journal Special*: All Clerical Group Members in BT plc have been called out on a three day strike on Tuesday 27th, Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th in support of the Clerical Group's claim for a substantial pay increase without strings!

This action will consolidate the resolve of the 34,000 Members in BT plc to fight against BT's intimidatory behaviour and signal to management once and for all the demand of our Members that they have created massive profits for BT and therefore deserve a substantial pay rise without strings!

All Members must support the strike and show clearly the strength of the members' demands on the 1986 pay claim.

Monday, 19th January saw further escalation in the NCU's fight against BT's totally unaccountable and conditional

pay offer, and already many Clerical Group Members have shown their clear solidarity with Engineering Group Members by not crossing their picket lines.

Members in Manchester GMO and Blackburn GMO refused to sign letters stating they would work as directed by BT and were locked out by management.

Later in the week the number of members locked out for refusing to sign these letters dramatically increased as the Engineers' industrial action spread to London.

In York GMO members were locked out and immediately met and decided to stay out until the letters were withdrawn. Similar action was taken or is being considered by members in other branches.

In Bristol and Bedford letters were either not given out, or withdrawn after local negotiations, as their Members remained adamant they would not give in to threats from management.

After the suspension of the Branch Secretary in Canterbury 200 members walked out and say they will remain out until the suspension is lifted. In the West End of London traffic was disrupted at one stage by hundreds of members reporting for work at their Branch who were locked out by management.

The Branch Secretary was suspended and advised that all Union facilities were withdrawn permanently. Members were told to sign a declaration that they would work Sundays if required!

In Southend and Leicester Members also refused to cross picket lines and met later in the week to discuss further action.

The resolve from the members was most evident in the Clerical Group's Communications Room as Branches rang in advising HQ of their determination not to succumb to BT's bullying.

oral warnings Tuesday, written warnings Wednesday, suspensions Thursday. But all down the East coast General Winter played havoc with that plan. Some managers even asked for an amnesty.

Jan 13: Managers' action plan marked "in strictest confidence" for suspensions by the week became popular reading. A leaflet for handing out to customers prepared by Head Office.

Press interest was heavy, critical of BT. Senior executives appear "to have miscalculated badly", *The Guardian*, shareholders on strike "providing management with a sober barometer reading", *Daily Telegraph*, BT's plans for a "lock out" became even clearer. Friday looked to be the crunch.

Jan 14: Growing threats to Show Working Week arrangements were another management move to force "suspensions". The weather was still causing chaos. Many members could not get their vehicles out. Goonhilly was snowed in. Preference keys were being used to ease problems.

Jan 15: BT confirmed they were planning to change hours to round the overtime ban. Factory workers were piling up. The Union told Press a volunteer had got a Norfolk hospital back on the air "talking through" a repair over emergency link.

Jan 16: The first suspensions reported came in West London on Saturday working for a car exhibition. A wave followed throughout the Central Territory with between 700 and 1,000 suspended, often at random, with some immediate local stoppages. The Engineering Executive instructed members not to sign "assurances".



THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDDTH YEAR

PHONE CHAOS
 -10,000 lines crash
 -Hospital 'isolated'

Western Morning News
OPINION
No need for this Telecom strike
 ASSUMING there is no last-minute resolution of differences, British Telecom will be plunged into an all-out strike by telephone engineers from Monday, and its most serious industrial relations problem since privatisation. The National Communications Union, representing telephone engineers, wants productivity

Wales was out Jan 21, as was much of the West Country and Glasgow. The rest of Scotland and Northern Ireland were due out Jan 22. Clerical staff were due out for 3 days.

Above Jan 24 Nottingham: An exchange crashes before the national strike even starts.

Right, Jan 24 Plymouth: One of a number of friendly newspaper comments. This said BT's offer was "below par".

Below, General Secretary John Golding's comments on his phone being tapped caught the cartoonist's eye.

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Weekend, Jan 17 and 18: The suspensions were followed by local stoppages, meetings and mass pickets with up to 10,000 members involved. In some places clerical members came out too, or refused to cross picket lines. Letters to home, and even visits by some managers, did not improve members' feelings. General Secretary John Golding said it seemed in some areas management "picked names out of a hat". In one case a non-member volunteering for

overtime was told to "b***** off", the manager wanted "refusals" not workers.

Jan 19: Around 40,000 members were out in support of 1,000 suspended, and more suspensions followed, spreading from the centre into Wales, the North East, North West and South. Around 6,000 clerical members were also out, with some suspended. Some exchanges crashed, Oxford and Aylesbury included.

Jan 20: BT made it clear there would be a "lock-out" by saying members would be asked to sign "work as directed" forms. In London members were told the Shorter Working Week would be scrapped from Thursday. Around 61,000 members were out, with 25,000 locked out. The Union decided to call London out on Wednesday, and any other area not yet hit on Thursday. "BT management appear to want to do a Rambo", John Golding told the Press. Today said BT "will find the big wide world of privatisation can be cold and friendless". Management's emergency control listed major service failures in Arrowe Brook, Billinge, Ashbourne, Langley Mill and Walsall.

Jan 21: With London out nearly 100,000 members were involved, including Clerical branches in many parts of the country. International unions pledged support. Clerical members were advised not to sign forms, but to cross pickets — as they could not do engineering work. Three day Clerical strike was called for Jan 27, 28 and 29. BT's control has six major service failures.

Jan 22: BT settle with STE, and their action is called off. Remaining areas join in stoppages. Around 115,000 members out. Engineering ultimatum to BT — everybody back by Friday 10 a.m., or all out strike from Monday. BT control lists 10 major service failures. Problems reported to Head Office include Manchester Airport, Whitstable, the TUC, the Open University, M4 phones, and Oxford and Aylesbury again.

Jan 23: BT did not back down, though verbal assurances seemed to be replacing written ones. Leaked documents shows BT's real customer priorities — last, the residential phone. One theory went up in flames this week, said the Daily Mail, "the idea that once workers become shareholders they will not take industrial action".

Manchester Central Branch chair George Haigh said: "We have a number of magistrates, some Tory Councillors, even a prospective Tory Parliamentary candidate, all out on strike and all on the picket lines."

Reports flooded in of computer links down, cash machines hit, customers complaining, faults soaring, phone boxes out, 151 services suspended, and non-members and EOTA flocking to join up.

Weekend Jan 24 and 25: BT's control listed seven major service failures. Nottingham's Crusader exchange crashed while a mass meeting was going on. East Midlands District Chair Box Laxton said: "The industry is already falling apart at the seams." BT Chief Executive Iain Vallance said the strike was "impetuous, self-indulgent action".

Jan 26: All out strike starts. BT control lists 14 major service failures. BT claim "sabotage", but the story proves to be a 24-hour wonder as the Union and members round the country pick holes in BT's "fabrications". "They should stop insulting the integrity of their staff," said John Golding. Brief session with BT, after routine meeting of all the unions on other issues, ended with statement: "We are no nearer a resolution, but we have agreed to reflect."

Branches were putting out regular news-sheets and leaflets, and some were also advertising in local papers. Management were reported to be setting up special flying squads, and telling customers not to talk to the Press if they wanted faults fixed.

In The Star TASS sponsored MP Joe Ashton wrote: "Already Norman Tebbit is wheeling out the little old lady cut off from her relatives."

Jan 27: Clerical came out on a three-day stoppage. Other unions instructed members not to cross

pickets, or do NCU work. BT's control had eight major service failures, and reports flooded into Head Office. Operators reported congestion on the system in many parts of the country. TV and radio reporters said they could not get Manchester, Nottingham or Oxford.

The Financial Times reported on the unlikely pickets... "all were shareholders... some were readers of the Daily Mail, others of the Daily Telegraph... some had worked for 20 years without being in a national strike"... who were convinced "we have to stand and fight".

Jan 28: BT rejected Union call for more talks saying it was not prepared to separate pay from strings. BBC and ITV were having growing problems with links and picture quality. London operators reported serious congestion to nearly 40 areas, including all of central Manchester, five Birmingham exchanges, and 11 exchanges in London. Reports later in the day listed over 20 London exchanges which could not be reached. Repeated reports came in of cables being dug up and vandalism problems, and BT's "sabotage" claims were ignored by the Press.

Jan 29: The revised Clerical offer was put forward, and rejected as unacceptable. Clerical members were told not to sign forms when returning to work. The Engineers had exploratory talks with BT. Many reports of problems included banks and building societies. One member cashing a cheque was told by the cashier they had been told not to tell the Press about problems. Reporters, who could not get their money out, found "official denials" far from amusing.

Jan 30: The Clerical return to work was confused with some not crossing pickets, some suspensions, much not signing of forms,

and some walk-outs... but most eventually got back in. One was out for three weeks — he had not heard, and no one had told him, he should be back. The engineering pay team was now to meet BT. A thousand members marched through Preston led by a solitary drummer, former Internal Branch Sec. Pete Vickers. Bank cash machines were hit again, and exchanges were crashing round the country.

Weekend, Jan 31 and Feb 1: Engineering talks continue. BT's second round of Press advertising features the rejected Clerical offer. John Golding tells the Press his phone has been tapped — badly — because he knows about it. **Feb 2:** Little progress made in engineering talks so General Secretary asked to see the Board. Clerical members still out. Bristol child dies after farm accident. Phone is out of order, but mother says strikers bear no blame. Birmingham Internal Chair Les Ford stars in Channel 4's Comment slot saying "a permanent solution, honourable to both sides" must be found. Branches continue to phone in with lists of problems. Exchanges crashing include Wapping and parts of the City. Management are said to be keeping TXE4s going by pegging out alarms caused by over-metering leaving customers to pick up the tab. BT continues to clamp down on information, telling major customers not to tell the Press about problems.

Feb 3: Clerical have lengthy talks with BT. John Golding tells the Press BT should sharpen up, the company appears to be stalling in the engineering talks. Members in the Sheffield and Lincoln district are told hours will all be changed to cope with the disruption, and managers will then decide whether





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THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDDTH YEAR

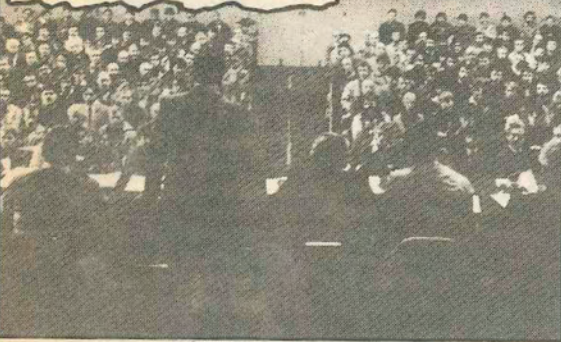
Dog goes on picket



British Telecom engineer Les Watson on the picket line with his pet Border collie Jenny.

By Jane Sneyes
 JENNY, the Border collie, is on picket duty with striking engineers outside British Telecom's Doncaster exchange in Printing Office Street.
 Labelled "securicollie official picket" she braved sub-zero temperatures to support her owner, Les Watson, secretary of Doncaster branch of the National Communications Union.
 The 260 Doncaster NFU members begin their third week of dispute over pay with BT today.
 They fear emergency services are threatened because BT management have refused to allow the union to organise cover when required, and to withdraw

● **General Secretary John**
 Golding decided January would be a good time to move house. The removal was just two days into the national stoppage, and packing and painting was done in-between television broadcasts, press interviews and executive meetings. The move took his London base nearer the House of Commons for MP wife Llin.



FEB. 12: While the morning newspapers were reporting the ballot result, and commenting on the dispute, members began to return to work — but not without difficulty in many areas.

In the City of London there was a mass meeting and a march by hundreds to the District HQ before

talks got underway about return to work arrangements. The national formula is set out in more detail on the centre pages of this JOURNAL, and makes clear the framework within which local deals had to be agreed.

Other areas which had problems included Liverpool, Manchester,

the Midlands, Nottingham and Brighton.

A top level meeting was held with BT Inland boss Mike Bett. After it, John Golding told the Press that it was hoped "a suggested formula which has been worked out would both keep the Shorter Working Week intact and

provide BT the cover they need to repair the damage they say has not happened". It seemed likely that the after effects of the dispute would take a month to six weeks to clear.

The Independent said the dispute had been "a good old fashioned sort of strike", but fore-

cast battles ahead, and predicted in another story "phone users could sue" BT.

The Morning Star said the dispute had been "working-class solidarity at its best" while the London Evening Standard reported John Golding as saying it was "a Tebbit strike". Tebbit

Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			Holiday Scotland											
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11						

on offer not now likely until Wednesday. BT say network working well, but stockbrokers write down BT's profit forecasts. Clerical talks continue.

Feb 7: Union adverts in national Press for Sunday's meetings. Press say talks may be over by Sunday night.

Feb 8: Widespread media coverage of mass meetings and vote to stay out. Talks continue throughout the day. One offer rejected in morning, a second considered at 9 p.m. — and Engineering Execu-

tive decide to recommend it. Problems cropping up in various areas over future working hours.

Feb 9: Ballot papers go out Wednesday's vote.

Feb 10: Engineers agree return work formula, but Union issues warning on Shorter Working Week arrangements. Despite some campaigning against settlement, General Secret confident it will be backed.

Feb 11: Engineers accept by 2 to 1, and Clerical also agree to for settlement.

Steve McTaggart

THE PAY DETAILS

From previous page
 "the original arrangements can be restored". Slightly less faults reported by Branches. BT seems to have stopped operators getting, or giving out, any information on problems.

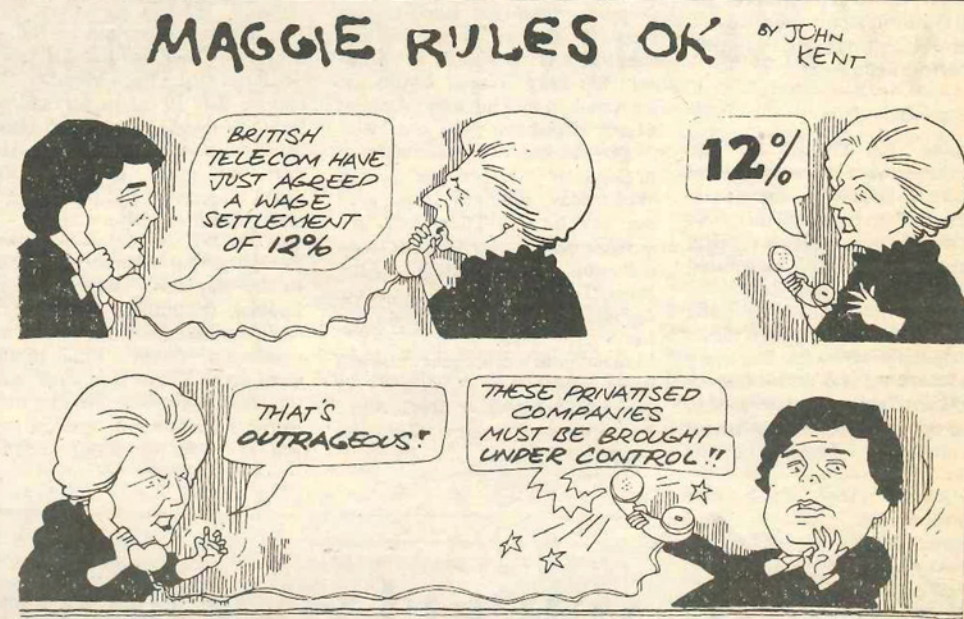
Feb 4: Around 15,000 members took part in the London march and rally. Clerical rejected the latest offer, but further talks are taking place. On the engineering side a Press conference expressing some hope of a settlement followed a meeting with Board members. Branches reported huge backlog of faults, many exchange crashes, and various major cable problems but network congestion seemed less.

Feb 5: More talks with BT. Engineering Executive calls Sunday meetings for a ballot. BT warns

● THE dispute and the pay offers are reported to have been unpopular with the Prime Minister. Private Eye comments, right. Left, a members' mass meeting in Edinburgh, January 25, on the eve of the all-out strike. Below, all grades get the same. The main grades on the centre pages.

against undue optimism, and says a return to work Monday unlikely. TV and radio still having problems.

Feb 6: Talks continuing, but ballot



	Existing Pay	1.7.86	1 April-30 June 1987	1.7.87	30.6.88	Total Increase in 1986/87	Total increase on Rates between 1 July 1986 and 30 June 1988
TRAINEE TECHNICIAN (Improver)	6,705 (128.50)	7,050 (135.11)	7,106 (136.18)	7,444 (142.66)	7,563 (144.94)	6.0%	12.8% + £858
TRAINEE TECHNICIAN (Apprentice)	5,842 (111.96)	6,140 (117.67)	6,189 (118.61)	6,483 (124.24)	6,587 (126.24)	5.9%	12.8% + £745
MT: WORKSHOP SUPERVISOR I	£11,584	£12,170	£12,267	£12,850	£13,056	5.9%	12.7% + £1,472
WORKSHOP SUPERVISOR II	10,269	10,790	10,876	11,393	11,576	5.9%	12.7% + £1,306
TECHNICIAN IN CHARGE	9,262	9,730	9,808	10,274	10,438	5.9%	12.7% + £1,176
DRIVING INSTRUCTOR	9,262	9,730	9,808	10,274	10,438	5.9%	12.7% + £1,176
TECHNICIAN	8,354 (180.10)	8,780 (168.26)	8,850 (169.61)	9,270 (177.65)	9,418 (180.49)	5.9%	12.7% + £1,064
ASSISTANT TECHNICIAN	7,934 (152.05)	8,340 (159.83)	8,407 (161.12)	8,806 (168.76)	8,947 (171.46)	6.0%	12.8% + £1,013
APPRENTICE TECHNICIAN	5,842 (111.96)	6,140 (117.67)	6,189 (118.61)	6,483 (124.24)	6,587 (126.24)	5.9%	12.8% + £745
SUPPLIES: FLEET FOREMAN	9,262 (177.51)	9,730 (186.47)	9,808 (187.96)	10,274 (196.90)	10,438 (200.04)	5.9%	12.7% + £1,176
DRIVER	8,354 (160.10)	8,780 (168.26)	8,850 (169.61)	9,270 (177.65)	9,418 (180.49)	5.9%	12.7% + £1,064
PATROLMAN	7,934 (152.05)	8,340 (159.83)	8,407 (161.12)	8,806 (168.76)	8,947 (171.46)	6.0%	12.8% + £1,013
WATCHMAN	6,682 (128.05)	7,020 (134.53)	7,076 (135.61)	7,412 (142.05)	7,531 (144.33)	5.9%	12.7% + £849
SENIOR STOREKEEPER	9,262 (177.51)	9,730 (186.47)	9,808 (187.96)	10,274 (196.90)	10,438 (200.04)	5.9%	12.7% + £1,176
STOREKEEPER	8,354 (160.10)	8,780 (168.26)	8,850 (169.61)	9,270 (177.65)	9,418 (180.49)	5.9%	12.7% + £1,064
SUPPLIES ASSISTANT	7,281 (139.53)	7,650 (146.61)	7,711 (147.78)	8,077 (154.79)	8,206 (157.26)	5.9%	12.7% + £925
TRAINEE STOREKEEPER	5,742 (110.05)	6,030 (115.56)	6,078 (116.48)	6,367 (122.02)	6,469 (123.97)	5.9%	12.7% + £727
REPROGRAPHIC: UNIT SUPERVISOR	£10,397	£10,920	£11,007	£11,530	£11,714	5.9%	12.7% + £1,317
CHIEF PHOTOPRINTER	10,093	10,600	10,685	11,193	11,372	5.9%	12.7% + £1,279
ASST. CHIEF PHOTOPRINTER	8,798	9,240	9,314	9,756	9,912	5.9%	12.7% + £1,114

	Existing Pay	1.7.86	1 April-30 June 1987	1.7.87	30.6.88	Total Increase in 1986/87	Total increase on Rates between 1 July 1986 and 30 June 1988
PHOTOPRINTER 1	7,934 (152.05)	8,340 (159.83)	8,407 (161.12)	8,806 (168.76)	8,947 (171.46)	6.0%	12.8% + £1,013
PHOTOPRINTER 2	7,156 (137.15)	7,520 (144.12)	7,580 (145.27)	7,940 (152.17)	8,067 (154.68)	5.9%	12.7% + £911
DRAUGHTSMAN	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
SENIOR DRAWING OFFICE ASSISTANT	8,499	8,930	9,001	9,429	9,580	5.9%	12.7% + £1,081
DRAWING OFFICE ASSISTANT	7,800	8,200	8,266	8,659	8,798	6.0%	12.8% + £988
JUNIOR DRAWING OFFICE ASSISTANT	5,842 (111.96)	6,140 (117.67)	6,189 (118.61)	6,483 (124.24)	6,587 (126.24)	5.9%	12.8% + £745
ILLUSTRATOR	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
ASSISTANT ILLUSTRATOR	6,367	6,690	6,744	7,064	7,177	5.9%	12.7% + £810
SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER	9,923	10,430	10,513	11,012	11,188	5.9%	12.7% + £1,265
PHOTOGRAPHER	7,664	8,050	8,114	8,499	8,635	5.9%	12.7% + £971
ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER	5,454	5,730	5,776	6,050	6,147	5.9%	12.6% + £603
TELECOM OFFICER	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
TELECOM OFFICER (PR)	11,584	12,170	12,267	12,850	13,056	5.9%	12.7% + £1,472
MSR	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
SALES REPRESENTATIVE	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
SALES SUPPORT OFFICER	10,397	10,920	11,007	11,530	11,714	5.9%	12.7% + £1,317
SALES SUPPORT OFFICER (PR)	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400	5.9%	12.7% + £1,397
CABLESHIPS: SEAMAN CABLEHAND (Certified)	£7,407 (141.95)	£7,779 (149.08)	£7,841 (150.27)	£8,213 (157.40)	£8,344 (159.91)	5.9%	12.7% + £937
GENERAL SERVICE HAND	7,156 (137.15)	7,520 (144.12)	7,580 (145.27)	7,940 (152.17)	8,067 (154.60)	5.9%	12.7% + £911
LEADING STOKER	7,281 (139.53)	7,650 (146.61)	7,711 (147.78)	8,077 (154.79)	8,206 (157.26)	5.9%	12.7% + £925
ASSISTANT STEWARD	6,915 (132.53)	7,270 (139.33)	7,328 (140.44)	7,676 (147.11)	7,799 (149.46)	6.0%	12.8% + £884

* These figures have been rounded up

ballots had kept members united, he said, and the Standard commented "rumours of the strike's demise are premature".

Clerical Branches were sent copies of their pay offer so members could be consulted on whether or not to accept.
Feb. 13: Sorting out the engineers'

return to work continues, and clerical began to organise meetings to consult their members. (See back page for latest on Shorter Working Week problems.)

PRIORITIES
The priorities we have been asked to follow are as follows:-

- 1 Network Maintenance - DMSUs - Large TE RS - Backbone equipment
- 2 Life/Death individual faults
- 3 Major Business PABX - Megastream etc - Kilostream
- 4 PCs generally
- 5 Business Faults
- 6 Residential

Jan 23: (left), a management note from East of Scotland manager D. L. Reay shows exactly where BT's priorities lie, with residential customers last.

Jan 31: (below), and Carlisle Branch Secretary Jeff Graham makes sure the public knows why the Union is taking a stand.

Feb 2: (far left, facing page), Doncaster Secretary Les Watson on the picket with Jenny — but the story did not have a happy ending. See District report in "Around the pickets."

W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25					

● Government Ministers fear the BT two year 12.7 per cent pay offer could be used as a yardstick by other unions and threaten Tory efforts to curb settlements, said the *Daily Telegraph*, Feb 10. "They were also complaining that the company had prematurely opted for a settlement and had conceded key items in its productivity package."



● A former Times employee, who refused to work behind the Wapping barbed wire asked one NCU picket line during the engineers' strike their opinion of scabs. They told her forcibly what they thought. She then asked what they were doing reading a scab newspaper — they were clutching a copy of the Sun!

Andrew Ward (REPORT)

The Telecom dispute

'We have to change to stay ahead...'

'BT trying to railroad the issues through'

JEFF Graham has become something of a local media star since the Telecom dispute began.

As Carlisle branch secretary of the National Communications Union, he has been in great demand by newspapers, radio and TV programmes over his 200 members picket line last Monday.

But Mr Graham starts with the warning that the union is not a political party. "We have already done a lot of change and we have done it in a way that has not been done before."

He says he is not a politician but a trade unionist. "I am not a politician but a trade unionist. I am not a politician but a trade unionist."

AROUND THE PICKETS

THE front page of the January *Journal* reported the Clerical walkout which marked the start of their industrial action. The "Stop Press" in February's *Journal* reported BT's first suspensions of engineers for taking industrial action.

That *Journal*, which may have not reached all members because of the lock-outs, walk-outs and the strikes, was followed by two *Strike Specials* on January 22 and 30, printed in limited quantities and distributed at pickets and meetings.

In this March issue of the *Journal*, and in the Clerical *Link* now being printed, further details of the dispute are set out.

Most of the *Journal* is a day by day round-up of the industrial action. The two *Specials*, however, also recorded area-by-area what had happened.

This feature adds to the two snapshots taken on January 22 and 30 two further reports compiled on February 10 and

13. Some districts, despite a number of attempts, are not featured. Apologies for that, but making calls, and getting through, was not always easy.

Hundreds of calls came into, and were made from, the Engineering and Clerical Industrial Action Rooms. These accounts, collected together by Assistant Secretary Roger Darlington, give a flavour of what was going on:

JAN 22:
EAST MIDLANDS DISTRICT: First suspensions in the District came about 3.00 p.m. on Friday 16th January when all over the District management started to suspend Subscriber Apparatus and Line staff and Repair Service Control staff for refusing to work overtime.

Branches then called out the members concerned so that, by the weekend, 150 members were "out". On the following Monday 19th January these members reported for work, but were all sent home. As a result, the Burton-on-Trent and the two Leicester Branches had a 24-hour stoppage.

The following day — Tuesday — the two Derby Branches, the two Nottingham Branches, and its members came out on their 24-hour stoppage.

The position as at Thursday 22nd January is that no members are working, but each day some 4,500 Engineers are turning up for what one Branch Official described as "work queues". However, BT is not allowing members to return to work without signing the form, and all members are refusing to do so.

Membership support in the District is total. Indeed members with outstanding levy payments are sending cheques to the Branches, and even non-Union members have refused to go to work and have asked to rejoin the Union.

An indication of the private feelings of at least some First Line managers is that a number of them have been sending cheques to the Union's local fighting fund — one for £50.

Packed mass meetings have been held in Nottingham, Northampton and Derby where morale has been "first-class". Local Branches have had very good



"This is British Telecom wage negotiations of the day. It's the same as yesterday. Thank you for ringing. This message will now be repeated. . . ."

Turn to next page

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GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5	GROUP 6
Metro 1300 Allegro 1300 Marina/Ital 1300 Maxi 1500 Fiesta 1100/Ghia Escort Pre 81 1300 Escort FWD 1100 Cortina 1300	MG Metro 1300 Marina/Ital 1700 Maestro 1300 Maestro L/HLS 1600 Montego 1600 Triumph Acclaim 1300 Cherry 1300 pre 83	Maestro VP 1600 Montego 2000 HL Micra DX/GL 1600 Ambassador 1700/2200 Datsun Cherry 1500 Sunny 1400/1500	Alfa Sud Ti/Super 1500 Audi 80LS 1600 Citroen Lancer GLX 1400 Stanza 1600 Escort FWD Ghia/Sport/GL 1600 Cortina 2300	Alfa 33 1500 Audi 80 GLS 1600 Audi 80 GL 1800 Maestro MG 1600 Montego MG 2000 Rover 2.3/2.6/3.5 Renault 20 TS 2000 Volvo 240/245 2100

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1	2	3	4	5	6	
£63	£76	£95	£114	£141	£171	
£74	£88	£105	£130	£164	£187	
£82	£96	£119	£141	£178	£212	
£100	£121	£142	£173	£210	£236	

AREAS: The following areas and premiums are for your guidance and may in some circumstances be subject to variation.

RURAL: Counties such as — Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Lincolnshire, Somerset etc.

TYPICAL: Counties such as — Kent, Herts, Bucks, Berks, Leicestershire, W. Yorkshire etc.

METROPOLITAN: Areas such as — Greater London (not Postal Areas), Merseyside, Bradford, Leeds etc.

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NCU 01333

100

THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDTH YEAR

AROUND THE PICKETS

From previous page

reporting from the press and local radio and — as one Branch Official put it — "British Telecom have lost the argument".

● The effect of the industrial action are certainly beginning to be felt in the East Midlands District. Ashbourne, a large TXE2 Exchange serving some 10,000 customers, has been off the air for periods which have totalled 12 hours.

Meanwhile, in Matlock, customers can make calls within the town but are unable to make calls externally. Derbyshire County Council — which has some 34,000 staff — is only able to contact 1,800 of them. Radio paging and Cellnet are off totally.

So great is BT management's desperation that they have been leaning on non-members to do work totally inappropriate to their duty. For instance, a pole tester was told to go out on emergency faults but he refused, walked out and is now part of the stoppage.

● ONE company Allied Dunbar has been calling the Industrial Action Control room at Head Office each day requesting an update on the action. The caller in Swindon has frankly admitted that the company is suffering major communications problems with its facilities in Liverpool, Manchester and elsewhere.

Therefore any bland assurance by BT to the media that companies are not being hit by our action are simply instances of BT spokespersons being "economical with the truth" (to use the words of a distinguished British civil servant when testified in an Australian Court).

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT: The action in Liverpool District is described as "fantastic". The solidarity of the members is "marvellous". Two mass meetings have been held and, in each case, over 2,000 members attended.

The second of these meetings was held on the evening of Wednesday 21st January when there was a local Liverpool versus Everton football derby. Any sports enthusiast will know how seriously Liverpoolians take their football, but incredibly members gave away tickets for the derby match in order to attend the mass meeting!

Support for the industrial action has not come simply from long-standing Union members. Trunk Networks Operations recently recruited a number of people on short term contracts and seven of these have joined the Union and gone on strike. One of them only joined BT on Monday 5th January and was taking industrial action within a week which must be some kind of record.

Then there is the case of the Sales Support Officer, a non-member who will be 60 in two months time, who was not presented with the traditional form, went off to seek the form so that he could refuse to sign it, and subsequently went out of the building and joined the Union.

● As elsewhere in the country, major communications problems are now being felt by the Company and customers in Liverpool District. It is reported that half the circuits between Liverpool and Manchester are down. A job excavator cut through three cables, and put out of action 350 circuits near Aintree.

LONDON: ONE incident reveals clearly the brutally insensitive way in which some BT managers have been responding to the action of our members in seeking a reasonable pay settlement.

One of our Clerical members who works for Materials Executive in London is planning to marry on Saturday 24th January. His bride-



● Feb 11 — Engineering President Tony Field (above) announces the acceptance of the pay offer. Right General Secretary John Golding and Engineering Deputy G.S. Eric C. George.

ENGINEERING President Tony Field writes: After the return to work I wanted to seek the opinion of ordinary members on the settlement — not in committee rooms or mass meetings, but over a pint or two in the workplace.

I have done just that and, needless to say, the views expressed ranged from the disappointed to the ones who felt we had had a victory. Knowing that my mates were typical I thought it may be useful to put on paper, in article form, some of the discussions we had.

The issues are not in order of priority, but do cover some of the concerns.

Firstly, the role of John Golding. It appeared to some that, as General Secretary, he was not leading all the extremely detailed set of negotiations. Although it is true that Golding was not in on all those detailed meetings it should be made clear that he met the Chief Executive and the Managing Director of British Telecom more than anyone.

These are the people in BT who make the policy decisions and John prompted, threatened, cajoled and used all other efforts in order to ensure that the negotiations kept going.

Nor should he have been in on all meetings with BT. The Head Office machine is much more than one person. Every morning, during the dispute, there was co-ordination between the Publicity Department, the Control Room, the Deputy General Secretary (E), John and myself.

All the press, TV and radio may have appeared as a one-man show but it was backed up with detailed planning and briefing. John may have rightly been seen as the voice of the Union, but the policies he pronounced were laid down strictly by the Executive which met almost on a daily basis — including weekends.

Next — was it a good offer? My honest answer is that the first year could have been better. However, an increase of 5.02 per cent with another 0.8 per cent to come, against an inflation rate of 2.5 per

How did the odds add up

cent last July is not bad.

The second year figure of 4.75 per cent from July 1987 is not bad either against inflation predictions of between 3.5 per cent and 3.9 per cent. In this sense a no strings deal which beats inflation is no mean achievement.

Add to that a further 1.6 per cent and the two-year deal with increased rates of 12.7 per cent will in no way be a defeat. We are then due another pay increase on 1st July, 1988.

Ballots — was the Sunday (99 per cent in favour) ballot a complete waste of time? My answer is absolutely not. If ever a ballot was a success then this was. There were two major benefits:

1. It showed BT a completely united Union.
2. It forced BT round the table to make its absolute final offer on that Sunday evening.

How do I know? It is not only the clarity with which managers make these statements but almost an instinct with negotiators that they

Your pay: Four steps up

1986 PAY DEAL: EXAMPLES OF INCREASES AT MAXIMUM SCALE

	Existing Pay	1.7.86	1 April 1987	1.7.87	30.6.88
ENGINEERING		1.7.86	1.7.87	30.6.88	
INSTRUCTOR	£11,784	£12,380	£12,479	£13,072	£13,281
TECHNICAL OFFICER	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400
SENIOR TECHNICIAN	10,269	10,790	10,876	11,393	11,575
TECHNICIAN 1	9,262	9,730	9,808	10,274	10,438
	(177.51)	(186.47)	(187.96)	(196.90)	(200.04)
TECHNICIAN 2A	8,354	8,780	8,850	9,270	9,418
	(160.10)	(168.26)	(169.61)	(177.65)	(180.49)
TECHNICIAN 2B	7,934	8,340	8,407	8,806	8,947
	(152.05)	(159.83)	(161.12)	(168.76)	(171.46)
LABOURER (PR)	6,915	7,270	7,328	7,676	7,799
	(132.53)	(139.33)	(140.44)	(147.11)	(149.46)
LABOURER	6,237	6,560	6,612	6,926	7,037
	(119.53)	(125.72)	(126.72)	(132.73)	(134.86)
MT TECHNICIAN	8,354	8,780	8,850	9,270	9,418
	(160.10)	(168.26)	(169.61)	(177.65)	(180.49)
SUPPLIES STOREKEEPER	8,354	8,780	8,850	9,270	9,418
	(160.10)	(168.26)	(169.61)	(177.65)	(180.49)
DRAWING OFFICE ASSISTANT	7,800	8,200	8,266	8,659	8,798
PHOTOPRINTER 1	7,934	8,340	8,407	8,806	8,947
	(152.05)	(159.83)	(161.12)	(168.76)	(171.46)
TELECOM OFFICER	11,003	11,560	11,652	12,205	12,400

*These figures have been rounded up

	Existing Pay maxima	1.7.86	1.5.87	1.7.87	30.6.88
CLERICAL		1.7.86	1.5.87	1.7.87	30.6.88
CA	6,648	6,990	7,039	7,373	7,410
	(127.40)	(133.96)	(134.90)	(141.31)	(142.02)
CO	8,646	9,080	9,144	9,578	9,626
COMMO	10,397	10,920	10,996	11,518	11,576
SDPO	8,952	9,410	9,476	9,926	9,976
SPECIALIST TYPIST (Standard Max)	7,120	7,480	7,532	7,890	7,929
PERSONAL SECRETARY (Standard Max)	(136.46)	(143.35)	(144.35)	(151.21)	(151.97)
RETAIL ASSISTANT	9,200	9,264	9,264	9,704	9,753
	7,300	7,670	7,724	8,091	8,131

know when the end of the line has come.

The whole pay team unanimously agreed that the final offer had been made. That is, of course, unless in the weeks to come the whole system ground to a halt.

Why then did the Executive not dig in and hope that this would happen? The answer to that is simple. The network was standing up. In fact, after the first week, it seemed to be getting better. We regularly used to telephone from Greystoke House to all parts of Britain, and, quite frankly, connections were getting through.

Moreover the evidence to show the failures of the network was very sparse. So with this clear evidence any Executive that relied on hope rather than reality would not be serving the best interest of the membership.

Why did I vote in favour of putting the issue back to the Membership with a positive recommendation? I think the first thing to say is that the easy option would have been to make no recommendation at all. But I believed this would have been a cop-out and an abdication of the responsibility those who elected me placed on me.

Judgements in situations like this are never black or white. No one with responsibility for people's livelihoods can make immediate snap decisions and the whole of the Executive took an extremely serious view of the decisions.

My judgement was based on three important considerations:

1. **The Final Offer.** I was sure that without major catastrophes we would not be talking for many weeks. The final offer had been made and it was not one that could be rejected out-of-hand.

2. **The drift back.** I thank the many activists who had been honest enough to tell me we had not long before a drift back to work would commence.

3. **The Network.** I cannot put on paper how I feel about other Unions' members and strike breakers doing our jobs. But, in circumstances like we were in, my judgement can only be — is big business failing? The answer was NO. Nor could anyone guess how long it would survive.

So, I along with the vast majority of the Executive, decided that the unity of the Union had been kept. The obnoxious strings had been lifted and the offer improved to a level where the membership should now be in a position to judge.

I share the view that the Union is now stronger. I believe this is due in no small way to the balloting system. Everyone I spoke to on Saturday, Sunday and Monday were adamant that balloting is essential. That is where the Union got its strength from during this dispute and it is here to stay.

Many thanks to those who gave me their honest opinion, especially Bob from Radcliffe. A. R. FIELD, President (Engineering).



DETAILS

SINCE the end of the pay dispute, writes Assistant Secretary Brian Harper, the Organising Department has received a number of calls from members raising questions on the Return to Work Agreement.

I thought that it might be helpful if I gave a brief outline of the return to work negotiations and how the resultant agreement should be applied within the Districts.

When we met BT to discuss the return to work they attempted to impose upon the Union the most unacceptable terms. They wanted



to-be works for the Company as well.

He was involved in a one-day stoppage of work on Wednesday 21st January and, when he reported back to work the next day, he was told that he had to sign the infamous letter.

Then, so as to show how little some Line managers care for individuals who give dedicated

service to the Company, our member was told that, if he doesn't sign the letter, his special leave for his honeymoon would be cancelled.

SEVERNSIDE DISTRICT: as a result of the "lockout", our Severnside District is operating from a Transport and General Workers' Union building. The local control room advises that the

action in the district is "solid" with over 3,000 Engineers out.

The first suspensions took place on Monday 19th January because of the refusal of certain members to work the previous Saturday. There was a 24-hour stoppage the following day everywhere except Gloucester, and then on the Wednesday Gloucester followed suit.

● Branch officers and members on the picket outside Ballymena T.E.C.

Mass meetings have already been held in Bristol and Bath and more are scheduled. Those which have already taken place are described as "excellent" with "a marvellous response".

Continued over

The return

INDUSTRIAL ACTION: The agreed return to work formula — On the assumption that the NCU(E) ballot of its membership on Wednesday, 11 February endorses the Union's EGEK recommendation to accept the negotiated pay settlement the following agreement will apply.

1. BT will take back, from normal starting time on Thursday, 12 February 1987, all employees in grades represented by the NCU(E) currently taking industrial action. As a gesture of goodwill BT will restore those employees to the payroll with effect from Wednesday, 11 February 1987.

2. All forms of industrial action, including working to rule and overtime ban are withdrawn. There will be no blacking of any work, goods or equipment.

3. Returning employees will not themselves be required to give undertakings, but it is agreed that employees returning to work will work fully in accordance with their terms and conditions.

Derek Bourn reports



SUNDAY: FEB 8

Time to decide

subject to further negotiation for the purpose of gaining better protection for promotion outlets and a share of the benefit for our members.

Conditions - Engineering Technical Grades	Pre-strike 8 January 1987 Offer	In-strike 8 February 1987 Offer
New 1986 company demands:		
● Extended 8/9 day fortnight attendance from 7 am-6.45 pm	In	Out
● Exceptional direct recruitment to TO	In	Out
● Accelerated promotion T2A-ST	In	Out
1985 Pay Agreement Accords:		
● ETG Grading Package	In	In
● TO computer programming	In	In
● Planning team ratio changes	In	In
● Changed TO pool arrangements	In	In

Consolidated pay	Pre-strike 8 January 1987 Offer	In-Strike 8 February 1987 Offer
1st July 1986	5.02%	5.02%
ETG grading related 1 April 1987 - 30 June 1987	None	0.8%
1986/87 Negotiation	1 July 1987 To be negotiated later - BT wanted strings	4.75% - without strings
30 June 1988	Estimated 0-1.5% depending on grade	1.6% for all
Total increase on '85 rates in base for application of July 1st 1988 pay increase	Not known	12.7%
1988 Negotiation	1 July 1988 To be negotiated in 1988	To be negotiated in 1988

ALLIED GRADES: The previous requirement for review of the Tel O grade had been dropped. Retention of the conditions concerning the MT and Supplies grades were, however, required by the company in return for its major concession of applying all pay increases to all the Allied, as well as the Engineering Technical, grades.

Conditions - Allied Grades	Pre-strike 8 January 1987 Offer	In-Strike 8 February 1987 Offer
● Review of Tel O grade	In	Out
● New MT Workshop Assistant grade	In	In
● Change in MT Workshop Supervisor responsibilities	In	In
● Supplies grades flexibility changes	In	In

Thus, for those of you who are members of the Engineering Technical Grades, improved value had been gained for the future, and important principles had been established:

- same increase for all ETGs
 - lasting benefit (consolidated pay, not bonuses) in return for lasting change
 - an end to payments being made at different times in different Districts.
- ALLIED GRADES:** those of you who are members of the MT, Drawing Office, Tel O, Supplies, MSR, SSO, SR, Photoprinter, Photographer and Illustrator grades were now being offered all of the same consolidated increase as our ETG members. This contrasted very sharply with the previous offer of no bonuses at all and no consolidated increase other than that from 1 July 1986. A crucial principle had been won, the value of the increases had been improved very significantly.

Consolidated pay	Pre-strike 8 January 1987 Offer	In strike 8 February 1987 Offer
1st July 1986	5.02%	5.02%
ETG Grading Package and efficiency related 1 April 1987 - 30 June 1987	None	0.8%
1986/87 Negotiation	1 July 1987 To be negotiated later - BT wanted strings	4.75% - without strings
30 June 1988	None	1.6%
Total increase on 1985 rates in base for application of July 1st 1988 pay increase	Not known	12.7%
1988 Negotiation	1 July 1988 To be negotiated later	To be negotiated in 1987

British Telecom had made the new increases available to our CABLESHIP grade members also, provided that agreement can be reached on a separate Cableship package of changes. **Conditions: ALL NCU(E) MEMBERS — of the two previous conditions which applied to all our members, one was dropped and the remaining one is helpful to our members.**

Conditions - all NCU(E) members	Pre-strike 8 January 1987 Offer	In-strike 8 February 1987 Offer
● Review of entry qualifications	In	Out
● Mixed hierarchical working	In	In

ENGINEERING TECHNICAL GRADES — very important improvement was obtained for ETGs as a result of conditions, which had been requirements in the previous offer, being dropped. All of the new conditions introduced in 1986 which applied exclusively to ETGs, were dropped. The conditions which remained were those stemming from the 1985 pay settlement accords. The company was under no circumstances willing to depart from those.

The principle one of these — the ETG Grading Package — had been approved by the 1986 Engineering Conference

ENGINEERING PAY: The time for decision — Sunday, 8th February — Wednesday, 11th February 1987 — By Derek Bourn, Assistant Secretary and Officer to the Engineering Pay Committee.

ALMOST every one of you in our Engineering Group membership had maintained total unity and support for our industrial action for over a month.

Whether members of the Main Engineering Grades or of the Allied Grades, you had taken everything that British Telecom could throw at you and — far from dividing and weaken-

ing as BT hoped and planned — you had gone from strength to strength as a result of your determination and because you were caring for each other.

You had taken personal risks and had sacrificed a minimum of three weeks' badly needed pay; several hundreds of pounds each.

THE MAIN ISSUE: The Union had never sought a total national strike. That was forced upon us by a Board which had elected to break our strength, unity and will through a vicious programme designed to divide us and intimidate us.

As we reached the time for decision, your unbroken solidarity had given us victory in this, the most important issue of all. The strength of our Union had been tried and had prevailed. But what happened to the company's offer on pay?

THE CHANGE IN THE PAY OFFER: For its part, the Engineering Group Executive Council had used the negotiating opportunity created by your magnificent solidarity to secure principles of great importance from the company as well as significant improvement in the deal on offer.

High level talks between our General Secretary and Engineering President and the most senior of BT Board Members had paved the way to full exploratory talks and negotiations.

After several sessions of these discussions, which went into late night, by mid evening on Sunday, 8th February every possibility for improvement in the offer had been exhausted. What had been achieved?

Pay: ENGINEERING TECHNICAL GRADES — whilst the company was not willing under any circumstances to improve the 1986 situation, (because, they said, of the agreements they had reached with the UCW and STE), unconsolidated one-off bonus payments for some on a District by District basis had gone, and valuable concessions in the longer term value of consolidated pay had been achieved. A two year deal, involving a reasonable and totally unconditional common consolidated increase from 1 July, 1987 was now available.

STATEMENT FROM JOHN GOLDING: This return to work document has been agreed on certain very clear understandings by the Engineering Group Executive Council.

1. **Shorter Working Week Agreement:** In no way does it permit variation to the Shorter Working Week Agreement. Branches are instructed to resist any changes to the Shorter Working Week Agreement which they do not believe desirable.

They should be aware that as they have received legal advice that as the Shorter Working Week Agreement is a term and condition of employment then we can take BT PLC into the Courts if they try to alter this Agreement unilaterally.

This the Group Executive intend to do. Additionally start times must not be altered.

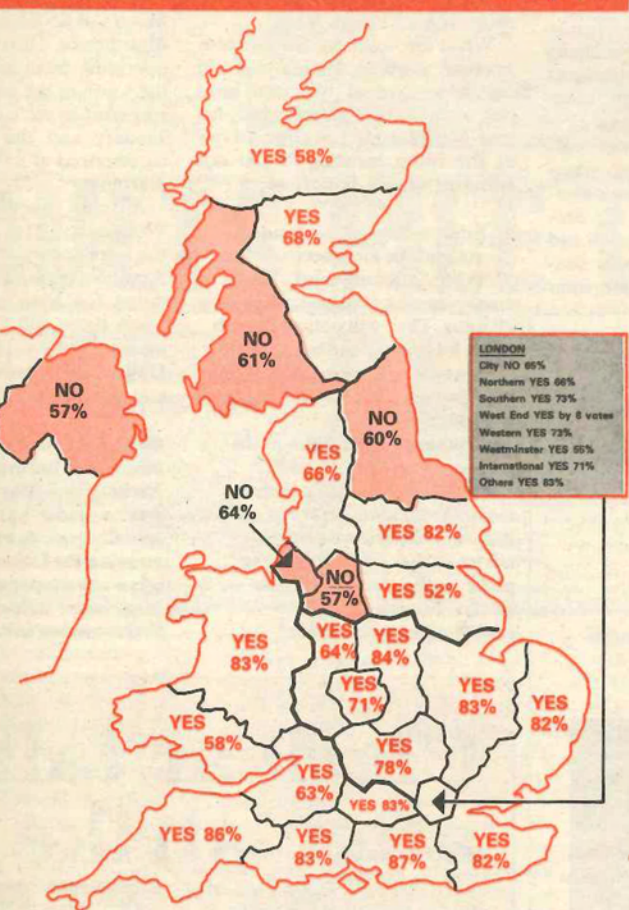
2. **Indeed we believe that there should be no change to "terms and conditions of employment" until negotiation and agreement has been given. Paragraph 3 of the Agreed Return to Work Formula makes it clear that employees returning to work will work fully in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment and this should be brought to the attention of local management.**

3. **Overtime: It is desirable to help restore BT PLC to normality. To do this overtime will be needed. We advise Branches to lift any restrictions on overtime working, including any that relate to the scheduled day off.**

At the same time it should be made absolutely clear that the Union believes that overtime should be on a voluntary basis and is contesting a case in the Courts concerning this.

4. **Flexible Cover: It is our strong advice for Branches to allow properly trained installation staff to be engaged on maintenance work on a voluntary basis.**

THE RESULT



LEFT TO DISTRICTS

work formula, which is reproduced as part of this article. (See below).

When we published the return to work formula the General Secretary issued a statement which is also reproduced. (See right).

The purpose of this statement was to ensure that our District Officers who had to negotiate the detail of the return to work with their District Managers clearly understood where the Union stood on the shorter working week, overtime and flexible cover.

Why was it left to District Officers to negotiate the detail of

the return to work in their Districts? Well, in the 31 Districts throughout the country there is a whole range of work practices and local agreements. It would be impossible for national negotiators to come up with an agreement that would suit all Districts.

The Union's District Officers are all experienced negotiators. They know their Districts and their district management. They were by far the best people to resolve local problems given a national return to work formula to guide them.

The nationally agreed return to work formula protected the shorter working week agreement, it made the Union's position clear on overtime, and ensured that the management were committed to negotiations on any permanent changes that they required.

The great majority of Districts have negotiated with the District Manager temporary agreements that will allow BT to quickly return to the quality of service that it enjoyed before the stoppage.

Some District managers required little or no alteration to existing agreements, whilst others made unreasonable and unnecessary demands. District Officers have dealt with these demands in a firm and sensible manner.

At the time of writing this article only the City of London District management are refusing to come to a sensible agreement with the District Officers, but even here negotiations are continuing.

If any members have any questions relating to their own particular return to work circumstances they should raise them with their Branch Secretaries who of course are their representatives on the District Councils.

District Council Representatives as soon as the result of the ballot is known on Wednesday, and which will be concurrent with the return to work.

Thereafter, if it becomes clear that the retention of such working arrangements would be in the long term interests of customers such arrangements would be the subject of local negotiation with the Union.

6. There will be no victimisation on either side. In particular, there will be no harassment tolerated in any form by individuals or groups.

7. Where there is evidence of criminal action by BT employees during the dispute BT will deal with such cases in accordance with normal procedures.

8. All normal facilities will be restored for Union representatives. There may be individual cases where, because of the individual union representative's behaviour during the dispute, BT will wish to discuss with the Union the appropriate action.

to work

that the majority will be able to start normal starting day. For operation it will be necessary return to work of employees from their normal service.

service will be as possible and local will contact employees to inform them of their return time. Employees are required to sign when they return.

agreement will be a top priority, on rework on Thursday need to implement temporary revised arrangements necessary priority.

agreements including drawn up by District will be the subject of discussions with Managers and Dis-

the new Engineers accepted in the Allied Grades now same — and the details on rates on

Fulling have Branches.

Left, Clerical chair current national President Spike Wood the Clerical industrial action control room.

to work and accept that they, the had imposed during

to work and accept that they, the had imposed during

A STOCKBROKERS' report on January 23 (far left, on facing page) predicted BT needed to cut 70,000 jobs, but it got little attention as first the Engineers, and then Clerical, came out on strike.

In Dorset, January 26, Weymouth police station (left) was an early casualty. The day after (see below, right) Sunderland's paper reported the start of the Clerical strike.

The same day in Middlesbrough (right) Internal Branch chair Ken Stone addressed a mass meeting and was joined on the platform by officers from the External and Darlington branches.

Derby's paper (below) reports growing problems on January 28. Clerical pickets were out in force (bottom) at Croyden on the 29th, but their return to work was not without problems (see Jan 30 panel on facing page).

● A television crew filming at Shepton Mallet became intrigued by a pair of false teeth sitting on a gate post. They asked one picket what they were. The reply came back... "That's all that's left of the last b***** that tried to cross this picket".

Photo: Evening Gazette, Middlesbrough.



● Found on the back of an envelope an ordinary customer used to pay a Liverpool telephone bill. "Query: Your call charges have risen by 14 per cent, yet you offer your staff just over 5 per cent despite a vast profit last year and the risk of a disrupted service to your customers together with the loss of business to Mercury. I'd be interested to hear your comments. John Carr... Wallasey."

ly ignoring them". Throughout the city, approximately 1,500 public call offices are out of order.

The Conservative controlled Solihull Council experienced embarrassment and inconvenience when it extensively advertised the new telephone numbers for a new non-BT switch that was due to be commissioned next week. It cannot now be brought into service.

Meanwhile the Spring Fair at the National Exhibition Centre is virtually without telephones, and it is rumoured that BT is being required to pay compensation as a result.

The Union is not providing emergency cover in the District because management has taken away kit and van keys. When two members of management went out to restore a doctor's line they finished up after 3½-hours pinching the line of the next door neighbours.

On Thursday January 22, the Central Hall Birmingham witnessed a mass meeting of 1,400 members. Even Birmingham Internal's AGM attracted 500 members. The membership position is described as "astonishing".

● Birmingham Internal has received 100 new applications for membership while losing only three members as a result of the action.

EAST OF SCOTLAND: The Edinburgh branches have already held two mass meetings, on Friday January 23 and Monday January 26. On each occasion, over 600 members attended.

The action is beginning to "bite". At the end of last week, 9 private wires going into Air Traffic Control at Edinburgh Airport "went down" and they are now down to their second tier of service which is simply two PWs.

More recently, on Wednesday January 28, all the independent radio lines between Edinburgh and London were "out" which was affecting all independent radio stations.

The Edinburgh External Branch has been anxious to cover genuine emergencies.

● A gang provided a new line to the local Humble Exchange to ensure that the local doctor in this small community was able to make and receive calls;

● Committee members repaired a line to a domestic subscriber with a handicapped child;

● and a police enquiry caravan in Edinburgh was supplied with two lines to assist a murder enquiry.

NORTH OF SCOTLAND: The first action came on Thursday January 22 when all three Districts were called out. Both Engineering and Clerical members came out for the day and then, following negotiations that went on until 3.45 a.m., members returned to work on the Friday without being required to sign any documents.

However once the national stoppage commenced on Monday January 26, the Engineers were back out and, of course, the following day they were joined by their Clerical colleagues.

FAULTS PILE UP IN BT STRIKE



A LINE of British Telecom vans at Derby stand forlorn and idle as the bitter engineers' dispute enters its third day.

normal job without giving undertakings on doing overtime. Mr Gordon Manning, Whetlam, secretary of the clerical branch of the NCU, covering Nottingham and Derby, which has 450 members, including around 75 in Derby, said he expected 80 per cent to obey the strike call.

As telephone faults start to pile up striking engineers in Derbyshire have intensified their picketing of British Telecom sites in the county, and the war of words between both sides goes on. And yesterday the chaos was aggravated when clerical workers started a three-day strike in

Derbyshire have intensified their picketing of British Telecom sites in the county, and the war of words between both sides goes on. And yesterday the chaos was aggravated when clerical workers started a three-day strike in

management were so desperate that a Level 3 went down a manhole with two Level 1s in an attempt to repair a cable. Meanwhile the situation has become so chaotic that the flashing lights on operators' boards are looking "like Blackpool illuminations".

JAN 30: WEST LONDON: This is where it all started with the first suspensions about 11.00 a.m. on Friday January 16. Seven fitters were sent home for refusing to do overtime that weekend.

In ten minutes the entire 1,200 Met West Branch were out and the following Monday all 4,500 District staff staged a 24-hour stoppage.

On that first Friday, the Chiswick Exchange was off the air for most of the afternoon and evening. Since then, District management has kept a tight control on information about service faults.

However, extraordinary measures are having to be taken to cope with the Union's action. The BBC's outside broadcast on the Sizewell enquiry had to be beamed from Suffolk to a satellite over Africa and bounced down to Shepherd's Bush rather than taking the usual land line route.

Emergency cover is being provided by members. On Tuesday January 20, a car park attendant was murdered in Hammersmith and staff provided three lines for the police "murder room".

● One member had a most dramatic introduction to his working life with BT. After a year on strike at Wapping over the News International dispute, he joined BT on the day the District staged its 24-hour stoppage and has been "out" ever since.

The action is attracting new members. Met West alone has picked up 30 and even the local

EOTA organiser has joined the Union and gone on strike.

CITY OF LONDON: Reports have come in of problems encountered by Arsenal Football Club, Allied Carpets, Coca Cola, Channel 4 and the Inland Revenue.

Exchanges are going off and on. On Saturday January 24, the TXE4 Exchange at Kingsland Green was "lost" for six hours. On Tuesday January 27, BT faced major problems when a contractor put a Kango drill through a 400 pair cable in Hackney, East London.

District management has refused to co-operate with the Union's offer of emergency cover. Mass meetings have been held which filled the Odeon, Leicester Square, one of the largest cinemas in the country seating some 2,000.

London North Central Internal Branch has set up 24-hour cover at its office and organised 24-hour picket coverage on all BT operational buildings in the Branch area to dissuade local AEs from doing the work of NCU(E) grades.

FAULTS: On Wednesday January 28 telephone operators in London were having severe problems with lines to Peterborough, Swindon, Oxford, Slough, Haverhill, Aylesbury, Orpington, Maldon, Manchester, Ascot, Canvey Island, Mansfield, Lewes, Canterbury, Wentworth, Sevenoaks, Glasgow, Lea Valley. Some 33 London Exchanges were also reported to be experiencing difficulties.

ANGLIAN COASTAL: Engineers have been out since 2.00 p.m. on Friday 16 January, following suspensions at Norwich and Clacton. Clerical colleagues refused to cross picket lines, were suspended on Wednesday January 21, and have been out ever since.

At Norwich, there have been meetings every day of the Internal and External Engineering

Branches and the Clerical Branch with "massive turn-outs".

The Norwich Main Exchange was lost for periods on Monday January 19 and there was a power failure the same week at the Clacton Exchange.

In the small village of Ilkeshall St. Margaret between Norwich and Lowestoft, following a cut cable, there is now only one working telephone but management has refused the Union's offer of emergency cover arrangements. Management had to give a Cellnet 'phone to the wife of a seriously ill man in the village.

One of our members reports that his mother — who is not on the telephone — had gas supply connected on Wednesday January 28 and the men from the Gas Board managed to smash the BT duct and mess up a 100 pair cable.

SMALL BUSINESSES SQUEAL: The National Federation of Self-employed and Small Businesses are acutely conscious of just how badly their members are suffering from the NCU's industrial action. So concerned are they about deterioration in the service they have issued a press release urging the government to reach a no strike agreement for essential services.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS: The District was among the first to become involved in suspensions and walk-outs on Friday January 16. Further suspensions and walk-outs took place on Monday January 19 and, from the following day, everyone in the District was out for the duration.

District Officials have been operating from the Trade Union Resources Centre who have been "absolutely smashing" and assisted with the production of leaflets, stickers and badges.

The City of Birmingham is described as "going down in bits". The Victoria Exchange was out for four hours on Wednesday January

28, the Central Exchange is providing a severely reduced service, and other units have been out for various periods of time.

At the Erdington Exchange on January 28, a compressor failed due to lack of oil and management had to rush around to find a spare compressor to prevent cable joints from admitting water. As in other parts of the country, most TXE4 Exchanges are giving intermittent service because they require such regular attention.

Over 25% of the trunk links in and out of Birmingham are off. On the 140 megabit links between the major cities, all spares have been used up because of failures on existing routes. This is now cutting into capacity.

There are thousands of outstanding faults in the area and around Birmingham and this figure is increasing by thousands every day. However, management is "virtual-

MORE than 140,000 British Telecom workers were on strike today as clerical workers joined the walkout by engineers.

About 30,000 staff who deal with orders and bills and handle computer equipment lined up with their 110,000 engineering colleagues who started an all-out strike yesterday.

The clerical workers, who have their own section within the National Communications Union and are taking action in support of their own pay claim, plan to stay out tomorrow and on Thursday.

Now clerical workers join the BT dispute

The executive was also considering the position after last night's vote by BT staff on industrial action.



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Jez Coulson (TEL)

● Making calls from public phones became increasingly difficult during the dispute. One BT spokesman said he was unable to give the number out of order, but they were on the "emergency list" — "The first priority is fixing the telephones at railway stations and airports".

THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDDTH YEAR

AROUND THE PICKETS

From previous page

The most serious network difficulties have been experienced at the exchange at Tomintoul, one of the highest villages in Great Britain. A conductor damaged cables.

However, a BT claim that formal complaints had been received from the Grampian Health Board and the Grampian Fire Brigade was denied by both these organisations.

Indeed our members have ensured that emergency cover is provided throughout the District. Two examples are a renal dialysis unit patient who had service restored to his home and a cancer patient who had new service provided to his home.

Graeme Allan of Aberdeen Branch gained a great deal of coverage for the Branch's offer to guarantee live television coverage of this weekend's Scottish Cup Tie

between Aberdeen and Celtic in return for BT agreeing to take back all staff throughout the country without pre-conditions.

However, local management refused the offer and therefore, at the time of writing, coverage of the match is in jeopardy.

Some excellent mass meetings have been held throughout the district. On Monday January 26, over 350 members were at a meeting in Aberdeen and support came from representatives of the Transport and General Workers' Union and the local teachers' union, the Educational Institute of Scotland.

LANCS AND CUMBRIA: All Engineering members in the District have been out since Monday January 19. Clerical members in Preston came out on Tuesday and Wednesday January 20 and 21 in support of Engineering colleagues, while Clerical members in Blackburn and Lancaster came out on Tuesday January 20 and remained out.

Joint meetings between Engineering and Clerical members have been held in Blackburn and Lancaster and these are described

as having been "highly successful".

Engineering Branches report very high attendance at a series of mass meetings of 350 at Blackpool, 200 at Southport, 200 at Rochdale, 150 at Kendal and 500 in Preston.

Up and down the District, there are reports of serious network difficulties. Barrow has had major congestions on its STD system and in Carlisle the Royal Automobile club is completely off the system and having to use radio contact.

In the Preston area, all seven TXE4 Exchanges have gone completely at times and most of these Exchanges are still experiencing "massive problems".

One Exchange covering Lancaster and Morecambe was completely isolated for three hours on Thursday January 22. Lines between Preston and Liverpool, and Preston and Manchester, have been particularly trouble-prone.

These difficulties have attracted considerable attention from the local media. The Preston Traders' Association has complained to local newspapers about interruption to service and loss of business. Red Rose Radio has given "superb coverage" to the dispute, and

The NEWSpaper for Milton Keynes and North Bucks. Telephone

TELEPHONE MERCY DEAL IN JEOPARDY

By TREVOR JOHNSON

there have been interviews with major business customers who are suffering from the action.

All Branches have offered emergency cover under the control of the Branch, but the lack of management co-operation is such that this cover is now only being provided in Blackpool.

NORTHERN IRELAND: The District was pulled out for the first time on Thursday January 22 but was able to return for one day without any undertakings being required from staff.

Then on Monday January 26 all the members were back out for the national stoppage. In Belfast pickets are now organised through a

citizens' band network.

The strike is hitting local customers hard and the Belfast RSC is now taking something like 1,000 fault reports a day. As at Wednesday January 28, of the 190 Exchange units throughout Northern Ireland, 53 of them were showing prompt alarms of some description.

The AVX American computer company was complaining bitterly to BT about the difficulties it was experiencing passing data between its operations in Larne and Coleraine and back to the parent company in the USA.

District Officials point out, with some bitterness, that the day before BT started to make claims of sabotage, on Saturday January 24, 9 members worked for 7-8 hours to restore PCM links for the Police Authority's digital network.

Belfast has seen mass meetings of up to 1,000 members and there has been a "flood" of EOTA members re-applying for membership. The Branch has had one resignation as a result of the action, but 51 applications for re-admission to membership.

SOUTH WALES: District officials are engaged in a major "war of words" with management over the effects of the stoppage. Various Exchanges have been isolated for periods and Ferndale in the Rhondda Valley was isolated for several days. There is growing congestion on the network, and lines to London and to Scotland have exhibited particular problems.

District Officials report that, when members first walked out, there were 500 faults carried over in Haverfordwest alone, and they conservatively estimate a "minimum" of 1,000 faults every day throughout the District.

At the beginning of the week, a mechanical digger went through the Cardiff-Pontypridd No. 4 cable. The Union sorted out the 999 circuits in accordance with emergency cover arrangements, but the rest of the cable is still out.

Union members have ensured that they have covered all genuine emergencies. In one case they installed a telephone to a house where a terminally-ill cancer patient was living but, when the wife of the patient told the local press and television, no one carried the story.

Generally, however, the Union has received "good press coverage" which is clearly upsetting the District General Manager.

SOLENT: The response of members throughout the District is described as "really solid". Mention should be made of members

on the Cableships and in Central Marine Depot at Southampton, since these have provided "excellent co-operation".

Several Exchanges have come out at various stages. The Boston TXE4 Exchange went down on Monday January 26 and a number of UAX units have been through power failures. It is reported that there are "several" outages on all STD routes.

The Dorset police have lost links and their IDX is suffering considerable problems. Meanwhile, in Bournemouth, Barclays International and Citicorp Manhattan are just two of many companies suffering "reduced service" as a result of loss of links.

However, Branches have been ensuring that emergency cover is provided for genuine cases.

- A family in Wareham, Dorset, was provided with a line so they could maintain contact with their child who was in intensive care at a hospital in Southampton.
- Service was restored to a family in Bournemouth whose child was undergoing a hole in the heart operation in Southampton.
- And a woman of 87 who was crippled with arthritis had her 'phone repaired over the weekend in Winchester.

Throughout the dispute, there have been some splendid meetings. At the beginning of Tuesday January 20, a meeting of the whole District was held in Bournemouth which attracted some 1,500 members, travelling as far as 70 miles.

Then, on Monday January 27, the two Southampton Branches had a meeting with over 100 members and the Bournemouth Branch had one with over 200 members. The local media coverage has been "excellent" and on Tuesday January 27 Bob Bournemouth, Secretary of Bournemouth Branch, did a radio 'phone interview on BBC Radio Solent.

STE branches in the District have held collections for the National Hardship Fund and have now raised over £1,000 in this way. An individual BT manager sent an anonymous donation to one of the Branch Secretaries of £100. Members of the public have been offering money to members of the picket line.

Finally, a story which indicates the sense of bitterness created by the strike. On Sunday January 25, members of the BT football team in Bournemouth who play in a regular weekend league refused to wear their traditional strip, sadly the only alternative strip being the colours worn by a local club known as Mercury!

Still on the sporting front, on Thursday January 29 a "friendly" football match was being held between the Southampton Strikers and the Bournemouth pickets.

SOUTH DOWNS: One of the first Districts to come out, with its first suspensions and walk-outs on Monday January 19. A week and a half later, District Officials reported "support is very solid" and "morale is very high".

On Wednesday January 28, Brighton had a meeting attended by 700 members and on Thursday January 29 there was virtually the entire Branch strength of 200 members at meetings in Eastbourne and Worthing.

In the early days of the action Gatwick Airport was "severely affected". On Thursday January 29, WD1400 siren circuits were out of the early warning chain — being out for eight days in Eastbourne.

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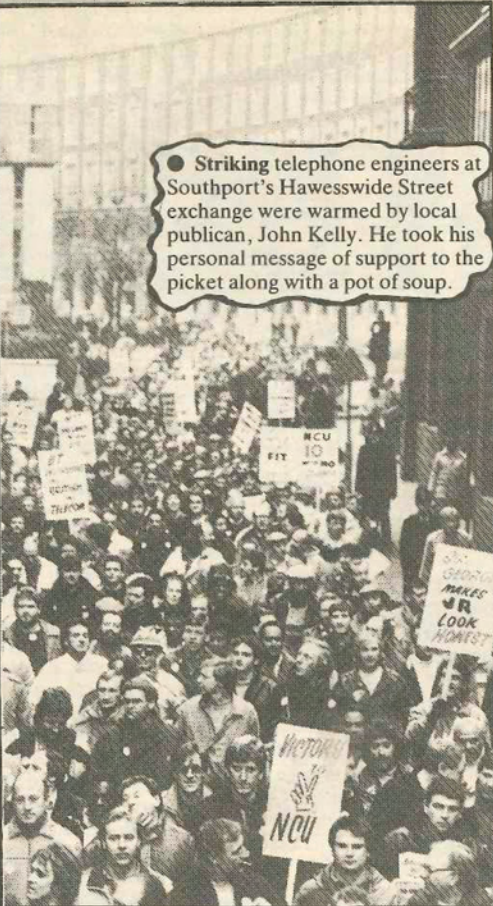
Published in DATALINK, Feb 72. Nick Newman and Ben Woolley

● A striking BT engineer in Bristol, Norman Pearce, found a grim trio of letters on his doormat one morning. There was a management note begging him to go back, a pay cheque for £0.00 — and Norman Tebbit asking for a donation to Conservative Party funds. Pearce disposed of two birds with one stone. He sent Tebbit his pay cheque. (*The Independent*, Feb 3).



Andrew Wiarid (REPORT)

● Striking telephone engineers at Southport's Hawesswide Street exchange were warned by local publican, John Kelly. He took his personal message of support to the picket along with a pot of soup.



Andrew Wiarid (REPORT)

Banking phone chaos

BANKS and building societies all over the country were reeling yesterday under the im-

● WHILE the Union was willing, BT seemed to do its best to undermine emergency cover (above left, *Milton Keynes*' headline January 29). The following Saturday the two *North London Internal* engineers (above) fixed a phone in this tower block for a kidney patient. BT had failed to pass on the hospital's request to the Branch. That same weekend the press were reporting growing problems (right). Reporters who could not get money out of their accounts were sceptical of denials prompted by BT's apparent 'service for silence' promises to major customers. Members showed their unity with *Dumfries*' human chain (January 29) and *Birmingham*'s January 30 march (below) and *London*'s march (above right) on February 4.

● The most serious service problem in the District so far occurred on Wednesday January 28 when the Isle of Wight hospital was off the air for four hours. Union members were available ten minutes away to provide emergency cover, but district management has refused to accept Union arrangements for such cover. So it took four hours for someone from Portsmouth to sort out the problems on the Isle of Wight.

Feb. 10: NORTH EAST DISTRICT: The first suspensions took place at 8.30 a.m. on Monday 19th January when two female CSOs working in the RSC were sent home. Their colleagues at the Swan House building in Newcastle immediately walked out in solidarity.

In one particular case, the experience was especially traumatic. The District General Manager's chauffeur had taken away from him his car, his Cellnet telephone, his keys, and his passcard. He told us that it was just as well that he was allowed to keep his uniform otherwise he would have been standing there simply in his underwear! On Wednesday 21st January, a mass meeting in Newcastle voted to remain out until the suspensions were lifted. So strongly did members feel that a group who held their own meeting in Berwick said that they might have to see the Branch Officers if the strike went on for more than three months. This mood of total determination has continued throughout the stoppage. At the Branch meeting held on Sunday 8th February, as requested by the Engineering Ex-

ecutive, the Newcastle Branch polled 1,170 votes for staying out and only two for going back. Even then, the two members who voted against the proposition told the Branch Officers afterwards that they had simply done this to check that the ballot was not being fiddled! As elsewhere in the country, the strike has attracted a lot of new members. Newcastle Branch alone has picked up 50 new members — some of them non-members, some of them members who were expelled over the privatisation issue, some of them EOTA members, and some of them Tel-Os who resigned from the STE to rejoin the NCU(E). Picket lines have been well organised, but in Newcastle the pickets were forced to park their cars on double yellow lines. When traffic wardens approached the vehicles in an attempt to "book" the owners, they were told that they should not cross Union picket

lines and promptly turned round and left the scene. A more macabre sense of humour was shown by those strikers who hung a blow-up skeleton from the motorway approach to Swan House in Newcastle. Apparently local managers driving past the scene found the exhibit offensive, and the police had to request that it be removed. The North East was the source of some of BT's sabotage claims but District Officials have effectively countered these spurious charges. Certainly there has been no need for sabotage because the action itself has had a major effect on services in the District.

● The Hadrian Exchange — the main trunk exchange in Newcastle — has 40 per cent of its equipment out of service and the six TXE4/4A Exchanges in the Newcastle area have been repeatedly on and off throughout the stoppage. At one point the police had to contact the local Water Board and ask for the use of their vans and radio network because their own facilities could not guarantee effective communications.

NORTH WALES — MARCHES DISTRICT: Speaking from the "Home Guard Club" — the temporary headquarters of the Chester Branch — our informant advises us that throughout the District there have been "tremendous meetings" where the members have been "absolutely solid".

Places like Chester, Wrexham, Bangor, Rhyl and Telford have had meetings at which very substantial proportions of the Branch membership have attended. ● This is one District where an agreement between Union and management on emergency cover has been maintained. In Wrexham, the main exchange went down twice and had to be restored by Union members because hospitals were involved.

One of the emergency cases handled by Chester Branch involved a 70-year-old man who was unable to walk and had just been released from hospital. Throughout the District, pickets have been in place at all major BT buildings and there has "never been a shortage" of volunteers. One particular picket site in the centre of Chester has become something of a tourist attraction

with overseas visitors taking photographs and cine-film. The first item of interest here is a gallows with a noose suspended from the top. Every time a BT manager passes the scene, the noose is swung ostentatiously. However, the main attraction at the site is a flag pole complete with flag. Apparently the flag is raised whenever a Union Official is in the vicinity, but the main raising ceremony takes place on the hour every hour to the accompaniment of a roll of drums and a blast of trumpets.

All this is doing wonders for morale, but caused one passing driver — who found the flag raising so interesting — to drive into the vehicle immediately in front of him. WESTMINSTER DISTRICT: Like most London Districts, Westminster first became involved in the action when the Engineering Executive pulled out all members in the capital on Wednesday 21st January.

The following day, the District had a mass meeting at the Central Hall Westminster attended by over 2,300 members. They voted to remain out until there was a settlement to the pay dispute. District Officials explained that this good start has enabled the action to be "solid throughout". Since then, the action is described as "fast and furious".

This is one District where management refused the Union's offer of emergency cover. Members of management have been attempting to circumvent the Union's action, but have resorted to using rented vehicles rather than the familiar yellow vans. However, the amount of scabbing is said to be "minimal". Throughout the action, picketing has been "vigorous" with 24-hour pickets on some operational buildings such as Keybridge House and Colombo House. Picket parties have been held with drinks donated by local licensees.

One of the visitors to the picket line at Keybridge House was Labour MP for Vauxhall, Stuart Holland. A contrasting character has been visiting the same picket line at least twice a week. He is a well-known local "character" who is said to look like Jimmy Saville and dresses up in full Scots gear complete with kilt and bagpipes.

● Engineers working for BT subsidiary City Business Systems, not involved in the strike, had a whip round and donated £285 to the union to help with hardship cases.



John Harris (IFC)

● The consultative ballot on Sunday 8th February presented some problems for the District, since this part of London has the kind of large public buildings which are used for religious purposes on this day of the week.

Therefore the District held a mass meeting in the park next to the Imperial War Museum where over 1,100 members voted to remain on strike and only 20 members took a different view. This was war of a different sort...

SHEFFIELD AND LINCOLN DISTRICT: This District first went out on Monday 19th January. Any suggestion in this District that the strike did not have a major impact on BT would be greeted with cries of ridicule. The following TXE2 Exchanges all went off the air for various periods of time: Holmewood (Chesterfield), Hatfield Wood House (Doncaster), Hathersage (Hope Valley, near Sheffield), Maltby (Rotherham area), Bentley (Doncaster area), and North Carlton (Worksop area).

Local TXE4A Exchanges experienced even more serious problems. The Dronfield Exchange went down once and those at Barnsley City Centre, Rotherham City Centre, and Wadsley Bridge (a satellite at Sheffield) each went down twice. Unusually this is one District where Union facilities were not withdrawn throughout the dispute, and therefore our local officials were able to continue using BT premises. However, special arrangements were made to use an office at the Sheffield Polytechnic Students' Union to handle DHSS claim enquiries.

● There are two sad stories from the local picket lines. Outside the Lincoln General Manager's office, one of our members was said to have been assaulted by an Inspector. The Union is now pressing management to institute the disciplinary code.

At Doncaster, Branch Secretary Les Watson took his dog to the picket line and indeed a photograph appeared on the front page of the local paper. However the dog was run over a few days later. Finally, a story which demonstrates the inventiveness of the NCU Engineering member. At Chesterfield TEC, members installed an old toilet next to the picket line, and then erected a hut to provide appropriate privacy for certain essential activities!

FEB 13: SOUTH MIDLANDS AND CHILTERN DISTRICT: This District was one of those involved in suspensions from "day one", that is Friday 16th January. A few hours after the members walked out, BT started to experience problems with the TXE4 Exchange at Aylesbury.

Throughout the course of the industrial action, this proved to be one of the major "trouble spots" in the National Network. The Exchange went down at least twice a day during busy periods throughout the whole of the action.

A management support group went in to effect repairs and it was this action which led the District Council to remove the arrangements for emergency cover. Throughout the action, all the Branches in the District held meetings once a week where attendance was said to be "excellent". For instance, the Chiltern Branch with 500 members, had 400 of them present for the vote on the pay settlement on Wednesday 11th February.

The pickets were "always solid" and managed to turn away postmen, oil tankers and food supplies. A picket at the Aylesbury Exchange failed to prevent two management members of the support group going into the building, but it did force them to abandon their car and it involved them in "a nose to nose confrontation" which was duly recorded on camera. Continued over page



● STRIKING British Telecom workers form a human chain to show their solidarity for the action outside the headquarters in Loreburn Street yesterday.

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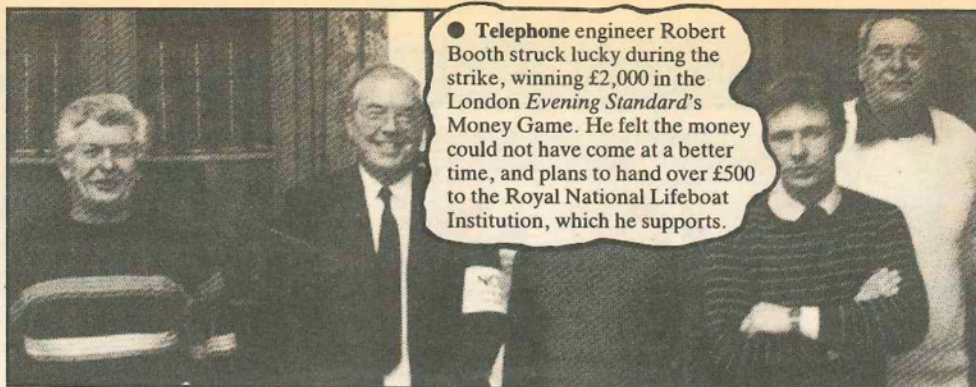
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● Telephone engineer Robert Booth struck lucky during the strike, winning £2,000 in the London Evening Standard's Money Game. He felt the money could not have come at a better time, and plans to hand over £500 to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which he supports.

From previous page

At High Wycombe, "an old boy" struggled across the road for what the pickets thought was a friendly chat about the action. When he asked them how long they had been out, they told him two weeks.

At this point, he snapped: "I hope you're bloody well out here for 10 years". One of the pickets cheekily replied: "If we are, you won't be here to see it". Apparently he took the joke in good part!

MID YORKSHIRE DISTRICT: At 10.30 a.m. on Monday 19th January, 11 internal construction men were suspended for refusing to work overtime the previous weekend.

The following day, all the engineers in the District had a 24 hour stoppage and in the Leeds and York CSAs they were joined by our Clerical colleagues. The next day all were asked to provide written assurances which effectively turned the stoppage into a lock-out. From then on, "the flak flew thick and fast all the time."

A particularly eventful meeting took place on Friday 23rd January. At the Queen's Hall in Leeds, some 800 Engineers were being addressed by engineering Executive members Kevin Clark and Jim Flack when some 200-300 Clerical colleagues marched in to join them. One observer described the occasion as "emotional".

Throughout the action, District Officials managed to maintain emergency cover arrangements although there were certainly difficulties from time to time.

Major service difficulties were experienced at the Keighley and Halifax Exchanges and the Halifax Building Society was one of many business customers to be severely hit.

Like all Districts, there are "picket line stories". At Bradford, one of our members on the picket line was given £5 by a passerby for a drink, but promptly donated it to the Branch Welfare Fund.

Then, over in Hull, a member living around the corner from an exchange noticed a van attempting to deliver some System X equipment. He immediately

AROUND THE PICKETS

rushed from his home and formed himself into a one-man picket line persuading the van driver to return to Liverpool.

WEST OF SCOTLAND DISTRICT: This District came out a day earlier than the other two Districts in Scotland. This was because our members walked out in solidarity with two Glasgow main cable jointers who were suspended on Wednesday 21st January because of their refusal to work overtime on the Glasgow — Coatbridge cable which had been damaged by a JCB. Thereafter the action throughout the District was "absolutely solid".

Another of the many cables where BT had major difficulties during the action was that between the Halfway Exchange in Glasgow to the Craigton Estate. When this cable went down, it affected a whole range of companies including the Howden Engineering Company, Level 2s and 3s — with a Level 4 in attendance — attempted to lay a new cable, but made a right mess of it.

● Some of the Branches in the District were forced to withdraw emergency cover in the course of the strike, but Glasgow Branch maintained such cover throughout the action. As a result, some of those assisted were two blind pensioners, a terminal cancer patient who had been sent home, and the "Loganair" ambulance pilot.

As elsewhere throughout the country, the District Officers were forced to find new accommodation and in this case they used the Trade Union Centre at Glasgow.

In the course of the action, there was a whole series of mass meetings: three were held in the Granada Bingo Hall at Park Head in Glasgow involving some 1,800, and another two were held at the Anderson Exhibition Centre in Glasgow when over 2,000 members were in attendance.

A major communications exercise took place both within the

● Electricians' General Secretary Eric Hammond, wearing a NCU picket armband, handed his HQ board room over to union pickets. LNCI, right, staged picket parties. Far left, NEC member Chris Flinn with the night picket at Madley S.E.S.

membership and throughout the Labour movement in the West of Scotland. A particularly appreciated initiative was a letter from the District to the spouses of strikers, and indeed a similar exercise was subsequently carried out in Northern Ireland.

The pickets were very well organised and indeed some of them proved to be "very ingenious", arranging for portacabins, calor gas fires, electricity, and even television. There was a suggestion that there should be a prize for the best picket site with the winners obtaining a weekend at Wapping!

There was no need for pickets to prevent a member of management going in to the Barrhead Exchange to do meter photography. This is a new exchange with the old exchange still on site and the individual concerned managed to photograph the "dead" exchange.

Overall the membership in the District showed "A tremendous camaraderie" and a comment which is echoed in many other parts of the country was: "Members got to know guys as never before".

WEST END DISTRICT: The London Districts are newer than those elsewhere in the country but, as a result of the industrial action, West End claim that "we really came together as a District".

Every Monday morning throughout the action, a District-wide meeting was held at the Friends Meeting House near Euston Station. The first one was over packed with 1,500 members inside the building with a further 500 outside. All subsequent meetings attracted between 1,200-1,300.

One of the advantages that Central London Branches had during the action was access to some of the biggest cinemas in the country for their meetings. Popular venues for further meetings in the West End District were the Odeon Leicester Square accommodating 2,000 and the Leicester Square Theatre seating 1,400.

Picket Parties

Picket Parties is the latest publication from LNCI to inform our members of where the fun and boogying is happening around the 24 hour Pickets.
If your Picket is organising a Get Together or knees up, let the Branch know so that it can be published.
The only requirement needed is to 'Bring a Bottle' to help the Party go with a swing.

PAVILION PICKETS SO FAR
Thursday 15th January
Fancy Dress at Kings Cross Exchange 23:00 hour
Friday 16th January
House Warming Party at Bastion/Cov Gdn Starting at about 21:00 hours.
Saturday 17th January
General Meeting Boozing and merry making (lucky merry) from 23:00 hours (check time) at Kentish Town Exchange.
REMEMBER DON'T DRINK & DRIVE
Not only does it make a mess in your lap... But we need you on the Picket Lines.

Perhaps appropriately, the latter cinema was showing a film called "Short Circuit" which is about a piece of technology — this case a robot — that goes wrong.

Support for the action was solid throughout. A clear demonstration of this came on Sunday 8 February when 671 members of the West End Branch turned up for the consultative ballot and 671 of them voted to remain out. Many non-members joined the Union and one Branch Official commented: "We wiped out the local EOTA Branch."

Local picket lines were well organised. In one case — the picket at Burne House in the Edgware Road — a sofa was somehow brought up to the building. Initially this enabled tired pickets to sit down for a few moments but eventually it was burned to provide some warmth.

● Members of management did their best to circumvent our action but not always with the desired effects. At Telecom Tower, a Level 3 who is a graduate engineer attempted to correct a fault on microwave transmission equipment.

The result was to blow the apparatus into what one Branch Official described as "a piece of welded architecture". Indeed, by the end of the action, an estimated 10,000-12,000 faults were outstanding for the District as a whole.

Special thanks should go to NALGO which provided the District with full use of its executive room and complete use of all facilities at their National Headquarters on Euston Road.

Among the many facilities provided was use of NALGO's public address equipment. At the end of the action, our members made sure that the executive room was cleaned out before returning it to its normal users.

SOUTHERN LONDON DISTRICT: Geographically this is the biggest of the six London Districts and therefore there was no Di-

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£5000	19.31	22.91	28.05	40.55	17.2%
£4500	17.39	20.62	25.24	36.50	
£4000	15.45	18.32	22.44	32.45	
	120	84	60	36	18.1%
£3500	13.94	16.41	19.99	23.22	
£3000	11.94	14.07	17.13	19.90	
	120	84	60	36	18.8%
£2500	9.95	11.72	14.27	16.59	
£2000	8.14	9.54	11.57	16.55	
£1500	6.10	7.15	8.68	12.41	
£1000	4.06	4.77	5.78	8.27	

term credit commitments and have your monthly outgoings with one low monthly payment Eg. Borrow £4,000 x 60 months @ £97.24 per month Total Paid £5,834.40p (17.2% APR)

FIXED RATE LOANS

AVOID RATE FLUCTUATIONS

EG. BORROW £5000 x 120 mths @ £94.35p.m. Total = £10,122.00 APR = 17.4%

FIRST 60 MONTHS PAYMENTS FIXED

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LICENSED CREDIT BROKERS UNDER THE CONSUMER CREDIT ACT

THE 100 DAY DISPUTE IN THE HUNDREDDTH YEAR

100

IT'S A DEAL

BT strike to end on Thursday?



BT engineers pack the press bingo hall at their mass meeting

● Jan 20 — Mitel, the BT owned manufacturing company with premises in South Wales, offered its factory workers a 9.6 per cent pay increase for this year... with no strings!

trict-wide control room for the industrial action.

Instead control was exercised through the three CSAs — South East, South, and South West. Indeed the South West area further split up its operations into control rooms at the Merton Resource Centre and someone's house in Kingston.

● At the beginning of the action, local management claimed that Union members had been guilty of sabotage, and rushed to the television studios to publicise this spurious claim. However the Union mounted a virious public denial of the charge, but the fact that it was made in the first place caused great bitterness among the strikers.

For the first week of the action, the Union provided emergency cover arrangements. However management then refused to work through the Union and the arrangements for such cover had to be withdrawn.

Picket line operations went smoothly with co-operation from the police. Regular information was given to the pickets and indeed "The South West Area Strike Bulletin" was printed every day.

Other effort was directed at

putting over the Union's case to members of the general public. Masses of leaflets were distributed at local shopping centres.

On Wednesday 4th February, the majority of members in the District joined the other five London Districts in a march through central London. On the same morning, there was also another march in Croydon.

MID ANGLIA DISTRICT: Evidence of the impact of the Union's action could be found throughout the District. The Cambridge Central Exchange broke down and the Newmarket exchange went off

twice in one week. There was a major cable breakdown between Epping and Bishops Stortford.

● In a local Harlow newspaper, there was a cartoon showing someone interviewing a BT manager about the effects of the dispute. The BT spokesperson was of course insisting that everything was operating "as normal". The cartoon depicted the interviewer responding with the words: "As bad as that, is it?"

Throughout the course of the action, the District Council maintained an emergency cover.

Assistance was provided to the Fire Brigade at Hertford Control, St. Margaret's Hospital at Epping, and elderly patients awaiting heart operations.

Much practical support for the action came from local Trade Unions. The District Council Chairman Maurice Cotte operated from the AUEW Hall at Harlow, while the District Council Secretary Chas Etchells worked from the T&GWU Hall in Peterborough.

Among several donations received was £100 from ASTMS to the Bishops Stortford Branch.

Even an invalid pensioner in his wheelchair was so supportive of our action that he donated £5 to the Union.

District Officers were well pleased that the Union obtained "more than our share of media coverage" and management failed totally to provide any effective counter arguments to the Union's case.

On one occasion, Maurice Cotte of Bishops Stortford Branch was interviewed on the Harlow picket line by Anglian News, the local television station, and, when immediately afterwards the television crew went into the Harlow Depot, they found members of

management watching television in the social club.

The action ended with a smile when, on the day of the ballot on the pay settlement, someone cut out a newspaper headline and stuck it up on the wall at the back of the stage being used at the meeting of Bishops Stortford Branch members.

The headline read "Beam us up Cottee" — it was actually a reference to West Ham footballer Tony Cottee, but naturally members took it as a reference to Branch Secretary Maurice.



Jan 27 — From the Financial Times "The miners' firebrand leader, Arthur Scargill was heard welcoming the telephone engineers' strike for a personal reason: 'For the first time in 25 years my phone won't be tapped'". Sorry Arthur, wrong.

WHAT ROLE HAS LAW IN STRIKES?

I WILL remember the 1986/7 pay and conditions dispute particularly for the number of legal issues raised, writes Assistant Secretary Jim Moher.

First we had the ballot requirement of the 1984 TU Act which we complied with totally. This gave the Union immunity from prosecution throughout the dispute against breaches of individual or commercial contracts arising from members' action.

Armed with this ballot, we were able to fend off, with confidence, a number of irate business customers affected by the action.

But we also had to be ready for indirect legal attacks. This was the first test of the Telecommunications Act 1984. BT's Licence under that Act stipulated various duties to provide a service to business and private customers.

That Licence excuses BT in exceptional circumstances from failures to provide the service, though industrial action is not specified as one of the exceptions.

However, the Director General of OFTEL, Prof. Carlsberg, made it clear that he would not exercise his statutory powers to lay orders which would have allowed individual customers to sue BT on the basis of that Act. By the same token, we were insulated from being joined in any such action.

Of more immediate interest to most members were the contractual issues raised by BT's action in escalating the dispute during the first week of the action.

Members prepared for limited action, viz. working to rule and banning overtime, were suddenly faced with Line Managers intent on finding excuses to suspend people without pay. People who had not worked overtime for years were suddenly confronted with supervisors' demands to work on Saturday.

It came as a shock to many, who asked could they do this legally as they had always thought overtime was voluntary? Some members resorted to local Solicitors who, always welcoming new business, raised hopes in many minds that there was a legal remedy.

We certainly would have a strong argument on the overtime issue in normal times. But it is doubtful whether any Judge would ignore the official industrial action of which the overtime ban was but one part.

All forms of industrial action are viewed as misconduct and a

breach of contract by the common law. The ballot papers said as much, as required by the Act.

The members' and officers' good sense told them that the real remedy was to respond as they did to BT's challenge.

The subsequent written and verbal undertakings demanded of members were nothing more than attempts by BT to break members' resolve by getting them to repudiate support for their Union. But this did not work either.

In the end BT had to lift those suspensions and undertakings. BT would have liked nothing better than a series of paper challenges in the Courts — but the Union was not enticed down this futile avenue.

During the dispute, picketing incidents might have been expected to embroil us with the Police and the Courts, given the actions of those Managers who went in to do our members' work. It is to the enormous credit of both Engineering and Clerical members and officers that this very serious dispute provided hardly any charges, injuries or damage.

Finally, the actions of some District Managers in attempting to use the Agreed Return to Work formula to re-assert themselves by changing established conditions, such as the Shorter Working Week, almost overcame the Union's reticence for Court action.

The General Secretary had to remind BT forcefully that, on good legal authority, we regard such conditions as permanent features of members' contracts.

In response, we had a categorical national assurance that no permanent change would be made by any of its managers without members' consent and the Union's agreement.

Locally, District Councils pushed managers back one by one from their "try on" positions, so that in no way can BT claim acceptance of any permanent changes in this respect.

Now that we are back at work, major permanent changes to contractual conditions without consent would be viewed very differently by the Courts.

However, the Union does not rely on the uncertainties of judicial interpretation to protect members' vital conditions of service. Nevertheless, legal action may well have a part to play should the lessons of this dispute have failed to sink in with some managers.

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