

Full Steam Ahead for 10 Maritime Apprentices

Ten newly-recruited apprentices will embark on maritime careers this month as a result of a successful partnership between the RMT and Highlands and Islands ferry operator, Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac). More than 1,000 applications were received for the ten vacancies for deck and engine room ratings. RMT project worker, Dan Henderson, and RMT/CalMac Trade Union Co-ordinator, Brian Reynolds, worked very closely with CalMac, the Maritime Skills Alliance, Skills Development Scotland and the STUC to implement the apprentice programme, which will be further developed in coming months. Dan said, "The ferry industry, in common with other maritime sectors, faces the problem of an ageing workforce. So there was a clear need to address that through an apprentice programme which will provide CalMac with a sustainable staffing base in the future. CalMac was already receptive to the idea of apprenticeships and started on the route last year with three trainees, recruited from existing staff. A huge step forward was taken with the recruitment of 10 more this year, and a further intake is anticipated in the near future. The apprentice programme is providing good quality, well-paid careers for local young people. It's also supporting the Highlands and Islands economy and the communities that CalMac serves. It shows what can be achieved through a positive partnership with the employer."

Highlands & Islands Cross Union ULR Forums

The next round of ULR forums will take place as follows:

Orkney - Tuesday, 26th November, 12 noon - 2pm, (Skype or VC)

Western Isles - Wednesday, 27th November, 12 noon - 3pm, Stornoway

Caithness - Thursday, 28th November, 11am - 2pm

Inverness - Friday, 29th November, 11am - 2pm

There's a lot going on, so please come along and get involved. Please contact your own trade union to make arrangements to attend all STUC and Scottish Union Learning events. Remember, organisation of attendance and release is by your own trade union.

Coming up...

Unions into Schools - Western Isles

A one-day training course will be held in Stornoway on 5th November for experienced reps who would like to introduce secondary school pupils to trade unionism, as part of their Modern Studies curriculum. Contact Terry Anderson at tanderson@stuc.org.uk if you would like to take part.

Scottish Union Learning Conference 2013

The annual conference will be held on Wednesday, 20th November 2013 at the COSLA Centre, Edinburgh. Further details will be available soon. Please contact your union if you wish to attend.

Your Local Trades Council Needs Your Support

The Western Isles Trades Council extends a warm welcome to ULRs and their union colleagues. A date for the next meeting will be arranged this month. Please contact Tom Joyce, WI Trades Council Chair, at tjoyce@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Surprise, Surprise for Calum and John

There was no way ULRs John Evans and Calum Mackenzie would be allowed to miss their moment in the spotlight, despite not being able to attend the Highlands and Islands ULR Awards. Instead, STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith surprised the pair with a presentation at the Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR conference in June. Unite ULR John, who works for NHS Highland, has organised courses ranging from Digital Photography to a PDA in Supporting Adults with Dyslexia. He plays a key role in the Learning Partnership with the NHS and recently trained to deliver the Ready Study Go



(Above) John Evans, (right) Calum Mackenzie. Photos by John Paul.

pre-access course. Orkney ULR Calum Mackenzie shows how one committed person can make a difference. He is the only ULR at Orkney Council, yet recently gained agreement

to set up a Union Learning Forum. Calum never misses a ULR Forum - whether it's a one to one via Skype, or the ULR conference. He is currently working to re-establish Orkney Trades Council and spread the word about union learning.



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Putting Unions into Highland Schools

UNISON ULR Roxana Meechan is lending her skills and enthusiasm to help put the 'Unions into Schools' initiative firmly on the Highlands and Islands map. Roxana said, "I got in touch with Terry Anderson last year to find out how I could get involved, and the Unions into Schools Song Festival seemed a good opportunity, as I work with two Youth Music groups in Brora. The young people have written an 'All Different All Equal' song and are very excited as the STUC invited us to attend the Song Festival in Glasgow on 29th November. I also agreed to run a couple of Unions into Schools sessions at Dingwall Academy with Mark Falconer, a PCS union activist. Mark and I received materials and support from Terry before running the sessions, which involved quizzes on Rights at Work and Equal Opportunities. There were 13 pupils and their teacher, Mr Lyall. It was our first time doing this work and we enjoyed it very much and learned even more. The feedback has been excellent and the school made us feel very welcome." If you would like to get involved with Unions into Schools, contact Pauline at pwalker@stuc.org.uk or Terry at tanderson@stuc.org.uk.



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