

# Annual conference

The 2016 annual conference came at a pivotal moment for both the union and the country, with discussions on merger with Prospect, the impending vote on whether to remain in the EU, and the renewal of the BBC Charter. **Janice Turner** reports

## Celebrating progress

This year's BECTU annual conference was a stark contrast from the gathering last year which had been overshadowed by a shock Tory win at the General Election. Twelve months ago stunned delegates knew that at the top of the new Tory government agenda would be an attack on trade unions and on workers' rights, a tough BBC charter negotiation, and yet more cuts on the pretext of austerity.

But one year on the union was celebrating political campaigns that had defeated the worst of the Tory proposals and sensational progress as a result of the hard work of union reps and activists, officials and staff. An anticipated £300,000 deficit had been turned into a small surplus with income up 6% and an underspend of 7.5% on the budget. Membership had grown by 12% over the last two years.

Taken forward from last year's conference was the issue of merger with the trade union Prospect, and about half the day was devoted to discussion on this. In order to allow the fullest, most frank discussion on the merger members were able to ask questions and speak more than once if they wished. Ultimately conference overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal to move to a ballot on merger. (See cover story, page 8)

### EU REFERENDUM

BECTU delegates voted almost unanimously for the union to campaign to remain in the EU. Research officer Tony Lennon gave an authoritative presentation (see page 10) on the legislation that protected the workforce which would be under threat from Brexit, adding

that employment protection would be the top target after a leave vote. He also pointed out that "Nobody knows what leave would look like."

He also pointed to two important figures from the Office of National Statistics showing that the number of EU citizens entering the country in a year is smaller than the number of non-EU migrants: "The government is ignoring the fact that the immigration we can control is greater than that from the EU."

On a personal note, Lennon told conference that his father, who fought in World War Two and was invalided out, always supported Europe "because he never wanted anyone else to have to go through what they did. Never underestimate people's capacity to be inhuman to others."

Another speaker urged everyone to encourage younger people to come out and vote in the most important issue for Britain for decades which "shouldn't be skewed by older right-wing *Daily Mail* readers. Britain is stronger in Europe."

The young members delighted conference with a brilliant short video that combined its union message with wit and humour. Naomi Taylor of Ericsson introduced the video which



**Debates:** (clockwise from above) the NEC, Adrienne Peltz, NI freelance, Nia Hughes of Ritzy branch



won huge applause.

Training official Martin Roberts reported on another successful year: 26 reps' courses had been run since last conference.

There has been training at branches around the nations and regions. The growing membership is proof that you're doing a good job - we're here

## New BECTU policies

### TRANSFER OF ENGAGEMENTS

**TO PROSPECT - NEC**  
BECTU members shall be balloted on a resolution to approve the proposed transfer of engagements of BECTU to Prospect on the basis of the Instrument of Transfer and, if approved, the transfer of engagements shall take effect on 1 January 2017 or the date of registration of the Instrument of Transfer, whichever is the later.

### EU REFERENDUM - NEC

BECTU will support the campaign to remain in the EU

### REGIONAL PRODUCTION CREWING

**- Scottish Freelance**  
Ofcom must clarify and enforce the rules regarding local crewing of regional productions, and end the current situation of London based companies using regional addresses to get round the fact that they are not, by any definition, regional.

### FAILING DIVERSITY TARGETS

**- Writers Producers & Directors**  
BECTU will challenge broadcasters' failure to meet targets and adhere

to policies or strategies for recruiting BAME staff and freelancers by lobbying for diversity targets to be a priority, and lobby the Labour Party to set up a policy on how to approach improving diversity in the workplace.

**RACISM - Media City & NWBranch**  
Conference condemns the racist rhetoric used by some politicians and some sections of the media against refugees, migrants and Muslims.

### AUTHORSHIP - Post-Production & Facilities Branch

The joint authors of an audiovisual work should be regarded as persons who have made a significant contribution with their original creative effort to the creation of a work.

### BBC WHITE PAPER - BBC Technology London

BECTU opposes government-appointed members onto the new BBC board and setting production adrift from the rest of the BBC. The NEC will lobby where appropriate to protect the industry independence of the BBC.

Workers' rights are a global issue: (clockwise from main picture) the VFX branch with BECTU officials and international representatives from IATSE and UNI Mei; Peter Cox of post-production and facilities branch; Mick Calder of BBC Glasgow no 1 branch



to support that." Training officer Kate Elliott told conference that the Union Learning Fund project was being funded for a further year.

**The young members delighted conference with a short video that combined its union message with wit and humour**

### INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Delegates heard reports from the industrial sectors of the union, with discussion on the future of the BBC. Delegates passed a resolution opposing the intention of government appointed members of the new unitary board and recognising the great dangers of BBC Studios being separated from the rest of the corporation. An upbeat report on independent broadcasting highlighted the successful campaign at Arqiva to get an improved outcome after the company decided to close the pension scheme to further accrual. The closure was opposed by the members who



## Award winners

The union's great achievements of the year were reflected in the awards at conference.

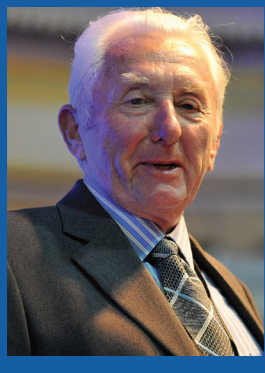
The Roger Bolton Memorial Award was received by the VFX branch for their amazing recruitment and recognition campaigns with Joe Pavlo accepting it for the branch (pictured right, top). NEC member Nicola Savage and the location branch were runners-up. Graeme Mackenzie of the location branch accepted the award.

Debbie Read of BECTU's North American sister union IATSE was awarded Honorary Membership of BECTU. Debbie has retired from IATSE after many years of service. Gerry Morrissey paid tribute to the support she had given to BECTU: Debbie had been a key link between the two unions and had been a part of the IATSE delegation to our conference for many years. Debbie Read told conference: "When I received the letter from Gerry I was quite overwhelmed. It's been an honour and a privilege to come to the conference. I will cherish this for the rest of my life."

Longstanding FAA member Alan Swaden was also awarded Honorary Membership. NEC member Peter McInerney thanked Alan who had been in the FAA since the



70s and had played a tremendous role in the organisation. He had also been a stormtrooper in the first three *Star Wars* films, and his first film was *Dracula* with Christopher Lee.



voted for strike action. Luke Crawley told delegates that what had frightened management was the number of members not in the scheme who demanded that they wanted to be balloted as well so that they could also vote. "This massively changed the offer from the company and shows the solidarity and support of fellow members."

The Arts & Entertainment Division had had a great year recruiting recruit more members and improving pay, particularly for the lowest paid. They had also had great success in campaigns which had caught the imagination of the public.

### FREELANCE

On freelance issues, conference agreed that Ofcom should clarify and enforce rules governing local crewing of regional productions after hearing from delegates about how companies circumvent them. "Regularly the callsheet has two addresses on it – the crew member's own address within the M25 and their granny's address locally," said one. Another regional freelance told conference how "one company asked me to work on a job, sent the invoice in, then contacted me back and asked me to change the address to one outside the M25."

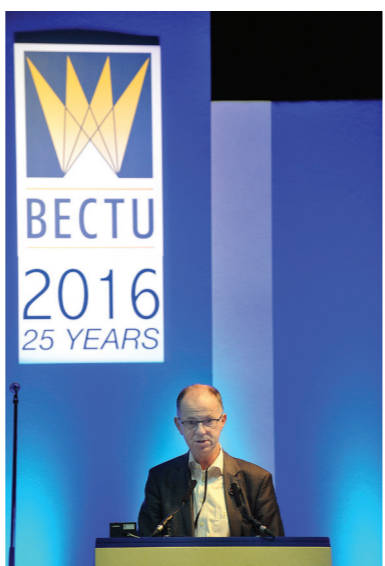
Luke Crawley urged support for the proposition and asked members to send in any evidence they have.

Authorship rights are an ongoing concern and post-production and facilities branch proposed a motion that conference believes the creation of film, television and other audiovisual work is a collaborative effort between highly creative people, and so joint authors of an audiovisual work should be regarded as persons who have made a significant contribution with their original creative effort to the creation of the work.

Matt Loeb, International President of IATSE, BECTU's North American counterpart, gave another inspiring speech to conference. He highlighted the visual effects campaign and said, to great applause, that IATSE had just hired an organiser for VFX.



Getting together: (from the top) young members, AGS Luke Crawley, (left to right) Kevin Carson, Peter McInerney, IATSE International President Matt Loeb



He described the Republican candidates in the US Presidential election campaign as "a bucketful of wingnuts in a clown car, and the main wingnut seems to have emerged." Donald Trump's candidacy was "an embarrassment for our country at large."

He told BECTU: "You are doing the things we are doing in IATSE to succeed. Those are all the things that position you to succeed in the future."

### RACE EQUALITY

The increasing concern held by members, and particularly BAME

members, about diversity in the broadcasting industries and racism in this country was reflected at conference with motions tabled by branches and a presentation from the union's black members' committee on its activities during the year.

Ami Chakrabarti of Writers Producers and Directors branch proposed a successful motion committing the union to hold the broadcasters to account for failing diversity targets and to lobby the Labour Party to develop a policy on improving diversity in the workplace.

There was also widespread support for a motion condemning Islamophobia

Finally, conference heard the result of the elections of the new NEC. Jane Perry was elected for another two-year term of office as President, and the new committee comprises Steve Grey,

Michael Houlden, Douglas McGill and Kevin Carson (A&E), Andrea Gauld, Carmen Locke and Nicola Savage (BBC), Ian Stewart (IB), Mike Dick, Andrew Evans, Peter McInerney, Nick Ray, Nicole Young/Vidya Krishnamurthy – job share (LPD) and Christine Bond, Ann Jones and John Handley (RPD). ●

## A great year for VFX



Everyone at conference wanted to hear from VFX branch about their barnstorming year. Joe Pavlo (above) told delegates: "London has half the world's capacity to make blockbuster movies."

"The exponential growth we've had over the last 10 to 15 years has brought problems in the workplace."

"I went to conference last year and I wanted to know why nothing was happening. I had this moment of revelation: nothing was happening because everybody was sitting there waiting for everyone else to do something."

He started a Thursday lunch meet at St Anne's churchyard. "We got 10 to 20 people

showing up; we got over 100 on one occasion."

He was working at MPC on *Jungle Book* with 130 people in his department. "I talked to every single one of them".

One year later the branch had grown from less than 100 to over 500 – about 20% of the entire workforce in Soho. The branch then began a campaign for recognition and it received worldwide coverage. About 400 people attended a meeting in January and 100 joined on the night. Issues such as pensions, sick pay and unpaid overtime are being raised: "We did a little calculator for the Living Wage. A lot of the junior artists are paid £25K a year but when you look at the hours they work it's less than the Living Wage."

He added: "I was in California and visited a friend of mine who works at ILM. I mentioned the union campaign and he said: 'I know, we're watching you. It's really exciting.' The VFX industry globally is ready for this."

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## Summary financial information for members

as required under Section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended)

Account (year ended 31 December 2015)	Income	Expenditure
Totals for the union	£4,888,984	£3,460,952
Of which, income in respect of membership	£4,801,025	
Totals for the political fund	£40,937	£29,684

Analysis of officials' salaries and benefits	Employer's NIC	Benefits Description	Value	Total
General Secretary Gerry Morrissey	£68,986	£6,727	Pension contributions £7,871	£83,584
Asst Gen Secretary Luke Crawley	£60,406	£5,484	Pension contributions £6,893	£72,783
Asst Gen Secretary Spencer MacDonald	£60,406	£5,496	Pension contributions £6,893	£72,795
President Jane Perry	nil	nil	nil	nil
All other members of the NEC	nil	nil	nil	nil

### BROADCASTING ENTERTAINMENT CINEMATOGRAPH AND THEATRE UNION STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Trade Union law requires the National Executive Committee to prepare the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice for each financial year which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the union and of the surplus or deficit of the union for that period. In preparing those financial statements the National Executive Committee is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the union will continue to operate.

The National Executive Committee is also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the union and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the union and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities and must also establish and maintain a satisfactory system of control over its accounting records, its cash holdings and all its receipts and remittances.

### INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BROADCASTING ENTERTAINMENT CINEMATOGRAPH AND THEATRE UNION

We have audited the financial statements of the Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph And Theatre Union for the year ended 31st December 2015 which comprise the General Fund, Political Fund and Death Benefit Fund Income and Expenditure Accounts, Balance Sheet and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the Union's members, as a body, in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Union's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union and the union's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### Respective responsibilities of the National Executive Committee and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of the National Executive Committee's Responsibilities, the National Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the

amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.

This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the union's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the National Executive Committee; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Agenda for the 2016 Conference to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report. Opinion on financial statements

### In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the union's affairs as at 31st December 2015 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the Union has not maintained a satisfactory system of control over its transactions in accordance with the requirements of section 28 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures within the form AR21 of Officers' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

CHANTREY VELLACOTT DFK LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor  
London  
Date: 3 April 2016

### IRREGULARITY STATEMENT

As required by Section 32A(6)(a) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended) by the Employment Rights Act 1999)

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police. Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.