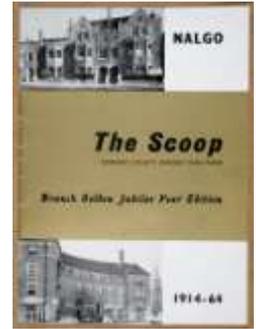




**Somerset County Branch  
1914 to 2014  
100 years of Trade Unionism**



# NEWSLETTER



The Branch was formed as “The Central Somerset Local Government Officers Association” as a result of a meeting held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1914. The meeting was addressed by Mr L Hill, General Secretary of the National Association of Local Government Officers. (NALGO).

The objectives of the organisation were:-

- (a) The promotion amongst its members of unity and mutual help and improvement;
- (b) The promotion of a knowledge of the principles and progress of Local Government; and
- (c) The provision of means of social intercourse and recreation.

At the annual meeting in November 1919, the names of six members killed in action during the 1914/18 war were recorded.

**Lieutenant J.J.Bellamy**

**Sergeant C.E.Bacon**

**Private A.Bacon**

**Private F.Addis**

**Quartermaster Sergeant Harry Payne Bonsor**

Killed 28/9/1915 Aged 30  
Somerset Light Infantry 6<sup>th</sup>  
Battalion.

Buried in Ypres town  
cemetery. Son of James &  
Julia Bonsor of Weston-  
super-Mare. Surveyor in  
Somerset County Council.

**Corporal Hubert Grove Woodward**

Killed 23/10/1918 Aged 27  
Machine gun corps (infantry)  
25<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Buried in Pommerevil British  
cemetery. His grave stone  
reads, “He will rest in his  
love”. Husband of Mrs M  
Woodward of John Street,  
Burnham-on-Sea. Mrs  
Woodward wrote to the  
Branch to thank them for  
their expressions of  
sympathy.

## 90 Members in 1914

County Council - Small Holding **5**, Clerks **7**, Health **10**, County Treasurer **8**, County Surveyor **3**, Agricultural **1**, Education Office **22**, District Council - Clerks **4**, Accountant & Rates **8**, Library **3**, Surveyor's **8**, Sanitary & Baths **3**, Hospital **5**, Magistrates clerk & staff **3**.



## The Great Struggle

In 1914 union members helped organise weekly collections to assist Belgian evacuees. In 1915, 30% of the NALGO members were serving with H.M. Forces.

Sadly we lost six members during the war. On each occasion the committee sent to the families an expression of deep sympathy. Here are some examples recorded by the Executive Committee in the minutes:-

- Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> October 1915. *“It is with much regret that the committee record that QT.M.Sergt.H.Bonsor was killed in action in France on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1915. Mr. Bonsor was a member of the Executive Committee, and his frank and manly spirit commended him to all his colleagues in the Local Government Service in Central Somerset.”*
- Minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1917. *“It is with much regret that the committee record that Sergt.C.E.Bacon (Education office) and Private Arthur Bacon (Clerk of the Council's office) were killed in France last July. They were both young men of much promise, and spoken of in the highest terms by their commanding officers.”* (They were brothers).
- Executive Committee Report from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1917 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918. *“It is with much regret that the committee report that Corporal H.G. Woodward (of the County Treasurer's Department) was killed in action in October. Corporal Woodward had probably taken part in more engagements in France, and Flanders, than any other of our members with H.M.Forces, and to receive tidings of his death when the end of the war was in sight has been a heavy blow to his Weston friends.”*
- Executive Committee Report 31<sup>st</sup> October 1919. *“The hope expressed in the report last year that Private.F.Addis (of the staff of the clerk of the County Council) who had been missing might be traced as a prisoner of war in Germany has not been realized, and it is with deep regret that his name is now added to the list of our members who have given their lives in the Great War.”*

29<sup>th</sup> April 1920. County Staff Advisory Committee. “We have considered letters from the Clerk of the County Council in connection with this committee and we recommend that the 9 members to represent the staff until the annual meeting in November be selected as follows

- 5 from the Executive Committee
- 1 Official, Dr A E Remmott-Weaver
- One woman, Miss E Shaddock
- Mr D Smart, Health Department
- Mr Stone, Local Taxation Department.”

The annual conference of the Association was held at the Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare in May 1932.

In 1933 Lt Col E. J. Stead was elected a member of the National Executive Council – the first member of the Branch to obtain a seat on the NEC. In 1939 he became President of NALGO.

In 1937 improvements in salary scales were successfully negotiated with the County Council.

## The Branch develops

The records for the first few years indicate that the activities of the Branch were mainly concerned with the 1914/18 war and members on active service. The affairs of the rifle club feature prominently.

In March 1916 women members were admitted to the Branch. Twelve health visitors joined.

In October 1922 the Staff Advisory Committee recommended, and the County Council subsequently agreed, that women should be required to resign their posts on marriage – a practice which continued until the 1939/45 war.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1924, the County Council, adopted sick pay regulations, following representation from the union.

In 1926 the County Council for the first time laid down standards of education requirements for appointment to the service and for promotion.

Reference is made in May 1928, of the decision to move the County Council headquarters from Weston-super-Mare to Taunton. 53 votes to 19. It was unpopular.

In 1928 the first of several branch magazines were published under the title, “Daily Work”. At the annual meeting in 1928 new rules were adopted and the name of the Branch changed from Central Somerset to Somerset.

Following the passing of the Local Government Act in 1929, the National Poor Law Officers Association amalgamated with NALGO and in 1930 – 117 members joined the Branch and three sub-branches were formed Shepton Mallet, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare.

In 1939 ‘Somerset Scribbles’ was to appear as the branch newsletter.

Mr Pratt gave notice to resign his post of Branch Secretary, however in view of the outbreak of war was “persuaded” to continue in office, and held the post for 5 years longer. (1954...“For nearly 30 years Mr Pratt had held office in the branch continuously since 1920. He was presented with a plated tray and a gold watch in token of his most valuable service”.)

## Conflict again



The members employed by the Bridgwater Corporation and Rural District Council decided in 1940 to form their own branch.

At the Annual Meeting in 1942 it was reported that no less than 214 of the 780 members of the Branch were serving in HM Forces.



## Further development

1946 saw the beginning of the implementation of new policy in the Branch which was eventually to lead to its reorganisation for officers of the County Council only.

In 1951 a vigorous campaign was organised in support of a 20% salary increase but although the full amount was not granted a substantial increase was obtained.

The only early edition of 'Somerset Scribbles' that survives in the branch office contains an editorial on the history of trade unionism. (*From 1952 – see the front page, top left*).

*In addition it tells us...*

- Births - Mr. and Mrs. C T Parsons (Fire Brigade) a daughter – Ann.
- Engagements - Sapper Terry Nicholls to Miss Barbara Finch (Clerk's), Mr J E Silke to Miss A F Burbidge (both of Education)
- Forthcoming Marriages. - Mr H Gibbs to Miss Valerie Hickton (Education)
- Marriages - Mr J Buckler (Planning) to Miss Shelia Templeman (Clerk's)

In 1963 ‘SCOOP’ Somerset County Officers Own Paper appears as the staff magazine.

The Branch was honoured by the presence of the National President Mr G.A. Ashton, at a dinner held in Taunton on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1963...*“Mr Ashton’s natural flow of oratory was somewhat impeded by a sore throat but the speeches given were enjoyed.”*

The eighth annual NALGO Flower Show was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1963. *All the trophies were won by the Somerset County Officers’ Branch.*

## Golden Jubilee

In 1964 the Branch celebrated its Golden Jubilee year with 994 members. The Golden Jubilee Dance took place on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1964 and was a great success. The dinner to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Branch was held at Maynard’s Restaurant, Taunton, on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1964. The attendance at the event was reported as disappointing, but the evening was much enjoyed by those who were present. The dinner menu was recorded as soup, fish, beef, sweet, cheese & coffee.

### Guests

- Earl and Lady Alexander (Former secretary of the branch)
- Branch President and Mrs Cottee
- Past Presidents (Post-war). Messrs. Deacon, Pratt, Saunders, Larway, Reynolds, Denton-Cox, Kennard, Allen, Webber, Harrison, Pitt.
- General Secretary (Transferable to (a) Mr Drain (b) Mr Newman)
- District Organisation Officer
- Lt. Col. Grey and Mrs Grey
- Mr and Mrs Rickards
- Maj. Gen. Evans and, if applicable Mrs Evans
- Four representatives of the press

### Toasts

- Branch President – The Queen
- Earl Alexander – NALGO & Somerset County Officers Branch
- Mr Allen – Reply
- Branch President – Somerset County Council
- Lt. Col. Grey – Reply
- Mr Brice – Guests
- Mr Harrison or Mr Rickards or Mr Webber – Reply

The Branch felt that the year should not be devoted only to celebrations within the Branch but that in accordance with the spirit of public services it should be marked by some effort of external goodwill. To this end they arranged an outing for the residents of Calway House and for a children’s party at Christmas 1964. They authorised a total expenditure of £100 on the projects.

**Still sporting!**

**SOCCER 1964—The Branch Team**

From Left to Right. Back Row: B. Cridland (Education), R. Pike (Architects), A. Thorne (Treasurers), K. London (Surveyors), B. Moore (Planning),  
T. Hodge (Clerks), F. Summers (Health)  
Front Row: M. Rice (Surveyors), C. Dyer (Education), D. Bridger (Clerks), T. Gargett (Surveyors), T. Hannaford (Fire Brigade)

**A Unionist's Philosophy 1964**

*The union is my Shepherd, I shall not work;  
It maketh me to lie down on the job;  
It leadeth me beside the still factories;  
It restoreth my insurance benefits;  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of strikes  
I will fear no recrimination, for the Union is with me.  
Its restrictive practices and Shop Stewards, they comfort me.  
It prepareth a Works Committee before me  
In the presence of mine employer;  
It annointeth my hand with pay rises and  
My bank balance runneth over.  
Surely Instalments and Union Dues shall follow me  
All the days of my life  
And I shall dwell in a Council flat forever.*

Source –“Branch Lines”, the Gloucestershire Branch Journal.

Somerset County Officers' Own Paper, Golden Jubilee Year Edition 1914-1964.

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permission  
documents  
A/AGP 2/1,  
A/AGP 4/2,  
A/AGP 4/3 held  
at the Somerset  
Heritage Centre.