

A new team to meet your needs

BECTU's Union Learning Fund project manager **Kate Elliott** introduces the union's new learning organisers



Ready to help: (left to right) Sebastian Barnes, Martin Roberts and John Crumpton

From last month we have three new recruits to the BECTU's training department: part-time learning organisers John Crumpton, Sebastian Barnes and Martin Roberts. They are working on a project around the National Skills Academy for offstage and backstage workers in theatre and live events. Over the next year they will be asking members in these industries about the kind of training they have already undertaken and what they feel they still need. This 'Labour Market Intelligence' (LMI) will be fed back to the National Skills Academy and will help to shape its future direction.

THE ORGANISERS

John is a freelance sound editor based in Manchester and already

working for BECTU on another training project; Martin is the chief electrician at the Princess Theatre in Torquay and chair of the Arts & Entertainment

divisional committee and ideally placed to go out and about and meet members in the south west of England. Seb is based in Birmingham and was, until recently, the technical manager at the Midlands Arts Centre. He is now a director of the Midlands Offstage Skills Consortium, which brings together groups of employers, unions and training providers across the Midlands.

Learning organiser Martin

Roberts says: "In the South West it is all about creating a learning network so members can benefit from the good training that BECTU organises in the region.

help from BECTU national official Lynne Korniak I'm currently setting up meetings with my local branches in the Midlands. I have an initial 12 branches to contact in Birmingham, Cheltenham, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham and Wolverhampton. We're also hoping to improve our branch communication and networking, something I found lacking when I was a local branch official. I've recently been invited to the Midlands Unionlearn network, and have been offered help from one of their project workers."

"Finding out about and addressing the learning and skills needs of offstage and backstage workers is vitally important to their staying employed in these industries," says John Crumpton.

RECONNECT

"I hope to be able to reconnect with BECTU members and recruit new ones via engaging with the workforce around learning and skills issues. I'm greatly encouraged that reps at several north west theatres and live venues have already expressed interest and I hope we can build upon this to make a successful national project."

If you are based in a theatre or arts centre in any of the above regions and would like the learning organisers to visit your workplace please contact BECTU on 020 7346 0908 and speak to Kate Elliott, or email Kate on kelliott@bectu.org.uk. ●

Addressing the learning and skills needs of offstage and backstage workers is vitally important

I am looking to make contact with any members in the South West who are interested in training; this includes freelancers and members who are not connected with a big branch as well as all the local branches.

"I am here to help with any sort of training, for instance job specific such as lighting or rigging, maybe IT, help with English or maths, or sign language. If you are in a branch and fancy being a union learning rep to help your workmates I can help and support you." Contact Martin at mroberts@bectu.org.uk.

Over the next few weeks the learning organisers will be contacting reps in a number of theatres and organisations across the the North West, the South West and the Midlands, asking for their help in carrying out a large 'learning needs analysis' of their workplace; they will also be contacting employers to seek their permission and support in doing this.

Midlands learning organiser Seb Barnes says: "I'm excited and looking forward to being involved with this project. With

