

## Laptop learning proves popular

Many members, including those made redundant, are being helped to improve their literacy, numeracy and IT skills and gain relevant qualifications with the use of laptop computers provided by the union.

The laptops, equipped with mobile broadband, are loaned to training providers who use them to deliver free training programmes to members, often at their place of work.

David Thacker, from Unity's Union Learning Fund project, said: "The take-up from members of the laptops and our other mobile IT equipment has been extremely encouraging."

## Help given to redundant Steelite workers

Following their redundancy from Steelite International, workers are being prepared by Stoke-on-Trent based training provider Axia Solutions, working with Unity, to apply for new jobs by achieving qualifications in Maths and English.

The teaching is taking place at Unity head office, using the laptops provided through the Learning in project.

One former Steelite employee, Linda Coates, said: "Being made redundant with few qualifications has made me realise how important it is to brush up on my Maths and English and obtain nationally recognised qualifications to help me find my next job."

Keith Marsh, director of Axia Solutions, said: "Ensuring that people have Maths and English qualifications give the individuals the confidence and ability to apply for new jobs. It also sends a positive

signal to potential employers that they have shown a willingness to improve themselves."

Linda Coates is pictured with Axia tutor Anthony Daley. Anthony was made redundant from his job as a hand painter at Royal Doulton and has since retrained at Axia to teach Skills for Life courses.

He provides an excellent example of what can be achieved after redundancy with the help of appropriate training.



## Dunoon members log on

Workers at Dunoon Ceramics in Stone are taking full advantage of the availability of the 'support on site' laptops.

They are working towards literacy and IT qualifications in their own time at the end of their shifts.

Among them are Dawn Rushton, Rose Fairbrother and Chris Bessey, pictured hard at work on online practice tests.

# More learning agreements signed

## Unity and Derby College link-up

The Visitor Centre at Royal Crown Derby was the venue for the signing of a partnership agreement between Unity and Derby College.

Royal Crown Derby was one of the first companies in the Derby area to work with Unity and Derby College to provide free courses in literacy skills for our members.

The course, part of the Skills for Life programme, is open to employees who wish to improve their English skills or just want to get a recognised qualification. It has proved so popular that Royal Crown Derby is considering adding a further course in numeracy skills.

Unity Assistant General Secretary Garry Oakes said: "We were pleased to be invited to Crown Derby to celebrate the signing of the partnership agreement with Derby College. It will allow us to work closely together to provide further education courses for our members in the Derby area.

"Lifelong learning has really come to the fore in recent years and it's vital that unions take up the challenge. There is no longer a guarantee of a job for life so we need to make sure that training and development is available to all of our members, particularly those who have had little access to training in the past. We look forward to a continued productive partnership with Derby College."

Royal Crown Derby Personnel Manager Pam Ridgarde said: "Our experience, particularly in the current economic climate, has shown that it is in the best interests of employers, employees and trade unions that staff maintain and upgrade their skills wherever possible. We are grateful to Unity and Derby College for allowing this to happen." Skills for Life provide the skills necessary for an adult to function well at an individual, workplace, family or wider level. These include training in literacy, numeracy and IT skills.



Unity assistant general secretary Garry Oakes and Steve Logan with representatives of the union, Crown Derby and Derby College at the signing.



Ideal Standard workers pictured top and right with the certificates they received for their successful studies.

A partnership agreement between Unity and training provider Axia Solutions has been signed at Ideal Standard, Middlewich.

The signing took place at the Cheshire company during the presentation to our members of certificates for literacy, numeracy and National Vocational Qualifications.

Doing the honours were Divisional Officer John Huson, on behalf of Unity, and Axia Solutions' Managing Director Karen Riley.

John Huson said: "I'm delighted to be signing this agreement which is the

culmination of many years of Unity and Axia working together to improve the skills of our members."

Paul Taylor, a Unity Learning Representative at Ideal Standard and one of the certificate recipients, said: "I've really enjoyed attending the Axia courses. The style of teaching is great - very friendly and casual."

Axia Solutions is a Stoke-on-Trent based training provider. It has worked very closely with Unity and its Learning Representatives and was recognised for its achievements in last year's Unionlearn awards.

It employs 16 people of whom half have joined the company after being made redundant from the ceramic industry.

They are all qualified in teaching, training or assessment roles and bring a wealth of experience to the benefit of the Unity members they train, teach and assess.

Gerald Crookes, Unity's Union Learning Fund Project Manager, said that Ideal Standard "was a shining example of the benefits that education and training can bring to both employees and employers."

## Training is ideal at Middlewich



**Would you like to improve your skills?**

To find out more about free adult learning courses, talk to your union learning rep. or works rep. You can also call Gerald Crookes or David Thacker at the Unity Resource Centre on 01782 280 588.