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Object(s): Banner

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Researcher details: Georgia Evison, Volunteer

The Banner

This marching banner was made for the 'National Union of Agricultural Workers – Essex County' and would have been carried at rallies and demonstrations by the union branch in Essex.

Historically, flags and banners have been used for communication and symbolism. Organisations with a marching tradition, such as unions, have long used banners to identify themselves and spread awareness about their group. Trade union banners would typically show the benefits of joining the union and promote the trade which the union represented.¹ We can see this on our banner. The farm workers shaking hands, promoting the unity and brotherhood of workers who joined the union, and the children representing the positive benefits it could have to families. These images also reinforce the inscription at the bottom of the banner, which reads "UNITE AND EDUCATE TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD FOR THE FUTURE GENERATION."² By uniting with other workers and joining a union, members could be making life better for themselves and their children. The tractor cutting and binding corn and two horses pulling the vehicle are exalting the hardworking tradition of agricultural work.

National Union of Agricultural Workers

This banner was owned by Dennis Walter Bareham MBE, the Essex County Officer of the Agricultural and Allied Workers Group of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU).³

¹ Trustram M. British History in depth: Banners of the British Labour Movement [Internet]. Bbc.co.uk. 2011 [cited 6 July 2020]. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/banners_01.shtml.

² eHive Record [Internet] 2020 [cited 13 July 2020] Available from: <https://my.ehive.com/accounts/3978/objects/1141259/banner>.

³ eHive Record [Internet] 2020 [cited 13 July 2020] Available from: <https://my.ehive.com/accounts/3978/objects/1141259/banner>.

There is little information about him available, but we do know he was awarded his MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 1990.⁴

The group Dennis worked for formed in 1982, when the National Union of Agricultural Workers (NUAW) merged with the TGWU, after nearly 80 years as the biggest union for agricultural workers.⁵ It was established as the 'Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers' and Small Holders Union' in July 1906 in the Angel Hotel in North Walsham, Norfolk (Figure 1), and by the outbreak of World War II had spread to every county in England.

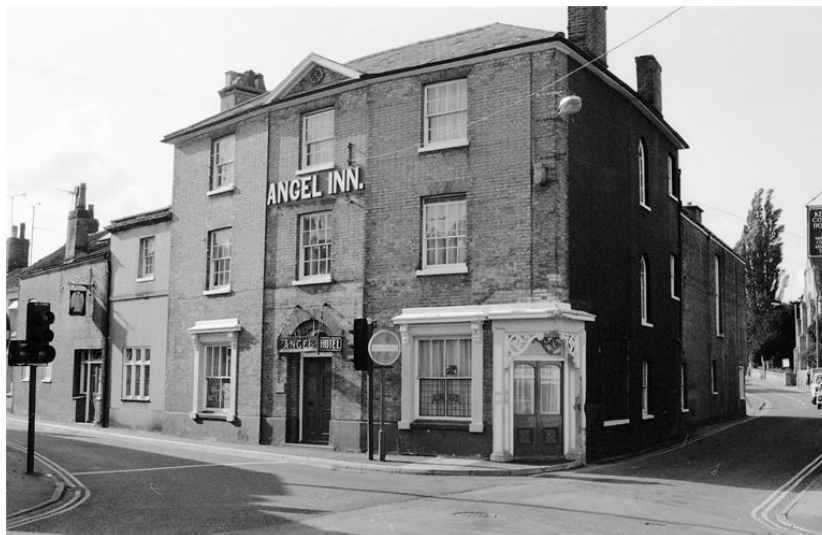


Figure 1: The Angel Inn, North Walsham in the 1980's⁶

The Union was created by a group of Liberal politicians, farm workers and veterans of the earlier union movement in order to grant agricultural labourers' political representation, locally and nationally, to protect them from political persecution and to improve their living conditions.⁷ Previous attempts had been made to organise agricultural workers in the latter half of the 19th century, notably the National Agricultural Labourers Union, set up in 1872 by Joseph Arch, which grew to have over 1000 branches and 72,000 members by 1873. The aims

⁴ Supplement to the London Gazette. Issue 52173. [Internet]. 1990 [cited 8 July 2020]. Available from: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/52173/page/12>.

⁵ Danziger R. Political Powerlessness. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1988.

⁶ North Walsham Archive [Internet] [cited 30 July 2020]. Available from: <https://www.northwalshamarchive.co.uk/photo/the-angel-public-house-north-walsham>. Attribution: © North Walsham & District Community Archive.

⁷ Howkins A. The Centenary of the 'Farm Workers Union'. Rural History Today [Internet]. 2007 [cited 7 July 2020];(12):1, 8. Available from: <https://www.bahs.org.uk/RHT/RHT%20issue%2012.pdf>.

of this earlier movement, inspired by the organising spirit of the time, were to elevate the social position of agricultural labourers, increase their wages, lower their working hours, improve their housing and assist them with migration and emigration. However, agricultural labourers proved difficult to organise, since they weren't easily canvassed and often worked in remote, rural areas. The following years saw a period of agricultural decline and depression, and things became increasingly difficult for the Union.⁸ Despite a small revival in the early 1890's, the old Union had disappeared by 1896.

1906 was the year of a landslide Liberal victory, and many workers reported being sacked due to their support of the party – an important factor in the creation of the NUAW that same year.⁹ This, combined with the work of earlier political leaders and organisers, particularly in the Eastern Counties and Norfolk, was crucial to the 1906 revival of agricultural unionism. The most important of these early agitators was George Edwards, from Marsham, Norfolk, who once served as a Branch Secretary in Arch's earlier Union. He was known to cycle all over Norfolk recruiting and organising agricultural labourers.¹⁰

We can estimate our banner was made and used in the post-war years, due to the type of tractor portrayed, and the fact that the Union had various name changes. It was officially named the NUAW from 1920, until in 1968 it became the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers.¹¹ During World War II, many unions improved their reputation and increased their membership, including the NUAW. Officials worked hard during the war years to improve industrial relationships and increase output, and membership more than doubled.¹²

The NUAW report of 1948, around the time the banner was probably in use, states that the union "employed 37 organisers, during that year they travelled a total of 422,976 miles, held 5,978 meetings and made 10,683 visits to members".¹³ Unions themselves would have been a method through which news and information was circulated and spread through rural

⁸ Pelling, H. A History of British Trade Unionism. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1977.

⁹ Howkins A. The Centenary of the 'Farm Workers Union'. Rural History Today [Internet]. 2007 [cited 30 July 2020];(12):1, 8. Available from: <https://www.bahs.org.uk/RHT/RHT%20issue%2012.pdf>.

¹⁰ Norfolk Museums Collections. Union banner (banner). Available from: <http://norfolkmuseumscollections.org/collections/objects/object-4289145073.html>. [accessed 16 July 2020].

¹¹ eHive Record [Internet] 2020 [cited 13 July 2020] Available from: <https://my.ehive.com/accounts/3978/objects/1141259/banner>, Marsh A, Ryan V, Smethurst J. Historical directory of trade unions. Aldershot: Scolar.

¹² Pelling, H. A History of British Trade Unionism. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1977.

¹³ National Union of Agricultural Workers 1948 [Internet]. Country Standard. 2009 [cited 6 July 2020]. Available from: <http://country-standard.blogspot.com/2009/07/national-union-of-agricultural-workers.html>.

communities and around the country as a whole, particularly political ideas and propaganda. Unions' traditional ties to the political left and Labour party meant often party officials were recruited from unions and members contributed to fund election campaigns.¹⁴ Moreover, they mobilised their members to vote. Overall, unions had a strong influence over the political left and information concerning politics and workers' rights would have been spread through the union network, through meetings, demonstrations (where our banner would have been displayed with hundreds of others) and through their publications, such as *The Landworker*, the journal of the NUAW.¹⁵



Figure 2: An example of a trade union banner, this belonged to the Norfolk County Committee of the NUAW¹⁶

¹⁴ Streeck W, Hassel A, Addison J, Schnabel C. Trade Unions as Political Actors [Internet]. 2003 [cited 7 July 2020]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/47801018_Trade_Unions_as_Political_Actors.

¹⁵ Campbell A. Celebrating rural workers and 100 years of *The Landworker* journal – LabourList [Internet]. LabourList. 2019 [cited 10 July 2020]. Available from: <https://labourlist.org/2019/09/celebrating-rural-workers-and-100-years-of-the-landworker-journal/>.

¹⁶ Norfolk Museums Collections [Internet] [cited 30 July 2020]. Available from: <http://norfolkmuseumscollections.org/collections/objects/object-4289145073.html>. Attribution: © Norfolk Museums Collection.



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George Tutill

According to our eHive record for the banner, it was made at '6 Tuthill, 83 City Road, London'.¹⁷ It's reasonable to believe this in fact refers to G Tutill, or George Tutill, a banner maker whose workshop was located at 83 City Road in London. Tutill was the most prominent banner-maker of the era and had a monopoly over the market since he set up his workshop in 1837, with his daughter continuing his business until the mid 20th century. Not only did he make banners for trade unions but for a range of friendly societies, churches and movements. He patented a treatment for his banners, covering them in a layer of Indian rubber to make them durable and long-lasting, the reason why examples of his work still exist today.¹⁸

¹⁷ eHive Record [Internet] 2020 [cited 13 July 2020] Available from: <https://my.ehive.com/accounts/3978/objects/1141259/banner>.

¹⁸ Walker J. George Tutill: Forest Gate resident and Trade Union banner manufacturer [Internet]. E7 Now and Then. 2016 [cited 7 July 2020]. Available from: <http://www.e7-nowandthen.org/2016/02/george-tutill-forest-gate-resident-and.html>