



Johnny Ball (centre) with Barney McGill (left) and LSC North East Skills Development Director Nick James

## Here's Johnny!

**Much-loved TV presenter and maths guru Johnny Ball visited the KP snacks factory in Billingham, Tees Valley to inspire staff to improve their numeracy and literacy skills this summer.**

The national treasure, who fronted children's TV programmes *Think of a Number* and *Johnny Ball Reveals All* in the '70s and '80s, was promoting the importance of gaining numeracy and literacy qualifications as part of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East Skills for Life campaign.

"Many people today do not handle the basic maths required for everyday life very well: we must encourage people with such problems to try confronting them, as this can lead to improvements in every aspect of life, from becoming better qualified in the workplace, to building similar confidence in our kids," Johnny commented.

A six-strong team of ULRs led by Jean McDermottroe (on full-time secondment through the Learning for All Fund) is helping hundreds of staff to improve and develop their skills in the fully equipped learning centre onsite.

"By holding events like this, coupled with the fantastic work that ULRs are doing both here at KP and at workplaces across the region, we're helping people make the first steps to improving their skills," said the then unionlearn Regional Manager Barney McGill.

Rachel Ovington, HR Cluster Lead – Northeast at KP, said employee development was vital to help the business continue to succeed on Teeside. "We will look for any opportunity to encourage learning and development in our workplace whether that is an NVQ, a vocational programme or a visit from Johnny Ball – maths is at the heart of everything we do."

## Academy signs up with Ruskin

**Ruskin College has become the lead national provider of TUC Organising Academy courses for the next two years under an agreement signed at Congress House this summer.**

The new partnership will allow Organising Academy graduates to take advantage of Ruskin's broader programme of training and support, which includes MA and undergraduate programmes.

"This new partnership marks an opportunity to shape a new generation of skilled, educated and motivated trade unionists that will create stronger and more successful unions," said TUC Deputy General Secretary Frances O'Grady.

"I'd like to thank Newcastle College for their wonderful support over the past four years and also

Ruskin College for welcoming the Organising Academy with such open arms."

Ruskin Principal Audrey Mullender was delighted to welcome the TUC Organising Academy to the college. "It makes absolute sense for Ruskin and the TUC to draw together our proud histories of educating trade unionists to organise for social justice and social mobility," she said.

Originally launched in 1998, the TUC's Organising Academy now trains over 350 union officers and organisers every year, while Ruskin's strong ties to the labour movement mean its graduates include former TUC General Secretary George Woodcock and former Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott.



Audrey Mullender and Frances O'Grady celebrate with (from left) Liz Rees (TUC Education), Paul Nowak (TUC Head of Organisation and Services), and Liz Blackshaw (TUC Organising Academy Director)

Photo: Andrew Ward

## USDAW campaign scoops top award

**Retail union USDAW's Check Out Learning campaign was named Best Campaign at the TUC Press and PR Awards this summer.**

Check Out Learning encouraged over 330 USDAW members to return to learning last year, directly led to the

union signing up over 440 new recruits and identified 250-plus members who expressed an interest in becoming USDAW reps.

"Check Out Learning ... is a great name for a campaign that gets everything right: the objectives are clear and the outcomes will have significant long-term benefits

for the union, developing both the union and the individual and collective skills of its members," the judges said.

"Unions are at their best when they show members that they are not just ordinary people, but extraordinary people, and this campaign does that in spades."

**USDAW's Check Out Learning campaign (above) gets it all right**

