



## NME Report – Owen Meredith

May 2008

### Responsibilities:

- **Region 4:** Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire & Worcestershire, Birmingham & Solihull
- **Wales**
- **Freshers' Packs**
- **Working Life**

### INTRODUCTION

*Since being elected it has been a hectic time, both in CF and politics as well as finishing my degree. As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, I have completed my studies, so will have more time to devote to my NME work.*

*It has been an exciting first two months, working on the Boris campaign, local elections and building a picture of the state of play in my region.*

*I also had the privilege of taking part in a Question Time debate as the Conservative representative as Calday Grammar School in Wirral West.*

*I have also been planning a CF presence at Staffordshire County Show, later this month.*

### DETAILED REPORT

#### **Freshers' Packs and the Student Campaign**

As we all know, freshers week is the most important week for recruitment at our Universities. I have been tasked with developing freshers packs for 2008, and am working on a comprehensive guide to recruitment and retention during freshers.

The packs this year will contain additional information for branches based on *Best Practice*, as well as supporting materials from external organisations.

Our campaign at freshers will focus on recruitment of members, but university branches will also be given the tools and guidance to promote the Party's message and policies to freshers – many of whom will have never voted before and will use University to shape their political thoughts.

We will also be assisting with packs for retention of members, to encourage existing members to renew their membership.

I am hoping that this year we will be able to introduce new membership forms to help branches get the important information they need from members, and to make it easier to return those details to CCHQ.

Finally, we will be running a competition for University branches. With prizes for those who recruit the most members, those with the highest % of students as members (to recognise that size is relative), and for the branch that gets their membership details back to CCHQ the fastest.

### **Elections Low Down (and the Crewe & Nantwich by-election)**

As we all know May 1<sup>st</sup> saw the local and London elections deliver great results for the Conservatives. During the election campaign I spent time supporting campaigns in London, Staffordshire and Cheshire. As well as directing help to Birmingham.

With the Crewe and Nantwich by-election taking place on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, much of my time this month is dedicated to assisting the campaign. I have visited the constituency on numerous occasions since the election was called, and will be spending much of the pre-election week in Crewe.

I would like to take this opportunity thank all those CF members who contributed towards these fantastic elections results, and congratulate those CF members who were elected to Local Government.

### **The Ever Difficult Art of Communication**

Improving communication was at the heart of my election manifesto. I have begun building a regional directory, listing Branch Chairman, Area Chairman, websites, email addresses, phone number and meeting details for all our CF branches in Region 4.

It has been difficult to progress with this as much as I had hoped, due to the lack of information already available. The task is much bigger than I had anticipated, as I need to discover as well as collate the information.

The directory is due to be finished next month.

### **The NME Tour**

Finally, I know from past experience that the CF NME is often criticised for not being open and transparent about their role in CF and exactly what they do. This year we are hoping to change this. The launch of the CF NME blog ([www.executive.cfbranch.com](http://www.executive.cfbranch.com)) is a big part of that and I will be regularly posting here to keep you up to date with my activities.

Additionally, I have launched a map on my website ([www.owenmeredith.co.uk](http://www.owenmeredith.co.uk)), which will contain details of my visits across the country in my capacity as NME member. Hopefully this will demonstrate by the end of my term that the NME is not London centric and will allow CF members to ensure I am working as hard as you expect.

## **A Word on Wales**

CF in Wales is progressing well. Paul Rogers has taken on the role of CF Wales Chairman, and is working hard to put together a full executive of Area Chairmen. Reports from branches suggest growing membership in the lead up to the May Unitary Authority elections - in which many CF members stood for election.

The elections results in Wales showed the Conservative Party is making a lot of progress here, which is massively helped by the presence and strength of CF.

*That is the lot for this report. I had originally intended to write monthly reports, but it seems more sensible to give a detailed reported every two months. My next report will therefore follow in July.*

## **Final Word**

I would like to thank all those CFers who have been working hard over the past few months for their efforts. We are doing really well in the polls and producing good elections results in the locals and London elections as well as by-elections. Largely down to the work of dedicated CFers.