General Federation of Trade Unions
(GFTU)
Administrative/Biographical History: The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) is a national trade union centre in the United Kingdom. It has 35 affiliates with a membership of just over 214,000 and describes itself as the "federation for specialist unions". In the 1890s, the development of socialist organisations and socialist thinking also found expression in the British trade union movement. Many of the new unions formed during that period were committed to the socialist transformation of society and were critical of the conservatism of the craft unions. The debate revolved around concept of building "one-big-union" which would have the resources to embark on a militant course of action and even change society. This thinking gained strength after the 1897 Engineering Employers Federation lockout which resulted in a defeat for engineering workers. The view that it was necessary to develop a strong, centralised trade union organisation by forming a federation, which had been rejected only two years earlier, was now endorsed at the Trades Union Congress of September 1897. This resulted in the establishment of the General Federation of Trade Unions at a special Congress of the TUC in 1899, the principal objective of which was to set up a national organisation with a strike fund which could be drawn upon by affiliated trade unions. The GFTU participated in the foundation of the International Federation of Trade Unions at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam in July 1919.

The GFTU now concentrates on servicing the needs of specialist unions. It does this by providing courses, undertaking research for its affiliated Unions and administering a Pension Scheme for officials and staff of affiliated Unions. In keeping with its original objectives, the Federation pays dispute benefit in appropriate cases to affiliated Unions. The Governing Body is the Biennial General Council Meeting, attended by delegates from affiliated Unions, at which policy and rule changes are debated and an Executive Committee of 14 members elected to meet on a monthly basis between Biennial General Council Meetings.

Custodial History: Donated to Bishopsgate Institute by the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) in 2012

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3. Typescript, ‘History of the GFTU’ by unknown author (n.d.)
   OPEN

4. GFTU Cash Book (1927-1951)
   OPEN

5. GFTU Contributions Register (listing contributions from affiliated unions) (1899-1931)
   OPEN

6. GFTU Contributions Register (listing contributions from affiliated unions) (1909-1932)
   OPEN

   OPEN

8. GFTU Staff Pension Book (1968-1987)
   CLOSED

   OPEN

    OPEN

11. GFTU Joint Board Account Book (1908-1913)
    OPEN

12. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1925-1931)
    OPEN

13. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1919-1922)
    OPEN

14. GFTU Account Book (1931-1935)
    OPEN

15. Statement of weekly rents collected at Duke’s Road and Woburn Buildings (1930-1940)
    OPEN
16. GFTU quarterly statement of accounts (1946)  
OPEN

17. GFTU: Building accounts for Central House and Woburn Buildings (1939-1947)  
OPEN

OPEN

19. Correspondence and ephemera concerning a meeting between P.Potts (General Secretary, GFTU) and the European Parliament Labour Group (1982)  
OPEN

CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

24. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1900-1904)  
OPEN

25. GFTU staff wages and pension book (1920-1927)  
CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

28. GFTU Pension Scheme (1983)  
CLOSED

29. Papers, correspondence and reports regarding the relationship between the TUC and the GFTU (1935-1942)  
OPEN

30. Correspondence between George Bell and Leslie Hodgson regarding various matters (1949-1959)  
OPEN

31. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1941-1950)  
OPEN
32. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (1936-1941)  
OPEN

33. GFTU wages book (1963-1965)  
CLOSED

34. GFTU wages book (1944-1948)  
CLOSED

35. GFTU wages book (1916-1919)  
CLOSED

36. GFTU wages book (1940-1944)  
CLOSED

37. GFTU wages book (1948-1952)  
CLOSED

38. GFTU wages book (1936-1940)  
CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

42. GFTU wages book (1968-1970)  
CLOSED

43. GFTU wages book (1957-1959)  
CLOSED

44. Correspondence regarding the 1964 GFTU Conference in Blackpool (inc. letters from Harold Wilson, George Brown and James Callaghan) (1964)  
OPEN

45. GFTU material for Royal Commission: Answers to questionnaire from affiliated societies (1965)  
OPEN

46. GFTU pension scheme: Old deeds and rules (1975-1980)  
OPEN

47. War Emergency National Workers Committee minute book (1914-1918)  
OPEN
48. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (1929-1936) OPEN


50. GFTU cash book (1913-1942) OPEN

51. GFTU: organiser’s expenses receipts (A: George Bell) (1922-1948) OPEN

52. GFTU Union Reps Briefing: back copies and other material (1990-2002) OPEN

53. GFTU general cash book (Oversize) (1932-1938) OPEN

54. GFTU wages book (Oversize) (1927-1936) CLOSED

55. Deeds, leases, policy documents and agreements regarding Central House and Woburn Buildings (1914-1941) OPEN

56. Central House: general correspondence and documentation (including GFTU’s move) (1928-1930) OPEN

57. GFTU meetings expenses book (1936-1948) OPEN


59. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (1921-1929) OPEN

60. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1927-1934) OPEN

OPEN

63. Hinckley and District Trimmers’ Union: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1949-1963)
OPEN

64. Derby Trimmers, Dyers and Auxiliary Workers’ Association: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1963-1969)
OPEN

OPEN

66. GFTU Wages and Insurance Sub-Committee meeting minutes (1974)
CLOSED

67. GFTU petty cash book (1915-1919)
OPEN

68. GFTU audited accounts (1966-1971)
OPEN

69. Leslie Hodgson remembrance file: correspondence (1979)
OPEN

70. Amalgamated Society of Cricket Ball Makers: Union File: Papers and Correspondence (1919-1944)
OPEN

71. Society of Shuttlemakers: Union File: Papers and Correspondence (1933-1968)
OPEN

OPEN

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OPEN

OPEN


78. Hinckley and District Hosiery Warehousemen/Menders Association: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1951-1952) OPEN


82. Papers and correspondence regarding the Cost of Living Enquiry (1948) OPEN

83. Miscellaneous correspondence (1939-1991) OPEN

84. Transference of Trade Union Membership: general correspondence (1940) OPEN

85. GFTU: miscellaneous reports, documents and statements (1939 – c1980) OPEN

86. Papers and correspondence regarding a loan from the Borough of Fleetwood (1939-1941) OPEN


88. Official publications regarding war damage and the loss of buildings (1941) OPEN


92. Correspondence and papers sent to W.A.Appleton by Henry Rothband regarding a scheme for the employment of partially disabled soldiers and sailors (1916)  OPEN

93. Counterpart lease for the first house in Upper Woburn Place (1824)  OPEN

94. Miscellaneous forms, documents and photographs (inc. Leslie Hodgson) possibly compiled for historical brochure (1945-c1980)  OPEN

95. GFTU Pension Scheme Trustees minute book (1961-1991)  OPEN

96. Papers and reports from a GFTU strategy meeting (1990)  OPEN

97. General papers and correspondence regarding Central House (1931-1933)  OPEN

98. Associated Metal Workers and Allied Trades: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1957-1963)  OPEN


102. Correspondence and drafts regarding the Rookes vs Barnard case (1964)  OPEN
103. Print Block, Roller and Stamp Cutters' Society: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1961-1968) OPEN

104. Print Block, Roller and Stamp Cutters' Society: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1947-1949) OPEN


107. Correspondence between GFTU and Home Office, predominantly about the employment of women and young persons on the shift system in factories (1935-1939) OPEN

108. Print Block, Roller and Stamp Cutters' Society: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1945-1952) OPEN


110. Correspondence with Edward Heath and Keith Joseph regarding regional development (1964) OPEN

111. Correspondence with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Insurance regarding various issues (1934-1952) OPEN


113. GFTU One Day Conferences, October 1965 and November 1966: Papers and correspondence (1965-1966) OPEN

114. GFTU audited accounts (incomplete) (1931-1952) OPEN
115. Screw, Nut, Bolt and Rivet Trade Society: Dispute with Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd: Papers and correspondence (1942) OPEN

116. Correspondence regarding loan of £10,000 to the Government in 1940 (1940) OPEN


118. Correspondence and papers regarding Federation City and Guilds prizes (1951-1957) OPEN

119. Correspondence between the GFTU and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (1934-1949) OPEN

120. Correspondence and papers regarding the GFTU loan to Denton District Council (1940-1947) OPEN

121. Correspondence between the GFTU and the Inland Revenue (1931-1950) OPEN

122. Correspondence between the GFTU and the Fylde Water Board (1936-1941) OPEN

123. Correspondence between the GFTU and the Borough of Rochdale regarding a loan of £10,000 (1939-1941) OPEN

124. Correspondence between the GFTU and solicitors Vivian J. Williams regarding various matters (1936-1941) OPEN

125. Correspondence regarding Liverpool mortgages (1933-1934) OPEN

126. Correspondence between the GFTU and the Co-operative Wholesale Society Bankers (1950s) OPEN

127. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (damaged) (1919-1921) OPEN

128. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1901-1906) OPEN
129. Papers and correspondence regarding Company Law Amendment and the GFTU Deputation at the Board of Trade (1944-1960) OPEN


131. Correspondence and papers regarding the case of Sydney Whitehead (1948-1950) OPEN

132. Mechanical plans for Central House (Oversize) (1972) OPEN

133. Central House: general correspondence and papers (1934-1939) OPEN

134. GFTU Sub-Committee minute book (1915-1919) OPEN

135. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1906-1909) OPEN

136. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (water damaged) (1919-1925) OPEN

137. Minute book of the Joint Board of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, the GFTU and the Labour Party (1907-1913) OPEN

138. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1899-1901) OPEN


140. Replies to questionnaire regarding industrial dust diseases (1943) OPEN

141. Correspondence and papers regarding a dispute between the Midland Counties Trade Federation and the National Union of Local and Metal Workers (1923-1926) OPEN

142. Correspondence regarding severance/redundancy pay (1964) CLOSED
143. Correspondence and papers regarding workmen’s compensation and industrial diseases, includes report of GFTU deputation, led by Mr Appleton, to the Home Office in 1934 (1932-1949) OPEN


145. Correspondence with and papers regarding the International Labour Office, including papers on the ‘Bedaux System’ (1931-1946) OPEN

146. Correspondence relating to Federation News, including invitations to contribute articles and letters from Harold Wilson, Anthony Crosland, Roy Jenkins, Douglas Jay, Richard Crossman and Reg Prentice (1954-1965) OPEN

147. Central House: general correspondence and documentation (1940-1952) OPEN

148. Pen and Pocket Blade Forgers’ and Smithers’ Protection Society: Union file: Papers and correspondence (1953) OPEN

149. Chemical Workers’ Union: Union file: Papers and correspondence (1940-1945) OPEN


151. Wall Paper Workers’ Union: Union file: Papers and correspondence (1932-1945) OPEN

152. Journeyman Felt Hatters and Allied Workers’ Union: Union file: Papers and correspondence (1948-1952) OPEN


155. GFTU cash book (1901-1907)
OPEN

156. GFTU audited accounts (1932-1938)
OPEN

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168. Papers regarding civil defence, war damage and the construction of a shelter at Central House (1939-1941) OPEN

169. Miscellaneous plans for building and renovation at Central House (1938-1971) OPEN

170. Bill of Quantities for the extension and alterations to Central House (October 1969) OPEN


172. GFTU Sub-Committee minute book (1900-1901) OPEN

173. GFTU Management Sub-Committee minute book (1935-1940) OPEN

174. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1911-1915) OPEN

175. 'Federationist': subscribers book (c1915) OPEN

176. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1909-1911) OPEN

177. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: papers and correspondence (1977) CLOSED

178. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: application forms (1949-1952) CLOSED

179. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: papers and correspondence (1977) CLOSED

180. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: application forms (1949-1952) CLOSED

181. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: application forms (1949-1952) CLOSED
182. Report of proceedings of the 71st GFTU AGM at the Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare (1970)  
OPEN

183. Report of a private session at the 70th GFTU AGM at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough (1969)  
CLOSED

184. Proceedings of a GFTU day conference held in the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1969)  
OPEN

185. Proceedings of a GFTU day conference held in the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1970)  
OPEN

186. Applications for the post of GFTU General Secretary: papers and correspondence (1977)  
OPEN

187. GFTU audited accounts (mouldy and damaged) (1939-1941)  
OPEN

188. Miscellaneous education documents, including reports on individual students (1983)  
CLOSED

189. Registration of GFTU rules: papers and correspondence (1949-1956)  
OPEN

OPEN

191. GFTU Management Committee minute book (1919-1927)  
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN


197. Midland Counties Federation of Hosiery Finishers: Union No.6: Papers and correspondence (1930-1934) OPEN


199. Nottingham & District Dyers’ and Bleachers’ Association: Union No.4: Papers and correspondence (1970-1979) OPEN

200. Lancashire Box, Packing Case and General Woodworkers Society: Union No.2 (1975-1983) OPEN

201. London Jewish Bakers’ Union: dispute benefit return sheet (1930) OPEN


204. Leicester and Leicestershire Auxiliary Workers: dispute benefit return sheets (1930) OPEN


OPEN

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OPEN

213. United Ladies’ Tailors Trade Union. Union No.158: dispute schedules and benefit return sheets (1930-1938)
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

216. Dundee and District, Calendar, Linoleum and Dye Workers’ Union: Union No.19: dispute benefit return sheets (1930-1934)
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN


226. Amalgamated National Union of Quarry Workers and Sett Makers: Union No.132: dispute schedules (1932-1933) OPEN


OPEN

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237. Leicester Hosiery Scourers and Bleachers Trade and Benefit Society: Union No.122: Papers and correspondence (1943-1952)  
OPEN

238. National Silk Workers’ Association: Union No.123: dispute schedule (1930)  
OPEN

239. South Durham and North Yorkshire Saltmakers’ Association: Union No.134: dispute schedule (1940)  
OPEN

240. Society of Shuttlemakers: Union No.143: Papers, correspondence and dispute schedules (1933-1979)  
OPEN

241. Amalgamated Society of Spring Makers, Tool Makers and Grinders: Union No.149: dispute schedules (1933)  
OPEN

OPEN

243. National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades’ Association: Union No.54: dispute schedules and benefit return sheets (1931-1941)  
OPEN

244. Amalgamated Moulders’ Union: Union No.105: dispute benefit return sheets (1931-1935)  
OPEN
245. Leicester and Leicestershire Trimmers and Auxiliary Association: Union No.83: Papers, correspondence and dispute schedules (1935-1962)
OPEN

246. National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades’ Association: Union No.54: dispute schedules and benefit return sheets (1932-1948)
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

251. Chain Makers’ and Strikers’ Association: Union File: Papers and correspondence (1945-1953)
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

255. Correspondence regarding the lease of 9 Prince’s Road, Wimbledon (1950)
OPEN

256. Dispute benefit return sheets and schedules for a variety of trade unions (1932-1950)
OPEN

257. Report of the 92nd GFTU General Council Meeting held at the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth (1997)
OPEN
258. Report of proceedings at a GFTU one day conference at Great Hotel, Manchester (1984) OPEN

259. Report of proceedings at a GFTU day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1982) OPEN

260. Report of proceedings at a GFTU day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1981) OPEN

261. Report of proceedings at a GFTU day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1980) OPEN

262. Report of proceedings at a GFTU day conference at the Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester (1975) OPEN

263. Text of the first GFTU annual lecture given by John Wood, Chairman of the Central Arbitration Committee, on ‘Trade Unions and the law’ in University College, London (1976) OPEN

264. Report of proceedings at a GFTU day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1978) OPEN

265. Report of proceedings at a GFTU one day conference at the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1973) OPEN

266. Text of the second GFTU annual lecture given by Francis Cripps and Frank Wilkinson at University College, London (1977) OPEN

267. Miscellaneous dispute schedules and dispute benefit return sheets, with correspondence (1930-1950) OPEN

268. GFTU Educational Trust minute book (Oversize) (1977-2011) OPEN

269. GFTU Management Committee (and other Committee) minutes (1979-1980) OPEN
270. GFTU Management Committee (and other Committee) minutes (1981) OPEN

271. GFTU Management Committee (and other Committee) minutes (1982-1983) OPEN

272. GFTU Management Committee (and other Committee) minute book (1977-1979) OPEN

273. GFTU Management Committee (and other Committee) minute book (1975-1977) OPEN

274. GFTU Educational Trust minute book (1971-1977) OPEN

275. GFTU Management Committee minutes (1956-1960) OPEN

276. GFTU Management Committee minutes (1961-1965) OPEN

277. GFTU Management Committee minutes (1967-1969) OPEN

278. GFTU Management Committee minutes (1970-1971) OPEN

279. GFTU Co-ordinating Sub-Committee minute book (1981-1982) OPEN

280. GFTU submission to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations (1965) OPEN


282. Report of proceedings at a GFTU Educational Trust day conference at the Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester (1974) OPEN

283. Proceedings of a GFTU day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1977) OPEN
284. Papers from the GFTU Educational Trust day conference on ‘Work and role of the internationals’ and ‘Work participation: current perspectives’, at the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1976)
OPEN

OPEN

286. Proceedings of a GFTU Educational Trust day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1983)
OPEN

287. Proceedings of a GFTU Educational Trust day conference at the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1972)
OPEN

288. Proceedings of a GFTU Educational Trust day conference at the Grand Hotel, Manchester (1971)
OPEN

289. Proceedings of a GFTU Educational Trust day conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester (1979)
OPEN

OPEN

291. Minutes, papers and correspondence regarding the GFTU Multinational Project (Courtaulds Commission) (1974-1975)
OPEN

292. Papers and correspondence regarding the GFTU Multinational Project (Courtaulds Commission) (1974-1975)
OPEN
293. Papers and correspondence regarding the GFTU Multinational Project (Courtaulds Commission) (1974-1975)
OPEN

294. Papers and correspondence regarding the GFTU Multinational Project (Courtaulds Commission) and the final report (1974-1975)
OPEN

295. Papers and correspondence regarding the GFTU Multinational Project (Courtaulds Commission) and a seminar at the Viking Hotel, York (1975)
OPEN
296. Papers and correspondence regarding Cartledge vs Jopling and limitation in common law cases (1960-1963)
OPEN

OPEN

298. Agendas and minutes of the GFTU Pension Scheme (1976-1989)
OPEN

299. Papers regarding the GFTU report on unemployment (c1977)
OPEN

300. Two engagement diaries belonging to Leslie Hodgson (1959, 1974)
OPEN

301. GFTU guide to external funding (c2006)
OPEN

302. Papers and reports from the third biennial conference of the Ceramic and Allied Trades’ Union (CATU) (2000)
OPEN

303. Papers and reports from the second biennial conference of the Ceramic and Allied Trades’ Union (CATU) (1998)
OPEN

304. GFTU dispute benefit claims ledger (Oversize) (1911-1921)
OPEN

305. GFTU Union Subscription ledger (Oversize) (1908-1910)
OPEN

306. GFTU Cash Book (Oversize) (1908-1914)
OPEN

307. GFTU Register of Benefits (Oversize) (1915-1933)
OPEN

308. GFTU Claims for Benefit ledger (Oversize) (1933-1992)
OPEN

309. GFTU Dispute Accounts Paid ledger (Oversize) (n.d.)
OPEN

310. GFTU Dispute Benefits Paid ledger (Oversize) (1904-1908)
OPEN
311. Scrapbook of articles by W.A.Appleton from ‘The Federationist’ (Oversize) (1914-1919) OPEN

312. GFTU Receipt Book (Oversize) (1935-1939) OPEN

313. GFTU Dispute Benefit Weekly Return Sheet copy book (1902-1907) OPEN


315. GFTU unidentified ledger, perhaps loans (1901-1932) OPEN

316. GFTU Dispute Benefit Claim Sheets (1909-1911) OPEN


318. GFTU: miscellaneous papers and leases (1912-1937) OPEN

319. GFTU: accounts (2009-2010) OPEN

320. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2003) OPEN

321. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2005) OPEN

322. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2001) OPEN

323. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2007) OPEN

324. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2011) OPEN

325. GFTU Biennial General Committee Meeting: papers and reports (2009) OPEN

326. GFTU Applications for Benefit ledger (Oversize) (1908-1911) OPEN
327. GFTU Cash Book (Oversize) (1915-1927) OPEN

328. GFTU Cash Book (Oversize) (1927-1932) OPEN

329. GFTU Claims for Benefit ledger (Oversize) (1921-1930) OPEN