

The Workers' Herald

Newsletter of Wisbech, March & District TUC

Issue 25 March 2016

Build the Trades Council

The Trades Council has played a leading role in the fight locally against this government. We have organised petitioning against privatisation of local NHS services, campaigned against the TU Bill, supported the living wage campaign, organised a festival, picketed the job centre, provided advice to benefit claimants and surgeries at the foodbank, organised the showing of two labour movement films and organised public meetings with high profile speakers.



However, at best, only seven people turn up to meetings of whom 4 are retired, one unemployed and 2 working - representing Unite, FBU, NUT, GMB and UNISON. Clearly, this is far from being a fighting force capable of challenging austerity and all the other ills the government is presently heaping upon us.

We need more trade unionists to come forward and support the Trades Council especially those who are presently employed, not just by becoming a delegate and attending meetings but also joining us in campaigning on the streets of March and Wisbech and other activities to raise the profile of trade unionism in the area.

To be a delegate you need to be a member of a branch that is affiliated to the Wisbech & March Trades Council. Most local TU Branches are affiliated. However, there are members who live and work in the Wisbech/March area but their branch may be based elsewhere. Branches can affiliate on the basis of the number of members they have working or living in this area, so you can ask your branch to affiliate and elect you as their delegate. For further information on affiliation please contact the Trades Council President Terry Stevens at wisbechmarchtuc@phonecoop.coop

If you are a member of an affiliated branch but not a delegate you may still be able to attend meetings as a visitor, please contact Terry for further advice. If you know of someone, TU member or not, who would be interested in receiving copies of our newsletter please let them know that by contacting me at wmdtuc@gmail.com they can be added to the mailing list and kept informed of all activities and events.

The Kop at Liverpool Football Club has been passing on the trade union message to their team. The trades council movement exists to make trade unionism stronger by working together. Unity is strength, let us work together to defend and rebuild our rights.



Ceremony 12.45- 1.15 Clarkson Memorial Wisbech.

Minute's silence 1pm

In 2016 the theme for the day is "**Strong Laws - Strong enforcement - Strong Unions**"

because across the world we are seeing growing attacks on health and safety protection, including in Britain where the Government have removed protection from millions of self-employed workers, and across Europe where the European Commission are pursuing a dangerous de-regulatory strategy. However strong laws are not enough if they are not going to be enforced. That is why we need proper inspections and enforcement action



against those who break the laws. Here in the UK the number of inspections has fallen dramatically in the past five years, however in many other countries enforcement has always been non-existent. That is why we also need strong unions. Unionised workplaces are safer, yet the Government is trying to stop unions protecting the health and safety of their members by restricting the right of health and safety representatives to take time off to keep the workplace safer, and also trying to reduce our right to strike when things go wrong.

Unpaid overtime (courtesy TUC)

According to an analysis of official statistics by the TUC, more than five million people worked an average of 7.7 hours per week in unpaid overtime in 2015, adding up to £6,114 a year each if they had been paid the average wage for those hours. Public sector workers contributed £10.8 billion of unpaid overtime last year. Although they only make up a quarter (25.7 per cent) of total employees, they produce a third (33.6 per cent) of all unpaid overtime.

Teachers and education professionals do more unpaid overtime than any other group, with more than half of them working an average of 11.9 hours unpaid every week; followed by financial institution managers (11.2 hours), production managers (10.3 hours), functional managers such as financial, marketing, personnel managers (10.1 hours), and managers in health and care services (9.9 hours).

Number of workers on zero-hour contracts rises above 800,000 (courtesy IER)

The number of workers on a zero-hour contract for their main job has risen above 800,000, accounting for 2.5% of the workforce in 2015 compared with 2.3% in 2014, according to figures released by the Office for National Statistics.

A total of 801,000 people said they relied on a contract that does not guarantee minimum working hours for their main income, jumping from 697,000 who said the same in 2014. These workers were more likely to be young, female, in part-time work or in full-time education than the rest of the workforce; and 37% of them said they wanted more hours than they received. The New Zealand Government have now banned contracts where the employer is not obliged to offer any work but the employee is obliged to accept work offered by the employer.

Women losing out under Tory “austerity”. (Sources various)

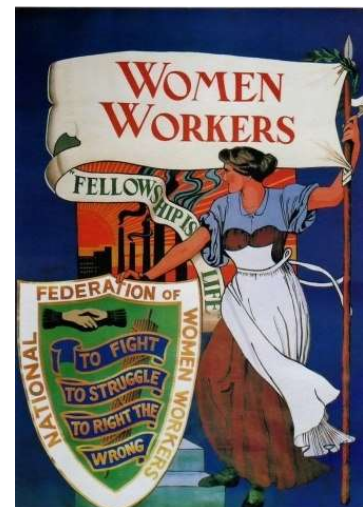
Women have not faced a greater threat to their financial security and rights in living memory. Decades of steady, albeit slow, progress on equality for women is being dismantled, as cuts to women’s jobs and the benefits and services they rely on turn back time on women’s equality.

“Austerity” measures have already locked many out of economic recovery and into poverty on the basis of their gender. Since the start of the crisis in 2008, 826,000 extra women have moved into types of work that are typically low paid and insecure, according to the Fawcett Society.

While UK unemployment has fallen, female under-employment has nearly doubled to 789,000 since 2008. One in eight women are now on a zero-hours contract. An enduring pay gap of 19.1%, according to Office for National Statistics figures, means the pay women take home is still markedly different to their male counterparts.

Benefits make up, on average, one fifth of women’s income, compared to one tenth of men’s. Of welfare savings already being implemented, around three-quarters (74%) are coming from women’s pockets, further benefit cuts will therefore hit women harder than men.

For thousands of women, a lack of flexible-but-secure work opportunities needed to balance a career and caring commitments has excluded them from the workplace. They are hampered further by changes already implemented, including cuts to child support and the carers' allowance. So far, austerity has hit women the hardest.





An Evening with Richard Howitt MEP and Dave Baigent PCC Candidate
Friday 15th April 2016 @7.30pm (Doors open at 7.00pm)
Warboys Sports and Social Club, Forge Way, Warboys, Huntingdon PE28 2TN



This is an exciting joint venture between NE Cambs, NW Cambs & Huntingdon CLPs and the Trade Unions.

Working together with a co-ordinated approach to win for Labour on both a local and national scale.

This event is free of charge and is open to all Labour Party and Trade Union members.

For further information please contact Chris York by e-mail:

Info@chrisyork.co.uk

Help us mark the 40th anniversary of the Grunwick strike - Brent Trades Council

August 2016 is the 40th anniversary of the start of the two year strike at Grunwick film processing in North West London. This strike, mainly of Asian women, received unprecedented levels of support from the wider movement, in contrast to the attitude of the movement to previous strikes by black and immigrant workers. This solidarity was faced with considerable police violence against pickets, with the highest number of arrests (over 500) in the course of an industrial dispute since the General Strike of 1926. The law was used both to undermine the fight for union recognition and against postal workers who refused to handle crucial Grunwick mail.

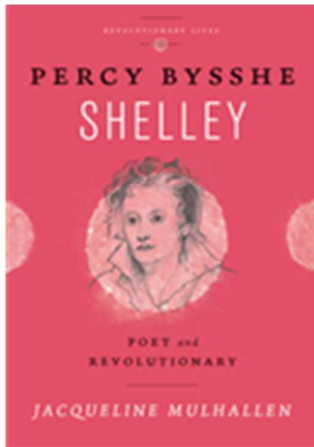


We're excited to announce that we now have permission to install **a mural** on a prominent wall very close to the former factory site in Willesden. This will be a permanent public reminder of the unity and solidarity that Grunwick represented and ensure that the history is remembered. This autumn there will be **a major public exhibition** on Grunwick at the Brent Museum, situated in Willesden Library, in partnership with Brent Council's Archive and Heritage Service. Do you have photographs or memories of the strike? If you were present would you be willing to be interviewed? If so, please [get in touch](#).

But commemorating Grunwick is not just about remembering the past, it's also about **organising for the future**. Later this year we will be holding a conference which will look at current issues relating to migrant workers and the bringing together of various struggles. If you would like to get involved with the conference planning, please [contact us](#). Finally, we can't do any of our activities without financial resources. For individual donations we have a [crowdfunding campaign](#) Please give generously. Don't forget to check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) – share, retweet and spread the word!

In solidarity
The Grunwick 40 Steering Group

Book Review



You would be forgiven for thinking a book about an early 19th century poet will be intellectual and dull. Shelley's life however was far from dull.

Jackie Mulhallen's biography is a refreshingly written book about a young man born into an English upper class family shortly after the start of the French revolution who, like Tony Benn threw off his aristocratic heritage and became a socialist champion of democracy, equality and social justice as well as one of the English language's great poets.

Shelley's life just happens to coincide with a period of economic, social and political turmoil in Britain and Europe. The parallels with today are a stark reminder of Tony Benn's comment about having to re-fight battles. Shelley's work has inspired some of the great radical thinkers including the Chartists, Marx and Engels, Ghandi, the Pankhursts.

The book covers the great political, moral and social issues of the time and how Shelley used his art to try and circumvent establishment censorship, not always successfully. Shelley's tragic death at the age of just 29 is the greatest censorship of all forcing the reader to put down a book you want to go on reading. Shelley is part of our labour movement history and part of the movement today. This biography is an inspiration for all who are fighting the neoliberal establishment. The book is published by Pluto press at £12.99. If you read just one book this year it should be this one.

Unemployed person finds job

The Department of Work & Pensions has finally succeeded in getting one of its most unemployable clients back to work. Esther McVey, the nasty former MP who enjoyed persecuting disabled claimants when at the DWP, has been appointed to a part time job with the British Transport Police.

Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, approved her appointment as British Transport Police "Chairman" earlier this month on the New Living Wage of just £66.66p per hour, which is the hourly rate for being paid £32,000 for just 60 days work per year (based on an 8 hour day). Ms McVey became unemployed last May when the good voters of the Wirral had had enough of the way she treated people under the benefits system.

An un-named source at her local Job Centre said they were delighted that the Transport Police had been able find her this role claiming; "after 9 months we were about to give up as her customer service skills made her unfit even to stack shelves in Poundland".

Well this should scare disabled people off the trains (if they can get on them in the first place) - Ed



If you are tempted to shop at Sports Direct.com please print out this calling card and take it with you to leave in the shop. Better still you can make numerous copies using word document to print out, then litter the store with them.

It is time we fought back against these thieving bast*rds.