



**DON'T MISS IN OUR EDITION CELEBRATING THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS' FESTIVAL:**

**MICK LYNCH · PAUL NOWAK · STEVE GILLAN · SUSAN FENTON · HELEN MERCER · FRAN HEATHCOATE · NURY MARTINEZ**



**for Peace and Socialism**

# Morning Star

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# FAMILIES FORCED TO SURVIVE ON JUST **£44** A WEEK

## Charity calls for benefits cap scrap as it warns of harmful effects on kids

by **Berny Torre**

THE “deeply harmful” benefits cap must be scrapped as it leaves families with just £44 to live on a week after paying rent, a children’s charity said.

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) said the measure “trapped” 250,000 children in deep poverty as it released its shock findings ahead of its “unhappy” 10th anniversary today.

Its analysis found a lone parent with three children has to cover all non-housing costs on £44 per week in some areas of London, despite the cap being higher in the capital.

The group added that while “nowhere fares as badly as London, it is clear that capped families all across the country can be left with very little after paying their housing costs,” with its research showing a lone parent with three children was left with £106 after housing costs in

Guildford, £147 in Brighton and Hove, and £170 in Oxford.

CPAG chief executive Alison Garnham said: “No family should have to live on £44 a week.

“There is no rhyme or reason to the benefit cap and it is deeply harmful to children.”

The CPAG said removing it would “substantially reduce the depth of poverty for the 250,000 children currently living in households affected by the cap without harming work incentives.”

Doing so “would only cost £300 million, 0.1 per cent of the total amount spent on social security,” it added.

Ms Garnham accused the government of being “at its most illogical” with the benefit cap after government-commissioned research in April found nine in 10 of those affected by it did not move into work.

“So needs don’t get met, entitlements aren’t paid and 250,000 children are trapped by the cap in deep

poverty,” she added.

“All political leaders must commit to scrapping it before it pulls more children into its net.”

The cap was hailed as a way of “restoring fairness to the welfare state” when it was introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government.

The introduction of the cap saw claimants spending less on their children and essentials such as heating and food, the government-commissioned report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies said.

It comes after separate research by Save the Children found Britain’s poorest are paying up to £5,600 more a year due to the cost-of-living crisis.

The TUC last month called for more money in the pockets of working families after the figures showed large families on low incomes had been the hardest hit by the rising costs.

Analysis by the union body also

found that pay rises for the top 10 per cent of earners were far higher than for the rest of the work force.

The latest government figures, published in June, showed that some 97,000 households across much of Britain that had their benefits capped included children.

The total number of capped households increased by 3 per cent in the latest quarter, according to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) statistics.

This means there were 2,900 more households subject to the benefit cap across England, Scotland and Wales as of February 2023 compared with November 2022.

Around 114,000 households had their benefits capped as of February and 86 per cent of these included children.

Seven in 10 households that had their benefits capped are single-parent families, the DWP said.

Children’s Society head of policy and research Sarah Wayman told the Morning Star: “Eradicating the ‘deeply harmful’ benefit cap isn’t merely a policy change, it’s an urgent act of compassion and decency.

“We’re talking about some families who, after paying rent, have less than £50 to make ends meet every week.

“These are not mere numbers; these are children’s lives framed by unnecessary hardship.

“This isn’t about giving away more, but about ensuring we are not taking away the basics. Because every child deserves a life defined by possibility, not by struggle.”

A government spokesman said it was committed to protecting the most vulnerable, which is why it has increased the benefits cap in line with inflation and is “providing record financial support worth around £3,300 per household.”

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**Visitors to the Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival will be receiving this edition with the compliments of POA, RMT and Unite South West**



WORKERS' RIGHTS

# Refuse workers warn council after court ruling on scab labour

by Peter Lazenby

STRIKING council refuse workers in Canterbury have warned bosses to stop using agency staff as scab labour after a judge had declared the practice unlawful less than 24 hours earlier.

General union GMB began action yesterday, the day after the High Court ruled that new government legislation allowing agencies to supply employers with labour to undermine strikes was illegal.

The Canterbury workers are employed by contractor Canenco on behalf of Labour-run Canterbury City Council in Kent.

They have been on strike over pay for eight days, hitting collections from thousands of homes in Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The new law was introduced in July 2022 by then business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng.

It changed legislation which for 40 years had prevented agencies from supplying scab labour to employers whose workers were on strike.

Eleven unions mounted a legal challenge against the new law, which had been rushed through without parliamentary scrutiny, and against Civil Service advice, as strike action in the public sector over pay was spreading.

The unions, led by the TUC, won their case in a ruling in the High Court on Thursday by Mr Justice Linden.

Regional organiser Gary Palmer said: "GMB union has warned Canterbury Council in light of yesterday's High Court ruling, it may now be breaking the law by using agency work-

ers during a strike.

"Our members are surprised and very disappointed a Labour-led council would use Tory anti-union laws like these to try to break a strike in the first place.

"Now we know it is not only immoral, but unlawful too.

"Yet again we call on the council and Canenco to spend their energy seeking a resolution to this dispute rather than trying to break the strike.

"GMB members are determined and aren't asking for anything other than the going rate for the job."

Canenco said in a statement: "We will examine yesterday's judgement very closely but still expect close to half of our normal crews to be out emptying household waste bins on any future strike days."

news@peoples-press.com

JUST THE TICKET:

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn talking at a rally outside King's Cross station, in London, over planned ticket office closures after industry body the Rail Delivery Group unveiled proposals last week for a mass closure of railway station ticket offices in England



SCOTLAND

## Private school vote for the union

WORKERS at Hutcheson's Grammar School have voted for trade union recognition for the first time in its 382-year history.

The successful ballot return for NASUWT recognition yesterday is the first in a private school in Scotland, prompted by management attempts to remove workers from the Scottish teachers' pension scheme.

Teachers at the school, which counts SNP's Humza

Yousaf and Labour's Anas Sarwar as former pupils – and Mr Sarwar as a present customer – have already announced further strike action in August and September at the dispute rumbles on.

NASUWT general secretary Dr Patrick Roach said: "This is a landmark result for teachers in independent schools in Scotland and a reflection of the depth of anger felt by teachers at the

school over the way in which they have been treated with regard to their pensions.

"The school needs to recognise that its teachers are not prepared to be bullied and intimidated into giving up their rights.

"There is still an opportunity to avert the planned strike action but this needs the employer to agree to re-enter negotiations with us and pause the planned transfer of teachers' pensions."

SNP

## Blackford's green roadmap 'laughable,' says Leonard

by Matt Kerr  
Scotland reporter

THE SNP's Roadmap for a Scottish green industrial strategy is "laughable," a Labour MSP said yesterday, after the plans were launched.

The former Westminster SNP group leader and investment banker, Ian Blackford MP, commissioned the report, inviting retired senior civil servant Sir Martin Donnelly and London Business School's Professor Dominic Houlder to lead the work.

The study recommends a focus on higher education and "alternative energy" in any future strategy, as well as a Scottish industrial strategy council which would be directly accountable to the First Minister.

Mr Blackford said: "There is a massive opportunity that exists in academia that's not been exploited."

He stated that he believed there was a "high degree of meeting of minds" between the First Minister and himself on the report, but added: "This report is an independent report.

"It is about how we get the economy in Scotland moving.



"We have talked in the report about some of the things we could do under the devolution settlement but we do highlight some of the things we could do if Scotland was independent.

"I think what the SNP will do is ensure that we have the answers in terms of growing the economy in a sustainable way.

"Here is a roadmap. Here is a plan. And on the back of that there will be a discussion about independence."

But Scottish Labour's Richard Leonard remained unconvinced, telling the Star: "It

would be laughable if it wasn't so serious.

"This report suggests establishing a Scottish industrial strategy council when there is no industrial strategy. So at its very heart is a con trick.

"Any industrial intervention by the SNP government is in their own words on a "case-by-case" basis.

"They have no economic plan, no industrial strategy and certainly no intention of tackling the hugely unequal relations of power in the economy."

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GMB London Region sends a message of solidarity to the

### Matchwomen's Festival 2023

A celebration of the women and girls who worked in the match factories of Bow, who in 1888 formed a movement to demand better pay and working conditions.

We honour their courage and determination for organised action that has paved the way for our movement to progress.



Warren Kenny,  
GMB London Regional Secretary

Penny Robinson,  
GMB London Region President



Join today [www.gmb.org.uk/join-gmb](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join-gmb)





■ RETAIL

## Public urged to show support for shop staff

THE public is being urged to show support for workers in the retail industry today as part of a campaign to recognise the value of their work to the economy and local communities.

Shopworkers' union Usdaw has launched the first of what will be an annual National Retail Workers' Day, celebrating the work of the millions of people employed in the sector.

Udaw activists across the country will hold regional events in stores and shopping centres asking the public to show their support for shopworkers.

General secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Today we are celebrating the role of retail workers, who undertake an essential role in our communities and our economy.

"It is only right that retail workers are a part of this positive event and enjoy good relations with the communities they serve.

"This day of appreciation adds to our year-round campaigning for the government to deliver improved workers' rights and negotiating with employers for better terms and conditions."



■ GLASGOW

## BAR STAFF WALK OUT IN HISTORIC BID FOR FAIR PAY

**UNSAFE:** Workers rebuke bosses for squalid conditions at venue

by Matt Kerr  
Scotland reporter

WORKERS at Glasgow's 13th Note bar have become the first in 20 years to take strike action, their union said yesterday.

Members of Unite Hospitality have begun a 48-hour strike yesterday over the usually packed Glasgow Fair weekend as they struggle for contracts, safe working conditions, and a living wage.

The bar remained padlocked as dozens of trade unionists – including retired members – descended on Unite's picket to show solidarity with young workers in a sector with notoriously poor conditions and low union density.

As the picket became a rally, workers at the venue addressed the crowd, detailing what they called the "intransigence" of the owner, Jacqueline Fennessy, who had issued legally incompetent redundancy notices to workers in recent weeks.

They were joined by local Labour and Green councillors, as well as former Labour leader Richard Leonard, who told the Star: "I'm here because I think it's the job of labour politicians not just to make speeches in Parliament, but to be out on the streets supporting workers when they're taking industrial action.

"These courageous workers are taking industrial action for the first time that I can remember in 40 years' experience as a trade unionist.

"I think it's great to see these are predominantly young workers who are getting support from retired members, and getting support from trade unions right across the spectrum.

"I think the conditions that these workers are toiling in represent some of the worst examples I've ever seen of working conditions that people have to put up with.

"And clearly they are saying today we are not going to put up with it anymore."

Unite activist and 13th Note worker Nick Troy told the Star: "Traditionally, our sector has been neglected by the movement, so the solidarity today is incredibly moving, to be honest, because traditionally – even with customers – you're not used to people treating you with respect.

"We're here for the real living wage as a base level for junior members of staff, for proper contracts, a safer workplace, one that isn't crawling with mice, and doesn't have broken equipment falling on top of members of staff.

"I think with hospitality employers, generally it's like the Wild West.

"They're so used to operating outwith the law that they are now at a point where they don't even understand it.

"Hospitality is struggling and this is why, because it treats people so poorly, as if we aren't human beings."

13th Note was contacted for comment.

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■ WESTMINSTER

## Activists rally in final bid to stop anti-refugee Bill

by Berny Torre

ANTI-RACIST groups will hold an emergency protest outside Parliament as the widely condemned Illegal Migration Bill returns to the Commons next week.

Stand Up to Racism and Care4Calais said the rally at 6pm on Monday will be "the last opportunity to voice opposition" to the government plans to tackle the small boats crisis.

Immigration minister Robert Jenrick yesterday ruled out further compromises to the Bill after peers inflicted a string of fresh defeats on the government this week – calling for limits to the detention of children, modern slavery protections and the provision of safe and legal routes for refugees to Britain.

It means the continuation of the parliamentary tussle over the Bill, known as ping-pong, where the legislation is battled between the Lords and Commons, until agreement is reached.

MPs are set to debate the Bill on Monday, Tuesday and

Wednesday next week before Parliament's summer recess begins on Thursday.

Urging them to join the rally, Stand up to Racism co-convenor Sabby Dhalu said: "Monday's protest is likely to be the last opportunity to voice opposition to the so-called Illegal Migration Bill.

"The actual Bill is illegal in that it flies in the face of international laws and effectively bans the right to seek asylum in the UK. It represents a fundamental breach of basic human rights.

"The whole 'stop the boats' campaign is a racist campaign designed to distract from and scapegoat for the government's deliberate policy of making people worse off so a minority can make billions of pounds of profit."

Author and poet Michael Rosen added: "This is not the Illegal Immigration Bill. It's the Scapegoating Bill.

"A government in trouble is trying the old trick of hoping to shore up support by blaming migrants for its own shortcomings."

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■ GRENFELL


## Tories were 'political' in response to safety report

THE government's decision not to implement Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations aimed at protecting disabled people was "political" but not illegal, the High Court has ruled.

Claddag, which campaigns on fire safety issues facing disabled residents, accused ministers of failing to implement the recommendations that owners of high-rise residential buildings should prepare Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for people with disabilities.

While the group lost its legal action against Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who has responsibility for national fire safety legislation and guidance, Mrs Justice Stacey ruled that "essentially a political decision" not to implement the recommendations made in late March 2022 and communicated on May 18 2022.

"It must have been desperately disappointing for the claimants and many others that the carefully considered recommendations contained in the Phase 1 Report have not been implemented, but it was not an unlawful decision," she added.



# Morning Star

## Southampton Supporters' Group

### Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict with Professor James Crosley

There have been numerous interpretations of Jesus Christ. In this month's meeting Professor James Crosley introduces his new book on the role of Jesus Christ in terms of developments in Palestine at the time. An area dominated by both the Roman Empire and regional potentates.

**Wednesday July 19, 7pm**  
Join Zoom meeting at <https://mstar.link/Jesus>  
(Meeting ID: 850 2709 5648)  
<https://fb.me/e/1pODToAfc>



# NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

*Solidarity to all at the  
Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival*

Dr Patrick Roach  
General Secretary

Rosemary Carabine  
National President

Regional Centre:

NASUWT

2 Marlborough Court

Manaton Close

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For more information, please contact the Regional Centre or alternatively visit our website at

[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)



## Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival 2023 Fraternal Greetings from GMB Southern Region



on behalf of 80,000 members

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Facebook: @GMBSouthern



## Food, Drink & Agriculture National Industrial Sector



**Unite Food, Drink & Agriculture sector  
salutes the Tolpuddle Martyrs, their  
heroic sacrifice and the hard-fought  
victory they achieved for us.**

We honour their legacy and continue in  
their fight to defend trade union rights  
for farm and food workers everywhere



Bev Clarkson | National Officer, FDA  
Joe Clarke | National Officer, FDA  
Matt Gould | FDA EC Delegate

Mark Pryor | Chair, FDA NISC  
Steve Leniec | Chair, Agri Sub Sector  
Nicki Holland | FDA EC Delegate



## UNITE POLICY CONFERENCE

### UKRAINE WAR

Conference calls for more sanctions against Russia

UNITE backed the imposition of further sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine at the union's policy conference yesterday.

Delegates endorsed an executive council statement calling on the British government to seek a "cessation of hostilities and find a negotiated solution" to the war, "rejecting military escalation and intervention."

It also expressed concern over allegations that Russian forces have used cluster bombs in Ukraine and news that the United States is now supplying these weapons to the Ukrainian military.

But the statement replaced a motion urging an assessment of the role of Nato expansion in provoking the war and another that called for the abolition of the Western military alliance.

The executive council text said that assessing the impact of unravelling the multitude of military alliances worldwide would take up resources that should be directed to core industrial issues.

Opposing it, Scottish delegate Raymond Morrell said that if the union condemned Russia's links to far-right organisations in Europe, it should also condemn Ukraine's neonazi Azov Battalion. He also argued that Nato should be explicitly opposed for its own long record of illegal wars.

### TARGETING THATCHER'S LEGACY

# DELEGATES VOTE IN FAVOUR OF ENERGY NATIONALISATION

ALL CHANGE: Present model 'puts profit before people and climate'

by Ben Chacko  
in Brighton

THE Unite policy conference backed nationalisation of the energy sector yesterday, condemning a model that puts corporate profit ahead of human need and the climate.

Moving Composite 5 on nationalisation, delegate James Findlay from Scotland said that, in Britain's current energy sector, "profit is the priority – workers, customers and communities are either a hurdle or a means to maximise dividends to shareholders."

Energy is "fundamental to the infrastructure of the country," he pointed out, calling on the union to demand of whatever government is in power that it "nationalise the energy and utilities industries in order to stop the profiteering and invest in the energy infrastructure."

Delegates had earlier backed

an executive council statement arguing that an economic system which "prioritises profiteering and wealth extraction over climate and social responsibility" was the key barrier to a just transition to renewable energy sources.

The union would continue "exposing and challenging this economic model while promoting worker-led alternatives," the statement read, noting the work of the Unite Investigates team and the Take the Power Back campaign.

But the statement prompted fierce debate in the conference hall, as it replaced Composite 6 on energy, which had opposed all new exploration for oil and gas reserves and called on the union to campaign against this.

West Midlands delegate Nina Barbosa said the transition from fossil fuels was not "solely an issue for the energy and carbon-intensive industries. This is an issue that affects all of us.

"If we just burn the fossil

fuel that we already know about, it will push us beyond" a 1.5°C temperature rise and into a "climatic death spiral," she said, "so there is no justification for looking for more."

But Hamish Campbell from Scotland countered that Unite had to stand up for properly paid jobs.

"The people where I come from are equally concerned about warming the house as they are about global warming," he said. "Working communities need work, Aberdeen needs oil."

Speakers called on union members not to attack other members' jobs and said that clarity was needed on quality employment in renewables before a single job in oil and gas could be sacrificed – otherwise the transition away from fossil fuels could leave social and economic scars as deep as Margaret Thatcher's war on coal miners.

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### HEALTH SERVICE

# Junior doctors are in pay fight 'for the long run,' says BMA

by Peter Lazenby

JUNIOR doctors are in their battle for decent salaries "for the long run," their union warned yesterday after the government insisted that there would be no improvement in its pay offer.

On Thursday, the government approved a 6 per cent pay increase for NHS staff recommended by the sector's pay review body.

The British Medical Association (BMA) said yesterday that the chance of more strikes was "very high" as the junior doctors remained on strike for the second of five days of planned action – reportedly the longest walkout in NHS history.

Consultants are due to go on strike when the junior doctors action ends on Monday night.

The BMA has refused to call off the stoppage following the government's insistence that there will be no improvement in its proposal and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's claim that "no amount of strikes" will bring more negotiations.

The doctors are pushing for a 35 per cent pay rise

to return their wages to the level of 10 years ago.

The proposed 6 per cent increase for junior doctors would also come with a one-off payment of £1,250.

More strikes are very likely, BMA council chairman Professor Philip Banfield said, "so I don't believe that this is all over."

"I do believe that doctors are in this for the long run because we are seeing so much harm come to patients every day because of the underfunding of the NHS."

Royal College of Emergency Medicine president Dr Adrian Boyle has estimated that up to 500 avoidable deaths occur every week because of delays in emergency care in hospital.

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### HAVE YOUR SAY

Write to Morning Star, Ruskin House,  
23 Coombe Rd, London CR0 1BD  
or email letters@peoples-press.com



**EULOGY:** Emma Webber, whose son 19-year-old son Barnaby Webber died alongside his friend Grace O'Malley-Kumar, also 19, when they

were attacked in Nottingham last month after a night out, gives a reading during his funeral at Taunton Minster yesterday.

**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**

# Greetings to all at Tolpuddle Festival 2023

## DEFEND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

MATT WRACK  
General Secretary

IAM MURRAY  
President

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# TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS FESTIVAL 2023

GREETINGS TO  
ALL ATTENDING  
FROM THE



The communications union

DAVE WARD  
GENERAL SECRETARY

KAREN ROSE  
PRESIDENT



@DaveWardGS



The Communications Union



@CWUNews

#TheCWU

CWU.ORG

# GREETINGS TO THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS' FESTIVAL



[www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)

General Secretary: Miok Lynch

President: Alex Gordon

## Unite the Union – Sends greetings to all attending Tolpuddle 2023

Why not join us this weekend for an exciting line-up of music and speakers or an informal chat with the Unite team?

Unite *Landworker* at the Unite Marquee – all welcome



You'll find us in a new larger Unite marquee where you can meet us, join Unite, collect a *Landworker* mag, this year's Unite Tolpuddle t-shirts and other Unite free goodies. Why not take part in some key debates on vital issues facing our members today? We very much look forward to seeing you.

### Saturday, July 15

13.00 to 13.55: *Women in rural and agricultural work – an all women panel*

14.45 to 16.00: *A rural worker's economy*

16.35: *Unite's 'Drag-tor Boys'*

17.00: *The Skimmity Hitchers in concert*

### Sunday, July 16

09.45 to 10.45: *Why is agriculture still so dangerous?*

#OnlineTolpuddle





■ FURTHER EDUCATION

# Lecturers to vote on strikes if pay offer not raised

by Peter Lazenby

COLLEGE lecturers' leaders warned yesterday that they will call the biggest-ever strike ballot in further education if employers do not come up with a satisfactory wage offer by September.

The University and College Union (UCU) is planning to ballot staff at 88 colleges in England where it is in dispute over pay and working conditions.

The warning followed Education Secretary Gillian Keegan announcing an extra allocation of £185 million to colleges for 2023-24 and £285m for 2024-25, equivalent to the 6.5 per cent pay increase proposed by the government for teachers following a recommendation from their pay review body.

But UCU wants a "fair" pay rise to help staff cope with the cost-of-living crisis, along with a deal on lecturers' workloads and binding national pay negotiations.

The union is waiting for a response from employers' body the Association of Colleges.

UCU says that college staff work an average of two days without pay every week, while salaries have fallen 35 per cent behind the retail prices index rate of inflation over the past 12 years.

General secretary Jo Grady said: "We are putting college employers on notice.

"Now that they have received this welcome funding increase from government, they need to come back to the table with a realistic pay offer.

"Any that refuses to do so will be part of England's biggest-ever strike ballot come September.

"Pay is too low and workloads are too high. Our members now need a new settlement and it must include binding national negotiations in English further education that deal with these issues."

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**WILDLIFE:** Tree climbers and wildlife experts have joined up to ring rare osprey chicks in one of the bird of prey's English strongholds. Ospreys returned to Kielder Forest, Northum-

berland, in 2009 for the first time in at least 200 years.

Since then, the fish-eating hunters have gone from strength to strength and this year eight chicks have been

fitted with identification rings on their legs so experts can monitor their progress.

Our picture shows ornithologist Martin Davison holding a chick.

■ PENAL SYSTEM

# Ministry of Justice 'fails to halt racist attacks on inmate'

by Berny Torre

PROTESTERS have accused the Ministry of Justice of failing to protect a prisoner from racist violence while he has been held in indefinite segregation for 13 years.

Supporters of Kevan Tharkar, who has spent most of his life sentence in total isolation, held a rally outside the ministry's London headquarters yesterday. The 36-year-old Muslim was convicted of murder and attempted murder on a joint enterprise basis in 2008.

He is awaiting a High Court decision after claiming in April that his solitary confinement is unlawful and has made him suicidal.

Mr Tharkar said: "The brutality inflicted upon the prisoners within solitary causes the majority of people to develop mental illness..."

"I am constantly anxious, hypervigilant, lethargic and feeling myself deteriorating physically and mentally."

His conviction resulted from a trial "riddled with injustice" and he has been held in solitary because he defended himself against a racist attack by guards, his supporters said.

Speaking after the demonstration, supporter Sam Weinstein told the Morning Star: "Kevan himself called in while we were there to say that they were going to allow him to associate with another person, which we consider to be a great victory."

Mr Weinstein said that the details of the future companion were not clear, but that when Mr Tharkar announced the news, "we obviously cheered and we were shouting: 'Free Kevan, end solitary confinement now!'"

Mr Tharkar's mother Jean Tharkar the family is proud of him for "resisting the torture of solitary confinement and defended others."

His High Court challenge followed a court ruling last November that the Ministry of Justice has violated his human

rights and failed to protect him from decades of "racist and religiously motivated" violence, his supporters said.

A spokesman for the group added the use of solitary confinement "is widespread in Britain and disproportionately targeted against people of colour, with 50 per cent of prisoners in segregated punishment units being Muslim, despite being only 4 per cent of the general population."

Prison Officers Association general secretary Steve Gillan said that it is legitimate to hold someone in solitary if they are disruptive or violent to other prisoners or pose a danger to prison officers.

"I don't believe that any prison officers have been racist towards [Mr Tharkar], because if he claimed that, it would be investigated, and I'm not aware of any ongoing investigation [regarding] this individual," he told the Star.

The ministry has been contacted for comment.

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■ INDUSTRIAL

# Requests for Acas help hit record high in the last year

CONCILIATION service Acas reported a "record increase" in demand for its help yesterday as the annual cost of workplace disputes across Britain hit £28.5 billion.

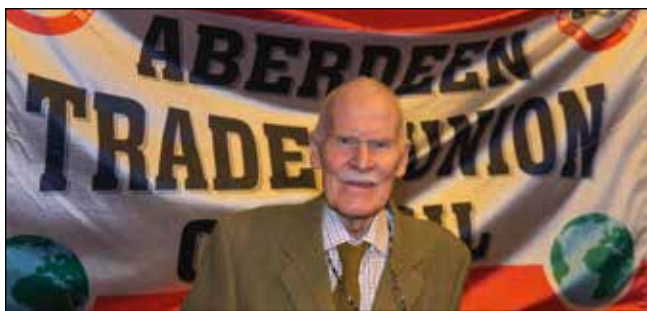
Acas was asked to intervene in 621 collective disputes and over 72,000 individual cases involving a worker and an employer in the last 12 months.

This number of collective disputes was up by 22 per cent on the previous year.

Acas chief executive Susan Clews said: "High inflation, the cost-of-living crisis and staff shortages over the past year have seen workplace tensions and large-scale disputes dominate the headlines, which have led to an increase in demand for our dispute resolution services."

"With the cost of workplace conflict in Britain estimated to be £28.5bn per year, our services continue to be a critical national asset."

Acas chairwoman Clare Chapman said: "The past year has seen Acas help millions of employees and businesses through its services."



■ LABOUR MOVEMENT

# Aberdeen union stalwart Ron Webster dies aged 96

ABERDEEN trade unionist and former Labour councillor Ron Webster has died at the age of 96, it was announced yesterday.

Beginning his working life over eight decades ago in the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Mr Webster moved on to the National Union of Vehicle Builders, then to the Transport and General Workers' Union and finally to Unite.

He remained active in the movement throughout his life, serving as secretary of Aberdeen Trades Union Council and president of the STUC and attending his last Unite retired members' meeting only last month.

Tommy Campbell of the trades council said: "He is held

in very high regard by those who ever had the pleasure of working with Ron to improve the lives of working-class people here in Aberdeen and elsewhere in our world."

STUC general secretary Roz Foyer said: "Ron Webster was a stalwart of our movement, so much so that we made a special presentation to him at the 125th Congress in Aberdeen.

"Ron was a trade union member and activist for over 80 years.

"He fought for workers' rights, for international solidarity, against the hated poll tax and much more besides.

"He will be sorely missed, but his contribution will not be forgotten."



FROM THEIR MEETING UNDER A  
**SYCAMORE TREE**



THEY PROPOSED

**LIBERTY**

THAT ALL

**WORKERS**

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# Unite North West



Sending greetings to all attending  
Tolpuddle 2023

George White  
Regional Chair

Ritchie James  
Regional Secretary

Trade union rights  
**from day one**  
for all



**CONCERNS:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks at the Asean foreign ministers' meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday  
Pic: Dita Alangkara/AP



■ CHINA

# Blinken meets with diplomat

by Roger McKenzie

CHINA'S top diplomat met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday in Indonesian capital Jakarta.

Wang Yi, who heads the Chinese Communist Party's central commission for foreign affairs, met with Mr Blinken on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

US spokesman Matthew Miller said that Mr Blinken raised concerns about alleged Chinese actions in the Taiwan Strait and made it clear that the US "will advance our vision for a free, open and rules-based international order."

Mr Miller said that the meeting was part of ongoing efforts between the two nations "to maintain open channels of communication" and to reduce any "risk of misperception and miscalculation."

According to the Chinese foreign ministry, Mr Wang told Mr Blinken that the US should stop interfering in China's domestic affairs and that they should work with Beijing

to improve the relationship between the two countries.

Mr Wang, Mr Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov were attending the Jakarta meetings with counterparts in Asean where members of the 10-nation regional bloc have raised concerns about being caught up in the competing interests of the major powers.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo delivered a pointed message during his address to the summit. He said: "Asean should not be a competition arena and should not be a proxy for any country, and international law must be consistently respected."

Following meetings with Mr Wang and some of his Asean counterparts, Mr Lavrov told reporters that he had stressed that Russia and China "respect the principles" of Asean's central role in the region.

But Mr Lavrov accused the US and its Nato allies of trying to undermine Asean, claiming that "they are pushing this idea that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions are indivisible."

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■ SOUTH AFRICA

# Army deployed to provinces after goods' vans set on fire

AUTHORITIES in South Africa deployed the army in four of its provinces on yesterday after at least 21 vans carrying goods were set on fire in various parts of the country in the span of five days.

The move came amid concerns of more violent unrest over a court decision that could send former president Jacob Zuma back to jail.

The deployment of soldiers to support police in some parts of the country came a day after South Africa's apex Constitutional Court ruled that Mr Zuma's early release from prison on medical parole in 2021 was invalid.

The Department of Corrections has not said if it will

order Mr Zuma back to jail to serve the remainder of a 15-month prison sentence for contempt of court.

His initial jailing two years ago sparked a week of violent protests that left more than 350 people dead.

Mr Zuma's spokesman Mzwanele Manyi said that the ex-president had served his time "inside and outside prison" and the court ruling was "just to anger people for no reason."

Police said they had no evidence that the torching of vans was connected to the 2021 unrest or to Mr Zuma.

The truck burnings appear to have started on Sunday, the second anniversary of the start of the 2021 protests.

■ CLIMATE TALKS

# SUMMIT CHIEF DEMANDS EMISSIONS REDUCTION

by Roger McKenzie  
International editor

THE head of this year's United Nations climate talks called on Thursday for governments and businesses to tackle global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in all regions and sectors.

Sultan al-Jaber said that urgent action was needed if world leaders want to stop the planet from passing a key temperature limit agreed on more than seven years ago.

Mr Jaber of the United Arab Emirates, who also heads one of the country's state oil companies, told senior officials from Europe, Canada and China gathered in Brussels that record-breaking heat seen across the world recently shows the need for urgent action to curb emissions.

Laying out his strategy for the upcoming Cop28 global climate talks in Dubai this autumn, Mr Jaber said that leaders "must be brutally honest" about what has caused the sharp rise in temperatures since pre-industrial times and how to stop them from climbing further.

While many fossil fuel companies have pledged to reduce direct and indirect emissions from their operations, many have refused to take responsibility for so-called scope three emissions resulting



**URGENT MESSAGE:** UN conference president Sultan al-Jaber attends the United Nations climate change conference in Bonn, Germany, on Thursday

Pic: Martin Meissner/AP

from sources they don't own or control, such as consumers using their gas.

The latter make up the majority of emissions, and cutting those effectively means reducing demand for fossil fuels. "We need to attack all emissions, everywhere," Mr Jaber said.

He said that he was planning to bring together governments, major energy producers and heavy emitting industries to develop a practical plan for limiting global warming to 1.5°C, in line with the 2015

Paris climate accord.

Scientists say that achieving this target requires halving global emissions by 2030 and current efforts are far off track.

Mr Jaber urged governments to come forward with more ambitious national targets for cutting emissions in the next few months.

Illari Noriega of the anti-poverty group Christian Aid said: "The climate is showing that we need to be acting far far quicker than the current slow progress.

"People are dying due to terrible drought in East Africa, more than 100 million people are now under a heat warning in the United States and a road worker in Italy became the latest fatality of a lethal heatwave across Europe this week."

Petter Lyden, of the campaign group Germanwatch, said: "What we need to see at Cop28 is a commitment by governments to phasing out all fossil fuels, since that is the only way to keep the 1.5°C target alive."

## Fighting the Anti Trade Union Laws

July 15th 2023 2:00pm

TOLPUDDLE  
MARTYRS  
FESTIVAL

Fringe Marquee at the  
Tolpuddle Festival

Speakers include:

- John McDonnell MP
- Prof. Keith Ewing, CTUF/IER
- Maria Exall, President TUC/Communication Workers Union
- Gawain Little, General Secretary GFTU
- Fran Heathcote, President PCS
- Chair: Steve Preddy, Unite SW Regional Secretary

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FREEDOM

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# Communist Party of Britain

## Executive Committee



The Communist Party sends warmest greetings to all at the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival. Many workers are now taking part in the fight of their lives, in the biggest strike wave for decades. With unity and solidarity, we can win:

Support your local picket line!  
Challenge Starmer's purge of the left!  
Prepare for mass defiance of anti-union laws!

*"Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you  
Ye are many—they are few."*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

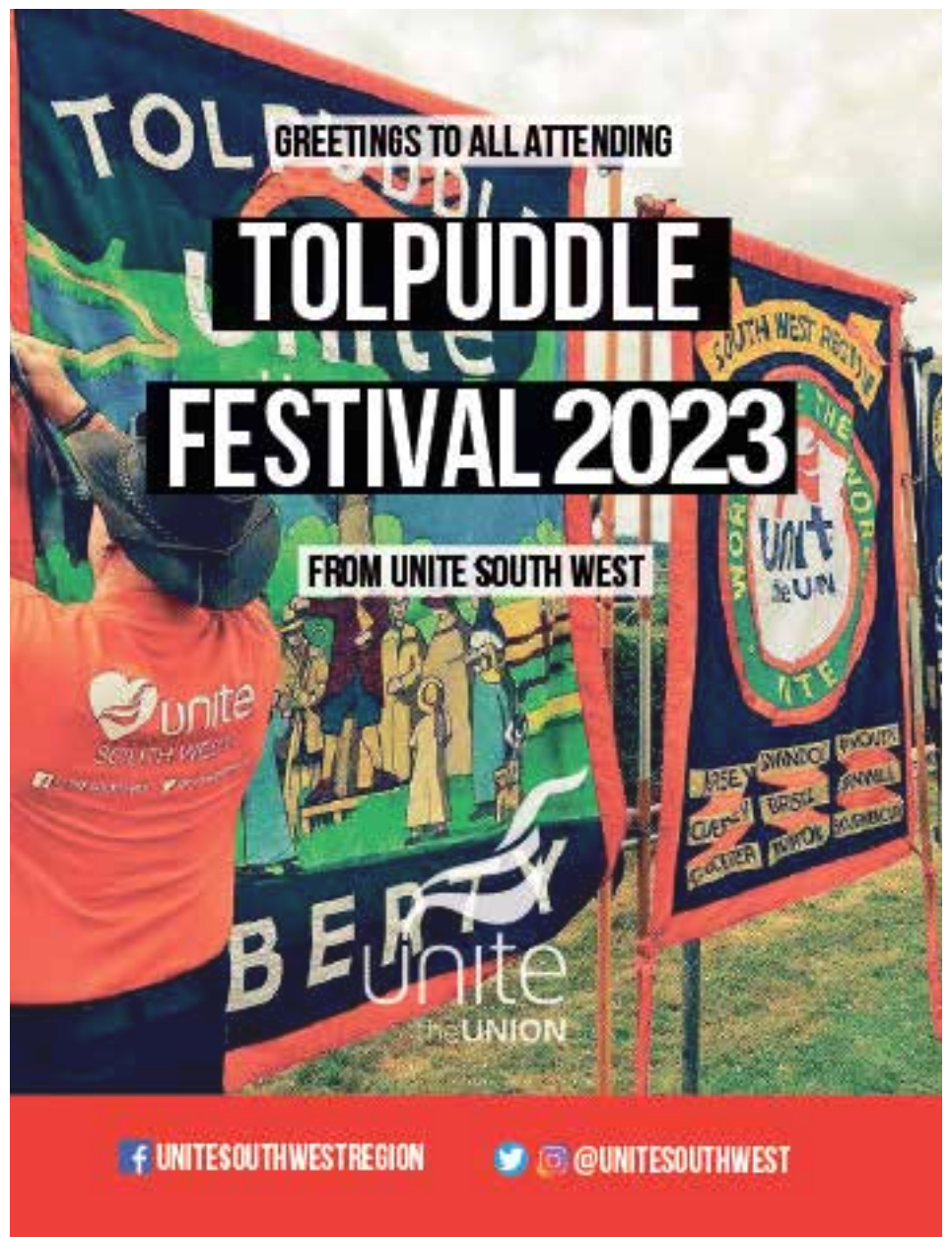
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UNITED STATES

# SCREEN ACTORS BEGIN PICKETING ALONGSIDE WRITERS IN NY & LA

by Roger McKenzie  
International editor

STRIKING screen actors will begin picketing alongside writers in New York and Los Angeles yesterday in what has become the biggest Hollywood union dispute in decades.

The strikes will shut down the small number of productions that continued shooting in the two months since screenwriters stopped working.

Many actors made a show of solidarity on the writers' picket lines, including Fran Drescher, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) president and former star of *The Nanny*.

The union's 65,000-member actors' branch will now formally take action. The two guilds have similar issues with studios and streaming services.

Both are concerned about contracts keeping up with inflation, residual payments in the streaming era and putting up guardrails against the use of artificial intelligence mimicking their work on film and television shows.

The famous faces of Oscar and Emmy winners will likely be seen with some regularity on picket lines, adding star power to the writers' demonstrations outside studios and corporate offices.

No talks are planned, and no end is in sight for the strike, the first time both guilds have walked off sets since 1960,



UNITED: Writers and actors join forces as they walk the picket line during a strike at NBC Universal Studios in New York City, yesterday  
Pic: Bebeto Matthews/AP

when then-actor and future US president Ronald Reagan was SAG's leader.

Ms Drescher delivered a fiery rebuke of studios and streaming services when announcing union leaders' unanimous vote to strike.

She said: "We had no choice. We are the victims here. We are being victimised by a very greedy entity. I am shocked by the way the people that we have been in

business with are treating us.

"I cannot believe it, quite frankly: how far apart we are on so many things. How they plead poverty, that they're losing money left and right when giving hundreds of millions of dollars to their chief executives."

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents employers including Disney, Netflix, Amazon and oth-

ers, said that the walkout, would hurt thousands of workers in industries that support film and television production.

The actors' strike means actors will no longer be allowed to promote their work through red carpet premieres and personal appearances, campaign for Emmy Awards or take part in auditions or rehearsals.

While international film

shoots technically can continue, the stoppage among US-based writers and performers is likely to also have an impact on that work too.

The writers' strike brought the immediate shutdown of late-night talk shows, as well as several scripted shows that have either had their writers' rooms or productions paused.

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GUATEMALA

## Seed Movement party's suspension reversed

by Roger McKenzie

THE Constitutional Court of Guatemala on Thursday granted an injunction to reverse the suspension of the Seed Movement party which should now allow Bernardo Arevalo to stand in the presidential election second round on August 20.

This came after the country's attorney general had tried to revoke the legal status of the party on Thursday.

The court "granted the provisional injunction requested so that the second round of elections can be held on the indicated date and with the participation of the ruling candidates."

Four of the five magistrates of the highest court of the country accepted the request of lawyers acting on behalf of the Seed Movement party to annul the order to cancel its legal status, which they believed went against the country's Electoral and Political Parties Law.

The run-off now looks set to take place between Sandra Torres, of the right-wing National Unity of Hope, and Mr Arevalo following weeks of political turmoil in Guatemala.

The government's actions against Mr Arevalo by first suspending Seed Movement, then raiding the country's election tribunal offices after it certified election results, sparked fury in the country.

The move managed to unite

parties on the left and right who warned the government to honour the election result.

Mr Arevalo won a surprise 11.7 per cent of the votes with Ms Torres gaining 15.8 per cent but no candidate got near to passing the 50 per cent mark to avoid a run-off.

As the wait dragged on for certification of the election, anxiety grew that the government was looking for a way to change the results.

First, a number of parties waged a legal challenge which led Guatemala's highest court to suspend the certification and order a review of hundreds of challenged polling place tallies.

The review concluded with no change in the results.

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ITALY

## Rail unions call for talks to restart amid massive strike

ITALY was brought to a standstill on Thursday by a major train strike, with cancellations affecting even high-speed lines that are usually guaranteed during Italy's work stoppages.

The country's main unions called for the strike of Trenitalia and Italo workers, complaining about staffing shortages and excessive overtime, minimum salaries and other poor conditions.

A statement from the UIL union said: "In general there's a need to restart a serious and constructive confrontation within the rail transport sector to concretely improve work conditions and make them responsive to the needs of all the personnel."

Transport Minister Matteo Salvini signed a decree

ordering the two-day strike be cut in half, but even that truncated stoppage forced the cancellation of services at the height of Italy's booming high tourist season.

Mr Salvini promised to facilitate a meeting between companies and unions "to give satisfaction to Italian railway workers, without, however, stranding hundreds of thousands of Italians who bear no blame."

At Milan's main rail station, eight of 20 scheduled Trenitalia trains scheduled between 10.30-11.30am were cancelled.

State-run Trenitalia warned of the likelihood of a "significant impact" on services that would involve the partial or total cancellation of services even after the official end of the strike.

 in brief

### Syria greenlights UN crossing use

**SYRIA:** The Syrians gave a green light on Thursday for the United Nations to use a key crossing from Turkey to the country's rebel-held north-west that was closed earlier this week, but it wants to take away UN control over aid deliveries to the region.

Syria's UN ambassador Bassam Sabbagh said that the government is granting the UN and its agencies "permission" to use the Bab al-Hawa crossing for six months, starting on Thursday.

### 'Deadliest six months in US since 2006'

**UNITED STATES:** This year was the deadliest six months of mass killings recorded in the US since at least 2006, it was reported yesterday.

From January 1 to June 30, the nation suffered 28 mass killings, all but one of which involved guns, beating the previous record of 27 mass killings, which was only set in the second half of 2022.

### Dockers end strike after deal agreed

**CANADA:** Dock workers reached a tentative deal with employers on Thursday after a strike that halted shipments in and out of ports in the country's west-coast region of British Columbia for nearly two weeks.

The strike by 7,400 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union began on July 1 and shut down more than 30 west-coast ports, including Canada's largest, the Port of Vancouver.

### Scholz hopeful AfD support will dwindle

**GERMANY:** Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed optimism yesterday that support for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has been surging in the polls lately will shrink to previous levels again by the time of the next national election in 2025.

Recent polls have shown support for the AfD at about 20 per cent and ahead of Mr Scholz's centre-left Social Democrats.



# Unite South East

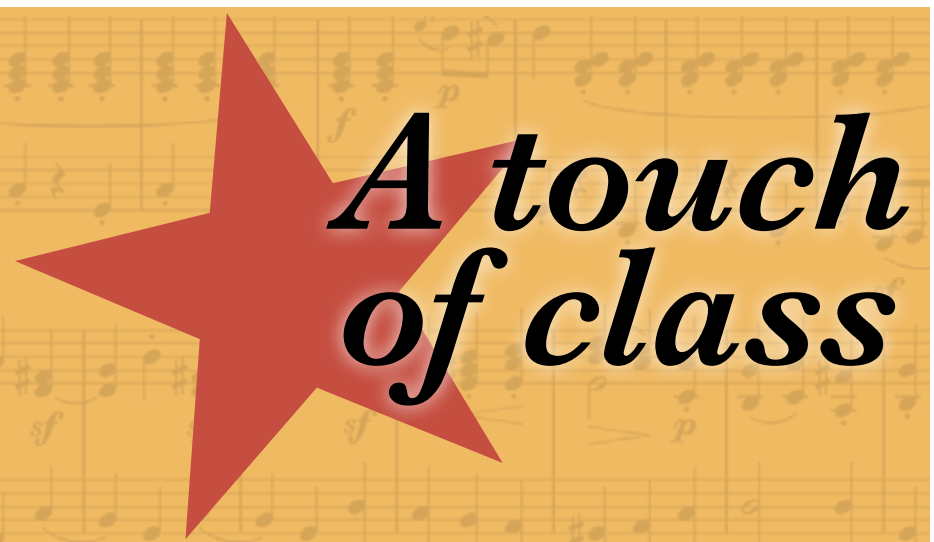
We raise the  
watchword  
Liberty, We  
will, we will,  
we will  
be free



Solidarity to all trade unionists  
fighting for their rights from  
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# KEEP YOUR TICKET OFFICES OPEN



The Government has instructed the train companies to begin closing all their ticket offices. RMT is opposed to the closures which we believe will restrict passengers' access to the best value tickets, worsen passenger service, accessibility, safety and security and lead to a de-staffing of stations.

**YOU MUST RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATIONS TO  
SAVE YOUR TICKET OFFICES BY 26 JULY 2023**

You can respond to the consultation, sign our petition and write to your MP by scanning the QR code.

If you want to save your local ticket offices, you must respond to the consultation and oppose the closures. **Please specify which stations you are particularly concerned about, and why.**

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## New Organising Conference 8-10 September • Liverpool

It has been a momentous twelve months for the trade union movement, but we have yet to see a fundamental rebalancing of power. The Ella Baker School of Organising and the Network for Social Change are convening the New Organising Conference, an opportunity for reflection, critique, and learning. We will celebrate the most effective workplace organising in the UK, build new friendships and collaborations, and strategise for the future wins.

Join us (accommodation is provided, rates are on a pay what you can afford basis):

<https://www.ellabakerorganising.org.uk/new-organising-conference>







Diane Abbott

# Opposing the ‘stop the boats’ Bill is in all our interests

**T**HE government is facing extreme difficulties in getting its “stop the boats” Bill through Parliament. Its formal title is the Illegal Migration Bill, but since ministers have decided that the mode of transport you use by itself makes your application illegal, no-one is taken in by their nonsense.

The Bill is not meant to be policy in the sense of a workable plan to cut the number of people arriving on dangerous small boats. Ministers claim that harsh treatment, rejection of all applications made in this way and the threat of deportation will all have a deterrent effect.

This is based on no evidence at all. It completely ignores the levels of desperation that drive people to leave their homes to make this journey on the open seas. It ignores too the fact that most applications are granted.

It also leads to bizarre and disgusting decisions, such as the order to paint over a Disney mural in a centre used to house child refugees, because it might make them feel too at home.

It is not a plan – instead, it is continuous and quite vile propaganda, allowing a permanent distraction from the effects of disastrous government policies. “Stopping the boats” has become a theme central to this government’s overall stance precisely because it has nothing to offer the vast majority of voters except further falls in living standards.

Despite this incessant campaign, the public is not buying the Tories’ toxic brew. Two-thirds of voters do not even place the broadest headings of immigration and asylum in their top three concerns. The economy and then health are way out in the lead, as they have been for the last two years.

This is clearly a “core vote” strategy by a Tory Party way behind in the opinion polls and looking to limit the damage in next year’s general election.

This political cynicism becomes even more apparent in light of the very large numbers of migrants who are legally arriving in the country.

A record high of 606,000 migrants arrived legally in this country in 2022 – yet ministers and their supporters want to claim that it is the far lower numbers of asylum-

When legal migration is far higher than illegal, this preposterous legislation is not only unworkable, it is pure propaganda. However, the demonisation of asylum-seekers presents real dangers – for them, and us as a society



**PUBLIC MOOD:** Demonstrators protest against the Illegal Migration Bill in Parliament Square in March. Migration is not a high priority with voters, according to polling

Brexiters wanted all along. All of this, both the much higher levels of legal migration and calls for further increases, is taking place against a backdrop of the government-sponsored demonisation of asylum-seekers. There is no legal obligation to increase net migration, simply a business logic.

Yet there is a legal obligation to admit asylum-seekers. And ministers know they are breaching those obligations. Usually, parliamentary Bills have written assurances on their face that they comply with existing international laws. There is no such reassurance on the face of this Bill.

This is why both the courts and Lords have provided such stiff opposition to the legislation. They know it is an illegal, immoral and unworkable ploy.

The government claims it has a democratic mandate for its plans – that this is what people voted for in 2019 (and three prime ministers ago).

Perhaps they have not read their own manifesto. On this issue, the manifesto says, “We will continue to grant asylum and support to refugees fleeing persecution, with the ultimate aim of returning home if is safe to do so.”

That is it. Not another mention of either topic in the rest of the manifesto. If anything, this is a mandate for humane, reasonable and legal treatment of refugees, not their vilification, mistreatment and threats of deportation to Rwanda.

The Lords should not be intimidated by talk of the “will of the people.” It is a government of chancers once again making completely false claims.

The labour movement has every interest in opposing this Bill. It should always oppose injustice and discrimination and refuse to get caught in divide-and-rule tactics. We should also demand this policy be scrapped by an incoming Labour government for the same reasons.

■ Diane Abbott is MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington.

seekers who are responsible for all society’s ills. Because anti-migrant forces dominate our media and politics, it is worth taking a little time to correct some of the myths.

In an advanced industrialised economy like Britain, the overwhelming majority of migration takes place within the country. There is a general drift towards jobs for those that do the migrating, which is mainly young people. There is a separate and much smaller trend of people moving with retirement.

In both cases, these very large movements of people, way above the levels of net international migration, can cause difficulties for both locations, the place of former residence and the location of the new home.

Issues of overcrowded and unaffordable housing are widely acknowledged in places like London and south-east England.

Much less discussed are the serious issues for towns, regions and countries where the population is declining, often because of a lack of good jobs.

The consensus in Scotland is much more pro-immigration than in England, for example, precisely because of emigration and the effects of population stagnation or decline.

In both cases, the answer is investment. Investment in good jobs where there is a shortage and investment in housing where better-paid jobs are more plentiful. And in both cases investment in good levels of public services and transport.

Economically, there is no difference between someone who moves from one region to another compared to someone who moves from one country to another.

In both cases, the potential pitfalls and opportunities can be addressed by increased

investment. Yet we seem to have now a political consensus even more hostile to public investment.

It is this failure to invest which causes most of the difficulties associated with immigration, which reactionaries use to stir up hostility toward migrants themselves. Those reactionaries include this government and its predecessors.

This reactionary politics can lead to farcical contradictions



**ALL MIXED UP:** George Eustice MP

– prominent Tory Brexiteer George Eustice recently called for more migration from the EU.

There is a widespread fear in ruling circles that labour shortages are so acute that pay will be forced up despite all the strenuous efforts of big business and the government.

For those of us who argued that the Tory Brexiteers were never mainly focused on migration, this should come as no surprise. Shedding EU workers with Brexit and then rehiring them should be seen as a fundamental change in the terms and conditions of workers.

In effect, full citizens of the EU with full workers’ rights will be replaced by workers with temporary work visas, whose right to reside here is linked to their employment.

It is very hard to organise or mobilise workers if they can be threatened with deportation. This is what many of the Tory





# We need to unite to defeat the Tories' anti-strike Bill

The surge in union activity and industrial action is inspiring, but we must now channel that energy against this draconian legislation, writes RMT general secretary **MICK LYNCH**

**F**ROM his prison cell George Loveless, one of the Tolpuddle Martyrs scribbled the words: "We raise the watchword, liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!"

Despite the fact this was nearly 200 years ago, the trade union movement finds itself in a position where it has to reassert its values and

the rights of workers to take action to improve their lot.

The so-called "minimum service" legislation is being rushed through Parliament with the view to making effective industrial unlawful.

The conscripting of labour and the prospect of unions having to instruct their members to cross their own picket lines represents a very real threat to our existence

as effective organisations. I have said repeatedly that our union, RMT, will not be bowed or cowed by the Tory government or any government in the future.

We have demonstrated the tenacity and the determination to defend our members on the railway, campaigning to keep ticket offices open and attempting to inspire the rest of our class where we can to

take action. At our AGM in Bournemouth, our union unanimously backed calls for a national demonstration against minimum services legislation and we call upon all trade unionists to join that march.

I told delegates at the conference: "The trade unions must now, in this time and under a new government, exert themselves as an inde-



Pic – Creative Commons/Tom Roper

## Why this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival is so important

The rich cannot be allowed to dictate the terms of our impoverishment – the Martyrs stood up and so must we, writes Prison Officers' Association general secretary **STEVE GILLAN**

**S**INCE the 1930s there has been an annual gathering to mark the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs with wreaths laid on the grave of James Hammett followed by a procession of banners and speeches.

The struggle of the Martyrs must never be forgotten – otherwise their struggle will be in vain.

In 2023 many families are suffering from a cost-of-living crisis that wasn't of their making. The explosion of gas and electricity prices wasn't just a result of the Ukraine crisis nor was food inflation either, as these prices were rising well before the conflict. I recognise that the invasion of Ukraine has not helped but it is all too

“

One question they can never seem to answer is: how can a below-inflation pay rise fuel inflation?

easy to blame that and the pandemic.

Boardroom pay has boomed with eye-watering bonuses and executive pay increasing across the food industry and utilities that have been privatised such as energy, gas, water and the railways.

The narrative for working-class people appears to be we are not to even suggest a pay rise as the Bank of England governor and those feeding off him think giving workers a pay rise fuels inflation.

That is absurd and they know it – but it doesn't stop them trying to shift the blame onto working-class people.

One question they can never seem to answer is: how can a below-inflation pay rise fuel inflation? Of course, it doesn't,



Pic – Creative Commons/Tom Roper

pendent working-class movement.

“And we will put every politician whether they are in Scotland, Wales, the councils and the mayors, wherever they are, under extreme pressure.

“You can’t cosy up to them and hope they will do you a favour.

“We have used the last year to present a different vision for transport. Bus, road, maritime and rail – run for the benefit of the passengers and the workers.

“That is our vision, and we must always fight for it.”

We have seen the trade union movement flex its industrial muscle across almost every industry in this country.

And that has been inspiring to see.

But as some of those disputes end, and others begin, we need a sense of unity of purpose that we are not going to meekly accept new draconian legislation that stops us from being able to win for our members in the workplace.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were operating at a time when trade unions were illegal in this country.

And we must look to them for inspiration to defeat these anti-democratic laws and this dreadful Tory administration.

but it is easier to say that to keep workers in their place and just accept the crumbs from the table.

Rail workers, teachers, prison officers, postal workers, nurses, care workers and many other groups of workers are just not accepting that they will have to struggle to put food on the table or pay the bills with rent and mortgage payments increasing monthly.

The Martyrs didn’t accept crumbs from the table and neither should we accept it either.

Social justice must be at the heart of everything, from affordable housing to decent, secure jobs and security in retirement. Our NHS must be protected from being dismantled and free at the point of use.

Trade unionists must be the voice for those who do not have a voice, such as the less able, our children and the elderly.

No community should be left behind and wealth should be redistributed to ensure that social justice becomes a reality.

Trade unions must be at the heart of the struggle for social justice to make the world a better more equal place to live in with no-one left behind. Racism and homophobia must be confined to the dustbin with equality for all.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ struggle must not be in vain, and our struggle today is as relevant as ever. I am always amazed when rich people lecture poor people about tightening their belts. The reason they say that is so they get richer and keep us in our place. Together we can rise up and win the right to social justice.

“Give me the freedom to think, to speak and to argue freely, according to conscience above all other liberties” – George Loveless, leader of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, 1834.

“One of the best ways to achieve justice is to expose injustice” – Julian Assange, imprisoned on remand in Belmarsh for over four years.

**T**HE Tolpuddle Martyrs were trade unionists transported to Australia in 1834 for seeking higher wages. Julian Assange is an Australian journalist who faces imminent extradition from Britain to the US for publishing the truth about US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. At first sight, the two cases seem completely different.

Look closer and there are striking parallels.

In both cases, ruling elites were outraged that their “rights” (to cut wages at will or to commit war crimes across the globe as they choose) were challenged.

In both cases, brave men asserted that we the people have rights – to decent living conditions or the right to know the truth about our rulers’ wars.

In both cases, the Establishment used the law as a form of “shock and awe” to deter others and to deny the liberties claimed.

In both cases violation and abuse of legal process were used to trap the men and to subject them to inhumane treatment; their names were smeared and their families harassed.

### Lawfare

In both cases, men were charged under laws intended for national security purposes, which therefore carried heavier sentences, and criminalised what were normal activities: trade unionism in the 1830s and investigative journalism today.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were charged under the 1797 Unlawful Oaths Act, a law directed against mutinies in the navy and intended to combat seditious conspiracies in the armed forces. Assange was the first journalist to face charges under the 1917 Espionage Act in the US.

### Tainted testimony

The key witness at the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs was the son of the head gardener of the landowner who pressed the charges and who had sought to reduce labourers’ wages, Joseph Frampton. The wording of the supposedly illegal oath was never produced.

The statements of the key witness at Assange’s trial, Sigurdur Ingi Thordarson, purported to show that Assange instructed Thordarson to commit computer intrusions or hacking in Iceland.

He has since admitted to the Icelandic paper Stundin that Assange never instructed



# Julian Assange and Tolpuddle: two great miscarriages of justice

**HELEN MERCER** explains the parallels between the two cases, and why the committee to defend Assange will be at the festival

him and it is now known that Thordarson had several convictions for sexual abuse of minors and fraud and that the FBI had promised him an immunity deal. Subsequent hearings have failed to acknowledge this new circumstance.

### Excessive and extrajudicial punishment

The Tolpuddle Martyrs received harsh sentences, they were subjected to further brutal treatment in Australia, their families were left destitute, and their names and their beliefs smeared; when they returned they were effectively hounded out of England.

Julian Assange has suffered still worse. He endured seven years of “arbitrary detention” in the Ecuadorean Embassy, deliberately trapped there through the machinations of British, Swedish and US authorities.



**POLITICAL PRISONER:** Julian Assange at the Ecuadorean embassy, 2017

He continues to be arbitrarily detained in Belmarsh, on remand for over four years, some of that time spent in near solitary confinement. Together with a media campaign of vilification the whole process amounts, according to Nils Melzer, a former UN rapporteur, to psychological torture.

He faces charges in the US which carry a sentence of up to 175 years and he is likely to suffer prison conditions in the form of Special Administrative Measures that amount to torture.

### Judges, jury, family and class

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were initially indicted through a grand jury whose foreman was William Ponsonby MP, brother-in-law to Lord Melbourne, the home secretary. Melbourne believed that trade unions were “inconsistent, impossible and

contrary to the law of nature.”

Key decisions in Assange’s legal process were made by Lady Arbutnot whose husband and son have ties to security firms and the intelligence services.

Just recently, Judge Jonathan Swift, arbitrarily and without explanation, has denied Assange’s defence team the right to appeal against two adverse judgements.

Swift has represented the Ministry of Defence and the security services on at least nine legal cases and said in a newspaper profile that his “favourite clients were the security and intelligence agencies.”

### Organs of mass persuasion

The Church of England of the past and today’s mainstream media have upheld the Establishment. Although the effect of Assange’s case is to silence investigative journalism and free speech, journalists have not only failed to defend him, they have been part of an orchestrated and relentless campaign of public mobbing, intimidation and defamation, collective ridicule, insults and humiliation.

This process dehumanised Assange, muting condemnation of his treatment and depriving him of his rights. Yet the writing is on the wall for all journalists and our access to the truth: judgements have been passed and precedents set which make it a crime to reveal war crimes.

As Assange’s defence has stated, the five “national secu-

urity” publications by Wikileaks cited in the US extradition request “exposed irrefutable evidence of, inter alia, illegal rendition, torture, and black site CIA prisons across Europe, as well as aggressive steps taken to maintain impunity and prevent the prosecution of any American operatives involved in these crimes.”

Trade unionists should also remember that Wikileaks published the hitherto secret draft texts of international treaties – TTIP and the International Trade in Services. Many trade unions praised Wikileaks at the time for exposing these plans to entrench corporate power, and in so doing enabled public mobilisation. It is time to pay back their debt to Assange.

If the current appeal against Swift’s judgement is refused, Assange will have run out of legal options and only an intervention by the European Court of Human Rights could save him from what appears to be imminent extradition.

Nils Melzer’s comment in his book *The Trial of Julian Assange* could stand equally well as a comment on the significance of the Tolpuddle Martyrs: “Assange is not persecuted for his own crimes but for the crimes of the powerful. Their impunity is what the trial of Assange is really about.”

■ *The pamphlet Tolpuddle, Julian Assange and the Long Struggle for Social Justice is available at the Committee to Defend Julian Assange festival stall. Find out more at [www.wiseupaction.info](http://www.wiseupaction.info).*



★ Star comment

## A week of wins for workers – but the big battles lie ahead

UNION reps and activists have reasons for qualified confidence as we mark the second great labour movement carnival of the summer, the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.

Attendees at an event celebrating the victory of people power over unjust anti-trade union laws can march with a spring in their step following the humiliating defeat of the government at the High Court this week, when its legislation allowing employers to use agency workers to break strikes was ruled illegal.

Nor can we underestimate the significance of the government's climbdown on public-sector pay.

From declining even to publish the advice of pay review bodies, Rishi Sunak has dramatically accepted them, leading to education unions suspending planned strikes and recommending acceptance of a 6.5 per cent pay offer. Raises of between 5 and 7 per cent are now to be awarded to workers in healthcare, education, policing, prisons and the military.

Last Monday Chancellor Jeremy Hunt and Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey were telling City big-wigs at the annual Mansion House dinner that pay was growing too fast – despite workers facing the fastest real-terms loss in income on record over the past year – and urged that wages be held down to slow inflation.

The government's mood music on disputes was aggressive, with ministers declining to talk to unions unless strikes were taken off the table and a refusal even to address questions like the cumulative loss of pay over the last 13 years. The about-turn is a sign that unions were right not to back away from threatened strikes: the government has been moved by pressure from below.

Even so, as TUC general secretary Paul Nowak tells the Morning Star in today's edition, there will be no "popping champagne corks" at results like this.

Sunak continued the bully-boy tactics even while retreating – education unions for example were warned that unless they agreed to recommend the 6.5 per cent offer to their members, it would immediately be withdrawn.

The Treasury says the awards will not be funded by borrowing or higher taxes. In some departments there are fears that this will mean cutting back on services.

Extra money has been pledged for schools, but the government is not retrieving this from the record-breaking profits being accumulated by energy or food companies – the foremost driver of inflation. It is raising the cost of visa applications and charging immigrants more money to access the NHS.



In no department will the new award match inflation, so public-sector workers are to get poorer for the 15th year in a row.

And though accepting recommendations from the likes of the School Teachers Review Board is better than offering a lower figure as ministers have previously done, we should not for a moment allow these bodies to be depicted as independent or objective arbitrators.

Their composition and terms of reference are decided by the government. Unions point out that those sitting on these pay review bodies are generally from corporate executive backgrounds. Unite leader Sharon Graham has previously called for the abolition of the NHS pay review body and its replacement by a system of direct national negotiations – real collective bargaining.

Like the High Court ruling against scabbing by agency workers, which was based on ex-business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng's failure to consult and does not prevent the even more serious assault on strike rights in the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, this week's victory for public-sector workers is partial, a step forward, but not a resolution to the steady immiseration of Britain's working people by the rich or the crisis across public services.

The question now is how we use this demonstration of our movement's power to embolden workers and confront these twin threats.

# 'We'll defend the right to strike and the workers who exercise it'

TUC general secretary **PAUL NOWAK** speaks to Morning Star editor Ben Chacko about the anti-union laws, the strike wave and the Labour Party

**T**HE Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival commemorates the ultimately successful struggle to win freedom for six pioneering trade unionists transported for their collective stand against low pay.

It bears a special relevance in a year when the Tories are intent on new anti-union legislation – pushing the draconian Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill through Parliament to ban effective strike action in whole sectors of the economy.

Despite tussles with the House of Lords, the Tories have the numbers to impose their Bill and it will likely become law in more or less its current shape. How does the TUC plan to resist it?

"First of all, we'll challenge it in the courts," general secretary Paul Nowak says. "And we'll challenge it in the courts on the basis of not just this set of proposals, but the cumulative impact of all these restrictions on the right to strike."

"We think this will put the UK in breach of international law, we've had the International Labour Organisation expressing concerns."

The government has already faced legal setbacks such as this week's High Court ruling that allowing agency workers to break strikes is illegal.

"So we'll see the government in court, but I'm absolutely clear that the challenge will then go on to protecting workers."

"Who is going to be the employer who first sacks a nurse or a paramedic or a railway worker or a teacher for exercising their fundamental right to strike?"

"I think that will be the point at which there would be a response not just from the individual union but from the whole of the trade union movement."

Some unions have called for a national demonstration this autumn against the Bill. But Nowak says he's "not a big fan of the 'name the date' call a demonstration" approach.

"We did that on June 18 last year. We had a good turnout – 20-25,000 – but I think the moment that the union movement would mobilise tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people against the strikes Bill is when the government tries to use it. So we've got to keep our powder dry."

"And we've got to avoid walking into a trap set by government – they'll want to provoke unions."

With many employers, including in transport, telling ministers they do not want this legislation, Nowak believes the government will find most of them step back from trying to make workers cross their own picket lines.

"But we're very clear – we'll defend the right to strike and defend workers who exercise it. I don't think the movement will stand by and let people be sacked."

You have a potentially new

audience for trade unions this summer, with the highest level of industrial action in decades and many workers having taken strike action for the first time.

Are the traditional highlights of the trade union summer calendar, like this weekend's Tolpuddle and last weekend's Durham Miners' Gala, relevant to a new generation of trade unionists?

"We need to use events like this to celebrate what we've done during the year, but also set out what more we need to do."

"Hundreds of thousands of people have been taking strike action, but of course that's not an end in itself. We need to win."

"We've seen some big wins for unions in the private sector. In the public sector, we've had to drag government kicking and screaming to the negotiating table, but we've made progress even there – in the Civil Service, in the health unions

they were told 'there's no more money, it's the pay review bodies or nothing' – and in both those sectors, government had to move. It wouldn't happen if people hadn't stood up, taken action and voted for it."

It's true, but even the better offers are below inflation. The British Medical Association, whose junior doctors began another strike this week and which has consultants walking out later this month, has indicated it wants ministers to at least acknowledge the loss of a quarter of their incomes in real terms over the last 13 years and propose a way towards pay restoration. Without such concessions, aren't below-inflation deals defeats?

"I wouldn't say defeats, but nobody's popping champagne corks on the settlements reached in the Civil Service or health service. But we clearly moved government."

Nowak thinks the battles of the last year have helped unions organise and improve



We've got to avoid walking into a trap set by government – they'll want to provoke unions



**LEADING FROM THE FRONT:** Paul Nowak (centre), at 10 Downing Street, with representatives of the Fire Brigades Union and the NHS Ambulance Service at the handing in of a petition against the government's controversial plans for a new law on minimum service levels on February 1 2023





TUC general secretary Paul Nowak at the demonstration in Parliament Square, London on May 22 2023

their ability to beat Tory ballot thresholds, putting them in a better position to fight pay cuts going forward.

So we're not seeing the strike wave recede, with fewer sectors in dispute than a few months ago?

"No. I don't think you take the health of the movement from who's taking strike action at any particular time.

"What I would say is that there's been a whole group of private-sector workers who have taken confidence from the broader struggle.

"Take the ongoing fight in Amazon in Coventry – that turned from a pay dispute into a dispute around union recognition and I've got no doubt that despite the union-busting techniques GMB will win recognition at Amazon – and that will plant a big flag in the ground, saying there is no part of the private-sector unions should be afraid of. We can represent workers anywhere.

"Again, just a few weeks ago

I was on the picket line with workers from Allied Bakeries in Liverpool, on £11.43 an hour which includes their shift payments, their weekend payments, working bank holidays.

"A group of workers who can't really afford to go on strike but who are absolutely determined with the support of their union [the BFAWU] that they are not going to accept a real-terms pay cut.

"Would that have happened two or three years ago? Probably not. But people have seen what happened elsewhere and thought, it's time to take a stand."

Nowak notes figures on union membership don't suggest an increase in activity has led to overall increases in membership, and says the "big challenge" for the movement is how to turn the enormous public support we've seen for strikes

into new union members.

"I don't want to be part of the leadership of a movement that is managing decline for the next decade. We've got to use this opportunity – and the opportunity of a potential incoming Labour government – to rebuild union membership in the private sector."

Is an incoming Labour government such an opportunity? Labour is studiously ignoring union demands around public ownership of energy and water, has told MPs not to stand on picket lines and even declined recently to say it would match the independent pay review body's recommendation on teacher pay (which the government has just conceded).

"We will always be pushing Labour to do more, and be more ambitious for working people.

"When it comes to a sector where the market has failed – water is a good example – we'll keep pushing.

"It was ever thus – I remember in 1997 when I was a regional secretary coming down to London to argue that PFI was not a good way to finance hospitals and schools, that we'd be paying for it long into the future. I hate to say to Labour 'We told you so,' but we told them so.

"On the positive side of the accounts, there's the new deal for workers. Angela [Rayner] has been clear, Keir [Starmer] has been clear at our congress, that this will be delivered within the first 100 days of a Labour government and that is potentially a game changer.

"It doesn't in and of itself rebuild the trade union movement, but repealing the anti-union laws, employment rights from day one, rights for unions to access the workplace – it's a pretty comprehensive package of measures and more radical, I think, than anything the 1997 Labour government did to get to grips with Britain's broken labour market."

# 'Industrial action works'

Peter Lazenby speaks to PCS president **FRAN HEATHCOTE** about the regeneration of her union, the relationship with Labour, and her campaign to become general secretary

**A**FTER the biggest wave of public-sector strikes in decades, Fran Heathcote, president of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), says 12 months of mobilisations have drawn more women workers into action in the trade union movement and sown the seeds for future struggles.

Heathcote, who is standing as Left Unity candidate to become PCS general secretary when Mark Serwotka retires from the post after a 23-year stint, has seen a new generation of activists emerge.

As with many of Britain's biggest unions, PCS has a mainly female membership – approximately two-thirds women.

"What we have found during the latest pay claim campaign is a whole new layer of people getting involved, young working women and ethnic minority members who want to do something about the situation they are facing," she told the Morning Star. "New activists are coming through. Strike action is mobilising many people for the first time."

On Saturday Heathcote is attending the annual celebration of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the six Dorset agricultural labourers transported to Australia in 1834 for founding a trade union.

Last Saturday she was at the Durham Miners' Gala with a hefty contingent of PCS members.

"We had delegations from the north-east, Liverpool, London, the north-west and Scotland, travelling from all over to the Gala," she said.

The PCS members were in good voice at the front of the huge Gala crowd as Heathcote delivered a fiery speech which ended with an impassioned call for "an end to the Tory government and an end to their rotten capitalist society."

Workers in her own department, the DWP, where she is a union rep, are among the victims of the Tories' attack on the public sector and the steady and deliberate erosion of public-sector wages. Their jobs involve processing benefit payments to the worst-off people in Britain, including to people who have jobs but who are so badly paid that they struggle to survive.

"The irony is that 40 per cent of the people processing these benefits are also claiming them, or are entitled to claim them," she said.

She believes that the success of her members' recent strike action, which has brought concessions from the government, has shown the way ahead for the



Pic: Neil Terry Photography

public sector through the potential for co-ordinated strikes by several unions at once.

"As long as I have been an activist, we have been going to the TUC calling for co-ordinated action, whether or not you use the term 'general strike'," she said.

"But when you have us in dispute, teachers, firefighters, nurses, wouldn't it make sense to have a co-ordinated plan? Working together?"

"We had a taste of that in 2011 over pensions. It gave us a glimpse of what is possible when people are prepared to co-ordinate. It is achievable."

PCS has a socialist left grouping within its membership, PCS Left Unity, as do several other unions. Heathcote believes they can come together.

"Left Unity in PCS do organise with the left in the NEU, Unite, Unison, RMT, to discuss how we might be able to join our campaigns and strengthen the movement," she said.

"It is quite difficult to achieve. Some people might say too difficult. We do not believe that. It is achievable."

As for the election of a new PCS general secretary to succeed Mark Serwotka, she said: "I am very happy being president, but with Mark retiring, I have been agreed as the Left Unity candidate."

Her manifesto is based on listening to members at the grassroots level.

"I come from a background of being an activist, a workplace rep still active in my branch and my region, to national president. That has given me a good grounding. I always stand on a platform of engagement with branches and members, talking, and listening, to members, reps and activists," she said.

She believes the way has been paved for the next stage in the struggle.

"This last 12 months has seen a whole wave of strikes which has led to a regeneration of the movement and a whole new layer of people coming through," she said.

"Industrial action in PCS has delivered tangible gains and has shown that our members will stand up for themselves."

She also believes that struggle is not just about wages. It is about fighting to defend public services which the Tories despise.

"This is a government of liars, people who do not have time for the issues that working-class people feel. They are not interested in public services. Part of what we are about is protecting public services," she said.

She believes that even when the Tories are defeated, her members will have to fight when Labour is in power.

"We are not affiliated to the Labour Party," she said. "We will obviously want to hold the Labour Party's feet to the fire, but we are not under any illusions. We see no commitment from Keir Starmer's Labour Party to stand with working people, to stand on picket lines.

"[Starmer] did say that within 100 days in office, he would repeal anti-union legislation. We had a meeting of our young members and their first question was: which anti-union laws? The devil will be in the detail.

"Obviously when he made the commitment at the TUC there was a big cheer, but it then comes down to, what will he actually do?"

Referring to the period in which the Labour Party was led by Jeremy Corbyn she said: "What that gave working people was hope that there could be something better.

"We will get that back, making sure that trade unions support each other's struggles, all the campaigns and struggles that we are involved in.

"The message we want to give our members is that industrial action works. When you campaign together you achieve something. If we can get that message across to members that can only make the movement and my union stronger."



“

The "big challenge" for the movement is how to turn the enormous public support we've seen for strikes into new union members

“

We see no commitment from Keir Starmer's Labour Party to stand with working people'





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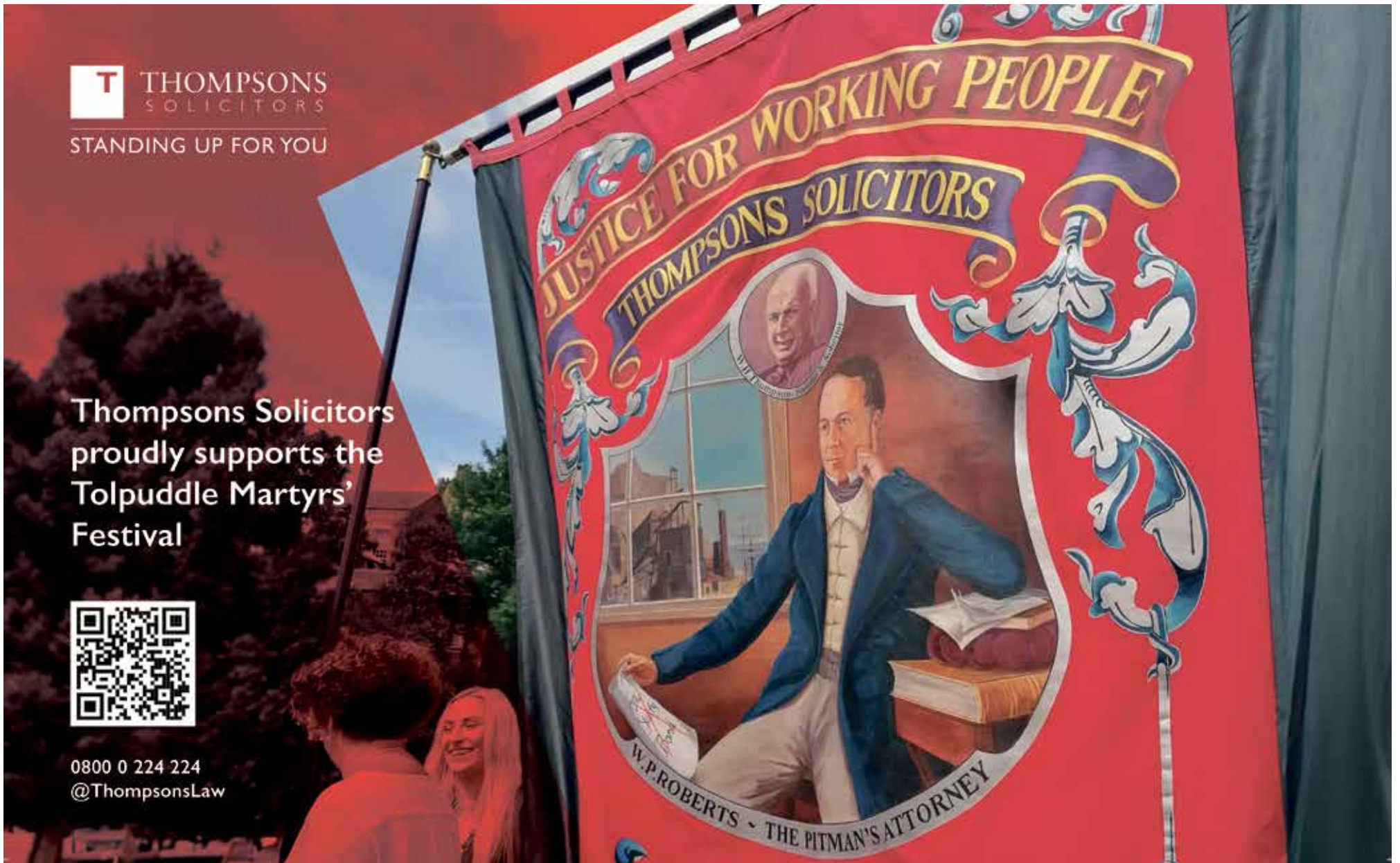


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*From the comrades at  
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**W**ALK past any of the frequent protests and progressive events in the Cotswolds town of Stroud and chances are you'll see the Red Band playing.

Refugee support vigils, International Women's Day celebrations, Pride parties, picket lines, demos against repressive legislation... the band is usually there.

Playing a variety of brass, woodwind and percussion instruments, it has a large repertoire of marching and protest tunes from the labour and civil rights movement.

The band colours of red and green reflect the political allegiances of its members – and the political spirit of Stroud.

Though the parliamentary constituency is narrowly Conservative, the Tories have been kept out of power on the district council for more than a decade by a Labour/Green/Lib Dem alliance and there are no Tories on the Green-led town council.

Musical director Mark Coldrick says: "The band members are a fairly broad church politically but we all sing from the same hymn sheet: we share a social conscience and a dislike of Tory greed."

Coldrick, a music teacher and professional percussionist, co-founded the band in 2016 with trumpet player Jeremy Green, who had been a member of the London Red Band and wanted something similar in Stroud.

The band has grown to about 45 members – largely through word of mouth and through the founders genially inviting every musician they meet to join the band. Members have been recruited in places as diverse as a canoeing session, a party or a Morning Star meeting.

This open-minded approach to recruitment is echoed in the running joke that prospective members are grilled more on their political leanings – "we'll accept anyone who's not a raging Tory," laughs Coldrick – than on their musical ability.

Coldrick enjoys the variety of teaching and motivating players of varying standards. "I'm used to working with very competent musicians, as well as with people who struggle a bit to get to grips with the music," he says. "I love that spectrum of abilities; it makes things more interesting for me."

Band coordinator Green lists some of the tunes from the Tolpuddle set. "The melody of Seven-Nation Army inspired the 'Oh, Jeremy Corbyn' chant. El Pueblo Unido is from the Chilean revolution. I Wish I knew How It would Feel to be Free is from the civil rights movement. Can You Hear the People Sing? is a French revolutionary song from Les Misérables.

"Woody Guthrie's All You Fascists Bound to Lose and Billy Bragg's Power in a Union speak for themselves."

Some aspects of the left-wing musical heritage are problematic, he concedes. "There are people who think that the Internationale is a Soviet Communist tune so we shouldn't be

# Music to Tolpuddle ears

The Tolpuddle procession on Sunday will be led by the Stroud Red Band. **SUSAN FENTON** talks to its founders about why it doesn't want to be labelled a 'Labour' band



Pics: Author supplied

**LIFTING THE SPIRITS:** (Above) Stroud Red Band at last year's Tolpuddle Festival; (right) Playing at the International Women's Day event in Stroud this year

playing it. Yes, it was briefly a Soviet anthem, but its history goes back much earlier than that.

"Bella Ciao was played by East German military bands, but it existed long before that as a

song of the anti-fascist movement. And A Las Barricadas/Na Barykady was apparently Lenin's favourite song, but the tune comes from a Polish socialists' song published in 1897 and popular during the 1905 revolution.

"I think we're reclaiming the history of tunes like these rather than celebrating the more creepy aspects of them," says Green.

What's most important: the music or the politics? "I love the music for itself but it's the political message that really defines the band," replies Coldrick.

He muses how musicians (and creatives generally) often tend to be left wing. "Capitalists are greedy – or ignorant – and don't have a social conscience, and that doesn't fit well with artistic expression. Even famous composers have been left-wing. Beethoven, who had aristocratic sponsors, was really bolshy. His attitude to them was 'sod you!'"

"And Aaron Copland," interjects Green [Copland's Fanfare for a Common Man is part of the repertoire]. "He was very involved with progressive causes."

For Green, supporting protests and social justice campaigns is the primary motivation. But the camaraderie of playing together is important too, and the band doesn't play



only at "political" events.

It has played at Stroud's raft race and leads the lantern procession at the town's annual Christmas shopping event, for example.

**A**nd the band instigated a quirky horned procession along a suburban street to the pub.

"The street happens to be called Horns Road so we decided to have a horned procession, and pretend it was a revival of an ancient tradition and that the pub was built on an ancient Bacchic temple," says Green. "It was loads of fun and everyone loved it."

The band is often assumed to be allied with the Labour Party and was once referred

to disparagingly as "Doina's disco." This was a reference to Cllr Doina Cornell, leader of Stroud District Council until she resigned from Labour and became an independent after the Starmer regime blocked her from standing as the parliamentary candidate.

Other left-wing Labour councillors followed suit, and what is seen locally as Starmer's persecution of socialists lost Labour the leadership of the council to the Green Party.

While acknowledging the wit of the Doina's disco comment, Jeremy Green says: "I was proud to support causes Doina was involved with and I was sorry about what happened to her. But we are not a Labour Party band; we're not associated with one par-

ticular party, let alone one individual."

The average age of the band is about 55, and Coldrick chuckles that when members go for a beer, the scene is "a cross between Citizen Smith and Last of the Summer Wine; a bunch of old geezers in the pub planning the revolution!"

Most Stroud residents love the band, says Green. "We always get a lot of applause and our bucket-shakers collect loads of money when we're busking for charity. We've raised hundreds of pounds for the local women's refuge and for refugee support, and the Oxfam shop said the £900 we collected for the Turkish/Syrian earthquake appeal was the biggest single donation it received – and foot-fall increased spectacularly thanks to us playing outside the shop."

That said, some shopkeepers have grumbled about their doorways being blocked by the frequent protests in the town and the band isn't popular with the distributors of the conspiracy theory newspaper The Light.

"We do get some negative comments from them," says Green, who says The Light disseminates right-wing propaganda including climate change denial and anti-refugee, homophobic and anti-semitic rhetoric.

"They appear to think we are funded by the evil global elite overlords George Soros and Bill Gates. And they have objected to our 'militaristic uniform,' which is bizarre as we wear T-shirts featuring pictures of musical instruments and most of the band are strongly anti-war."

Coldrick and Green aspire to help launch sister bands elsewhere (Bristol is first on the list) and like to play outside Stroud when possible. As well as Tolpuddle the Red Band has played this year at May Day celebrations and Extinction Rebellion events in London.

A plan to play on the 2020 Parisian May Day march down the Champs-Élysées, with sister-bands from the International Activist Fanfare network, had to be abandoned because of the pandemic but the band would still love an overseas gig.

"Protest against the capitalist oppression of the working class knows no geographical borders," says Green. "We could play anywhere in the world and our message would be understood and enjoyed."



# Greetings and Solidarity

to all at the  
*Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 2023*

**THERE IS POWER IN A UNION**



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THE RIGHT TO  
PROTEST**



**#FreedomToProtest**



The POA sends fraternal greetings and solidarity to the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 2023

Mark Fairhurst  
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The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
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# Tolpuddle Festival 2023

*Unite West Midlands Region remembers and honours the sacrifices of the Tolpuddle Martyrs in 1834.*

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West Midlands  
Regional Secretary

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Best wishes to the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival



Marc Wadsworth  
Chair

Deborah Hobson  
Secretary

# SOLIDARITY

to everyone attending Tolpuddle 2023 from

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# ★ Morning Star

**Public Meeting**

**NO TO THE NEW COLD WAR**

**Kenny Coyle** (former Morning Star International Editor)

**Johnnie Hunter** (General Secretary, YCL)

**Thursday July 20, 2023**

*Admiral Woods Bar, 29 Waterloo Street, Glasgow*



**For train drivers, trade unions & the Labour Party since 1880**

### THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS

As the sun rose in Dorset on 24 February 1834, George Loveless, a Methodist lay preacher and farm labourer, kissed his wife and children goodbye and set off to work. He didn't see them again for three years. He was one of six men charged with making an illegal oath but their real crime was forming a trade union to protest about their pay of six shillings a week.



**Mick Whelan, general secretary, Dave Calfe, president**  
**ASLEF THE TRAIN DRIVERS' UNION**



## WEATHER OUTLOOK



### TODAY

Rain clearing northern Scotland. Sunny spells and scattered showers elsewhere, the showers heavy with thunder possible, most frequent in the west. Another windy and cool feeling day for most

### NEXT FEW DAYS

Staying rather unsettled into next week. Strong winds and showers gradually easing during Sunday and Monday. Some rain likely, mainly in the west on, Tuesday. Remaining generally rather cool

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Thanks go to folk in Caernarfon for £1, London and Irlam for £5s, and a Redditch supporter sent £100 raised by the sale of books at the Women Chainmakers Festival

held at the start of the month in Cradley Heath.

Contributions of £1s, £5, £10, £25, £50 and £65 from unknown locations are also gratefully acknowledged.

The cry of "Westward Ho" will have been on the lips of many heading to Tolpuddle Martyrs this morning.

Among them will be the Star "stallwarts" who, hav-

ing just completed a week in Brighton with Unite, have arrived in Dorset for a week-end of activity.

The weather forecast is not promising with the wind expected to be high throughout the weekend, meaning the huge balloons popular with many unions will need to be kept in their box; it's also going to take strong

arms and long guy pegs to keep the banners up high and tents securely fastened to the ground.

Regardless, we will be there both days distributing the paper which has been provided at Tolpuddle by the POA, RMT and Unite South West.

Remember: those distributing the paper are also my agents collecting for the Fund!

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Cheques to PPF, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD

## Chef de Party

### Veggie bolognese

A NICE, simple version of a classic dish.

### Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 2 stems celery, chopped
- 2 tsp fresh thyme leaves, or 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 500g/1lb 2oz puy lentils,

- rinsed and drained
- 1 x 400g tin tomatoes
- 1½ litres/2½ pints vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 300g/10½oz dried pasta
- vegetarian cheese, to serve
- green salad, to serve
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

### What to do

Heat a large pan or casserole dish until medium hot.

Add the olive oil, onions, carrots and celery and cook over a medium heat for five minutes. You want them to soften but not colour – you can put a lid onto the pan to help keep the moisture in and steam the vegetables at the same time.

Add the thyme and garlic and cook for another minute then add the tomato puree and turn the heat up.

Stir well so that the tomato puree goes all through the vegetables then add the puy lentils and mix once more.

Tip in the tinned tomatoes and the vegetable stock, stir well and bring to the boil.

Turn the heat down to a gen-

tle simmer and cook for 20-25 minutes until the lentils are tender and the sauce reduced slightly. Add the balsamic vinegar and season with salt and pepper.

When the sauce has only 15 minutes left to cook, bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil.

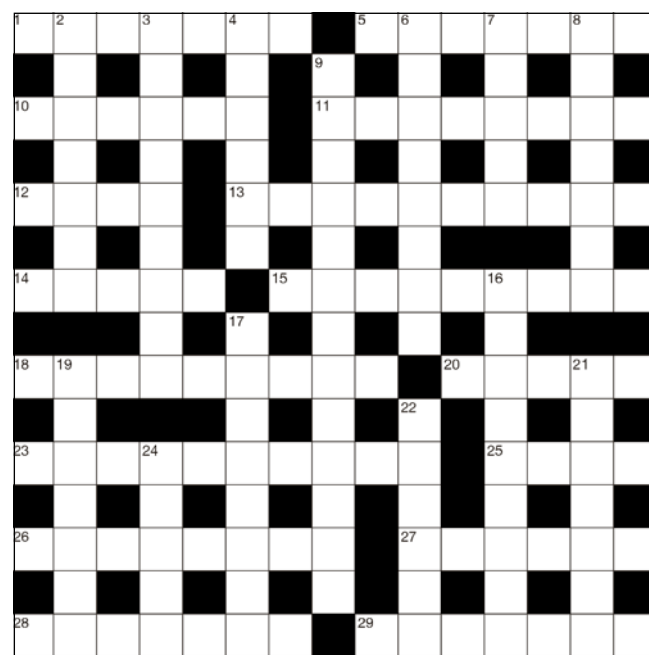
Add the pasta and cook to al dente according to packet instructions, then drain, reserving some of the cooking water.

Tip the drained pasta into the saute pan with the sauce and mix well, adding the reserved pasta water if necessary to coat all the pasta in sauce.

Serve straightaway with a green salad and a grating of cheese.



## CROSSWORD 1,501 set by Alamet



### ACROSS

1. Show unfinished record of drama (7)
5. Weapon removes top of grating (7)
10. Ass took couple of ecstasy tabs long ago (6)
11. Russian back entrance handle (8)
12. Driver gets job right away loading honey (8)
13. A duel Benin arranged for certain (10)
14. Time to find elite troops outside 26 store (5)
15. Mention to the auditor mistake to be set right (9)
18. If cabaret is around you'll need make up (9)
20. sacrifice some payoff or gold (5)
23. When in taxi visit Hollywood location and can possibly see classic film (10)
25. see 12
26. Treatment here at Polish building (8)
27. Last bit of heavy metal played without passion (6)
28. First lady hands out lines on partying (7)
29. Soak getting wrong answer has drink (7)

### DOWN

2. Approximate number (not number ten) to perform (7)
3. Poor serfs attack academic (9)
4. Path of a planet stopping short of Earth (6)
6. Hungry bird gets round America (8)
7. Party game almost spoiled by principle (5)
8. Clear starts for little English scallywags ñ they could sting you (7)
9. Eagerly accepting endless notice by accident (13)
16. Clout the French parliamentarians with torches (9)
17. Curs plot ruin of artist (8)
19. Salt sole and shellfish (7)
21. Girl and men frolic with troublemaker (7)
22. Wrap worker in rolled up wood (6)
24. Generous redcap gets in the beer (5)

Solution on Monday...

## QUIZMASTER with William Sitwell

### TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- 1 Which South African city recently saw its first snow since 2012?
- 2 What is the name for a male roe deer?
- 3 What is the one-word title of a film about the life of the communist John Reed (pictured)?



### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. Which government title is derived from a chess board? **The Exchequer**
2. If a Bronze Age ring was penannular, what would it have? **A gap in it. One such ring was recently discovered in South Wales**
3. Musicians from which North African country opened this year's Glastonbury Festival? **Morocco, playing pipes and drums**

## DAILY SUDOKU (easy)

3	7	1		4	5
	4	2			
		5	4	3	6
2					7
			7	1	
6	7				2
4			8	7	5
				6	3
7	6			2	4
					9

Solution on Monday...



# TOLPUDDLE FESTIVAL

**'We raise the watch-word liberty; We will, we will, we will be free!'**

(George Loveless)

Greetings from  
**Nick Matthews & Sue Moron-Garcia**

## FBU Scotland sends solidarity greetings for the **Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 2023**

Executive Council Member:  
**Colin Brown**



Scottish Secretary:  
**John McKenzie**

Scottish Chair:  
**Gus Sproul**

Scottish Treasurer:  
**Seona Hart**

[www.fbScotland.org](http://www.fbScotland.org)

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## Communist Party of Britain

South West England

& Cornwall District Committee



**GREETINGS TO ALL TRADE UNIONISTS ON THE OCCASION OF THE TOLPUDDLE FESTIVAL!**

[southwestcommunists.org.uk](http://southwestcommunists.org.uk)  
Facebook: South West Communists

**Liz Payne, Secretary**  
**Simon Cormack, Chair**



**WORTLEY HALL**  
The workers' stately home  
[www.wortleyhall.org.uk](http://www.wortleyhall.org.uk)

Greetings & solidarity to those attending this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival

## Bristol Retired Members Branch SW/001999

Marching in solidarity, the struggle continues...



**Maggie Roberts**  
**Joe McPartland**

Secretary  
Chair

## Pellacraft sends greetings to the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival

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**Mike Cattell**  
Secretary

**Graham Tranquada**  
President

## Communist Party of Britain

Swindon and District Branch



Greetings to all at the **Tolpuddle Festival 2023**

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Write (up to 300 words) to [letters@peoples-press.com](mailto:letters@peoples-press.com) or 23 Coombe Rd, London CR0 1BD

GMB London Region sends a message of solidarity to the

## Tolpuddle Martyr's Festival 2023

The legacy of the six men in 1834 who dared to fight injustice provides the inspiration that encourages the same strength and determination in our movement today.



**Warren Kenny,**  
GMB London Regional Secretary

**Penny Robinson,**  
GMB London Region President



Join today [www.gmb.org.uk/join-gmb](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join-gmb)

## UNITE London & Eastern Region

Greetings and Solidarity to all involved in one of the greatest celebrations of our movement's values!

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival 2023



**Pete Kavanagh**  
Regional Secretary  
**Bronwen Handyside**  
Regional Vice-Chair

**Jim Kelly**  
Regional Chair  
**James Mitchell**  
Regional Vice-Chair



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**T**HE trade union movement in Britain and Ireland has long stood in support of the Colombian people's struggle for peace, human rights and social justice.

That solidarity has been concentrated into many important campaigns co-ordinated by the union-funded organisation Justice for Colombia (JfC).

JfC accompanied the 2012-16 peace dialogues between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc), Latin America's largest guerilla movement, and has supported full implementation of the resulting agreement since its signing in late 2016.

This has involved parliamentary lobbying in support of peace, as well as taking regular delegations of trade unionists and politicians to Colombia to witness the reality facing workers, activists and all those striving for a fairer society.

Colombia is the world's deadliest country for trade unionists, with thousands murdered in recent decades. Despite the peace process, it remains extremely dangerous to organise your fellow workers in Colombia.

One of the most violently targeted unions in Colombia is the Federation of Agricultural Workers (Fensuagro), which has seen more than 700 members killed since its foundation in 1976. Many more have been imprisoned, forced from their homes or threatened.

Since JfC was established 20 years ago, it has been a close partner of Fensuagro, supporting its trade union organising, campaigning for the release of members imprisoned on trumped-up charges and providing emergency support as activists had to be relocated to escape from imminent threats to their lives.

This solidarity has helped raise international awareness

# Nury Martinez: Colombia at Tolpuddle

The president of the Federation of Agricultural Workers is currently in Britain explaining that despite the new progressive government, the danger for trade unionists is far from over in the embattled Latin American nation, writes **JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA**

of the aggression facing Colombian trade unionists and pressured authorities to guarantee their safety.

Unite has a partnership with Fensuagro, which included funding a register of human rights abuses suffered by the Colombian union. The findings were presented to Colombia's Truth Commission, created in the 2016 peace agreement to document decades of armed conflict and published last year.

Fensuagro president Nury Martinez is currently in Britain to attend Unite's conference in Brighton, where she has met Unite EC members and spoken at a series of events.

Violence and anti-union laws ensure less than 5 per cent of Colombian workers are unionised. As a result, labour rights and conditions are among the weakest in the world.

Successive right-wing governments have ignored the risks facing trade unionists, in some cases falsely labelling them as guerillas or terrorists to delegitimise their demands and encourage hostility towards them.

Stigmatisation of trade unionists, as well as social activists, indigenous leaders and student protesters, was particularly common under the far-right governments of Alvaro Uribe (2002-10) and Ivan Duque (2018-22).

Martin will also address the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival



**COLOMBIA STILL NEEDS SOLIDARITY:** Nury Martinez, seen here at Unite conference in Brighton this week

from the main stage this Sunday. Like the famous Tolpuddle Martyrs, Fensuagro's origins are in the peasant farmer, or campesino, movement. Long-standing demands include land access, environmental protection and peacebuilding.

"The historic struggle for land has existed all over the world, such as with the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Colombian peasant movement. That's why I'm delighted to take part in the festival," she says.

Conflict in Colombia has been driven by intense land inequality, with most agricultural land in the hands of a tiny

oligarchy that has used violence to forcibly displace peasant farmers, as well as indigenous and African-Colombian communities.

Their smallholdings then fall into the hands of wealthy landowners and multinational companies that develop industrial agriculture, ranching and extractivism. This also fuels the drug trade as production expands.

The importance of resolving land inequality and underdevelopment is emphasised in the 2016 peace agreement, which prioritises comprehensive rural reform.

In addition to supporting Colombian trade unions such as Fensuagro, JfC is currently campaigning for the release of more than 180 young people imprisoned for taking part in the massive 2021 protests against the Duque government.

This April, a JfC delegation met with 20 young men held in the Palmira Prison, in the south-west of Colombia. In March, the UN criticised the use of anti-terrorism laws to persecute protesters in Colombia. Several young prisoners recently ended a hunger strike after agreeing talks with the government.

The election last year of Colombia's first progressive government, headed by President Gustavo Petro and Vice President Francia Marquez, has raised hopes that conditions for workers and trade unionists can improve.

The governing Historic Pact coalition retains strong support in the trade union movement, as well as among communities historically blighted by inequality and conflict.

However, there is strong right-wing resistance to the government's attempts to pass progressive policies that would improve workers' rights, broaden access to healthcare and strengthen environmental protection.

The government also seeks peace agreements with several armed groups that are active across Colombia. The success of these talks is vital to tackling a human rights crisis that killed 82 social activists and 18 former Farc guerillas in the first half of 2023 alone.

Despite the risks, Martinez and many like her are committed to defending peace and social justice in their communities. Trade unionists and other allies will be able to show their solidarity at Tolpuddle this Sunday – and by supporting the work of Justice for Colombia.

■ Visit [www.justiceforcolombia.org](http://www.justiceforcolombia.org) for more information.

## TV Weekly Preview

with Ann Douglas



**Saturday**  
**Chernobyl: The New Evidence, 8.15pm C4**  
**DOCUMENTARY** exploring the "catalogue of errors" that occurred in the run-up to the nuclear disaster, examining newly declassified evidence from the KGB

archives about the safety of the plant. The programme examines concerns that had been voiced while the nuclear plant was still under construction, but which were ignored by the authorities.

### Documentary

**Sunday**  
**Louis Theroux's Forbidden America, 9pm BBC2**

The film-maker returns to the US to explore the impact of the internet and social media on some of the most controversial corners of the Land of the Free.

He begins by meeting the new "influencers" of the far right, who are promoting an ideology that is racist, misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic, anti-semitic – and often packaged as an "ironic" expression of free speech.

Theroux attempts to understand their recent surge in popularity.

But, as he wonders himself, does his very presence give these nasty characters an awful lot of free publicity?

### Drama

**Sunday**  
**World on Fire: Season Two, 9pm BBC1**

Return of the drama following people from all walks of life during the second world war, this time following events of 1940.

As the Manchester Blitz gets underway, Robina's household has another visitor in the shape of Jan's sister Kasia.

However, it soon becomes clear that the psychological scars of her experiences in Warsaw will not fade easily.

**Saturday**  
**Becoming Elizabeth, 9.15pm C4**

The "untold story" of England's most redoubtable queen, long before she ascended the throne. Henry VIII's death throws a

young orphan Elizabeth Tudor into the unpredictable and dangerous English court.

As her nine-year-old brother is crowned king and the great families of England and powers of Europe vie for control of the country, she can be either pawn or player.

### Entertainment

**Wednesday**  
**Death on the Tyne, 9pm BBC2**

Comedy murder mystery.

During an eventful and bloody overnight ferry trip from Newcastle to Amsterdam, the passengers and crew begin to get bumped off one by one in grisly circumstances.

Everyone seems to have a motive for murder. Starring Johnny Vegas, Sian Gibson, Sheila Reid, Sue Johnston, Georgie Glen and James Fleet.

### What to miss

**Saturday: Kate: Our New Diana? 9.15pm Channel 5**

**ANOTHER programme venturing inevitable comparisons between the princesses of Wales.**

**One wonders if such speculations include the likelihood of an acrimonious divorce and a tragic death – or is it all fine and dandy?**

### Yesterday's sudoku

9	4	1	7	6	2	5	3	8
6	5	2	1	3	8	4	9	7
3	8	7	4	5	9	1	6	2
5	1	3	2	7	4	6	8	9
2	9	6	5	8	1	3	7	4
4	7	8	3	9	6	2	1	5
7	2	5	9	1	3	8	4	6
8	3	4	6	2	7	9	5	1
1	6	9	8	4	5	7	2	3



## ATTILA THE STOCKBROKER | DIARY



### Working as he does for British intelligence, Attila tells us where to find it at the Edinburgh Festival (free) Fringe

SO it's official: no sanctions for the bullying, whining Tory cabal after their interference in the partygate inquiry. The message is simple: let people die, let braying, stereotyped Hooray Henry nerds party, let ghastly, overprivileged Softy Walter faux-aristocratic right wing pseudo-intellectuals wallow in their own pointless, self-indulgent, clichéd verbiage.

Let their unspeakable, sexist, racist, "press," whose flagship, let us not forget, was a tawdry, sexist monstrosity called Page 3, obliterate the whole issue in favour of yet another politically motivated witch hunt "scandal" where the "publicly owned" BBC is rightly expected to adhere to one set of social and political rules but the "publicly owned" sex-obsessed

gutter press can have another.

Bin the distinction between public and private. Expropriate the billionaire owners and require readers and writers to finance their own newspapers. We at the Morning Star do it: they should have to as well. Impose disciplined, intelligent reporting on all media outlets. Celebrity smegma-soaked, bungalow-bigot brainwashing craven Tory propaganda sheets should be declassified as "news-papers" and put on the same shelf as the TV guides and comics.

I keep thinking of the man who said he was going to vote Tory because under Labour there were no food banks and now there are loads. End this bizarre farce where the over-privileged and underprivileged

unite at an FPTP-slewed ballot box to force the rest of us to live on a xenophobic, sewage-covered rock.

And bollocks to AI: before we even think about artificial intelligence we need to look to the beer wars of the 1970s and start a Campaign for Real Intelligence. The Tories are the political version of Watneys, no doubt of that. I've said it before and I'll say it again: I've spent my whole life working for British intelligence, and there still isn't enough of it about!

Rant over.

This week I am in the East of England, Lowestoft and Ipswich, and I'm having a relatively quiet July before a frenetic August. I start at Rebellion Festival in Blackpool on the first weekend followed by two

weeks at the PBH Free Fringe in Edinburgh, playing afternoon spoken word/music "Left Wing Economic Establishment" shows at Bannerman's Bar in Niddry Street plus a couple of very special early afternoon music events at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh's music instrument museum and concert hall, just across the road.

At those events I shall be playing crumhorn, cornamuse, five different recorders and fiddle, doing songs from my "Restoration Tragedy" album about the Levellers, Diggers and Ranters of 1649. For all details see the links below.

I want to give a special shout out to the PBH Free Fringe, which brought me back to Edinburgh after many years away, disgusted by the way the origi-

nal DIY Fringe ideal had been hijacked by corporate promoters demanding huge fees from performers for venue spaces, playing on people's dreams and often leaving them audienceless and penniless.

Peter Buckley Hill's model is a brilliant idea, with venues providing spaces free to performers and audiences free to attend without payment and give whatever they choose at the end of the show. It gives the Fringe back to the people, with both those on stage and those watching able to participate in the world's largest arts festival regardless of their ability to pay.

Thank you, Peter, Luke and everyone involved.

The one remaining problem is the price of accommodation at the festival and there is a desperate need for a similarly creative solution. The large promoters, already coining

it, are in receipt of grants – this is ridiculous. Arts Council money should be used to subsidise accommodation for grassroots performers, and Edinburgh Council should be addressing the issue as well. It's no use having a venue for free if it costs you a grand a week to stay in the city!

Finally for this week, a call out to anyone local to the area to join our local Labour councillors at a Save Our Ticket Offices protest at Southwick station (near Brighton) next Tuesday (July 18) at 8am. Public transport must be safe and accessible to all. Trains need ticket offices, trains need guards, and above all trains need taking back into public ownership!

■ For further info please visit <https://www.facebook.com/attilathestockbroker> and/or <https://attilathestockbroker.bandcamp.com/merch>

## ART FESTIVAL REVIEW | LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL

★★★★★ | VARIOUS VENUES, LIVERPOOL

### SYLVIA HIKINS walks us through a huge, free festival of art that examines Liverpool's colonial past

NOW in its 25th year, the Liverpool Biennial is the UK's largest free festival of contemporary art. Curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa, this year's theme is uMoya – The Sacred Return of Things. In the isiZulu language, uMoya means spirit, air, breath, climate, wind – all elements representing the fleeting and transient, the elusive and intangible.

The Biennial addresses Liverpool's turbulent history, a city that in the 19th century was one of the world's richest, its wealth mainly coming from slavery and exploitation.

Thirty five artists, in 15 different indoor or outdoor venues across the city, examine colonial histories and legacies, ancestral and indigenous forms of knowledge and wisdom, and predict the possibility of a joyful future despite past and present catastrophes.

What better place to start my tour than the Open Eye Gallery close to the iconic three graces, where, upon entering, I immediately faced a torso wearing a wedding dress

embroidered with outspoken messages. Originally designed as a performance piece that re-enacted the 1962 Ugandan Independence ceremony as a wedding, artist Sandra Suubi's "Samba Gown" is a statement of resistance, a metaphor for that day when the bride, Uganda, entered a binding contract with the groom, her former colonisers.

On display too are Suubi's amazing photographs that document the wearing of the

gown (itself created from discarded plastic) in various rubbish dumps in Kampala. Uganda receives thousands of tonnes of plastic waste exported every year from wealthy nations.

The artist interprets this as the aftermath of colonialism, an example of the transactional relationships existing between former colonies and their colonisers.

Artist David Aguacheiro's photographic installation continues this theme, focusing on the exploitative practices of the West in Mozambique, people stripped of their clothes, dignity, identity, along with the natural resources.

My next stop was St Nicholas Church Gardens, in whose grounds, Abell, Liverpool's first recorded black resident and former slave, is buried. Alongside the Scousers seated on wooden picnic benches stand seven new clay sculptures by Ranti Bam, titled Ifa, which in Yoruba means "to pull close". The Stools, known as Akpoti, are an important element in indigenous life, used for care, rest, contact, communal gathering and seek to promote



Pic: Rob Battersby

**CARRY THAT WEIGHT:** (Left) Sandra Suubi, 'Samba Gown', 2021, Open Eye Gallery; (Above) Ranti Bam, Ifas, 2023. Installation view at St Nicholas Church Gardens, Liverpool Biennial

relaxation, calmness and love.

Entering Liverpool 1 from the Dock Road, I faced a large, colourful installation newly created by Rudy Loewe, The Reckoning, based on a former painting featuring mask-wearing carnival goers coming to the aid of Black Power revolution in Trinidad and Tobago. Rudy Loewe has shifted the participants to Liverpool's old docks where they now confront the city's colonial legacy and its present-day resonances.

Other outdoor locations include St John's Gardens, overlooked by municipal buildings, museum, library, art gallery, that were themselves the vanity projects of Victorian millionaires. In these surroundings, Nicholas Galanin has created seven overturned baskets in cast bronze, standing on plinths, adjusted to resemble the masks of burglars and the theft of cultural property. Given such baskets are used by the indigenous people of

Africa and North America, the hope is one day a return of that which has been stolen from people who were either silenced or erased.

Time for coffee in The Bluecoat, Liverpool's oldest city centre building, a school founded during Britain's colonial period by the Anglican Church and Liverpool Merchants, most of the latter deriving their wealth from slavery and the trade in goods this enabled – sugar, cotton and tobacco.

Four Biennial artists have works that invite us to think about how experiments in creativity may result in different foundations from which to imagine ideas for a better future. In Gallery 2, artist Raisa Kabir invites us to gather our spools and let our hair down. Entitled Utterances, there's crafts such as tapestry, hand weaving, hand looms, raw materials, plus we can watch Kabir's videos relating to the theme of the exhibits.

You can enjoy immersive video installations at many of the Biennial venues.

All 35 artists have responded to uMoya in strikingly different ways and imaginative ways. Our fossil-fuel based global economy, rooted in colonial expansion, continues to destroy indigenous eco-systems, people's homes and the land. In this thought-provoking festival we witness through art, both past and present, but are given the hope of repair and healing.

Come walk the streets of Liverpool and view all or most of this remarkable collection of contemporary creativity that both confirms our colonial past and explores how we may find redemption from the horrors of history, a genuine plea for positive change.

It is enjoyable to see and will get you thinking.

Well worth a visit.

■ The Biennial runs until September 17th, info: [biennial.com](http://biennial.com)



Pic: Mark McNulty



ART AND ACTIVISM

# Just my type

On UK Disability Awareness Day **ANGUS REID** celebrates the art of Keith Armstrong, a pioneering activist and writer whose unique body of artwork is a vision of protest and peace



**K**EITH ARMSTRONG (1950-2017) was a dynamic activist for the rights of people with disabilities. He was also highly creative, working as an artist, poet and musician, and a serious scholar of the history and linguistics of disability.

He contracted polio during infancy. In his teens he could just about walk but at the age of 20 he spent an entire year in hospital, undergoing complex back surgery. He would spend the rest of his life on crutches and, increasingly, in a wheelchair.

Yet he attended countless demonstrations – for CND, housing rights and against the government of the day, as well as those demanding disability rights – and was arrested more than once.

Keith's experience of being forced to sit in the guards van on British Rail trains in the 1980s was formative. He strongly felt that he had been treated like a piece of luggage, not as a human.

He adopted the online moniker "ruhuman," and was involved in the campaign for accessible transport of the '80s and '90s, serving on the management committee of Ealing and Camden's Dial-a-Ride scheme, as well as that of London Transport.

He continued protesting throughout the 1990s and 2000s with the Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) whose campaigning led to ramps in buses and improvements to tube and train access as well as the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995.

It is hard now to recall what



Armstrong is unique because his activism grew from his early achievement as an artist – as though the experience of himself as an original creator of things was the necessary prerequisite to political action

the world was like for people with disabilities before activists like Armstrong changed it.

But Armstrong is unique because his activism grew from his early achievement as an artist, as though the experience of himself as an original creator of things was the necessary prerequisite to political action.

There is a compelling immediacy to that work – the archive of his typewriter prints – that resonates as strongly today as it did at the time, and that deserves comparison with the great names of abstract and Op Art, such as Mark Rothko and Bridget Riley.

Due to his disability he often had a self-imposed time limit on how long he could spend at the typewriter and as his mentor Dom Sylvester Houedard noted: "Here are some of ka's poems – done with a tautness and cohesion imposed by their 60-minute limit." That Armstrong could turn these physical limitations to great artistic advantage is part of the inherent beauty of his work.

Houedard was also a practitioner of concrete poetry, and what he shares with Armstrong is the belief that the typewriter could be an instrument, or a conduit for peace. This is knowingly acknowledged by Armstrong in the work Test Peace.

He was extremely prolific during the late '60s and early '70s when the Concrete

Poetry movement was at its peak in Britain.

In the words of Jasia Reichardt, Concrete poetry: "... serves to examine what happens to language through a certain type of visual presentation, and what becomes of an abstract image simultaneously endowed with a literary meaning."

Armstrong's work captures extremes of this.

**A**rmstrong's was an exceptionally enquiring mind and his poetry explores everything from traditional, formal structures, to texts that use the page as a canvas.

There are pattern pieces, which use a title to suggest a deeper meaning, as well as works that are overtyped to create dense textural statement with no traditional structure alluding to meaning at all.

The visual sophistication of these pieces takes them away from text-based works or poems into pure abstraction. The typewriter's letterforms become the building up of a series of smaller elements, like the individual stitches used to form a greater whole in embroidery or textile works. Sometimes there are linguistic pointers to give the viewer an imagined or assumed context, but at other times the viewer is left to create their own under-

standing of the piece – after all, we are a species that seeks to find meanings in patterns.

Armstrong's more formal written poetry often shows his sense of dissatisfaction with the world, or questions his place in it, but the inherent structure of the pattern pieces enabled by the immediacy of the typewriter is a different, and more positive way of making sense of the universe. When language is broken down into these basic elements, it can be used not to complain or protest, but to celebrate beauty, and being in the world.

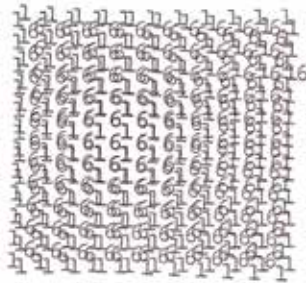
Michael Shermer invented the term "patternicity" in 2008 defining it as "the tendency to find meaningful patterns in meaningless noise" and it may be that this search for meaning was eventually better channelled into Armstrong's activism rather than his poetry, and this explains the relatively brief period of intense typewriter art activity over his entire career.

He also found musical collaborations very rewarding, pointing out that "John Peel played both sides of my one and only single AN AMAZING GRACE/SPACE BOOGIE on his BBC Radio One show. I also had a cup of tea with him in his London flat..." and he found



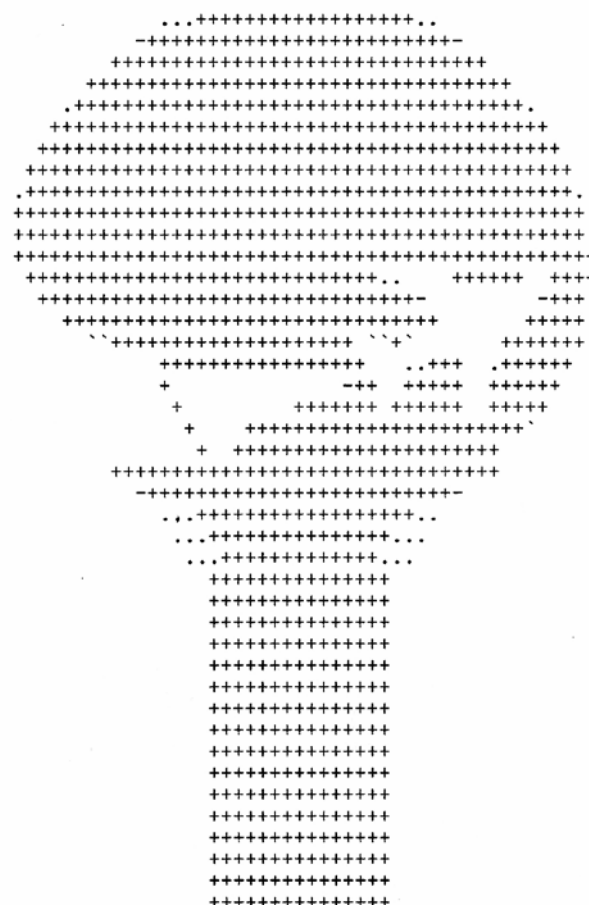
**ABOVE THE LAW:** Prior to the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Keith Armstrong is carried aloft by police arresting him for the sixth time at a disabled peoples' Direct Action Network protest in London; (Left) Ward 16 poem, 1972; (Below) The Plane Tree, 1999

WARD 16 POEM.



keitharmstrongoxford6372.

note: this a lungpoem  
 aircircle = lifesupportsystem  
 the number 16 is equal to  
 4 X 4 4 = Fire,Earth,Water and Air.



THE PLANE TREE ka90299

true equality on the internet, where connections can be made without reference to age, gender or disability.

Having run an international poetry magazine, The Informer, and exhibited widely in the UK, his CV from 1990 barely mentions his poetry writing or art and instead focuses on his activism, community engagement and disability awareness work.

Yet it is these works of concrete poetry that his originality as an artist can be acknowledged, and in later life he returned to them, creating Youtube films that explored and celebrated his early work. These are fascinating films, still in existence on the internet, and highly recommended. Find them by searching for Typewriter art and ruhuman.

In 2022 a comprehensive and beautiful retrospective of Armstrong's work was compiled into a book by Barrie Tullett and Tom Gill, with an additional essay by Nicola Simpson. Let's ensure that this is a step towards Armstrong's work finding its deserved recognition, a major exhibition, and its place in national collections.

**■ RUHUMAN**, the typewriter Art of Keith Armstrong, is published by Caserom Press and can be bought at [the-case.co.uk/ruhuman](http://the-case.co.uk/ruhuman), £20



**YOUR  
CHANCE TO  
WIN**

# A family getaway at Croyde Bay



**T**HIS weekend as the labour movement celebrates the legacy of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Morning Star has teamed up with Unison's Croyde Bay Holiday Resort to offer our readers a chance of a coastal holiday near one of Britain's most beautiful beaches.

The winning reader will receive THREE nights' stay in the resort's hotel — breakfast included — for two adults and two children (under 14).

To get your name in the ring for a relaxing seaside break simply answer the following question — Tolpuddle is located in which English county?

Send answers to [competitions@peoples-press.com](mailto:competitions@peoples-press.com) or write to Tolpuddle Competition, Morning Star, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD

Please include your full address and contact details including email.

The competition closes on Monday July 24.



**C**ROYDE Bay in North Devon boasts a picturesque landscape, one of Britain's top beaches and very unique trade union-owned holiday resort.

Nestled behind Croyde Beach — voted one of Britain's top 10 by both the Sunday Times and Trip Advisor, — is Unison's Croyde Bay Holiday Resort which is open to all and welcomes a variety of guests every year.

The resort has really evolved since it was set up in 1930, changing from

a members-only holiday and convalescence camp to a fully fledged holiday resort with a hotel, self-catering cottages and summer chalets ... all with private access onto the wonderful Croyde Beach. Perfect for the whole family!

The perfect place for a family holiday, there is lots to do.

On site there are free kids' clubs and entertainment on selected weeks, an indoor swimming pool and lots of on-site activities.



In the local area there's a variety of adventure parks, aquariums and surf schools. There's no minimum stay, so go for one night, a short break or a couple of weeks!

Call (01271) 890-890 for details or check out [www.croydeunison.co.uk](http://www.croydeunison.co.uk)

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. This competition is open to residents of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland except for employees of the People's Press Printing Society, their families or anyone else associated with this competition. 2. All information detailing how to enter this competition forms part of these terms and conditions. It is a condition of entry that all rules are accepted as final and that the competitor agrees to abide by these rules. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Submission of an entry will be taken to mean acceptance of these terms and conditions. 3. Only one entry per person. Late, illegible, incomplete, defaced or corrupt entries will not be accepted. 4. The winning entry will be drawn at random from all correct submissions. The winner will be notified within four days of the closing date of the competition and a voucher entitling two adults and two children under 14 to three nights B&B at the Croyde Bay Holiday Resort hotel dispatched to them. The voucher expires on April 1, 2024 and excludes dates between July 21 and August 31 and New Year's Eve. 5. The winner's name and county may be disclosed to anyone who writes within one month after the published closing date, stating the date of publication and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, to PPPS, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD. 6. The prize as described is available on the date of publication. It is non-transferable and there are no cash alternatives. 7. Events may occur that render the competition itself or the awarding of the prizes impossible due to reasons beyond the control of the Promoter and accordingly the Promoter may at its absolute discretion vary or amend the promotion and the entrant agrees that no liability shall attach to the Promoter as a result thereof. Promoter PPPS, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD.



WIKILEAKS

# Navalny is not the same as Assange

I AM responding to Anne Watson's letter published on July 10.

Julian Assange faces a critical situation. He has spent over four years in Belmarsh Prison and has had his recent appeal against extradition to the US rejected by the High Court. He has lost his freedom for the past 13 years. With only one appeal remaining, he is in imminent danger of extradition to the US where he faces a 175-year sentence in prison conditions that amount to torture. His life is at stake.

He has endured unending persecution for revealing war crimes, torture, murder, vast injustice carried out by countries in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. He

faces a united front of imperialist countries hell-bent on unending warfare and determined to cover up their crimes. Led by the US and Britain, these countries have collaborated to send him to the US, the country that plotted to assassinate him while he was in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

It is not helpful to compare Assange with Alexei Navalny.

Assange faces the enmity of every imperialist nation while Navalny receives praise and support from those nations and their media. Navalny purports to support human rights while his record includes speaking alongside neonazis and calling people from the Caucasus

"cockroaches." He is especially supported at this time of war in Ukraine when there is an avalanche of anti-Russian propaganda in the West.

Outside the Western/Nato bubble, millions of people support Assange and regard him as a hero. They have suffered grievously at the hands of the war machines of the US, Britain, and other Nato countries. They know that Assange is being punished for truthful journalism. All of us should rally to his side to stop his extradition, ensure his freedom and protect our fast-dwindling democratic rights.

MAXINE WALKER  
South London

STRIKES

# Army of teachers must stay united

CONCERNING the present teachers' pay battle, we need to recognise that we are in a war with this government and not just a battle.

We have arrived at the situation that we have so far united our forces. The successful ballot of the NASUWT further strengthens our hand, as hopefully will the ballots of the NAHT and ASCL whose ballots close on July 31.

It would be a disastrous tactic and a situation only of advantage to our enemy if we allowed our united front to be broken. The government has this as its strategic aim. It would like nothing more than to get the NEU into an isolated position.

We have to maintain the unity we have achieved of NEU,

NASUWT, NAHT and ASCL working together.

Yes, 6.5 per cent fully funded is still less than inflation. However, to have made some progress is good. A battle with our united army having won together some advance is better than breaking ranks and the NEU battling on alone, which again the government would love. Remember what they did to the miners.

Unity brings strength. The joint NEU general secretaries are tactically right. I say we should support them.

Keeping our army united will give us the strength for the next step forward. Climbing a mountain is not done in one leap.

HANK ROBERTS  
London NW10

UKRAINE

# War will end in negotiation

PROFESSOR Edward Luttwak, the eminent US strategist and historian recently wrote: "Like everybody else who matters, Volodymyr Zelensky knows all too well that the war must end in a negotiation because nobody is going to march on Moscow to force the Russians to surrender. Talk of 'regime change' may offer a seductive promise for some, but it mostly demonstrates a feckless over-optimism about its feasibility, while also ignoring the likelihood that Putin's replacement will promise not peace but a more effectively prosecuted war."

He concludes: "The good news is that the Ukraine war is a polite, 'limited war,' just like those of the 18th century that were later envied in the terrible 20th century of all-out, unlimited wars. But the bad news is that as long as only the Ukrainians are under fire, none of the other protagonists has an impellent reason to end the fighting. So like the 18th-century Seven Years' War, it risks dragging on for at least another 500 days."

However, a British decision to pull out of the war could change the whole dynamic, and push the protagonists towards the much-needed negotiation to end the war.

WILL PODMORE  
London E11

## ★ Readers & Supporters

### GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

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**CENTRAL SCOTLAND** – Email Colin Finlay at buses0768@gmail.com.  
**COLCHESTER** – The Colchester Morning Star Readers and Supporters Group meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month.  
**CHELTHENHAM** – Email Simon Meddick at cheltmorningstar@gmail.com. Meets 4th Monday every month.  
**CROYDON** – We meet regularly at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 1BD. For details e-mail croydonmornings-tarrsg@gmail.com.  
**CYMRU/WALES** – New Welsh group established. Contact David at davidedwin.nicholson@gmail.com.

**DORSET** – New group. Contact Ruth Pitman at dorsetrsg@gmail.com.  
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**DUNDEE** – dylanmarshall1000@gmail.com.  
**EDINBURGH** – Email Richard Shilcock at rcs@staffmail.ed.ac.uk.  
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**GOVAN & SW** – Email David Ferguson at david-ferguson23@hotmail.com.  
**SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY** – Email Vince Mills at vpmills@outlook.com.  
**LONDON** – Call Paul Clydes on 07969 321-657 or email paul@redstar.me.uk.  
**MANCHESTER** – Requiring new members for relaunch, email Evan Pritchard at evanpritchard.ep@gmail.com.  
**MARKET HARBOROUGH** – New group formed, email Peter at peterwhalen13@gmail.com.  
**MERSEYSIDE** – Meets regularly. Email Helen at merseycpnews@gmail.com.  
**MILTON KEYNES** – Meets regularly. Email Jimmy McIntyre at macintyrejimmy@gmail.com.  
**NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK** – Contact

Sean Meleady on smelea@hotmail.co.uk or call 0775 814 5671.  
**NORTH-EAST ENGLAND** – Email Ron Brown, Geoffrey Ferris or Jenny at ronnie49@live.co.uk.  
**OXFORDSHIRE** – New group formed, email Chesterton at oxonrsg@gmail.com.  
**SHROPSHIRE** – Regular paper sales & monthly socials: Call Phil on 07816 641-884 or email shropshiremorningstar@gmail.com.  
**SOUTHAMPTON** – Regular group: Contact Glynn Tudor, Glynt1951@gmail.com to get involved.  
**SOUTH YORKSHIRE** – Email Carrie Hedderwick at hedderwick@gmail.com.  
**SUNDERLAND** – Email Alec McFadden at alec.stucc@gmail.com or call 07831 627531  
**SWINDON** – Email Pete Webb at jackobadenski@yahoo.com.  
**WATFORD** – Call Phil Brown on (01923) 239-512 or email leveller@myphone.coop.  
**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE** – Email George Kirkpatrick at george.kirkpatrick@hotmail.com.  
**WEST YORKSHIRE** – Email westyorkmorningstar@gmail.com.

POLICY

# Fortune favours the radical

LABOUR has done a number of U-turns of late. Its plan to invest £28 billion a year to boost the green economy has been pushed back to 2027.

Shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves said that Labour needed to avoid the "risk of being reckless."

Childcare reforms have also been watered down. Again it was said that Labour needs to be "fiscally responsible."

It is claimed also that Labour will jettison a proposed £3bn tech tax. This follows intensive lobbying by Silicon Valley firms.

This appears to have

left voters less than impressed. Few people seem to know what Labour stands for apart from political cowardice and fence-sitting.

Plus while the Tories are immensely unpopular, Labour's lead in the opinion polls is actually down three points and it now stands at 14 percentage points.

It is clearer, now more than ever, that if Labour is to hold onto its lead and get into government it needs to offer the electorate bold, radical policies.

ALAN STEWART  
Wakefield

SIMON RENTON explores the Star's online archives

## 80 YEARS AGO TODAY...

### Worker appreciates exploits of Yugoslav partisans

THE exploits of Yugoslav partisans were much appreciated and reported by the Daily Worker. The capture and trial of Gestapo officers and a Gestapo spy was reported on July 15 1943. The successes of the partisans were in sharp contrast to the abject defeatism, and even collaboration, of the Yugoslav government, in London, which was frequently reported by the Worker.

#### GUERRILLAS TRY GESTAPO

"Such was the surprise of the German garrison when the little town of Litush was suddenly raided by Slovene guerillas in broad daylight that every man threw down his arms without resistance. Besides the weapons and equipment, two Gestapo officers and

a woman Gestapo spy fell into the hands of the guerillas, who set up a court and sentenced all three to be shot.

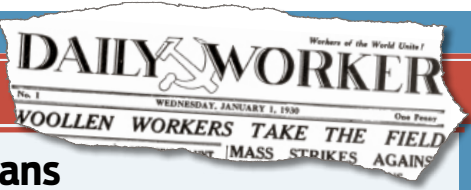
"This incident is described by Free Yugoslavia Radio, which also tells how, when the same Slovene detachment raided the village of Tuhiro three days later, the German garrison withdrew at once into a heavily fortified barracks."

#### RELIEF EXPEDITION

"The Germans held out in this barracks against all attacks for four hours, while the nearby German

command hastily assembled a relief expedition that greatly outnumbered the guerillas. The Slovenes managed, however, to get explosive charges up against the walls of the barracks, and blow the whole building up, together with its defenders, just before the relief forces arrived."

In the same issue of the Daily Worker, the operation of Courts of Honour to deal with absentee miners was reported. However, in these courts offenders were liable to fines.



You can read editions of the **Daily Worker (1930-45)** and **Morning Star (2000-today)**, online at [mstar.link/DWMSarchive](http://mstar.link/DWMSarchive)  
Ten days' access costs just **£5.99** and a year is **£84**

CND

# Trident nukes are a waste of cash

EVERY which way we turn, we are told by the government that increased wages for public-sector workers are not affordable or they will push up inflation.

But neither the Tory government nor the Labour Party leadership ever says we cannot afford weapons. Apparently it is quite OK to spend £205 billion (and rising) on the US Trident nuclear armed submarines.

And to increase defence, that is military, spending by billions, up to 2.2 per cent of GDP this year.

RAE STREET  
Littleborough



## HAVE YOUR SAY

Write to Morning Star, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Rd, London CR0 1BD or email [letters@peoples-press.com](mailto:letters@peoples-press.com)



The Red List

July 15-22

▶ SATURDAY 15

**Trans Pride protest march**  
11am in Jubilee Square, Brighton  
With speeches before the march  
leaves at 12pm for Brunswick  
Square, where there will be  
music, stalls and food. Find  
out more at facebook.com/  
events/6252234181508887.

**Glasgow's Pride March**  
11am in Glasgow Green, Glasgow  
Help turn the city centre into a sea  
of rainbow flags as we continue to  
fight for equality. This year's theme  
is Women of the LGBTQ+ Commu-  
nity and Movement. Groups, floats,  
etc, should register at mardigla.org.

**Meet Greater Manchester Stop  
the War at MIFFF'd**  
2pm at the Peer Hat, Faraday  
Street, Manchester  
Speak to anti-war activists at Man-  
chester International Fringe Festival  
to hear the case against  
arming Ukraine and fanning the  
flames of war when the NHS is on its  
knees through lack of funding.

**Until 16th: Art installation:  
About Face**  
11am-5.30pm on Saturday,  
11am-5pm on Sunday, at Migration  
Museum, Lewisham Shopping  
Centre, Molesworth Street, London  
SE13  
Mltidisciplinary visual artist EVE-  
WRIGHT explores their perspectives  
on growing up in Lewisham as the  
child of parents from the Windrush  
generation. Part of the Windrush  
75th anniversary celebrations.

**15th-16th: Tolpuddle Martyrs'  
Festival**  
From 12pm on Friday and all day on

Saturday and Sunday in Tolpuddle,  
Dorset  
A family-friendly labour movement  
festival with discussions, music,  
food stalls and campaign groups,  
trade union activities, radical films,  
comedy and a whole lot more. Find  
out more at tolpuddlemartyrs.org.  
uk/festival.

**Until 19th: The Freedom Flotilla  
visits Bristol**  
Various times and locations across  
the city  
A range of events to mark the  
Freedom Flotilla Coalition's boat ar-  
riving in Bristol as part of a tour of  
European ports to raise awareness  
of Israel's occupation and blockade  
of the Gaza Strip. Find out more at  
mstar.link/44dDclo.

**15th, 19th and 22nd: Free Julian  
Assange**  
■ 15th: 12pm to 2pm at HMP  
Belmarsh, Western Way, London  
SE28  
■ 4pm to 6pm at Eros statue,  
Piccadilly Circus, London SW1  
■ 19th: 3pm to 5pm at the  
Australian high commission,  
Strand, London WC2  
■ 22nd: 12pm to 2pm at HMP  
Belmarsh, Western Way, London  
SE28

■ 4pm to 6pm at Eros statue,  
Piccadilly Circus, London SW1  
Oppose the WikiLeaks founder's  
extradition to the United States and  
demand his immediate release. Also,  
look out for the Free Assange' stall at  
the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival. Find  
out more at wiseupaction.info.

**Until 30th: Our Windrush Story**  
10am to 5pm Wednesdays to  
Saturdays and 10am to 4pm on  
Sundays at the Willis Museum &

Sainsbury Gallery, Market Place,  
Basingstoke  
An exhibition, including a photo-  
graphic commission by Tamsyn  
Warde and an immersive sound-  
scape by composer Thomas Baynes,  
commemorating and celebrating  
the contributions of the Windrush  
generation in Basingstoke.

**Until 31st: Sankara x Guevara  
art exhibition**  
Online all the time  
A variety of immersive, digital, and  
AI art exploring the shared political  
values of Latin American revolution-  
ary Che Guevara and his African  
counterpart Thomas Sankara, who  
was president of Burkina Faso from  
1983 to 1987. Find out more and view  
the exhibition at pastfutures.co.uk.

**Until September 2: Windrush:  
A Voyage through the  
Generations**  
Every day at Clapham Library, Mary  
Seacole Centre, 91 Clapham High  
Street, London SW4  
A new photography exhibition by  
Jim Grover exploring how the gen-  
erations which followed the Win-  
drush arrivals are living their lives  
in Britain today. For exact opening  
times and other information, go to  
mstar.link/44m2jIC.

**Until September 5: Journeys to  
Hope**  
Any time at Autograph, Rivington  
Place, London EC2  
An outdoor display of pictures from  
the TopFoto archives, punctuated  
with the profound words of Profes-  
sor Stuart Hall, showing the journey  
of those who arrived in Britain on  
the Empire Windrush in 1948.

**Until September 10: Over A**

**Barrel: Windrush Children,  
Tragedy and Triumph**  
10am to 6pm Thursdays to  
Saturdays, 12pm to 5pm on  
Sundays, at Black Cultural  
Archives, 1 Windrush  
Square, London SW2  
An interactive exhibi-  
tion exploring the  
incredible journeys  
of children who  
travelled from the  
Caribbean to Britain  
during the Win-  
drush era. Entry £5,  
concessions £3. Find  
out more at mstar.  
link/3pkDNTe.

**Until November  
30: Windrush: It  
Runs Through Us**  
10am-3pm every week  
from Tuesday to Saturday  
at Mansfield Museum,  
Leeming Street, Mansfield  
An exhibition on what Windrush  
was, why it happened and how  
migration has shaped Britain.

**Until January 7: Northern  
Ireland: Living with the  
Troubles**  
10am to 6pm at the Imperial War  
Museum, Lambeth Road, London,  
SE1  
An exhibition allowing visitors  
to further their understanding of  
the Troubles through the multiple  
perspectives of individuals affected  
by the conflict.

**Virtual art exhibition: Roots,  
Culture, Identity 2023**  
Online all the time  
A Windrush-themed art exhibition  
which also marks the 30th anniver-  
sary of the murder of Stephen Law-  
rence. Artists featured include An-  
tonietta Torsiello, Frederico Ramos,  
Jay Percy, Marci-Yah, Oisín ("Oshii")  
Davis-Lyons, Rhian Wellington,  
Shaneen Phipps, Shiquerra Clark,  
Yeside Linney and Zita Holbourne.  
Go to mstar.link/447mRhO.

▶ SUNDAY 16

**Mandela Day: End Israeli  
Apartheid**  
2.30-5.30pm in Windrush Square,  
Effra Road, London SW2  
Remember Nelson Mandela and his  
life and work to end apartheid. Or-  
ganised by local Palestine Solidarity  
Campaign and Friends of Palestine  
groups.

▶ MONDAY 17

**Stop the Drift to Armageddon!**  
7pm at Quaker Meeting House, 2  
Lawn Terrace, London SE3  
Kate Hudson and Sami Ramadani  
lead a discussion of the threat of  
a Nato-Russia nuclear war, US  
nuclear weapons returning to  
RAF Lakenheath, the US drive  
for global domination and the  
rebalancing of US foreign policy  
towards Asia. Register at eventbrite.  
com/e/656232207197. Hosted by Lew-  
isham and Greenwich Campaign for  
Nuclear Disarmament.

▶ TUESDAY 18

**Beyond Abortion Rights:  
Reproductive Justice for All!**  
6.30pm at Pelican House, 144  
Cambridge Heath Road, London E1  
Get together with Women's Strike  
Assembly to discuss the urgent need  
to fight for reproductive justice  
in Britain and to demand the im-  
mediate release of Carla Foster, who  
was recently jailed for having an  
abortion during lockdown in 2020.  
Find out more at facebook.com/  
events/565422478878586.

**Slapps: An Ongoing Threat to  
Freedom of Expression**  
7pm at Amnesty International,  
Human Rights Action Centre, 25  
New Inn Yard, London EC2



▶ THURSDAY 20

**Marx on India: The  
Immanent Dialectical  
Critique of (Anti-)  
Imperialism**  
7pm at Marx Memorial  
Library, 37A Clerkenwell  
Green, London EC1  
and online  
Spencer A Leonard  
launches his latest  
collection of Marx's  
journalism, contain-  
ing articles in which  
Marx draws on the  
1853 renewal of the  
East India Company to  
develop his understand-  
ing of the British state as  
imperialist or Bonapartist.  
For tickets, priced £5, con-  
cessions £3, go to eventbrite.  
co.uk/e/656569496037.

▶ FRIDAY 21

**Book event: Miss Major Speaks  
and Atmospheres of Violence**  
7pm at Housmans Bookshop, 5  
Caledonian Road, London N1  
Toshio Meronek, author of a recent  
biography of Stonewall veteran Miss  
Major Griffin-Gracy, and Eric A Stan-  
ley, whose new book is a radical new  
trans/queer analysis, discuss their  
research and activism, read from  
their works and take questions from  
the audience. For tickets, priced £5,  
concessions £2, solidarity £8, go to  
mstar.link/3NPS2Yo.

**Until 24th: The Freedom  
Flotilla visits Southampton**  
Various times and locations across  
the city  
The Freedom Flotilla Coalition's  
boat arrives in the city as part of  
a tour of European ports to raise  
awareness of Israel's occupation and  
blockade of the Gaza Strip. Check  
facebook.com/southamptonpsc for  
more information.

▶ SATURDAY 22

**Big Red Picnic: a Morning Star  
fundraising event**  
12pm at Clarion House, Jinny Lane,  
Newchurch-in-Pendle  
With raffle, entertainment and  
stalls. Tea and coffee provided, but  
bring your own food.

**2nd Annual Queer History Walk**  
12pm from the New Foresters, 18 St  
Ann's Street, Nottingham  
A fundraiser, with a buffet and an  
afterparty, for the Nottingham  
LGBT+ Network and the Spencer  
Trust, organised by the Nottingham  
Forager. No booking required. Email  
thenottinghamforager@gmail.com  
with any queries.

**Film screening: Block To Block**  
1pm at Carlton Club, Rowan Lodge,  
113 Carlton Road, Manchester  
A documentary exploring the pri-  
vate rental takeover of Manchester,  
following two communities on  
either side of the city, Save Ancoats  
Dispensary and Block To Block,  
which have fought it tooth and nail.  
Tickets by donation at eventbrite.  
com/e/629266672557.

A panel of experts discuss strategic  
lawsuits against public participa-  
tion, which are used by a private  
party to silence critical speech in  
an effort to evade scrutiny of an  
issue in the public interest. Find  
out more and register at eventbrite.  
co.uk/e/664486435817. Organised by  
the Foreign Policy Centre, English  
PEN and Amnesty International UK.

**Disruption and Control**  
7pm online  
University of Glasgow lecturer in  
human geography Diarmaid Kel-  
liher explores questions of mobility  
in labour history through an ac-  
count of the relationship between  
picket lines and drivers in 1970s  
Britain. Join the Zoom meeting at  
mstar.link/46KKEWF, meeting ID  
845 3508 4069, passcode 099985.

**18th-22nd: Theatre show: The  
Tremors**  
7.30pm on each day at 53two, Arch  
19, Watson Street, Manchester  
Set in East Jerusalem bookshop  
under threat of demolition,  
Nikki Mailer's new play is about  
an unequal relationship between  
two women. It explores the magic  
of books, erasure of history and  
the Palestinian struggle against  
occupation. For details and tickets,  
priced £12, concessions £9.38, go to  
eventbrite.co.uk/e/637212298137.

▶ WEDNESDAY 19

**Abolishing Institutional  
Racism: Policing, Activism and  
Radical Alternatives**  
7pm at South London Gallery, 65  
Peckham Road, London SE5  
Adam Elliot-Cooper, author of Black  
Resistance to British Policing, con-  
siders why the rise of equality and  
diversity, unconscious bias training  
and government commissions  
have failed to effectively challenge  
institutional racism. For details and  
tickets, priced £6, concessions £4, go  
to eventbrite.co.uk/e/672160569357.

**AI and Accountability in  
Warfare**  
7pm at the Frontline Club, 13  
Norfolk Place, London W2  
Professor Mariarosaria Taddeo of  
the Oxford Internet Institute and  
disarmament researcher Taniel  
Yusef discuss the implications of  
artificial intelligence in modern  
armed conflict. For tickets, priced  
£15, students £10, go to eventbrite.  
co.uk/e/673024202507.

**Ukraine: How Do We Get  
Peace?**  
7pm at Central United  
Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk  
Street, Sheffield  
Stop the War Coalition officer  
Shabbir Lakha talks about the  
need for immediate peace talks, a  
Russian troops withdrawal, an end  
to Nato expansion and public invest-  
ment in welfare not warfare. Hosted  
by Sheffield Stop the War.



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## Racing Guide

with Farrington

■ NEWMARKET, ASCOT, YORK, CHESTER

# 'It's Good To Laugh is the one to watch at Chester this afternoon'

**A**BUMPER Saturday of racing with four big meetings up and down the country headed by Newmarket and the big race of the day, the Group One July Stakes at 4.35.

Little Big Bear resumes his rivalry with Shaquille after finishing a length and a quarter off that rival when second in the Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot. However, I think he was ridden too much as a presser that day and I suspect that Ryan won't be as forceful on the Ballydoyle charge in the opening exchanges. The fact that Aidan is happy with him following a slight bruising is enough to suggest that he will run his race and there will be little between the pair here.

However, I think that both will be trumped by **AZUREBLUE** if we get the showers that are forecast for the area. It is hard to know how good this grey filly is as she only just does enough in her races, winning a Listed contest at Newmarket by half a length and then coming late and fast to beat the classy Highfield Princess in the Duke of York Stakes in May. All she needs is safe ground to operate at her best, so Michael Dodds will be keeping a close eye on the skies. If she goes to post then she is a fascinating contender.

The Bunbury Cup Handicap (4.00) looks as competitive as ever with 20 runners set to go to post. Montassib has all the talent in the world, but looks a tricky horse, while previous winner Bless Him will surely be vulnerable to some up and coming improvers here. Awaal ran well when third in the Royal Hunt Cup at Royal Ascot, but I am not sure that the droop to seven furlongs is his thing and I shall be having an each-way play at a double figure price on **SPANGLED MAC**. The Scottish raider was fourth of 29 in the Buckingham Palace Handicap at the Royal meet, and then ran again on the Saturday when finding six furlongs a tad too short when coming home nicely eighth behind Saint Lawrence but only beaten by three lengths. As long as the ground remains on the fast side he looks vastly over priced.

The first and second in the opening handicap at Ascot (1.45) 12 months ago, Mountain Peak and Bond Chairman, renew rivalry. The winner is down in the weights this season after



some moderate efforts while the runner-up comes here on the back of a winning seasonal debut at Doncaster. However, both will need career best efforts to land this Heritage Handicap in what looks a much deeper race than in 2022.

For example dual Wokingham winner Rohaan carries top weight off a mark of 110 and despite two poor efforts, albeit in better grade this season, he must be respected back on his favourite track, a remark that also applies to King's Lynn. Old Arcibo is worth a special mention as he too has a good record here and the handicapper has

at last given him a big chance off a mark of 97 and if the eight-year-old retains the majority of his ability and I think that he could well be worth a saver. Equilateral (5th), Existent (9th) and Raasel (10th) all take a drop in grade after running well in the King's Stand, but the selection makes more appeal.

Last seen here over 7f in the Victoria Cup (too far) Jim Goldie's charge, **CALL ME GINGER**, is already a C&D winner off 81 and has since run below par resulting in him being able to run off a 2lbs lower mark here. Fast ground and a rapid pace seem to be the key to him and if he can

stay in touch early on then his blitz finish should see him in the mix at a price.

The feature Heritage Handicap at York (3.10) looks very competitive which is not surprising with the prize money on offer. To my eyes Sea of Casper had the run of the race when landing a class three at Lingfield Park last time out. However, this is only his ninth career start and there should be more to come from him, but in time I suspect an extra furlong and a half would suit.

Veteran Certain Lad has run really well in the last two renewals of this race, too free last year when 11th, but previously a cracking second to Sinjaari, but may be the assessor still has hold of him. I prefer the Godolphin charge, **WHITEWOLF**, who to my eyes hasn't got home over 12 furlongs in the Duke of Edinburgh last time out (travelled powerfully through the race) and here in the Jorvik Handicap first time out this season. What this son of Invincible Spirit needs is a fast-run 10 furlongs with no jar in the ground. A mark of 101 looks very fair on what he has achieved and he is preferred at the relative prices to the Crisford rep and the unexposed Nobel trained by Andrew Balding.

In the two-mile handicap at 4.55, a medium class four event, there are several well handicapped entries that are open to consideration. Single hasn't won since this time last year at Newmarket off a mark of 78 over a mile and three quarters. The mare has dropped down to the same mark and if she settles I fancy could play a part. Top weight,

Land of Winter, didn't get home over two and a quarter miles at Pontefract last time out after travelling well for most of the journey. Down to a mark of 81, the Newmarket raider could well be the biggest danger to **SHARP DISTINCTION**.

A maiden after 11 starts, that would be a good enough reason for many of you to ignore the claims of the selection. However, three runs over this trip have resulted in form figures of 223 and his comeback run at Kempton Park can be significantly upgraded as he was very free through the first half mile and then had to come off a moderate pace. There is almost certainly more to come from this four-year-old.

Fast Response is interesting on only his second start over seven furlongs in the Chester 4.27, fast ground wouldn't have been his thing last time out, but with rain in the air he could play a major role if Billy Garrity can get him covered up in midfield.

Witch Hunter won a nice handicap at Royal Ascot under an inspired ride from Spencer, but soft ground is a question mark as well as this uplift in grade so I am going to take a chance with **HOLGUIN**. He has been given some stiff tasks in his career including when a close-up sixth in the Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot last time out and previously when twice placed behind the classy Cold Case, the second of which was in the Two-Year-Old Trophy at Redcar last back end. Seven furlongs around here could prove spot on if he can get a good sit from his inside draw in box number two.

### WEEKEND TIPS

#### Farrington's Doubles

Saturday

**IT'S GOOD TO LAUGH**  
Chester 3.52 (nap)

**AL MUSMAK**  
Ascot 2.55

Sunday

**JET OF DREAMS**  
Stratford 4.35 (nap)

**GO BOB GO**  
Perth 3.40

#### Houseman's Choice

Saturday

**SHAQUILLE**  
Newmarket 4.35

Sunday

**BORN FAMOUS**  
Perth 4.15

### ■ MEN'S FOOTBALL

## Sleeping pill use rife, says expert after Dele interview

A LEADING sleep expert says use of sleeping tablets is "rife" in football following Dele's (pictured) revelation of addiction and has called for more education in the game.

Dele laid bare his struggles in an emotional interview with Gary Neville, where he also spoke of suffering sexual abuse as a child and revealed he had undergone a stint in rehab to battle his problems.

The Everton midfielder is the latest player to suggest it is a common problem in the game after former Football League

defender Ryan Cresswell opened up on his troubles to the PA news agency last year, saying it was a "big issue" among his peers.

Sleep expert James Wilson, who has worked at West Ham, Rotherham and Lincoln, agrees it is a concern but said the pills are counter-productive for good sleep.

"You hear stories from players and members of staff that say, 'You should go and work with this club because every single first-team player is taking sleeping pills every single night,'" he told PA.

"They are not generally good

for your sleep and they are not good for recovery so that is why they are not a good idea in football. The fact they are addictive is the cherry on the cake in saying why we should not be using sleeping pills, especially as a first line of defence.

"In society in general we don't understand the use of sleeping pills. The use is more rife in football because the job itself contributes to poor sleep, the night after a midweek game in particular footballers find it harder to sleep.

"There are two issues, one

is which Dele has highlighted is that they can be addictive, depending on what type of pill it is.

"But also the sleeping tablet doesn't give you sleep, it knocks you out. Sleeping pills impact on REM sleep and that is the stage where you go through an overnight counselling session, where your brain files the information from the day before.

"Without that REM sleep, the sleeping pill without him knowing will have contributed to him not being able deal with his mental health issues."





in brief

### Edgbaston hosts Twenty20 finals

**MEN'S CRICKET:** Edgbaston hosts the Twenty20 finals today with reigning champions Hampshire taking on Essex before Somerset face Surrey in the semi finals. Somerset boast the best record, losing only twice in 15 matches, the season's highest run rate and leading wicket taker in Ben Green. Hampshire's James Vince is the leading batsman left in the competition and needs only 17 more runs to replace Kent's Daniel Bell-Drummond at the top of the pile.

### Belle Vue Aces secure narrow win at Ipswich

**SPEEDWAY:** Charles Wright and Connor Bailey took the penultimate heat by five points to one as Belle Vue Aces came from behind to secure a narrow 46-44 win at Ipswich on Thursday night. The Aces are now 10 points clear in the Premiership although second-placed Leicester do have six games in hand. Bottom club Peterborough's match with Sheffield was postponed due to heavy rain.

### Hunslet ARLFC face Rochdale Mayfield

**MEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE:** National Conference top dogs Hunslet ARLFC welcome this season's surprise package, fourth-placed Rochdale Mayfield to the Leeds Oval this afternoon looking to increase their three point lead at the top. The league's bottom two clash when Leigh Miners take on Wigan St Patricks. Elsewhere today second-placed Wath Brow are at Hull Dockers, faltering Siddal host Thatto Heath, Kells meet West Hull and York Acorn are up against Lock Lane.

### Scottish League Cup gets underway today

**MEN'S FOOTBALL:** It's only mid-July but the Scottish League Cup kicks off today with the pick of the fixtures seeing league new boys The Spartans hosting Dundee United, who were relegated from the top flight last season, 2021 cup winners St Johnstone beginning their campaign at Stenhousemuir and the Highland League's Brechin City playing the Premiership's Livingston. Ex-League club Cowdenbeath are not in action until Wednesday when they travel to Arbroath.

# Women's World Cup on TV

**JAMES NALTON** writes about how blanket coverage of every game means it could be one of the most watched women's football tournaments in history

AS THE 2023 Fifa Women's World Cup kicks off this week in Australia and New Zealand, viewers will be able to watch the opening games involving both host nations live on the BBC and ITV.

New Zealand's game against Norway opens the tournament, kicking off at 8am on Thursday morning British Summer Time and being broadcast on BBC1.

It is followed by Australia against the Republic of Ireland on ITV at 11 am, with England's first game, against Haiti, being shown on ITV at 10.30 am on Saturday.

This blanket coverage of every game, not just the home nations, on terrestrial TV means it could be one of the most watched women's football tournaments in history.

The kick-off times will not be considered prime time viewing slots in many countries, but as is usually the case of women's sports, if it is readily available to watch, and not awkwardly hidden behind a streaming service or red button, people will watch it.

This has been shown to be the case by increased attendance and viewing figures in recent times.

The availability, affordability, and accessibility of the game have been important to its resurgence.

It has offered something more family-oriented (mainly thanks to being able to buy multiple tickets for a reasonable price – games can feature the aggression and ruckus of top-level competitive sport) and diverse in contrast to the un-affordability and toxicity of the men's game at the top level.

But this accessibility was almost obstructed by Fifa who left it until the last minute to agree broadcast deals for this summer's World Cup.

At one point it looked like the tournament would not be available to watch on TV at all. The governing body held out until the last minute for better broadcasting deals as they were selling the Women's World Cup as a separate package for the first time.

Fifa has always been tentative about women's football. Even when the global governing body organised the first women's world cup using the Fifa name in 1991, National Football Museum archives show the official name as the 1st Fifa World Championship for Women's Football for the M&Ms Cup, stating that "Fifa were reluctant to call it the World Cup at the time."



Fifa was probably shocked by some of the lower fees tabled for the 2023 World Cup, and in some ways was right to bargain for better deals that reflect the quality and high level of entertainment provided by the women's game, but at the same time, the game still needs to be able to attract broad interest as it continues its recovery. High fees for broadcasters can be a stumbling block to that.

The recent Uefa Women's Euros just last year felt like a landmark event for women's football following decades of the sport being kicked purposefully into the long grass.

During this resurgence, it can be easy to forget that the game was banned by the English FA for more than half of the 20th century, which seems almost unbelievable now.

The FA were put out that they had no control over the increasing amounts of money coming into the women's game, and that women's football teams were supporting miners who were locked out after coalmines returned to private ownership after World War I.

On the back of these issues which were unfavourable to the FA coffers, they moved to

halt the game's development altogether.

The lasting effects of that 50-year ban effectively made it much longer, and 102 years after it was enacted, the game is only just beginning to recover to previous levels. Before that ban, women's football was as popular as it is once again becoming.

This increase in attendance and viewership isn't unusual, or necessarily surprising to anyone who follows the game and knows its history. But it is nevertheless remarkable in its own way given the ban which prevented it from taking off alongside the men's game.

Women's football is now merely starting to return to the levels it was at prior to that ban. A sense of normality restored, and a move towards, if not yet arrived at, equality in the sport.

Fifa's hawkling of the broadcast rights for this World Cup as a separate package is another step towards women's football regaining its independence and self-sufficiency. Something that was taken away from it, in the English game at least, by the FA.

But as this happens, and as increased support and viewing

numbers lead to more money in the game, it needs to be careful that the right structures are in place and the money, rewards and benefits go to the right places, ie, the players, staff, and fans, many of whom still remember a time when women's football was not at all on the national radar. That time wasn't so long ago.

It's worth pointing out that the Morning Star newspaper has long covered women's football, even prior to its recent, more lucrative resurgence. It was putting women's football on the back pages long before other national outlets (re)discovered the game.

Former Arsenal defender and now high-profile football pundit and presenter Alex Scott once wrote a women's football column for the paper, while one of the most prominent women's football writers, Suzy Wrack of the Guardian, once covered the game in the pages of the Morning Star, writing in 2017 one of the best pieces about the FA ban and the support from women's football for the coal miners after the first world war.

It is good to see those who covered the game when no-one else was now getting the

rewards in the form of full-time jobs and the resources to cover a World Cup on the ground as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.

There is still a long way to go, though. Some women's football journalists needed crowd funders (started by their readers) in order to make the trip, while others will have missed out altogether.

Even the Jamaica team that qualified for the tournament were forced to crowdfund to afford accommodation and meals so they could then focus on the tournament in a professional manner.

The game and the issues surrounding it need to be readily available and accurately reported on if it is to overcome the barriers it has faced throughout its history, and still faces to this day.

Fifa not being able to agree on TV rights deals globally for this tournament would have been a massive step backwards for the game as it looks to build momentum, but eventual agreements in the UK with the BBC and ITV mean every game will be broadcast and, given the kick-off times, should be prime breakfast TV viewing for the next month.



**T**HAT tough times produce tough people is an urban myth that has long peppered working-class life – as if having to be tough to survive is something to be proud of rather than something to lament.

And what is toughness anyway? Is it a form of courage, a willingness to harness violence in pursuit of self-interest – material and status – or is it the ability to suffer and endure privation without being broken by it?

Those very questions have tantalised and occupied the minds of philosophers stretching all the way back to Aristotle, who once opined: I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self.”

In no other field is “victory over self” more important than in the sport of boxing. Processing the natural human fear of physical violence and pain, and ultimately overcoming it, is the non-negotiable criterion for not only success but survival in a boxing ring.

One fighter who more than overcame this fear, and who also helped his people overcome theirs, was the famed and legendary lightweight world champion, Benny Leonard (pictured).

Born Benjamin Leiner in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1896 to Russian orthodox Jewish immigrants, Leonard was destined to carry on his shoulders the weight of a Jewish community suffering the ravages of anti-semitism on one of the lower rungs of the ladder of American immigrant status.

The spike in anti-semitism across the United States in the late 19th century was in large part a consequence of the influx of Jewish immigrants to the country from Europe, where across Eastern Europe in particular anti-Jewish pogroms were then rife.

Poverty was endemic in the country’s massive conurbations - and nowhere more so than New York - as working class people competed for evermore scarce employment opportunities. Such conditions are ripe with the opportunity for racial and religious bigotry to spread, and with Jewish immigration the predominant kind in this period, anti-semitism became more overt than it ever had or has been in the land of the free.

Out of this toxicity emerged Benny Leonard, who like many ring legends of this era began his fighting career in the streets. There he and others from the same Jewish ghetto on Manhattan’s Lower East Side fought the children of other immigrant groups, mostly Irish and Italian, for bragging rights and to protect their turf. Over the course of these regular street battles, Leonard established a reputation for being good with his fists. With seven siblings to be fed at home and a father whose pay from hard physical labour was paltry, Leonard seized the opportunity



# ‘Victory over self’

**JOHN WIGHT** tells the story of legendary lightweight world champion Benny Leonard, who grappled with his opponents and rife anti-semitism

offered to him by his uncles to develop his talent for fighting at a local boxing club when he was just 11 years old.

With empty dinner plates on his mind, Leonard forswore the conventional path of learning his trade as an amateur and began fighting as a pro from the age 15 in 1911. He anglicised his last name at the same time, so as to avoid his parents finding out by reading about his ring exploits in the pages of the then popular Jewish Daily Forward. However he couldn’t avoid them finding out for long, and returning home after participating in a bout one evening, he later recounted that “My mother looked at my black eye and wept. My father, who had to work all week for 20 bucks, said, ‘Alright Benny, keep on fighting. It’s worth getting a black eye for 20 dollars; I am

getting verschwartzt (blackened) for 20 a week.’”

Leonard rose through the ranks to become world lightweight champion in 1917, the same year that the US entered the first world war and the Russian Revolution shook the world. By now he had become the symbol of a new and rising muscular Judaism – representing Jews who weren’t going to take it anymore and would fight back – and in consequence he wasn’t just lauded he was revered by the Jewish community in New York and further afield.

As Jewish boxing scribe and movie writer Budd Schulberg remembered: “To see him [Benny Leonard] climb in the ring sporting the six-pointed Jewish star on his fighting trunks was to anticipate sweet revenge for all the bloody noses, split lips, and

mocking laughter at pale little Jewish boys who had run the neighbourhood gauntlet.” In this sense, a Jewish champion of the ring like Leonard provided a strong counterpoint to popular anti-semitic tropes at the time.

The great trainer of a prime Roberto Duran, Ray Arcel, said of Leonard: “Boxing is brains over brawn. I don’t care how much ability you got, if you can’t think you’re just another bum in the park. People ask me who’s the greatest boxer I ever saw pound-for-pound. I hesitate to say, either Benny Leonard or Ray Robinson. But Leonard’s mental energy surpassed anyone else’s.”

Arcel’s analysis of Leonard’s craft was spot on. A student of the game, Leonard approached boxing as if it was a game of human chess. He would spend hours at the gym studying

other fighters to learn from their strengths and weaknesses, honing his own style into that of a defensive and counterpunching technician along the same lines as Floyd Mayweather Jr in his day.

At the time, the lightweight division was stacked with talent, making Leonard’s achievement in retaining the title for seven years all the more remarkable. Lightweights of the calibre of Johnny Dundee, Richie Mitchell, Charley White, Rocky Kansas, Johnny Kilbane, and Lew Tendler, Leonard fought and overcame.

Soon his fame transcended boxing to the point where Benny Leonard became a US cultural icon to the point where his fights became stadium events attended by crowds of 50,000 and more.

When he retired in 1925 he had amassed millions in

the bank and looked set for a comfortable post-ring future. This changed abruptly with the 1929 stock market crash, which obliterated his savings and prompted his return to boxing. But as with most every champion who returns to the dance after retirement, Leonard was not the same animal and stuttered his way through to 1932, when he finally hung up the gloves for good.

Perhaps fittingly, given the extent to which boxing made and defined him, he died in the ring from a heart attack in 1947 while refereeing a bout in his beloved New York.

His legend still lives on to this day.







■ **WOMEN'S TENNIS**

# JABEUR AIMS TO 'GET IT RIGHT THE THIRD TIME'

Tunisian tennis player takes on Vondrousova at Wimbledon final today



by Our Sports Desk

ONS JABEUR (pictured) hopes she has served her apprenticeship as she bids to take the final step and win a maiden grand slam title today.

No other woman can match the Tunisian's achievement in reaching three grand slam finals in the last five tournaments after finishing as runner-up at Wimbledon last year to Elena Rybakina and at the US Open to Iga Swiatek.

Jabeur has certainly proved her grass-court credentials this fortnight, beating grand slam champions in the last four rounds, including Rybakina and second seed Aryna Sabalenka from a set down.

"Last year was my first final of a grand slam," said Jabeur. "I'm definitely getting closer to winning the grand slam that I always wished [for]."

"I would say I always believed [in]. But sometimes you would question and doubt it if it's going to happen, if it's ever going to happen. Being in the last stages, I think it does help you believe more.

"I'm going to learn a lot from not only Wimbledon's final but also the US Open final, and give it my best. Maybe this year was all about trying two times and getting it right the third time."

Standing in Jabeur's way is an unexpected finalist in Czech Marketa Vondrousova, who reached the 2019 French Open final as a teenager but has been mostly off the radar since.

Having already beaten the players who defeated her at Wimbledon the last two years, Jabeur will now aim to make it third time lucky in another way having lost to Vondrousova twice this year, at the Australian Open and Indian Wells.

It will be a match for the purists, with Jabeur and Vondrousova the two best exponents of the drop shot in the women's game and possessing far more in their arsenals than simply power.

Jabeur said: "I'm going for my revenge. I didn't win against her this year. She has good hands. She plays very well.

"I will try to focus on myself a lot. I'm not sure how she's going to play [in her] second grand slam final. We're both hungry to win. Whoever deserves it more will win."

Jabeur is already the first African woman and Arab player to reach a slam singles final in the open era, and is known as the 'minister of happiness' in her home country for her sunny demeanour and the pride she has engendered.

Lifting the Rosewater Dish would be a hugely significant moment for her home region and Jabeur is buoyed by the support.

"For me, there is one goal: I'm going for it," she said. "I will prepare 100 per cent. Hopefully I can make history, not just for Tunisia, but for Africa."

Vondrousova's resurgence this season has come after she missed six months of 2022 following two operations on her left wrist.

This is the first time Vondrousova has come close to matching what she achieved at Roland Garros four years ago, when a semi-final victory over Britain's Johanna Konta was followed by a one-sided loss to Ashleigh Barty.

Like Jabeur, she has done things the hard way here, beating four seeded players before seeing off crowd favourite Elina Svitolina in the last four.

She is aiming to become the first unseeded women's champion at Wimbledon and believes her previous final experience will come into play, saying: "I think it can definitely help in tough moments.

"I was very young, so I think it was just too much for me back then. I'm a bit older now. I think I'm a bit of a different person. I'm just very happy to be through this again."

■ **WOMEN'S FOOTIE**

## Ireland warm-up tie against Colombia is abandoned

THE Republic of Ireland's behind-closed-doors match against Colombia ahead of the Women's World Cup was abandoned after around 20 minutes after becoming "overly physical," the FA of Ireland said yesterday.

The PA news agency understands the decision was made following some rough challenges in yesterday's contest at Brisbane's Meakin Park, and that Ireland midfielder Denise O'Sullivan was taken to hospital and is set to undergo a scan after sustaining a shin injury.

A statement from the FAI said: "The behind-closed-doors game between the Ireland women's national team and Colombia on Friday evening was ended after 20 minutes of play.

"The game, which was held in Meakin Park, Brisbane, became overly physical and it was decided, following consultation with the match officials, to end the game.

"The Ireland team then underwent a full training session to continue preparations for their opening game in Fifa Women's World Cup 2023, against Australia in Sydney on July 20."

The Colombian Football Federation released a statement of its own which said that, while the training of its teams was "framed within the rules of the game, healthy competition and fair play," it respected Ireland's decision.

The FCF said: "The Colombian Football Federation informs that the friendly match that was to take place as part of today's training between the Colombia women's national team and Ireland was suspended because the Irish national team preferred not to continue playing when 23 minutes of the first half had elapsed."

■ **WOMEN'S CRICKET**

# Beaumont says belief has been key to Ashes comeback

by Our Sports Desk

TAMMY BEAUMONT (pictured) praised the belief and "trust in everyone" within the England squad as they aim for more Ashes success on Sunday.

The hosts have staged an incredible turnaround in the competition, coming from 6-0 down to level the series after winning the opening ODI in Bristol on Wednesday.

England edged to a nail-biting two-wicket victory thanks to a fantastic unbeaten 75 from captain Heather Knight, who was helped across the line by seamer Kate Cross with an important cameo of 19 from 20 balls.

Beaumont also played her part, scoring 47 to help England reach a target of 264 –

their highest successful run chase in the format – and the opener hailed the belief within the squad.

She told a press conference: "There's such great trust in everyone at every situation, so for me at Bristol the other day there was no doubt in my mind that Kate Cross could bat like that.

"I think her mum was surprised she could do that for England! Every single one of us on the sideline felt completely at ease knowing Kate had the skills to do it and the same again with Alice Capsey coming on to bowl such a crucial spell.

"Everybody just backs each other's abilities, their decision-making and everything in every situation.



"It's a great feeling to have and throughout even though we didn't get the results, we knew at times in the Test match we really competed and put them under pressure. "It felt at times like things were swaying towards us, we

just didn't win those crucial moments.

"We had that belief that we certainly didn't need to take a step back, we could just keep going and see what happens really."

Australia had originally held the upper hand, having sealed victory in the only Test match of the series before winning the T20 opener at Edgbaston.

However, the tourists have now lost three consecutive games for the first time since 2017 after Knight's side won the remaining T20 contests alongside Wednesday's ODI match to level the series.

Attention turns to the second ODI at the Rose Bowl on Sunday and the stakes are still high with Australia only

needing to win one of the two remaining matches.

"At the moment we're just focused on the next game, we're taking it one game at a time," Beaumont added.

"We're in a great position at the moment, I feel like we've got some good momentum and we're playing some good cricket. We'll see what happens on Sunday and go from there."

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# Country Standard

For Peace and Socialism in the Countryside

## UNIONS HAIL GLOBAL FOOD DEAL

**GROUNDBREAKING:**  
The agreement will be particularly important for women like this Kenyan farmworker

**A** GROUNDBREAKING global deal designed to raise pay and conditions for food and farmworkers worldwide has been struck with governments and employers by the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF).

The first beneficiaries are reported to be workers' organisations in Africa, where employers have pledged to implement recommended guidelines.

The deal establishing guidelines on Decent Work in the Agri-Food Sector has been hailed by Bev Clarkson, Unite national officer for food, drink and agriculture.

She called it an "historic achievement in the teeth of fierce opposition by the employers."

Ms Clarkson explained: "They resisted previous attempts in 2016

by **Chris Kaufman**

and 2018 but we got the breakthrough this time."

She spearheaded intensive talks at the ILO headquarters in Geneva as IUF agriculture president.

**"In many developing countries, basic trade union rights and a liveable minimum wage are still an uphill battle."**

**Bev Clarkson**  
IUF agriculture president

"The potential for the new guidelines cannot be overstated," said Ms Clarkson. "While for Western nations, many of the provisions in the document are taken for granted, in developing countries, basic trade union rights and a liveable minimum wage are still an uphill battle."

"A key part of our argument for living wages is the effect that better pay would have on child poverty which is a blight on countries across the world. We dug our heels in over child labour.

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**We must keep building our unions** Paul Nowak p3



**Sunak's summit style over substance** Vicki Hird p7



## COUNTRY STANDARD EDITORIAL



# Without a paddle

**I**T'S NOT WORKING. A staggering 69 per cent of voters do not believe the Conservative government is doing enough to tackle the cost-of-living crisis in rural areas.

After 13 years of Tory misrule Britain is in crisis. Sewage is pumped into our rivers, air pollution is increasing, energy bills soaring and privatised trains failing. Underfunded and understaffed schools, social care, dental services and the NHS are threadbare and neglected, the poorly paid but heroic workforce experiencing burn out and penury while the public suffers endless waiting times and anxiety.

Putting profits before people has led to the scandal of sewage being discharged into our rivers and seas. The government seems totally unable and unwilling to tackle this catastrophe, preferring to let water companies pay huge dividends to their chief executives and share owners while expecting the public to pick up the tab for any clean-up.

Last year the water companies dumped raw

sewage around our most popular beaches for 8,500 hours and into our rivers more than 800 times a day.

In the last two years they have handed shareholders nearly £2 billion in dividends. Will the clean-up operation be paid for by the shareholders or the public? We know the answer unless there's a huge public outcry.

FTSE 350 firms have seen their profits in 2021 rocket by 89 per cent since before the pandemic. Energy giants National Grid coined £3.4bn profit last year.

And while food prices are rising at record levels, half the population have been forced to cut down what they buy and food banks are overwhelmed. Supermarkets like Tesco have been making billions while vehemently denying they are profiteering. Last year they made £3bn operating profits, shareholders pocketed £1bn in dividends, and the CEO walked away with a £4.5 million pay packet. Those dividends alone are enough to fund the Trussell Trust's entire foodbank network more than 100 times over.

Britain has ended up

*“In the last two years, water companies have handed shareholders nearly £2bn in dividends. Will the clean-up operations be paid for by the shareholders or the public?”*

with higher taxes but deteriorating public services. The government spends billions subsidising the energy, water and rail companies while paying off Covid loan schemes and PPE contract scams often for their mates. Is it bad luck, bad management or bad decisions?

**T**he problems stem from belief in neo-liberal economics, blind faith in a free market that does not exist, that led to swingeing austerity cuts by the coalition government. As we hear in the Hallett enquiry it is these cuts which undermined British resilience and resistance to the Covid pandemic.

This was then compounded by the uncertainties of Brexit which changed trade rules. While other countries recovered, Britain has not. In 2021 the UK left the single market. In its place has come the 'hard Brexit' which has disrupted trade.

The new custom rules, regulations and costs have hit small and medium-sized businesses in particular. It is not just the

higher barriers to trade and poor trade deals, but the sense of constant change and uncertainty created, none more so than in the areas of housing and farming.

Rural communities are crying out for partnership and constructive dialogue, whether it be housing, public transport or farming issues. With a growing number of progressive rural councils and councillors it is vital that they show leadership in championing policies which will benefit rural communities, despite financial constraints imposed on them.

Now is the time for councils and councillors to take the lead in campaigning for policies:

- for affordable local housing and Community Land Trusts
- to restrict second homes
- to develop food networks and farm shops
- to improve broadband
- to increase frequency and reliability of public transport – free to under 18s
- stop fly tipping
- conserve water and restore village ponds and

greens

- more pocket parks, hedge and tree planting, footpaths and rewilding
- working with farmers on diversification, farm shops, markets and environmental projects
- support for county council and tenant farmers, encouraging new entrants to farming
- councils to promote cultural and art events, building community identity and cohesion
- rural communities to attract and support all generations to live and work

Above all rural communities have to make the critical choice to plump for consensus building and an equitable, planned society against failed neo-liberalism.

Country Standard says the imperative to change course and bring new hope to the countryside demands combining the widest representation of rural interests to win achievable progressive policies.

To quote the great Chartist leader Ernest Jones: “Sharpen the sickle! The fields are white. ‘Tis time for the harvest at last.”



# Martyr's fight is far from over – we must build our trade unions

**E**VERY year thousands of trade unionists gather in Dorset to commemorate the Tolpuddle Martyrs – six farm labourers who fought against poverty wages, stood up to the Establishment and changed history. What happened in Tolpuddle gave rise to the trade union movement as we know it today.

And it's a reminder that the roots of organised labour are rural as well as urban, agricultural as well as industrial. Despite the passage of time, today's workers face challenges that would be all too familiar to the Martyrs: an economy that enriches too few and fails too many; an epidemic of low-paid and insecure jobs; and exploitative bosses desperate to maximise profits.

And today, as in the 1830s, we have a government detached from the lives of ordinary people, attacking the poor as it serves the interests of a tiny elite.

Almost 190 years on from Tolpuddle, and poverty continues to blight the lives of millions of working people in rural communities.

by Paul Nowak  
TUC general secretary



Average wages are lower than in big cities. Work is often seasonal and precarious. And women, young workers and migrant workers are on the frontline.

And that's before you consider the wider context. There are fewer good jobs in the rural economy. There's less connectivity, with buses and trains often few and far between. And housing is often expensive. In Dorset and elsewhere, the growth of second homes has pushed up housing costs for local people, making it even harder for them to make ends meet.

All this explains why the TUC is campaigning hard for change. We're fighting for proper action to combat the cost-of-living crisis, including a decent pay rise for all public sector workers, a £15 minimum wage, fair pay agreements for sectors like social care, and fair taxes the rich can't dodge. We're supporting every worker and every union involved in industrial action for fair pay. And



INSPIRING:  
The rally in 2015

we're fighting Tory attacks on our rights, not least our precious right to strike.

Ahead of an election, the TUC is also making the case for political change – and a new worker and union-friendly government.

We're calling for a New Deal for workers that bans the zero-hours contracts, fire-and-rehire practices and bogus self-employment that have spread like wildfire through the

rural economy. We're demanding an economy that rewards work not wealth, with decent jobs, wages and rights for all and our schools, hospitals and services rebuilt. And we're fighting for a just transition to net zero, with real investment in good, green, unionised jobs. Nowhere is this more important than in our rural communities, which have the potential to power the cleaner, greener

economy of the future.

But whatever happens at the next election, the best way we can win for workers is by building a bigger, stronger trade union movement – more diverse, more inclusive, more representative.

We must stand up for all working people, in all our wonderful diversity – black and white, women and men, rural and urban. And that demands we put equality

at the heart of everything we do, whether it's leading the fight for racial justice or tackling the scourge of sexual harassment.

Back in 1834, the Tolpuddle Martyrs stood firm and showed the power of collective action. Nearly two centuries later, it's time to rediscover that fighting spirit – and win the change workers in our countryside, our cities and all our communities desperately need.

## Unions celebrate ILO pact

**From pt:** With adequate pay there would be no need for parents to send their children to work."

For the first time ever, the new policy guidelines will provide UN member states and ILO constituents, such as transnational corporations with guidance on promoting decent work in the agri-food sector.

They include protecting fundamental labour rights such as freedom of association and recognition of the right to collective bargaining, as well as creating and promoting jobs with decent wages, terms and conditions.

A "just transition" to an environmentally sustainable global agri-food sector through social dialogue



ESSENTIAL: The deal is aimed at stopping child poverty, says Bev Clarkson (right)

and tripartism is another key part of the plan.

Although the guidelines may not always be applicable in Britain where many of the provisions are

already enshrined in law, they will have an impact on the wider supply chains of companies, like banana retailers, based in Britain. Mind you, farmworkers

familiar with the lesser-spotted (chronically under-resourced) agricultural inspectorate in Britain would find ammunition in the section entitled



Strengthening labour inspection.

It states: "Well-functioning labour inspection institutions are a mechanism of crucial importance

for ensuring the effective enforcement of labour legislation and the protection of workers, and contribute to promoting productivity at work."

"I am proud to have played a role in this victory as part of Unite and the IUF," Ms Clarkson told Country Standard. "We are committed to working with unions around the world. The agri-food sector is now inextricably global – that means we have to fight for workers' rights globally too."

The true test will be the implementation of the new pact on the ground. Encouragingly news of employers adopting the guidelines in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh reached us as we went to press.



## Farming household income drops by 11%

AVERAGE incomes for two-person farming households plummeted by 11 per cent between 2021 and 2022, according to Defra statistics.

The first year of post-Brexit subsidies saw income fall from £20,000 to £17,800.

Blame has been pinned on the loss of European subsidies, the loss of EU workers, increased energy and fertilizer costs due to the Ukraine war and increased supermarket profiteering.

Farm household incomes are now consistently lower than the average household incomes and widening. This while British farmers are receiving negligible profits for many items as food prices rise and supermarkets boast record profits.

The highest farm incomes reported for 2022 was in arable (£22,200) and dairy (£21,400) farm households. The lowest incomes were in lowland grazing livestock farmers (£14,600) and fruit

and vegetable growers (£14,000).

Despite commitments to farm diversification, income that came from outside the main farm business accounted for just a quarter (24 per cent) of farm household incomes.

Food charity Sustain's farming head Vicki Hird said: "It is astonishing how little of the money we pay for our food ends up in the hands of the farmers and growers."

"Farmers carry a lot of risk and work in difficult conditions to put food on our table. We also expect them to look after our landscape and our nature – and want them to do more of that in the future, including protecting nature and helping to cut 30 per cent of food-based climate changing greenhouse gas emissions.

"If they are to do that, they need more money in their businesses. That money should not leach out of the system into the coffers of food industry intermediaries and supermarkets."

## Tree planting falls

UK TREE planting rates have reached their lowest levels for five years, official statistics have revealed.

Just 12,960 hectares of woodland were planted in the 12 months prior to the end of March 2023, around 1,000 fewer than the previous year and the first time the figure has fallen below 13,000 since the 2017/18 planting season.

The new total is a third of the government's goal of 30,000 ha per year by the end of 2025.

England's tree cover is



just 12.8 per cent, according to the research by Friends of the Earth, with only 10 per cent made up by woodland – paling in comparison with the EU, where woodland cover stands at 38 per cent.

## Labour will buy local

HALF of all food bought by the public sector will be produced locally and sustainably if Labour wins the next general election, the party has pledged.

Shadow environment minister Daniel Zeichner said it would support farmers and broader sustainability targets.

He said the biggest

difference farmers would see under Labour "is that we believe that government has to be involved."

He added: "You can't just leave it to the market which is what the Conservatives think. A Labour government will be active in helping to shape and support farming and the countryside."



## First pay strike at the Environment Agency

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY workers have taken to the picket lines in their first ever pay strike.

Staff carrying out essential work protecting the planet, including river inspection, flood forecasting, coastal risk management and pollution control, have taken a series of strikes since January over a 2 per cent plus £345 pay offer.

Members of Unison and Prospect have been involved in the action, with both unions securing mandates for another six months in June.

A ballot of GMB members at the agency fell one vote short of the 50 per cent legal threshold in March.

A recent survey by UNISON found more than a quarter (26 per cent) of Environment Agency staff

are considering leaving in the coming year. Of these, more than half (54 per cent) said their main reason for wanting to quit was inadequate pay. Without the staff, these vital services are at risk, says the union.

The government's failure to fund the agency properly over many years means staff wages are nowhere near the going rate for the skilled jobs these workers do.

Unison general secretary Christina McAnea said: "Ministers are simply ignoring this invisible workforce."

"The public might not see what they do, but day in day out, they work tirelessly behind the scenes keeping communities safe from the ravages of the weather, rogue companies polluting rivers and criminals blighting

the landscape with illegal fly-tipping.

"Staff are proud to play a vital role in keeping communities safe but feel constantly taken for granted and ignored by a government that has persistently failed to invest in the Environment Agency."

"Decent pay is a key factor in protecting the environment and keeping everyone safe. But those services can't be provided if there's no one to run them."

On 2 June 2023, the government announced that employers covered by the Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance, including the EA, will be allowed to award a one-off £1,500 payment to their staff. The agency has not yet clarified if it will make the award to its staff and therefore ongoing action is on the cards.





ECO-WARRIORS: Strikers at the Thames barrier, and below at Cattawade in Essex



# Tories barely hanging on to rural supporters

Country voters are turning from the Conservatives, discovers MICHAEL WALKER

**T**ORY SUPPORT in its rural heartlands has suffered an 18 per cent collapse since the 2019 election, according to polling by Survation earlier this year.

The same poll showed that only 36 per cent of people in England's 100 most rural constituencies believe that the Conservatives "understand and respect rural communities and their way of life."

It is against this background that the May 2023 local elections witnessed the near annihilation of the Conservative Party in large swathes of rural England. The Tories lost over 1,000 councillors and control of 56 councils.

Conservative losses were on such a colossal scale that it will undoubtedly hit the party's ability to fight the ground war at the forthcoming general election and leave them even more dependent on donations from rich businessmen (many not even living in the UK) to make up for lost activists by funding election activity such as leaflet deliveries, social media postings adverts and bussing in their few activists to key constituencies.

Labour, by contrast secured many key objectives and returned numerous new rural councillors.

As always, Rural Labour relies on a small network of dedicated, loyal and committed supporters, with meagre resources it is to them that we should pay our respect for our successes

## East

In Breckland, Labour increased its representation from seven to 12, with Harry Clarke securing twice the vote of the closest Tory in Dereham Withburga and Labour taking three more seats in Dereham.

In Thetford, Labour secured eight seats capturing two more in Castle and Terry Jermy was elected in Priory. Labour now has



CHANGING PICTURE: A voter in Dacorum, Hertfordshire, where the Tories lost 13 seats

13 seats on Thetford Town Council: independents have four and the Tories one.

In South Norfolk, Labour had its best result in 50 years going from one seat to nine, Michael Rosen was elected for North Wymondham, Jenny McCloskey in New Costessey and Justin Cork in Old Costessey, Nicola Fowler in Poringland, Deborah Sacks in Cringleford, James Eddy in Harleston, John Morland in Hethersett, Jeremy Rowe in Loddon and Georgina Race in Stratton.

At Broadland, Labour leader Natasha Harpley secured eight seats at Spowston and Thorpe St Andrews and Emma Covington came close to taking the rural Acle seat. At Bishop Stortford Town Council, Labour secured the election of five councillors.

Over in Suffolk, West Suffolk Labour secured 17 seats and Mid Suffolk Labour 12. A coalition of Labour, Lib Dems and Greens now runs West Suffolk, led by Labour's Cliff Waterman, while the Greens now run Mid Suffolk.

East Herts Labour secured eight seats, including Dave Willcocks at Bishop's Stortford Thorley Manor.

While in the bastion of North Herts, Labour's 19

seats meant it remains the largest party and continues to jointly run the council.

In Priti Patel's back yard in Essex, Braintree District Council Labour made gains at Bocking, Halstead and Witham

In Central Bedfordshire Labour (Julian Vaughan, Paul Burgin, Andy Skilton and many others) worked hard in Biggleswade but fell just 18 votes short this time, but Labour's Helen Wightwick (Stotfold) and Nick Andrews (Arlesey & Fairfield) won their seats.

## South West

Ben Cooper was returned in South Hams District Council topping the poll in Dartmouth, Devon, also aiding the end of 26 years of Conservatives rule on the Council.

In South Gloucestershire Labour gained six seats to take it to 17 and at Weston Super-Mare, Labour is now the largest party.

At Teignmouth Town Council, Jackie Jackson was elected, the first Labour councillor in 20 years. Labour also held secured two seats in Bideford, Devon, and missed out on a further seat in the town by just one vote.

Meanwhile in North

Somerset, Labour is now official opposition with 10 councillors.

## South East

John Haywood became the first Labour district councillor elected to New Forest District Council since incorporation in 1974 and two Labour councillors were returned to Ringwood Town Council.

In Wealden, the first Labour councillors (Ben Cox and Daniel Manvell) in 50 years were elected at Uckfield, while Clive Taylor was the first Labour councillor elected at Tilehurst since 1995 by one vote. Labour also won two seats in Surrey Heath.

At Runnymede, there are now four Labour councillors, including a gain at Englefield (Eliza Kettle) and Robert King holding his seat at Egham.

At Rother District Council, Labour now has eight councillors taking Rye for the first time ever (Cheryl Creasey and Simon McGurk).

The Tories lost control of almost all of their Kent councils, with Labour leader Vince Maple securing a stunning victory in Medway and Labour becoming the largest party

on Canterbury City Council after securing two seats at Seasalter, Whitstable.

## Midlands

Derbyshire saw the biggest gains for Labour in any county, with 10 gains in High Peak to secure the council. It took a number of rural wards, including Hayfield, where Gill Scott secured 60 per cent of the vote, as well as St John's, Blackbrook and Sett for the first time. Damien Greenhalgh was re-elected deputy leader.

In North East Derbyshire Labour secured 28 seats (including four gains in Dronfield and taking Penistone East for the first time since 1998) to take control of the council.

At Erewash, Labour gained control of the council for just the third time in 50 years.

## South

In West Oxfordshire Labour held its seat in Chipping Norton (Mark Walker), no doubt upsetting at least one local farming celeb and member of the Chipping Norton set.

At Witney, Labour secured nine of the town's 17 councillors and at Cherwell 10 seats and came close in one Bicester seat.



# FOOD WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

From 1834 to 2023 Unite food members have been digging, ploughing and packaging in solidarity with workers everywhere for better pay and conditions – ask our Unite Tolpuddle regulars and general aficionados – some of whom are pictured below.

Unite's Food, Drink and Agriculture sector sends solidarity greetings to all *Country Standard* readers and thanks you for your continued support for all Unite food workers in their continuing campaigns



Steve Leniec, Unite agriculture sub-sector chair  
Bev Clarkson, Unite national officer, rural and agricultural workers



To find out more or to join Unite visit [www.uniteunion.org](http://www.uniteunion.org)



Sunak's summit seems to have been style over substance. VICKI HIRD suggests six topics that could have helped address the food crisis



**PORKIES:**  
Prime Minister Rishi Sunak talks to a pork pie proprietor at his Farm to Fork summit  
pic: Number 10/  
Creative Commons

# Farm to fork-saken?

**H**UGE PUBLICITY was given to a recent Farm to Fork summit held at No 10 by the Prime Minister. It was helpful to have high level focus on food and farming — and long overdue — but this gathering seemed to involve business attendees only and there was scant information on the agenda.

Sustain, with other food and farming organisations signed a joint statement suggesting a coherent agenda reflecting the endemic problems in our food system.

- Food and nutrition security and how to secure a reliable supply of healthy, fairly traded and nutritious, affordable food;
- How to best use our land to create resilient, climate and nature friendly British farming;
- How to support British horticulture and make it easier for everyone to eat more fruit and vegetables;
- A fair deal for farmers and farm workers in the whole food chain;
- How to rebalance prices, availability and marketing so that nutritious food is the easiest choice for everyone;
- Setting core environmental and animal welfare standards for domestic food and imports alike.

Obviously, it would be impossible to sort all that

out in a day alongside all the vital photographs to be taken — with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Clarkson's Farm TV celebrities — and niceties to be shared.

But seriously, if you are not going to start to discuss these — at least to decide what should happen next — then it's not really farm to fork. And from what we can tell, and from the post-event announcements, the problems of food prices and unsustainable, unhealthy diets were hardly covered.

## Delivering food security

Food prices have reached a 46-year high; the price of a weekly basket of adequately nutritious food has increased by a quarter since April 2022. This forces families to seek out ever-cheaper calories. Truth is, leaving our food and nutritional security to the private sector has resulted in us becoming a nation dependent on junk food. Food security is more than ensuring the shelves are filled or even the rate of inflation; it's about ensuring we all have access to healthy, nutritious and high welfare food, and that we can all benefit from the best of British. And with climate extremes increasing rapidly, it's about building resilience.

While consumers struggle to pay for their weekly shop, farmers

are faring badly too; Sustain's Unpicking Food Prices research shows they make less than 1 per cent of profit from their produce due to unfair and extractive supply chains.

Very hard to go green on farm when you can't get a decent return. Yet a relatively small number of companies processing, manufacturing and selling us food make multimillion-pound profit announcements and returns to shareholders.

## Resilient, nature and climate proof farming

The post-Brexit Health and Harmony policy paper was supposed to signal a change in government policy for farming towards the "public money for public goods" approach. With payments rewarding public benefits delivered and a wider policy package to help farmers produce food in climate and nature friendly ways.

However, the excitement has eroded away somewhat, with farmers losing some confidence, alongside their old-style payments which were vital for staying in business for many.

We remain hopeful but a lack of vision, strategy, and objectives remains an issue. We urgently need an exciting, attractive range of payments for public goods and wider support package to truly help de-risk the

transition to agroecological, climate adaptive farming. There is a real opportunity here but it's becoming urgent given climatic instability growing everywhere. And we don't yet have a land use framework — a vital tool to help envisage the huge changes ahead as climate impacts make current land use untenable.

## Cultivating a great horticulture boom

We and many farmers were baffled that ministers hosted a food security summit a month after they dropped their commitment to developing a horticulture strategy and while payments and other support remain unclear.

Significant numbers of farmers have stopped planting, and farm businesses are closing. This is a disaster.

Currently we import 32 per cent of our fruit and vegetables from areas defined as climate vulnerable, and 54 per cent from countries likely to face high water scarcity by 2040, threatening the resilience of our supply chains.

British growers urgently need better protection and we need new entrants too — all to ensure we can produce the healthy, sustainable fruit and vegetables for a nutritious diet, while restoring biodiversity and capturing carbon and even creating new jobs and

enterprises. So many winners just dropped.

## A fair deal for farmers and farm workers

Sustain and others have long campaigned for fairer supply chains, to remove abusing practices and ensure farmers get a good enough return to transition and maintain agroecological approaches, treat workers fairly, and ensure high animal welfare.

We are still waiting though we were pleased to hear some moves at the summit including a review of horticulture and egg supply chains. We also need better tools for workers to have a say, via collective bargaining, and by listening to their ideas and needs in a just transition to climate and nature friendly land use which may change the nature of jobs on the land.

## Affordable food and curbing marketing of unhealthy food

This is vital as junk food is bad for our health, but also for the environment and farmers' livelihoods. Producing ever lower price raw materials in chemical dependent monocultures is not providing farmers here and overseas with a fair deal or viable future. But it suits big food corporations who make large profits on the highly processed foods dominating shelves. This

needs to end via curbing marketing (especially to children), investing in diverse farm systems, infrastructure, good food procurement and more diverse routes to market as well as fair prices.

The government cannot continue to leave food supply to big food manufacturers who externalise the costs of food production and develop ever more ingenious ways to sell us junk food or to retailers who leave our farmers with so little.

## Trading away good practice

We're a bit tired of saying we need trade deals that protect existing high food, farming and fishing standards and ensure democratic scrutiny. The Australia and New Zealand deals have just come into force — deals that could undermine our farmers efforts to enhance environment and animal welfare.

In short, we are still waiting for a comprehensive, joined-up approach to food and farming, for current and future generations. Not easy but essential. That remains the (I would say, most important) challenge for parties preparing their manifestos and post-election plans.

■ Vicki Hird is head of farming at Sustain



# A farmworkers' champion and ardent socialist

**F**IFTY YEARS ago, Joan Maynard started the parliamentary process that abolished the hated tied cottage system in agriculture. It was perhaps the greatest achievement in the career of one of the most remarkable women in trade union and Labour Party history.

Elected as Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside in 1974, she held the seat until retiring in 1987. A lifelong activist in the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, she ascended from branch secretary to vice-president.

Born in 1921 in Easingwold, Yorkshire, Joan left school aged 14, becoming a parish, rural district and county councillor, justice of the peace and lay member of the Labour Party national executive in 1972.

It was on the NEC that she was able to convince the party to put tied cottage abolition into the 1974 election manifesto, and then stop them backsliding from this commitment at any sign of opposition. A long-held union aim had been won — though the Rent Agriculture Act of 1976 could have gone further.

"The significance of Joan's life is not position, but steadfastness," says Kristine Mason O'Connor in her immensely readable biography *Joan Maynard, Passionate Socialist*. "Whatever position she attained, it was to promote the moral and political principles that were her very being."

"Above all she argued for and demanded social justice with a characteristic directness and candour that is unfamiliar and not always admired in political circles."

This very stance

by Chris Kaufman

earned her the hatred of the right-wing press which dubbed her Stalin's Granny. It failed to recognize one of her strengths, the ability to form alliances — which rural workers had to do — like the widespread parliamentary support she received to outlaw tied cottages.

Joan was a woman ahead of her time, unafraid to pursue causes, bravely in a male-dominated environment, often against hostile "class enemies." Above all she fought for the rural workers she represented in the NAAAW.

She campaigned against the safety hazards which made agriculture the most dangerous industry in the country, calling for roving safety representatives for farmworkers. She highlighted the dangers of farm chemicals like the weedkiller 245T, both to the users and the ecosystem which environmentalists now espouse.

A great supporter of animal rights, public ownership of the land (which was NAAAW policy spelt out in the pamphlet *Planning or Privilege*) and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Joan endured vilification by the press for visiting Ireland, then in ferment, to seek unification, civil rights for the Catholics, talking to Gerry Adams, and a just peace for all.

"A remarkable woman,

who believed in members and never gave up, building NAAAW membership often in unpromising territory," says long-time Yorkshire union colleague Peter Medhurst. It was Peter and fellow carpenters who crafted the wooden bench, dedicated to Joan (following her death in 1998 aged 76) which now graces the grounds in front of the workers' cottages in Tolpuddle.

One of Joan's trusty parliamentary allies for many years was Jeremy Corbyn. He recalls her frequently saying to visitors to the House of Commons: "This is not our place ... not for our class." The implication was that it was an important place to try to pass laws to help workers but there had to be extra-parliamentary pressure to win those changes.

Helen Hepburn, Joan's niece, has been organising the Maynard collection of books, papers and minutes which are housed in the York Archives and The Peoples History Museum. They include copies of the *Country Standard* to which, we are proud to say, she was a frequent contributor.

"She was a lovely and remarkable person," says Helen, "far ahead of her time as she showed in explaining the value of the land."

From a farming family, Joan was wont to say: "The earth is honest with you, it gives back what you put in."



**T**HIS YEAR marks the centenary of the totemic Norfolk agricultural workers' strike.

It saw over 6,000 members of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, many veterans of the first world war, strike against farmers attempting to slash their pay and increase hours.

The *Morning Post* newspaper told its readers: "It is impossible to write without emotion of the agricultural distress prevailing in Norfolk. With wages at 25 shillings a week, the labourer is worse off than he has been in the memory of living man."

The strike originated in the Tory-Liberal coalition government's austerity programme, including cuts to wartime financial subsidies to farmers and the axing of the minimum wage for agricultural workers, central tenet of the Agricultural Wages Board.

After the Tories won the November 1922 election outright, the economy continued its freefall. Faced with tumbling food prices, the farmers wanted protection or subsidies and drew up plans to put pressure on the government. On 6 March 1923 without negotiations, the Norfolk farmers gave notice they would cut the pay of 20,000 agricultural workers by 2 shillings and 6 pence a week (from 25 shillings) and added four hours to the working week (going up to 54 hours).

Efforts were made to avert a crisis: a delegation of farmers from the NFU and the workers' unions (National Union of Agricultural Workers and the Workers Union) met prime minister Andrew Bonar Law for last-minute talks at Downing Street on 16 March.

The PM reported: "So far as I understand it now, we cannot be of any help."

The Bishop of Norwich also attempted to break the deadlock on 24 March, but farmers and union reps again broke up without agreement.

That night, in a bold preemptive move the National Union of Agricultural Workers decided to issue a strike call to members across Norfolk: instead of waiting for the decision of the farmers to implement a lock-out they would strike.

Edwin Gooch, then a county councillor and later union president and North Norfolk MP, said: "I had begun to despair of



MICHAEL WALKER remembers the 1923 Norfolk farmworkers' strike

the Norfolk labourers, the men had grown indifferent as to their present and future welfare... The mantle of Kett and Arch had descended upon him, his sun is rising and god is on his side."

From Keir Hardie Hall, home of the Norwich labour movement, the union issued news, appeals for funds, met the press, sent out speakers and sent flying cycling columns of pickets into villages.

James Lunnon, the union's inspirational national organising secretary, was immediately sent for, he arrived on his

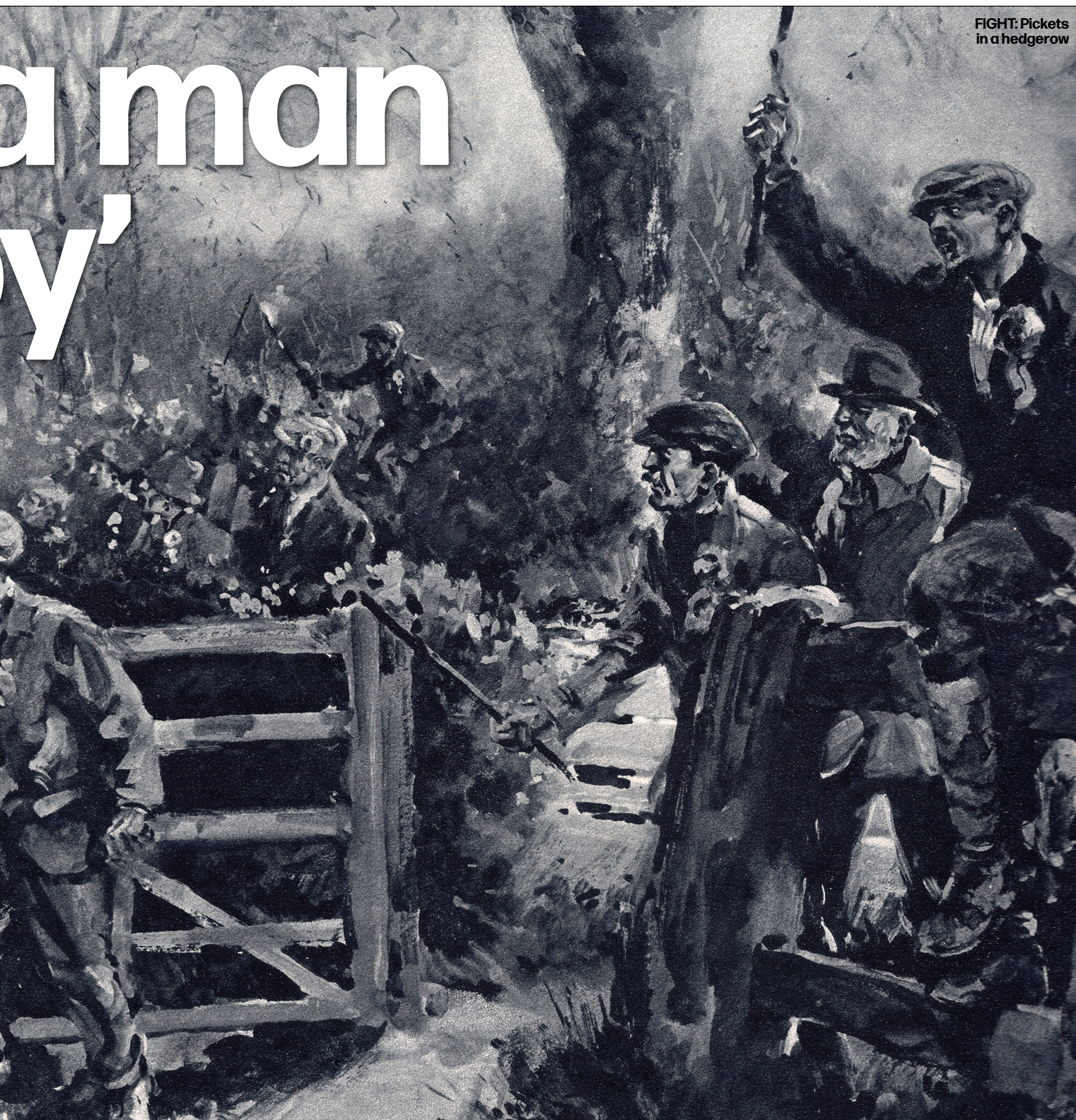
motorbike to take charge of the strike alongside the elected county strike committee.

Union general secretary Robert Barrie Walker echoed the view of the strike committee, stating to a rally at Aylsham that "not a man or boy" in the union would return to work on Norfolk farms, until a settlement had been reached.

**T**he number of strikers varied but was never less than 6,000 and at one period was estimated at 10,000. Strike pay was set at 12 shillings a week for a



# a man y'



FIGHT: Pickets in a hedgerow

married man and 6d extra for each child and a single man 6 shillings a week.

Many of the village leaders of the strike were non-conformist Primitive Methodists, it was in their chapels that labourers had learned self-respect, self-government and self-reliance. They learnt to read, write and preach.

This religious discipline had been bolstered by the growth in socialist education and propaganda provided by the union and dynamic progressive politics radiating from Norwich.

While the strikers

**“ The mantle of Kett and Arch had descended upon the Norfolk labourer, his sun is rising and god is on his side.**

**Edwin Gooch  
Future Norwich  
North MP**

enjoyed a high degree of public sympathy, it was the huge levels of support and solidarity in the Norfolk villages that was key to sustaining the strike.

Despite phalanxes of police being drafted in, columns of flying pickets on bicycles and on foot — many of them ex-servicemen wearing medals and ribbons — supported by a village intelligence network, ensured that strike breakers were soon challenged.

For the most part this was carried out peacefully, the press of course chose to overstate the disturbances

and while over 600 summons were issued during the strike, many were for trivial misdemeanours or, as often claimed by the strikers, in response to cases of police intimidation and victimisation.

In fact, the worst episode of violence in the dispute involved a notorious farmer firing shots at a group of strikers.

**O**n 18 April, as the strike held solid into its fourth week with little sign of resolution, NUAW president Walter Smith reiterated that the union

was “willing to have peace, but it must be an honourable and secure peace.”

Against the impasse in Norfolk, another crisis was being played out nationally, the prime minister was suffering from an incurable illness and his government was disintegrating over its approach to dealing with the huge economic and unemployment crisis Britain was facing. Then as now, it was clear that the Conservative government was on the verge of collapse riven by splits and personalities.

The union turned to Ramsay MacDonald,

Labour leader of the opposition, to help mediate. The NFU, no doubt equally aware of a possible impending election, agreed to talks. So it was that McDonald and TGWU president Harry Gosling hammered out a compromise agreement.

The Observer newspaper noted of MacDonald “that he has rendered signal service to the whole nation as an economic peacemaker... The socialist leader of his majesty’s principal opposition has twice appeared as a moral arbiter with an intellectual grasp.”

The left was less generous: Tom Wintringham, who would later fight in the International Brigade in Spain and become the architect of the Home Guard during World War II, stating: “Mr MacDonald’s intervention was not aimed at helping these workers in their fight for a living wage. He had other aims, and seems to have achieved them.”

The terms of the agreement effectively protected the pre-strike hours of 50 and a wage of 25 shillings — so the union could justifiably claim it had stopped the attack on their terms and conditions in Norfolk and, as a consequence, the rest of the country.

Gosling told NUAW branch delegates on 21 April: “50 hours is the number for today; but it is not the right number for another day to come.”

As the meeting debated the proposal, news arrived that the farmers had accepted the proposed deal, prompting delegates to unanimously accept it and instructing members to return to work on Monday 23 April.

They burst into a spontaneous rendition of the Red Flag before the conference concluded.

The five-week strike was the farm workers’ biggest battle since the great lock-out of 1873, when employers tried to destroy Joseph Arch’s union. As Norfolk was the stronghold of the NUAW, the strike represented not only a fight against poverty pay, but a fight for the union’s very survival.

The dispute had cost £30,000 in strike pay and nearly bankrupted the union, but Norfolk’s stand had stopped farmers’ planned assault upon workers’ terms and conditions across the country.

Most importantly the union had emerged stronger and unbowed.



## Britain's rainforests are a real boon

**F**EW PEOPLE are aware that British Isles have some of the most biodiverse and rarest rainforests in the world.

Temperate rainforest also known as Celtic rainforests or Atlantic woodland are primarily found in areas subject to the influence of the sea, high rainfall and humidity and a low annual variation in temperature. Temperate rainforests are ancient habitats, comprising of oak, birch, ash, pine and hazel and particularly good for diverse species of fungi.

However, just 1 per cent of Britain and Ireland's temperate rainforest remain, of which 75 per cent has no formal protection.

Rainforests can be found on the west coast of Scotland, north-west Wales, Devon, Cornwall, Cumbria, one of the furthest inland examples of temperate rainforest in Britain is Padley Gorge in the Peak District.

In Ireland the greatest

expanse of temperate rainforest occurs in the south-west, with notable examples including in the Killarney National Park, Uragh Wood and Glengarriff Woods.

Devon Wildlife Trust is planting a new rainforest on a 74-acre site at Bowden Pillars Farm in Dart valley, outside the Devon town of Totnes. The forest will take decades, perhaps a century, to grow to maturity.

Chief executive Harry Barton said: "I'm very excited that we can now start to recreate rainforest in this beautiful part of south Devon. It will provide vital habitat for wildlife in a time of nature crisis, store vast amounts of carbon, and help restore the health of the soils and the quality of the water that drains off them."

Our native rainforests are some of Britain's least known yet greatest environmental assets, we must do all we can to protect their biodiversity and magical qualities for generations to come.



# Methodism and the tradition of dissent

GREG SACHNO explores trade union history with a preacher

**R**ECENTLY finding myself at a friend's 60th birthday I fell into conversation with a local Methodist minister. The what-do-you-dos led from my growing of apple trees to my role in trade unions and soon the pair of us were chatting about Methodism's influence on unions and the story of dissent.

Among the key influences on union history and development — the Labour Party, ILP, communists, Trotskyists and others — you can still see the footprint of Primitive Methodism's lay democracy on today's union structures. Add to that early

union leaders' own Methodist thinking and the roots of both in organising rural communities and the strong ties are clear.

But what then of the line that "the trade unions owe more to Methodism than Marx"?

The first question to ask is who said it and why? It has been attributed to various people, Labour former leader Neil Kinnock, for example.

We could argue that it was used to undermine the rise of the left within the unions and Labour Party during the 1970s and early '80s. If the movement's early progressives were wooly-

minded Methodists, modern revolutionaries should shelve Karl Marx and sing the songs of Charles Wesley.

But while Methodism, specifically its early incarnation may not have been revolutionary in the true Marxist dialectical sense, nevertheless it was a revolutionary force.

At its core was a democratic structure that actively encouraged the involvement of women, was decentralised and encouraged self-education — but also fundamentally challenged aristocratic power and the established church.

The primitives' message of participation, debate

and reinterpretation of the bible my not have had the critical perspective of Marx and Engels or the organisational focus of Lenin, but it did influence early union leaders and laid down the basis for lay power, democracy and accountability as well as the progressive educational tradition.

The Primitive Methodist methods included open-air meetings, comparing the bible to the congregation's lives, it engaged women and children in discussion, while preachers often dressed in the same clothes as their flock.

As a scion of the Anglican church, the Primitive Meth-

odists took the message of the bible from the pulpit to the potato patch, not as Establishment doctrine but as lessons in justice.

Wilf Page, communist and agricultural trade union activist, recalled his Methodist Sunday School teacher in the 1920s describing the farmworkers in his Norfolk village as being "muzzled to work in the same way as the donkeys in the bible stories." Wilf continued to give the annual the harvest sermon in Norwich cathedral until well into his seventies.

Where they did have chapels they were little more than huts or shacks tucked down a side road

or on the edge of a field. Contrasted with the Established church's position in the centre of villages — spiritually as well as physically dominant — it gave Methodism an edge of seditious preaching that nonetheless was central to many working class lives.

When the BBC placed the Methodist preacher at the centre of a conspiracy in Poldark, it reflected the landowners' suspicion of the movement.

George Loveless (pictured), one of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs, was a lay Methodist preacher, something the landowners and high churchmen on the bench would have almost certainly known. His religion likely gave them as much cause for judgement as the legality of the case.

**M**ethodism took hold in the 18th century against a backdrop of the continuing privatisation of the land through enclosures — and rural communities' continuing battles against it.

This fight can be viewed





RAINFOREST: Hisley Wood in Devon  
Pic: Martin Stone

## Iberian lynx is making a fantastic comeback

**A**CCORDING to the Spanish environmental ministry the number of Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) recorded in Spain and Portugal is now 1,668.

The species had been on the verge of extinction less than 20 years ago with fewer than 100 individuals recorded in the wild. Decades of hunting, together with a massive decrease in rabbit numbers (the lynx's staple diet) because of myxomatosis and rabbit haemorrhagic disease — not to mention human encroachment — had effectively wiped out the lynx on the Iberian peninsula.

In the early 19th century Spain, Portugal and southern France had been home to thousands of Iberian lynxes. Numbers declined steadily during the 20th century, and by the beginning of the 2000s only two isolated breeding populations remained in the world. The communities in Andalusia, southern Spain, totalled about 1,000 animals, with only 25 breeding females. In Portugal the

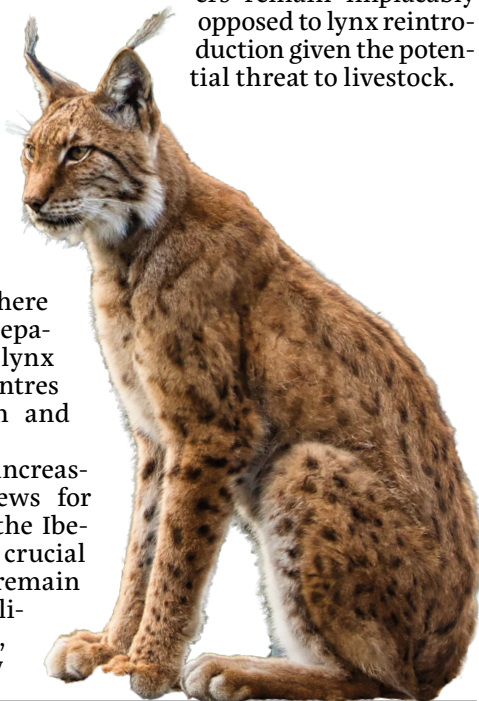
lynx had already become extinct by 1980.

However, since the summer of 2014, lynxes have been reintroduced to Sierra Morena and Montes de Toledo in Castilla-La Mancha (Spain), the Matachel Valley in Extremadura (Spain) and in 2015, the first of 10 captive-bred Iberian lynxes were released into Guadiana Valley natural park in the Alentejo region. To date, 47 lynx have been released in Portugal increasing the population to 154. There are now 14 separate Iberian lynx population centres in both Spain and Portugal.

Despite the increasingly good news for the future of the Iberian lynx, crucial challenges remain unsolved: climate change, food supply

and green corridors. As a result the species' future is still fragile.

Plans to reintroduce the European lynx (Eurasian lynx) to Britain continue, with the most advanced proposals being the plan targeting the Scottish Highlands, but despite the huge incentive for tourism and deer control, many farmers remain implacably opposed to lynx reintroduction given the potential threat to livestock.



as a wave of rural upheaval dating back to the Norman invasion, when Hereward the Wake and Robin Hood fought a rearguard guerrilla war from fen and forest against the new rulers' landgrabs and privatisation of the greenwood to make way for hunting grounds.

As the industrialisation of the land increased during 18th and 19th centuries, landowners passed new laws outlawing vagrancy (wandering the countryside) and bringing in a swathe of laws making various minor crimes against property capital

offences (from stealing turnips to being discovered with your faced blackened to go hunting).

The reality of the English enclosures was not just that the population shifted from the countryside into growing towns, they saw the criminalisation of an entire class of people.

This was the situation as Methodism and particularly its variant form of Primitive Methodism began to take shape — and with it one of the embryonic arteries of political and democratic thought that would flow into the early trade union movement.

**S**o, was Methodism a revolutionary or conservative force?

It was an alternative to the established church, with the bible and services in

the daily language of the peasantry helping to build a familiarity among the faithful.

William Tyndale's translation of the bible and the James I edition had changed the language, but the message was still open to interpretation, with its emphasis on collective participation, encouraging children to speak. Women played a significant role: there where an estimated 40 itinerant women preachers: the last, Elizabeth Bultritude, died in 1890.

The influence on the early trade union leaders, particularly in agriculture, is important. Joseph Arch leader of the first agricultural union was a Primitive Methodist lay preacher.

After being discriminated against by the local parson, Arch was influenced by the liberalism of lay Methodism. Like others from the primitive tradition, he was self-educated. His union went on to become one of the biggest in the country and was a forerunner of Unite.

George Edwards who went to become the gen-

eral secretary of the pre-war agricultural union was also influenced by the early Methodist tradition. George Loveless, the Tolpuddle Martyr, some hundred years before was also a lay preacher in the primitive tradition.

**T**oday, trade unions have 6.2 million members from all sections of society. Unite, with 1.1 million can be directly traced back to the agricultural unions and their strong Methodist influence.

The link can be made in other ways: a glance at union conference decisions, covering a multitude of economic, social, political and cultural issues have all been taken by the union's lay membership, carried out and monitored by elected leaders. It is a direct form of participatory democracy.

Primitive Methodism placed huge emphasis on self-education, the objective was to ensure that the message of the bible be articulated for meetings. To absorb the use of Latin

in the biblical translation was deliberate as was the use of fire and damnation for Primitive Methodists.

The message of justice, through what EP Thompson described as the transforming power of the cross, could only be gained if you understood what you were saying and how you said it.

The influence of Methodism within today's trade unions is nuanced: a reading of the biographies of the early leaders underpins their Methodist influences, but it is arguably within other areas of direct lay democracy that the influence is best seen.

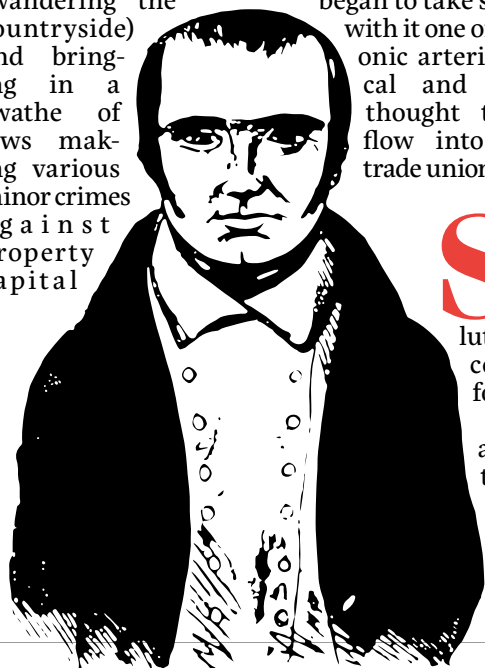
Within trade union education, the tradition of self-education is still evident: the encouragement of individual learning is still encouraged, the notion of the worker intellectual — the worker still on the tools but having a class-based understanding, a grasp of history, politics and economics as well as cultural interests — is still in evidence. This was encouraged historically in particular by the Communist Party and within the anarchist tradi-

tion, but the influence of the early Primitive Methodists is pushing in.

The questioning approach to the teachings of the bible and the translation under Wycliffe was used by the Primitive Methodists to articulate a message of equality and fairness. The unwritten narrative of trade union education is to not to tell workers what to think, but to get them to think. The similarities are subtle, but they are there.

Methodist, particularly Primitive Methodist, influence still resonates within the union movement. Collectivism and lay participation and self-education, democracy and questioning the system are the links between the two organisations: the "line of march" still resonates on a historical and current trajectory.

At the end of the evening my new debating companion and I parted ways. I would imagine he didn't expect to find himself in a discussion on the roots of Methodism, Christian socialism and even a divergence into the anarchist tradition in the Ukraine.





# Swifts need our help

THE ICONIC Swift for many, heralds the arrival of summer with it's the high soaring scimitar shapes in the sky and the screaming of the bird around the rooftops of our villages and towns

Yet over the last 25 years there has been a decline of over 50 per cent of the birds we see.

## What we can do?

No matter what size your garden, or even if you only have a window box, choosing wildlife-friendly plants and practices can increase insect numbers. Swifts pick up their food in the air as insects fly, or drift, high. Insects need somewhere to breed — with many larvae using particular plants — and then to feed.

We are all starting to learn of the need for nectar-rich plants for pollinators like bees but don't forget the value of grasses and

other plants that may be food for larvae.

## Ponds

A pond can be an ideal insect haven. With open water and emergent plants at the side — and a boggy bit — many species can be catered for. But if space is at a premium even an upturned dustbin lid with some water and plants kept topped up during the summer can help.

## Nesting Boxes

Nesting boxes are enjoyed by swifts. Fitted in spaces at roof level at least 4-5 metres up with a clear flight line in and out, there are a variety of designs to suit all situations. They can go under the eaves or wherever there is suitable space. Swifts are gregarious birds so putting up two or a series of boxes will also be welcome.

Searching the web will show you the range of options and sources available.



# Planting the natural seed

**P**ARALLEL to the growing interest in outdoor activities such as rambling at the end of the 19th century, improvements in leisure time secured by the trade union movement encouraged the establishment of factory botanists in northern England, as Harvey Taylor explores in his 1997 book *A Claim on the Countryside*.

This breed of man came to be exemplified by Ernest Evans (pictured) from Burnley, whose life represented the ideal of the independently minded and self-motivated, but community-orientated, individual.

Evans's main claim to fame stemmed from his rise, against the odds, from carding and weaving in the cotton mills of the Lancashire to his appointment

as the head of natural science department of Burnley College and eventually an organiser of scientific education for the area.

His recreational activities perpetuated in the tradition of Lancashire working men, combining a love of escape to the hills with a passion for natural history.

Evans's growing reputation resulted in an invitation to teach in night school at the Walk Mill branch of Burnley mechanics institute, while he was still working as a weaver, and in 1899 he was offered a full-time post at the main mechanics institute in the town, teaching a range of natural sciences including botany and geology as well as other scientific subjects.

From this invaluable institutional base, he organ-



ised rambles and field study courses for the young men of the district, some of whom would form the backbone of the outdoor movement locally. Evans's important contribution to the formation of a strong nucleus of enthusiasts of improving outdoor pursuits helped cultivate at perpetuate the popularity of rambling in north-east Lancashire.

The expansion of open-air

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# No tim'rous beasties

LEWIS WILLCOX explores the history of the Scottish farm servants

**A**LTHOUGH overshadowed by the colossal actions of Clement Atlee's post-war government, the years immediately following the first world war were marked by a period of great reconstruction.

Through agitation and industrial action, the British working class sought to drag Lloyd George's promised "land fit for heroes" from mere propaganda and into reality, with 35 million days lost to strike action in 1919 alone.

While more typically associated with the Glasgow engineers' 40-hours strike or the National Union of Railwaymen downing tools, the period had a significant impact upon the rural working class.

Reflecting on Scotland's rural workers in 1926, WR Scott wrote: "It may be said that the war has left a deep impress on the Scottish farm servant. He was made conscious of his place in the social organism."

It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that the struggle of the Scottish farm servants has been largely neglected. At best the historical struggles of the rural working class have been overlooked, at worst they have been trivialised.

There is an entrenched view that rural workers were, and continue to be, the deferential worker par excellence, incapable of attaining class consciousness or mounting any kind of labour resistance.

Some, such as the historian and sociologist RJ Morris, have even gone so far to advocate for the exclusion of rural workers from being labelled as part of the wider working class. Such assertions are not only damaging, but simply untrue.

Between 1918 and 1923, Scottish agricultural



BAA: A sheep farm in Scotland  
Cred: Patrick Mackie/  
Creative Commons

workers organised in large numbers under the Scottish Farm Servants Union (SFSU), with membership peaking at just over 38,000 in 1920.

Throughout this period, the union organised around nearly all aspects of life, ranging from wages and working hours to education and leisure.

Significantly, attempts to improve working conditions often mirrored the national demands of the working class indicating a sense of class-based solidarity with their urban peers. This is particularly

true of the campaign to curtail working hours, where the SFSU echoed the demands of many other unions in pursuing a 40-hour working week.

While the union won many improvements, these came under significant threat following the repeal of the 1917 Corn Production Act in 1921, ending price guarantees and resulting in a sudden agricultural depression.

Employers' attempts to cut wages and attack working hours was not met by farm servants meekly, but rather inspired a wave of

militancy. There were huge strikes in Ross (1922) and East Lothian (1923). In East Lothian, 1,400 walked out, leaving just 12 of the 300 farms in the area working normally.

Sadly, the agricultural depression seriously depleted union membership and finances, causing its influences to wane. It eventually merged with the Transport and General Workers Union in 1933.

Despite the decline, the efforts of Scottish farm workers to organise in the SFSU and agitate for better conditions punctures efforts to portray rural workers as unilaterally deferential.

And rural working class history is beginning to take its place, with the newly renovated Scotland: A changing nation exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh including a display devoted to SFSU leader Joe Duncan and his women's suffrage campaigner wife Mabel.

There is much work still to be done but rural working class history is a fertile field ready to be ploughed.

activities within local popular culture was nurtured through Evans's education and encouragement of receptive minds towards a more comprehensive enjoyment of the local countryside, including a considerable understanding of the natural history of the district.

"He knew every crack and more, every hill, valley and clough around Burnley and he knew the home and haunts of every plant and animal in the area of Lancashire," said the Burnley Express and News in 1934. Tom Stephenson, a life-long rambler and right of way campaigner, was a product of Evans's vigorous education legacy.

In Stephenson's autobiography *Forbidden Land*, published posthumously in 1989, Stephenson paid tribute to his mentor: "Evans was a great rambler and many of his students rambled with him. He was above all a practical naturalist, making frequent field excursions and introducing his students to geological features."

Stephenson's account of his own experience in the Burnley area before the first world war places great emphasis on the important

continuity which Evans engendered through his enthusiastic proselytisation among working people of open-air recreation and complimentary educational interests.

When Ernest Evans died in December 1933, his ashes were taken by his students in the January of 1934 and scattered on the summit of Pendle hill.

Since the days of the factory botanists, we have had great naturalists – such as Bellerby Lowerison, *Daily Worker* nature correspondent Wilfred Willett, author of *Birds of Britain* and others, and of course Paxton and Lee Chadwick from Leiston.

Today, there is growing interest in nature conservation and rewilding in particular. Many of these groups have a progressive agenda, none more so than the Woodcraft Folk, which remains committed to educating young people on the importance of nature conservation.

As Kelly Loughlin said: "Science filtered through the bodies of industrial workers ... botany and geology, it's what you move through each time you climb the hill."

## Unite SW/49823

Tolpuddle food, agriculture and transport branch



The Tolpuddle Branch of Unite salutes the bravery and persistence of George Loveless, Thomas Standfield, James Loveless, James Brine, John Standfield & James Hammett who 190 years ago attempted to form a branch of the Union in Tolpuddle.

They met with tyranny and transportation at the hands of the ruling class but won in the end with a free pardon and passage back to Britain.

John Burbidge, Chair | Tony Gould, Secretary | Alan Daniels, Treasurer | Liz Butler, Equalities



## Last of the Clarion Houses still strong

**P**ARTS of the Clarion vision remain today. In Nelson, Lancashire, you can still visit the Clarion House, a volunteer-run respite for ramblers and cyclists on their way through the Pennines.

It's the last remaining of several Clarion houses established by the Nelson ILP as precursor to and inspiration for the coming socialist society.

Today the Clarion House remains an example of the labour movement's aspiration for bread and roses, a society where workers not only earn enough to live on, but have time to enjoy life. As such this monument to those early radical pioneers continues to be a haven for walkers and cyclists.

It is still open Sundays and some bank holidays from 10.30am to 4pm offering a warm welcome to seasoned walkers, cyclists and families out for a stroll alike. Food is available but visitors can also bring their own to wash down with a pint of warm Clarion Tea.

Nelson ILP Clarion House is set deep in the heart of "Pendle Witch" country. Roughlee, Barley, Read and the historic towns of Colne, Whalley and Clitheroe are all within walking distance. Celebrated Pendle Hill is to the immediate North West and a few miles to the East, Boulsworth Hill towers over the Pennine Way.

You can visit at 39 Jinny Lane, Roughlee, Lancashire, BB12 9LL.

# Germany's red riders

**B**RITAIN'S Clarion cyclists aren't the world's only revolutionary riders. Germany's RKB Solidarity has also been flying the red flag on two wheels for more than a century.

Founded as the Workers Cycling Association Solidarity (ARBS) in 1896, offering workers a chance to get out into the countryside, providing an alternative to bourgeois performance-oriented sport and bringing sports, culture and politics together.

Despite anti-socialist repression in its early years, the association flourished, its growth only slowed by the first world war. It played a major role in organising the Frankfurt Workers Olympiad in July 1925 and by 1926 it had become the largest cycling association in the world, with more than a quarter of a million members.

Solidarity had its own bicycle factory, its own

shops and an extensive social security system with accident, liability, bike theft, legal protection insurance and even death benefits.

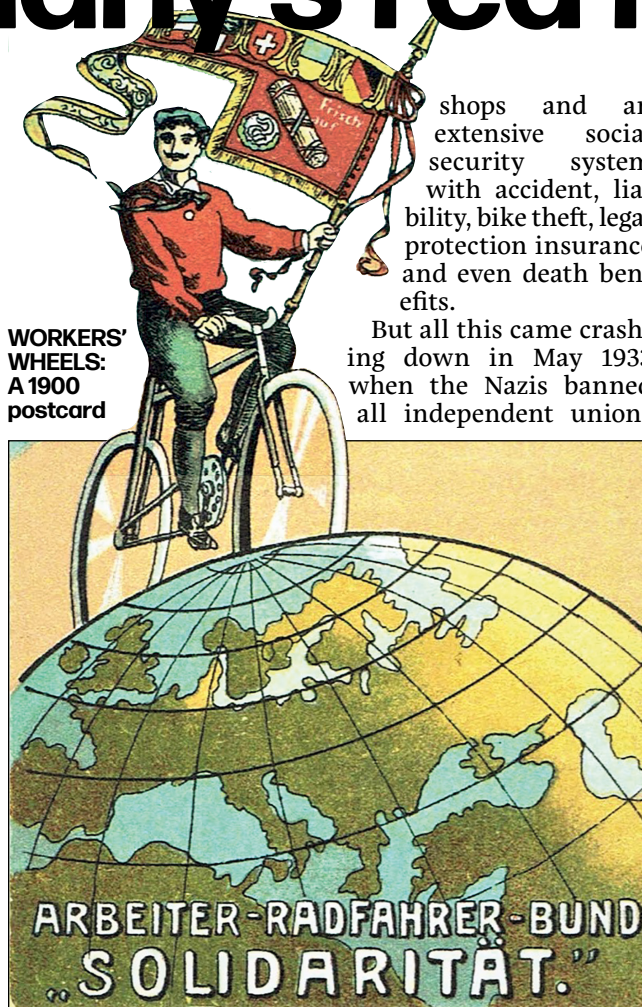
But all this came crashing down in May 1933 when the Nazis banned all independent unions

and socialist clubs. Solidarity refused to join the Nazi German Cyclist Association, unlike many of the functionaries and members of the Association of German Cyclists who joined the Hitlerite group.

The Nazis confiscated Solidarity property, expropriated the Bundeshaus and its bicycle factory which had been producing 20,000 bikes a year, firing the employees.

A number of Solidarity members fell victim to the Nazi regime as a result of their commitment to anti-fascism and the German resistance movement

Solidarity was reborn after the war. Though it hasn't achieved the dizzy heights of the 1920s, it is now a modern sports, culture and youth organisation with a focus on cycling, roller and motor sports placing emphasis on the co-operative aspects of sport and a celebration of its history.



Greetings to all at Tolpuddle from UNISON South West

Join the campaign for a National Care Service

Let's make care work.



UNISON  
South West



**P**OCKETS OF breathtaking beauty and magic in the landscapes and seascapes of Britain could be seen on David Attenborough's Wild Isles.

But, most poignantly, it has shown how much Wild Britain has been transformed. The health of wildlife and people has taken a back seat as corporate greed and ineffective policy has depleted nature and allowed the poorest people to be exploited.

The results are devastating. Today, Britain is one of the most nature-poor countries in the world, with half of our biodiversity wiped out since the industrial revolution.

We have chased wildlife out by changing and degrading nature, and we must face up to the reality that agriculture — what we grow, how we do it, and what we eat — is the main factor in the decline of our wildlife.

Only about 13 per cent of Britain is covered in trees (and half of this is commercially grown, non-native species), while 70 per cent of our land is taken up by agriculture. Of this, meat and dairy production takes up an extraordinary amount of land, to produce comparatively few calories — 85 per cent of the farmland that feeds us is used to rear animals (both grazing and caged animals and their feed).

### Factory farms have put our rivers on life support

Our precious rivers are bearing the brunt of wildlife decline and pollution, with just 14 per cent of rivers in England considered healthy and only one inland waterway considered safe to swim. Over the last few years, campaign groups have highlighted the role that greedy and incompetent water companies have played in trashing our precious rivers, but we must also turn our attention to the harm from factory farming, often carried out by large transnational agribusinesses, which is the main source of river pollution in England.

The river Wye is a prime example of this, where intensive chicken farms have turned the river into an ecologically barren sickly green sewer, often likened to pea-soup. Recently, a new ingredient was discovered in this potent broth — antibiotic resistant super-



GRIM: An Environment Agency worker treats the River Trent in 2019

# Industrial farming is ruining our rivers

SAM HAYWARD explains why Sustain is fighting factory farms

bug pollution was recorded downstream from factory farms based in the Wye valley.

### Big companies are profiting, while Britain's wildlife and communities suffer

Of the 20 million chickens that are fattened along the Wye, 16 million are owned by Avara foods. Avara posted £23 million in profits in 2020/21, while merrily polluting one of the most ecologically important and diverse rivers in Britain. This negligent and irresponsible behaviour should come as no surprise.

Avara foods is part-owned by Cargill, an international meat and grain company and one of the corporations found most responsible for slashing at the lungs of the world, the Amazon rainforest. Cargill has known about the damage their chicken factories do for decades and has ploughed on regardless.

Big livestock companies target rural communities

with promises of much-needed investment. But they create few, low-quality jobs when compared with sustainable farming, generate negligible profits for the farmer, can wipe value off nearby homes, and negatively affect other rural businesses.

Meanwhile, the giant food corporations are raking in more than ever as they raise prices way beyond the increased cost of production. As food prices are hiked, and people go hungry, their profits are soaring. Handing power to these agribusinesses is making food insecurity worse in Britain and abroad.

### Toxic factory farms are on the rise, but councillors have the power to stop the spread

Despite these threats to people and planet, planning permission for new factory farms is still being granted. Avara and others are exploiting our planning system, leading to a sharp

and dangerous rise in intensive megafarms. This means that the planning system is a key battleground for protecting our rivers.

Councils need local planning policies suitable for this new threat. Planners have the power to stop this rise in irresponsible big meat companies and we want to support them to do just that, which is why we are launching our new campaign.

### Planning for the planet

Planning for the planet is simple — we believe that the planning system should take a proactive stance on protecting wildlife and nature, and people's health, and should be harnessed to send industrial meat packing. Three in four British councils have declared a climate emergency. However, Sustain recently reported that 59 per cent have no significant or meaningful actions to address the climate impact of food

in their climate plans or biodiversity plans and only 18 per cent of councils have targets related to farming, food growing and/or allotments.

Planning for the planet helps councils ensure they have planning policy to reverse biodiversity decline.

We want to support local councils through a four-step process that starts with signing the Planning for the Planet commitment. These are to:

- Assess the impact that industrial livestock is having on your local area right now.
- Publish this assessment so that everyone can see it.
- Adopt policies that are right for your area and will protect and enhance local nature, jobs and the climate.
- Join a network of planners and councillors from across the UK calling for a better national framework for planning that protects communities and

the planet from the spread of the most damaging types of factory farms.

### The future is green and prosperous

Councils can instead support high-quality, sustainable farming that puts workers and the planet at the heart of our food system. Research by Sustain and the RSPB has found that a modest shift of 10 per cent of retail market share (or £2 billion) to sustainable, local food businesses could create an additional 200,000 jobs and aid in a green economic recovery.

Councils have a unique opportunity to protect their communities and the countryside through the planning system — the best place to start this work is by making the Planning for the Planet commitment. Repairing our broken wild isles means sending industrial meat packing.

■ Sam Hayward is a campaigns officer at Sustain.



# We will, we will be a free house

Tolpuddle residents have got a kitty together to buy the Martyrs Inn, reports Tony Gould

**A** JOYFUL warmth has recently come over the residents of Tolpuddle and also trade unionists who habitually attend the Tolpuddle festival and rally.

And with good reason too — because The Martyrs Inn reopened in June. The pub had been closed since February 2020. For years it was tied to brewers Messrs Hall & Woodhouse — but now it is free!

A collective of village residents and others clubbed together and bought the pub. In fact, interest was so keen that we have not been obliged to raise a mortgage on it; the sale price has been agreed at £390,000.

The person behind the buyout is village resident and entrepreneur, Barrie Lovelock. It will be managed by a couple who have invested in the business with a board of directors elected from among the shareholders in the background.

One of the great points is



CHEERS! The new owners of the Martyrs Inn (including Tony Gould in red trousers)

that it will be a free house, which means that the managers can buy whichever beer they think appropriate.

Nobody supposes that running a pub is easy and most especially in the current climate but a village

without a pub is not as jolly as it should be. We get a lot of visitors to Tolpuddle each year on account of

the story we know about — the six farmworkers who in trying to form a union in 1833 were convicted as

felons and transported to Australia.

Trade unionists from London, Bristol and other cities campaigned to have the six pardoned and returned to Britain and this is what eventually happened. It is this which the TUC celebrates — there had been attempts to obtain pardons before but all were in vain.

Visitors come to the grave of James Hammett, who was the only one of the six to remain in Dorset, and visit the small museum.

The establishment of the pub will make a difference to the “feel” of the annual rally with a focus for the event down in the middle of the village. We all enjoy the beer tent organised by the Workers Beer Company during the festival but do also come to the pub in which the TUC has bought shares. A warm welcome awaits you.

■ Tony Gould is a Tolpuddle resident and chair of the Unite Tolpuddle branch.

# WE SALUTE OUR MARTYRS



UNISON North West Region sends greetings to all those attending the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival.

We owe it to their memory to organise, fight, and win.

