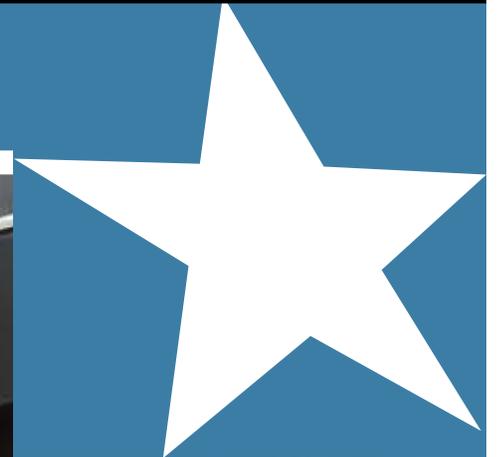




# National Education Union (NUT Section) Conference 2018

A Morning Star special pullout



## Much to debate and much to decide for delegates this Easter

**T**HIS Easter weekend the NUT section of the National Education Union will be debating the issues that matter most to teachers and school staff.

It is clear from our agenda that workload, funding and assessment are some of the main pri-

**by Kevin Courtney**  
NEU (NUT Section) general secretary

orities that delegates feel are getting in the way of either their profession or children's education.

Survey after survey demonstrates the unsustainable hours being worked by teachers. The current assess-

ment methods used in our schools is driving the joy out of learning and teaching.

The government has turned our classrooms into exam factories with children from the age of four upwards being tested and measured within an inch of their life.

Teacher pay has been cut by 15 per cent since 2010. The impact of these attacks

on teacher pay are clear – with government teacher recruitment targets missed year after year and teachers leaving the profession in record numbers.

Funding is having a devastating impact on schools and pupils. Some £2.5 billion has been lost from budgets since 2015 resulting in 91 per cent of schools facing real-terms budget cuts compared

with 2015-16. This is simply unsustainable.

Our survey of members on funding will be released over the Easter weekend. It paints a bleak picture.

With local elections around the corner, the government should pay heed to the fact that education funding played such a big part in the general election.

The School Cuts coalition

will be holding a weekend of action on April 21-22 to highlight our serious concerns.

So, much to debate and much to decide.

The NEU will be working in the months ahead to ensure that government listens to the voice of our members and starts making the changes we need in education, funding and employment.



FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM  
**Morning Star**



**BILLY STRACHAN:**  
Peter Frost  
remembers an RAF  
hero with a different  
story to tell **PAGE 12**

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# OVER 80% OF TEACHERS 'VICTIMS OF SCHOOL SEX HARASSMENT'

## Disturbing report details level of abuse by pupils

by Sam Tobin  
in Birmingham

MANY teachers in England have been sexually harassed by one of their pupils, a "deeply disturbing" examination of life in the classroom by teachers' union NASUWT has found.

A recent survey of teaching staff found 81 per cent felt they had suffered workplace sexual harassment or bullying since entering the profession, while 30 per cent said they had been subjected to unwanted touching.

Of the 1,290 people surveyed, two-thirds claimed to have received inappropriate comments about their appearance, more than half said they had received inappropriate sexual comments and 21 per cent said they had been sexually propositioned.

Some 3 per cent said they had been the victim of "upskirting" – taking photographs or videos of a victim's groin from beneath their clothing – or had images taken down their top while at work.

Shockingly, 42 per cent of teaching staff said they did not report any incidents of harassment, with

only one-third reporting every incident.

NASUWT general secretary Chris Keates said the findings were cause for concern, but warned that schools' failure to act on reports of harassment was equally troubling.

Ms Keates said: "Schools should be places of safety, yet research undertaken by the NASUWT is showing us that too often teachers are being exposed to sexualised comments and abuse from colleagues, managers, parents and pupils.

"The NASUWT will have no hesitation in taking action in schools

where sexual harassment and bullying occur and employers fail to operate a zero-tolerance approach.

"While the scale of the sexual harassment is deeply disturbing, equally disturbing is the scale of the failure to act on the incidents that were reported."

NASUWT's research shows that 8 per cent of teachers surveyed claim they were sexually harassed by a pupil.

One respondent said a sixth-form student wrote a sexually explicit story about a member of staff and handed it in to them.

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A Morning Star  
supplement



**National  
Education  
Union**  
(NUT Section)  
Conference 2018

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**Plus much more!**



**NEU/NUT CONFERENCE SPECIAL EDITION**

# Exciting times ahead for our new union

**E**ASTER 2018 for me and, I guess, other NUT delegates will be filled with optimism and excitement and tinged with a little nostalgic sadness.

Brighton sees the last ever NUT annual conference – number 147!

Looking back it is amazing to see what an impact our union has had on the working lives of teachers and the education system in this country.

As the National Education Union, still in its infancy, begins to grow and combine the best aspects of both union traditions, we can be filled with optimism at the high impact that the NEU has already had.

Since bursting onto the trade union platform in September, the NEU has seen a growth in membership, and a real positive buzz in schools and colleges up and down the country.

It is with great pride that I have attended meetings alongside my ATL colleagues both

## AMANDA MARTIN is full of optimism about what the NEU can achieve

locally and nationally.

There has never been a better time to put pressure on the government and Ofsted.

Research, parent groups, pupils, academic experts, areas of the business world and our union are speaking with one voice.

It is vital that we seize this opportunity because the system and profession are at breaking point.

We have won some gains on funding, £1.3 billion put back into the education budget after our successful campaign and workload guidance from Ofsted and conversations with all three political parties.

But is this enough? Short answer: no. It is a great start but if we are to make real

change we need to look back at what the visionary, former NUT general secretary Steve Sinnott had to say back in 2004.

“I pledge that no-one will work harder than I to achieve the union’s historic objective of unity in the profession.

“Below the surface, despite the present open differences between the teacher unions, there are opportunities for professional unity to be achieved by the generation of teachers to which I belong.

“I will not squander these opportunities. We should correct the aberration of 70 years of disunity. Public-sector workers do not wish to scar anybody’s back. We are healers and we are carers, but this government is squandering our good

will. Let no-one characterise public-sector workers as opponents of change. Nothing could be further from the truth.

“For teachers, change is at the heart of our profession. A child is changed by education. A child can be liberated by it. We are experts in change. Change and progress come from involvement, creating shared objectives, common goals. Yes, working in partnership. Change for the better cannot be achieved by imposition.”

If the NEU are truly to do as Sinnott suggested some 14 years ago and seek unity in the profession, we need to extend our hand to the other education unions – something I did from the platform of TUC 2017 when I invited all the educa-

tion unions to join us in our campaign for funding because disunity only divides.

All workers in the education sector face the same challenges, so all unions in the sector should be stepping up to the plate.

Without professional unity we are doing our future generations a disservice.

We as the NEU need to find ways to continue with our own recruitment but at the same time work with others to bring them into the family.

There is only one enemy and that at the moment is this atrocious Tory government, which simply does not care. I have always said that the union should be the family that you want to join, families have differences but when needed they pull together – to seek progress and fundamental change we need to pull together.

■ *Amanda Martin is senior vice-president of the NUT.*



It is vital that we seize this opportunity because the system and profession are at breaking point

# A trade union should do more than just defend the status quo

The formation of the NEU gives a chance to think radically about how we might want to shape tomorrow’s education policy, argues **GAWAIN LITTLE**

**T**HE final conference of the NUT offers us an opportunity to reflect on the proud traditions of the National Union of Teachers and its predecessor the National Union of Elementary Teachers.

It gives us an opportunity to celebrate the victories the union has won in its 147-year history and the difference it has made to the lives of its members, and the lives of the children they teach.

However, it also forces us to confront some significant questions about the future of the movement.

The process of amalgamation with the ATL, and the creation of the National Education Union, has provided an opportunity to reflect on the aims and purposes of an education union, to consider not only what we have achieved in the past but what our ongoing relevance is in the future. Crucially, why do we need an

organised education workforce and what can such an organised workforce achieve?

Throughout the history of the trade union movement, there have been a variety of different answers to the question: what is the purpose of a trade union? Most of these, however, are variations on one of two basic philosophies of trade unionism.

The first views the workplace, and the structure of wider society, while not without its problems and distortions, as fundamentally just.

It argues that the main role of trade unions is to ensure, within the current system of industrial relations, the fair treatment of trade union members.

It may even go as far as to advocate or campaign for improvements in the legal systems of protections for working people. But fundamentally it seeks improvements within the system and to align the interests of all stakeholders “for the common good.” It

does not recognise any fundamental difference of interests between working people and those who hold economic and political power.

The problem with this view, when applied to education, is that it simply doesn’t stand up to closer inspection.

Even a cursory acquaintance with education policy over the last 30 years shows fundamental differences of opinion around the purpose, structure and management of the education system.

The coincidence of interests between the policies set in motion by the 1988 Education Reform Act and those of Conservative-led governments since 2010 (what Professor Howard Stevenson refers to as the realisation of the “1988 project”) is not a matter of chance.

Similarly, the underlying continuity throughout the New Labour years (albeit with some real and meaningful differences in implementation), and the alignment of policy trajectories internationally (often referred to as the Global Education Reform Movement) are not matters of chance.

They represent an understanding of, and vision for, education which is fundamentally opposed to that of teachers and other education professionals. Crucially, it is also fundamentally opposed to the interests of the majority of those they teach.

At the classroom level, this difference of interests is, if anything, sharper. New management policies have stripped away professional autonomy and confidence from educators, subjecting them to

“performance”-related rewards and punishments, based on narrow measures of school effectiveness, which have nothing to do with genuine education and have a knock-on effect on the curriculum, increasingly narrowing and stripping out valuable educational experiences for children.

As a profession, teachers have resisted these changes in a variety of ways, individually and collectively. Teachers’ natural inclination to question, to challenge, to seek to understand and, where necessary to subvert bad policy, has ensured that the monotone vision of a measurable, standardised education has failed to take root in the majority of classrooms and the majority of schools. However, I believe it is the role of our union to collectivise these battles.

As Benjamin Jealous Todd said: “There are only two types of power: there’s organised people and organised money, and organised money only wins when people aren’t organised.”

The counter to the vested interests that seek to “reform” our education system is to organise and mobilise the creative power of education workers.

As the rules of the National Education Union state in Aim 1: “To promote and support education as a critical and creative process, which enables learners to understand and contribute to wider society and the world in which they live and to change it for the better.”

■ *Gawain Little is a member of the NEU (NUT Section) national executive.*

EDUCATION

# Village School academy plot as good as dead, says insider

by Marcus Bennett

PLANS to turn a special education school in Brent into an academy have been rejected by the government, the National Education Union (NEU) announced yesterday.

Government insiders told Hank Roberts, a member of the NEU's joint executive, that the attempt to turn The Village School in Kingsbury into a multi-academy trust (MAT) will be rejected.

In a statement, Mr Roberts attacked the "monumental incompetence" of attempts to turn the school into an academy, laying the blame firmly on Kay Charles – executive head of the school – and local Labour councillor Sandra Kabir, who chairs the school governors.

Mr Roberts today accused Mr Charles and Ms Kabir of leading the drive for academisation, despite clear and "overwhelming" opposition from staff, parents and the local community.

The Department for Education (DfE) will reportedly reject the offer to turn the school into an MAT on the grounds that it is not big enough, even if a proposed amalgamation with neighbouring Woodfield School goes ahead.

NEU has called for Brent Council to drop their plans for further MATs, which they say are "deeply flawed."

They have also urged the council to publicly reiterate its call that The Village school should remain a local authority school.

Mr Roberts said: "So it is clear that it was only these two schools (the Village and Woodfield) they were consulting on.

"It would be shameful if any attempts are made to go secretly scabbling around in an attempt to find other schools to join them, enabling them to make a different proposal without a full consultation."

The union also said it is currently scrutinising documents over alleged "financial irregularities" at one of the schools.



**WINNING:** Protesters demonstrate against academisation of the Village School in February

In January of this year over 100 staff at The Village went on strike against the plans laid out by Ms Kabir, who is a Labour whip on Brent Council.

Their demands remain the same – that Ms Kabir must

halt the process of academisation while alternative models of partnership could be investigated with Brent council.

The DfE could not be reached for comment.

news@peoples-press.com

FRONT PAGE

# 81% OF TEACHERS HARASSED

**FROM PI:** A further 7 per cent said abuse came from a colleague, 6 per cent said the harassment was by a manager, while 2 per cent said it came from a parent.

Another respondent said inappropriate, untrue and unsolicited comments from a male counterpart had such a dramatic impact on her family life that she and her husband eventually divorced.

Of teaching staff experiencing incidents of harassment, 43 per cent said they suffered a loss of confidence as a result, with 38 per cent experiencing anxiety or depression.

Almost half said they made changes to their daily routine to avoid the harasser, while nearly one third said they felt under pressure to change their appearance or style of clothing in an effort to put a stop to the trouble.

NASUWT's annual conference will vote on a motion on workplace bullying, addressing the "increased incidence of staff bullying staff and the horrific impact this continues to have on teachers' mental and physical health and careers."

samtobin@peoples-press.com

NEU CONFERENCE

# Pessimism envelops classrooms as support fails

by Marcus Barnett  
in Brighton

MOST teachers are "pessimistic" about the future of their schools amid funding and staff cuts, according to new research from teachers' union NEU.

The report paints a bleak picture of the state of education, as well as showing a catastrophic lack of support and

government funding for the education sector.

Survey results from 900 NEU members showed that 94 per cent of respondents felt despondent about school budgeting prospects over the next three years.

Over half reported that teaching posts had been cut, with 80 per cent stating that they had experienced teaching assistant posts being cut.

A further 55 per cent reported that class sizes had risen since 2017, and two-thirds of correspondents mentioned severe cuts to special education needs provision.

Teachers also complained about the hidden damage of maintenance budget cuts, with one respondent decrying the "filthy" state of the school they worked in.

NEU joint general secretary

Kevin Courtney praised the survey for highlighting the "dreadful consequences" of Tory budget cuts in our schools.

He said: "Removing teaching and support staff is gathering pace, parents are regularly being asked for money, subjects are being dropped from the curriculum, school trips cancelled, books and resources are not being replaced and class sizes are rising.

"The government should be ashamed of this list – yet, unbelievably, it is instead standing idly by and doing nothing about it."

Mr Courtney urged the government to address these issues and warned the government to remember the impact that school funding had on public voting intentions during the 2017 general election.

news@peoples-press.com



**LISTING DANGEROUSLY:**  
A North Sea oil rig  
Pic: Nick Bramhall/Creative Commons

**The great pedagogy debate; how do children learn best?**  
**Saturday 31st March 8pm**  
**Old Ship Hotel, King's Rd, Brighton BN1 1NR (seafront)**

**Speakers:**  
Alan Gibbons, Lauren Stocks,  
Amanda Martin (NUT VP), Jess Edwards,  
Luke Abbott (Mantle of the Expert),  
Rebecca Parkin (school student)  
**Chair: Megan Quinn (Camden NUT)**

NASUWT CONFERENCE

# Pupils' social media bullying is driving teachers offline

by Sam Tobin  
in Birmingham

**HUMILIATED** teachers are being driven off social media as pupils are posting videos of classroom incidents in a bid to embarrass them, NASUWT union leader Chris Keates warned yesterday.

Ms Keates said staff across England have reported troublesome children seeking hits on YouTube by secretly recording a riled teacher.

"You might get a situation which seems quite low level, where the pupil starts to answer the teacher back, they might have a piece of equipment in the classroom that they suddenly start to pass around."

Ms Keates said the presence of mobile phones in the classroom has had a marked impact on teachers' private lives.

She said: "We've had teachers who [...] don't want to look on social media and perhaps find comments about themselves. Some have said they felt humiliated in front of pupils and it's adding to the anxiety and pressure that goes with the job anyway."

Ms Keates said some schools have clear policies on mobile phone use in school, insisting that devices are locked away and used only once lessons have finished for the day.

TEACHING has become more stressful than ever due to "punitive and crushing" surveillance of teachers' performance, NASUWT president Dan McCarthy said yesterday.

Mr McCarthy, an English teacher from Essex, told delegates at the union's annual conference in Birmingham that teachers "change lives."

But Mr McCarthy warned that "observation overload" and excessive workloads had "very clear outcomes: mental ill-health for the teachers and the children. And more money for consultants."

He said teaching was an "intrinsically" stressful profes-

**D**ELEGATES gathering for the last conference of the National Union of Teachers will have a number of chances to celebrate the extraordinary history of a union that has been centre stage in public life for all of 147 years.

They will receive a copy of a popular pictorial history entitled *Pride, Passion, Professionalism: The NUT and the Struggle for Education 1870-2017*.

Though written by author and activist Martin Cloake, this history draws on a collaboration between colleagues with a variety of skills. But then how could a history of the main teachers' union not be based on working together?

It tells the story of a union formed by just 100 delegates and a volunteer general secretary in June 1870.

In the words of its first president, JJ Graves, the union was "convinced that by the elevation of the teacher, we elevate the value of education and accelerate the progress of civilisation."

The principle that "what's good for teachers is good for pupils," and vice versa, has guided the NUT ever since.

Professionalism and trade unionism would henceforth not be opposites. The two elements would intersect and create a unique combination such that, when times were hard, the union could use its knowledge and practice to shape education, often through political action.

And in good times, it would drive the organisation on through campaigning and industrial action, such that by the end its membership numbered 330,000 and had a presence in nearly every school in England and Wales.

The union brought this powerful combination to bear to weaken bad legislation and strengthen good. It played an organised and focused role in the struggle to shape the key education Acts of 1870, 1902, 1944 and 1988 and other legislation.

Whereas it was arguably at its most powerful in 1944, it was not able to neuter the destructive impact of the 1988 Baker Act, which allowed primary and secondary schools to opt out of local authority control and be funded by central government.

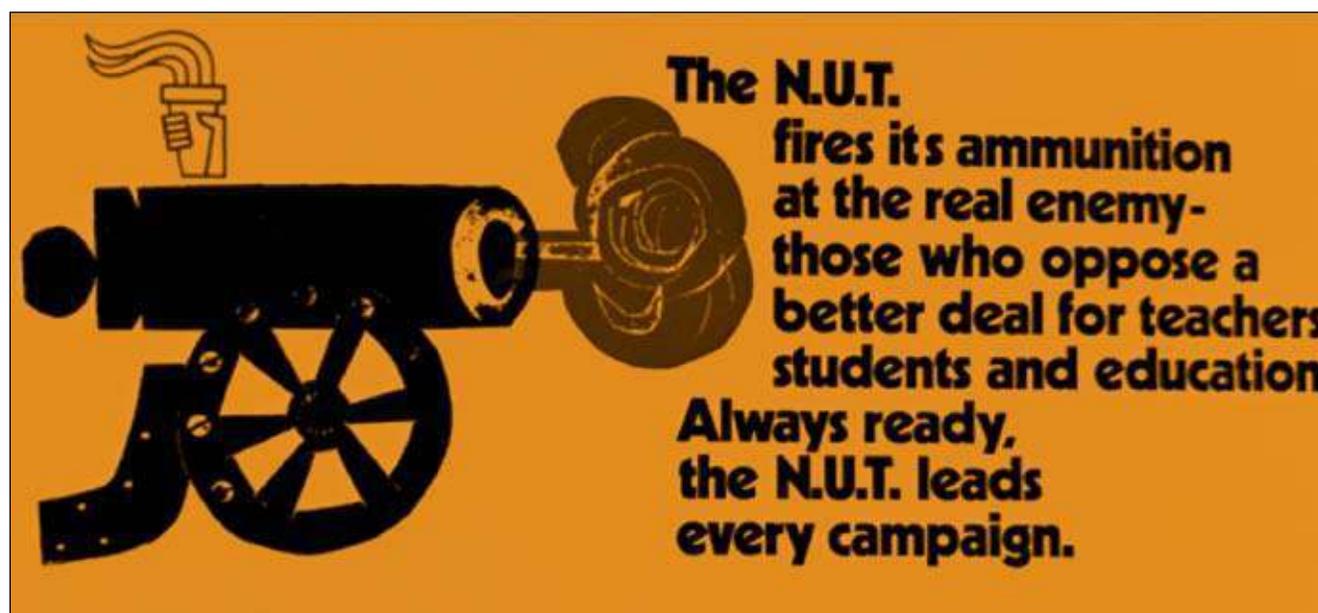
In many ways, this Act sought to reverse the trajectory of 1944, and efforts to block its negative aspects have shaped the struggle for education over the last three decades.

It is rare that an organisation lays itself open to critical scrutiny in the form of a written history; the last one about the NUT was written in 1970.

But although this is a popular pictorial account, it is not a hagiography. For the first time, it relates the story of those teachers and members,

# 147 years of fighting for the interests of teachers and pupils alike

As the NUT merges into the new National Education Union, **PHIL KATZ** looks back at a century and a half of campaigning



such as Minnie Lansbury, who sacrificed so much for the suffragette cause.

Likewise, with the threat of fascism looming, some enrolled in the International Brigades and fought in the Spanish civil war, among them Bill Alexander, the commander of the British Battalion who went on

to become a chemistry teacher

and NUT member.

It tells for the first time the story of the teachers who became London recruits to the underground struggle against apartheid, taking personal risks to fight white minority rule in South Africa.

In the course of those 147 years, the union witnessed the Boer war, lost many members

in the killing fields of France and Belgium during World War I, produced some of its best activists in the combined struggle for trade unionism, women's suffrage and equal pay, played a contradictory role during the general strike and shaped education policy that resulted in the 1944 Act.

The union then began the struggle for comprehensive education and increased pay and professionalism, achieving a graduate-entry profession and, along the way, affiliating to the TUC in 1972. Some readers may be surprised that this came so late.

Since the 1988 Act, and the high point of Thatcher's rule, the union has never wavered. It has campaigned tirelessly against the break-up of education and its privatisation, as well as against the Global Education Reform Movement, a radically reactionary programme of rolling back social gains through education on a global scale.

But all through its history, the union has been at its best when it has asserted, campaigned for and negotiated positive alternatives.

Its influence has been felt industrially and politically,

especially during last year's general election when hundreds of thousands of voters changed their previous habits and put their cross by the name of the Labour candidate out of concern at school funding cuts. It was an issue that the union made a talking point in many households and every community.

**A**s project co-ordinator, I am only too aware of the many amazing characters, events and outcomes, especially of local campaigns, that simply could not be included because of the space limitations. Our hope is that the records of the union are more systematically gathered so that further histories can be written.

There is a fantastic story of women's struggle for equal pay and suffrage waiting to be set down.

Two episodes that did make it in, and which I believe will change the way that members look at their union, took place in 1939-40 and in 1966.

At the outbreak of war, teachers were charged with organising the removal of children

from urban centres, so that they could be safely relocated and their schooling continued despite the threat of bombing.

Over a single weekend, in what is still the biggest ever movement of people in British history, teachers organised the evacuation of three million children without a single fatality. Most were back at school the following week.

And in 1966, the small pit village of Aberfan, near Merthyr Tydfil in south Wales, was the scene of the biggest peacetime disaster in education when an entirely preventable slippage of coal slurry slammed into a school, killing five teachers and 109 pupils.

The response of the NUT was immediate, it was social unionism at its most effective, and it rescued a little bit of humanity from the callous disregard of employer and government.

When all the events, personages and structural changes that affect a union over such a long period have been absorbed, one might ask whether there is a single element that takes pride of place.

If there has to be one, it can be found in the closing words of the author when he writes of the NUT having, "another perspective, one that recognises the enduring strength of the basic ideas of free education for all, social justice and solidarity."

It is likely that, on the NUT's passing into the National Education Union, its history will be revisited many times. Historians and writers will find few unions which have had the impact of the NUT or matched its sustained activism on a consistent set of core values.

In the words of Kevin Courtney, the last general secretary, "it's a members' history" because members make history. And long may that be so.

■ Phil Katz is the principal officer for communications and campaigns at the the National Union of Teachers and director of the union's history project.

■ ENERGY

## Oil rig worker sent home after finding 'blacklist'

AN OFFSHORE worker was removed from a platform in the North Sea after discovering a "blacklist", he claimed yesterday.

The rope access rigger, who does not wish to be named, found a set of 15 names of offshore workers while working on the Claymore platform last month, three of whom had either not passed an assessment or been described as "aggressive."

He told Energy Voice that he spotted the document, which has no accompanying notes, on a shared drive in a computer room on the platform, operated by

Repsol Sinopec Resources UK (RSRUK).

However when he took it to management he was told to leave the platform, according to the online industry magazine.

RSRUK told the site it takes the allegation "very seriously" and has found "no evidence" that anyone has been treated unfairly.

Management met with union officials to discuss the matter yesterday.

Unite regional officer John Boland told Energy Voice: "The thing is that for someone to put it on a Repsol spreadsheet, that person must have thought that is fine to do, so there is a culture there."

■ LABOUR

# CORBYN PASSOVER VOW TO FIGHT ANTI-SEMITISM

ANTI-SEMITISM: 'I am your ally and always will be' says Labour leader

by Ceren Sagir

JEREMY CORBYN vowed yesterday that he is an ally in the fight against anti-semitism and hopes Passover will mark a move towards closer relations with the Jewish community.

The Labour leader said yesterday that the religious holiday is a time to celebrate "a journey from oppression to freedom."

"We remember all our Jewish brothers and sisters, who have battled against discrimination and faced the most horrific acts of violence and mass murder."

Mr Corbyn also said the labour movement could never be complacent about anti-semitism but admitted the party needs to "do better."

The message follows accusations from right-wing politicians, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council that

Labour under his leadership has become more anti-semitic – a charge strongly rejected by organisations including Jewish Voice for Labour and the Jewish Socialist Group, who point to Mr Corbyn's long record of action against racism including anti-semitism.

"In the fight against anti-semitism, I am your ally and I always will be," Mr Corbyn said.

In his message Mr Corbyn said this year marks the 75th anniversary of the struggle of Jewish partisans in Warsaw, when they discovered on the first night of Passover that the nazis intended to destroy their ghetto.

"They decided to stay and fight, holding out against the nazi war machine for a month," he said.

Mr Corbyn also made a warning about the rising levels of anti-semitism around the world.

He said: "In Poland, the government has passed laws mak-

ing it illegal to acknowledge Polish complicity in the Holocaust. They have frozen the law that returns property looted by nazis to Holocaust survivors.

"In France, the neo-fascist National Front is on the rise and just days ago 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll was brutally stabbed to death in an anti-semitic attack.

"We see the far-right extremists gathering support for their hateful ideology in the US too."

Mr Corbyn said it is easy to denounce anti-semitism when you see it in other countries and other political movements, but is sometimes harder to see it when it is "closer to home."

He added: "I am committed to ensuring the Labour Party is a welcoming and secure place for Jewish people, and I hope this Passover will mark a move to stronger and closer relations between us and everyone in the Jewish community."

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■ MANCHESTER

## Burnham defends Arena bomb response

FIREFIGHTERS are not to blame over delayed response to the Manchester Arena terror attack, the city's mayor Andy Burnham insisted yesterday.

In an open letter to the county's firefighters, Mr Burnham acknowledged those on the front line on May 22 were "desperate to help."

However he told them that they were "prevented from doing

so by decisions taken above you" and a failure of "process, leadership and culture."

Poor communications between the police and fire service meant the "valuable" assistance of fire crews was delayed by two hours and six minutes after the bombing, a report by Lord Bob Kerslake found.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) north west secretary Mark Rowe said

members felt "ashamed" they could not help casualties more quickly after the incident that left 22 dead and scores injured.

Mr Burnham wrote: "While I understand why people feel like this, it is important for me to say that I think that they are wrong."

"No front-line firefighter in Greater Manchester has to apologise for anything. You and colleagues did nothing wrong."

■ NASUWT CONFERENCE

## Surveillance culture causing 'crushing' stress on teachers

sion, but it had become "more stressful as the challenges of poverty and inequality have worsened."

Teachers, however, have been made subject to increased monitoring rather than being supported, he said.

Mr McCarthy said: "There is more 'surveillance'. Surveillance that is not positive and developmental, but punitive and crushing."

"I have been told by colleagues that they are not just thinking of quitting teaching but that they have considered

taking their own lives."

Mr McCarthy said teaching services were the "foundation for civilised society," and that society needed to start working "harder to foster and support teachers."

He added that today's curriculum was too narrow, saying pupils needed "an English curriculum that is about creativity and expression" and subject criteria "which encourage speaking and listening," not just teaching towards exam results.

He told conference delegates: "Together we must con-

tinue to fight to give teachers the conditions where they can give our future generations an educational experience that respects who they are, where they come from and what they can and do achieve, as well as one that is fun, fulfilling and engaging."

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**Educate  
Agitate  
Organise**

Join the STA

Socialist Teachers Alliance

STA members have played a prominent role in building current NUT campaigns - on funding, SATs and workload and in defence of comprehensive education. Our aim is to develop mass campaigns, which involve members in winning real gains for teachers, children and education. The STA has consistently supported strike action as part of union campaigns. STA members are active at every level of the union from school-based activist to local officers, executive members and national officers. STA members are also involved in many other campaigns such as the People's Assembly, Stand Up to Racism, Stop the War Coalition, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Cuba Solidarity Campaign and campaigns on climate change.

To join the STA online go to [www.socialistteacher.org/join-us](http://www.socialistteacher.org/join-us)

NEU/NUT CONFERENCE SPECIAL EDITION

**E** NGLAND'S school system, the product of the Education Reform Act (ERA), is 30 years old this year.

The ERA's biggest claim was that it would raise standards. Through a mix of market pressures and state direction, it would deliver schools from the grip of ineffective teachers and incompetent local authorities. It would make England's school system "world class."

How are these claims looking now? From several perspectives, they don't look too robust.

When the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Andreas Schleicher looked at England in November last year, he saw a school system over-reliant on rote-learning and memorisation.

When Confederation of British Industry president Paul Drechsler spoke about education last month he lamented the emphasis on test scores and exam results, at the expense of "thought, questions, creativity and team-working." Surveys of teachers' work – like the OECD's Talis survey – depict a massively overworked profession, struggling to find the space for initiative and innovation. It is difficult to equate any of this with "world-class" education.

How has this come about?

# There's a growing desire to throw off the rigid shackles of Tory educational dogma

Labour has opened up discussion around a national education strategy and, by engaging as a movement, we can develop new radical ideas for the future, argues **KEN JONES**

How have government pledges of fundamental change taken us back to a curriculum reminiscent of years long past?

English Conservatism bears a lot of responsibility. Ever since the 1970s, politicians of the right have patrolled the field of teaching and learning, seeking to make a public scandal of schools' attempts to respond to diversity and the modern world.

Repeatedly, Conservatives have imposed on schools their own dogmatic preferences, no

matter how fragile the evidence for their effectiveness.

Nick Gibb, former KPMG accountant and minister for schools since 2014, insists that children should be taught to read through the method of synthetic phonics.

For older students, he has put in place a GCSE curriculum based on a narrow range of subjects, and notorious for its exclusion of the arts.

A gulf has opened up between the way that educationalists and

policy-makers in the rest of the world think about educational practice and what has been decreed for England.

But the problems don't just arise from Conservatism's long record of misguided micro-interventions.

Labour governments shared with Conservatism a belief in the virtues of new public management – that educational standards would rise fastest if schools were held to account for their performance against

indicators set by government and policed by Ofsted.

This is the system that has created an exam factory culture in schools, forcing the curriculum along a narrow pathway and making workload both extensive and intense.

How is this long and unproductive record ever going to change? There are any number of proposals for minor reform – for taking other indicators into consideration, besides test scores, when holding schools to account;

for eliminating "unnecessary" elements of teacher workload.

But it's difficult to see such ideas making a decisive difference. To create an education in which the energies of teachers are unchained, so that they can address the needs of all learners in an ever more complex and unequal society, changes on a greater scale are needed.

These changes have to be the work of many hands. The Labour Party has made a start, in opening up discussion around a national education strategy.

These discussions will develop fastest if they are linked to the growing movement to oppose actively central features of the current system.

In the campaign against current forms of primary assessment, More Than a Score, teachers, educationalists and parents are mobilising to stop a new baseline test for four-year-olds, and to bring to an end an assessment system based on SATs.

The effects of the ERA have lain across English education for three decades, suffocating initiative, frightening off those who would want to do things differently. It is time to reject that legacy. Fortunately, there is a growing will to do so.

■ Ken Jones is senior policy officer, curriculum and assessment, of the NEU (NUT Section).

**"T** HERE is no alternative!" This was Margaret Thatcher's

repeated slogan in the 1980s as she bulldozed industry, privatised public services and hammered trade unions.

In her final years of government she embarked on a total restructuring of the school system – privatisation, competition, punitive inspections, a rigid national curriculum with little connection to everyday lives, league tables of test data. Schools must be managed like businesses and espouse business values, their key purpose being to produce "human capital."

To consolidate this, she had to eliminate major sources of alternative thinking: an experienced school inspectorate (HMI), the ILEA and its curriculum centres, teams of experienced advisers and EAL specialists in local education authorities.

University-based teacher education was seen as dangerously progressive – an attack which culminated in Michael Gove's infamous use of "The Blob" to describe the 100 academics who dared to oppose his new curriculum in an open letter.

This has left a situation where teachers no longer have accessible and reliable sources of support to develop their teaching, and where opportunities for critical reflection

# To reclaim our schools we need critical thinking and reliable research

**TERRY WRIGLEY** on how a new network of academics aims to put sound knowledge into the hands of teachers to help them bring about change

are rare. Teachers' professional judgement has been systematically undermined.

Government policy sees teachers as a "delivery" system for a centrally imposed and standardised curriculum, excluding the experiences and voices of parents, children and teachers. Teaching which promotes empathy and solidarity, creativity and citizenship, is suppressed.

It is not surprising that many people regard the present situation as "common sense." It seems beyond doubt. Teachers below the age of 45 haven't known any different, though it has gradually got worse. It is vital to build networks of alternative thinking. In Roberto Unger's words, "The dictatorship of no alternatives cannot be overcome without ideas."

This is the purpose of Reclaiming Schools, a net-



'BLOB': Michael Gove

work of over 100 researchers in nearly 40 universities, committed to working with the National Education Union to put reliable and critical research into the hands of teachers.

Reclaiming Schools also

includes research-active teachers and activists from various curriculum bodies.

The network has a blog and Twitter account and has published pamphlets. Knowledge-building seminars have brought together union activists and academics to sharpen thinking about data, testing, accountability and child poverty.

We assisted the More Than A Score coalition to produce a new book *Beyond the Exam Factory: Alternatives to High-Stakes Testing*.

This links sharp arguments about primary school tests with rich examples of assessment designed to support children's learning, not attack teachers.

We recognise that research in itself won't "reclaim schools." That will require the combined power of teachers and parents, but researchers

can play an important supporting role by making sound knowledge accessible.

We are beginning to feel the potential of partnership between university researchers and a union with a proud history of critical thinking.

Indeed, the 150-year history of the NUT and its predecessor the NUET is exemplary for its intellectual vision, and the combination with the ATL to form the NEU can only make this stronger.

Rapid communication between specialists has helped union officials demolish Nick Gibb's claim about the superiority of the dogmatic literacy methods he had imposed.

We quickly obtained evidence of excellent results from more enlightened child-friendly teaching in Ireland.

By drawing on some expert statisticians, we were able to

expose the lie that baseline testing could accurately measure the "ability" or "potential" of four-year-olds.

Examples such as these show the power of linking reliable educational research to the campaigning strength of an education union but there is much more to be done on issues such as high-stakes testing and accountability; privatisation; selection; poverty and underachievement.

We look forward to working with the NEU on a range of projects, including supporting school-based research partnerships, in the struggle to regain control of education, restore decent social values and encourage the educational experiences our children deserve.

■ Terry Wrigley is joint co-ordinator of Reclaiming Schools.

## ■ PAY

# Month-long wage gap for workers on minimum pay

by Our News Desk

WORKERS on the government's National Living Wage have to work an extra month to earn the same as those on the higher, voluntary rate, according to new research.

The statutory minimum goes up on Sunday from £7.50 an hour to £7.83 for over 25-year-olds.

This is below the voluntary real living wage of £10.20 an hour in London, and £8.75 outside the capital.

The Living Wage Foundation said a full-time worker on the statutory rate receives almost £1,800 a year less than those on the higher, voluntary figure, so it would take 33 days to make up the shortfall.

For workers in London the gap is wider, at £4,621, meaning they would need to work

84 more days to earn the living wage, said the report.

Living Wage Foundation director Tess Lanning said: "There will be a welcome pay rise for some of the UK's poorest workers.

"However, over 5.5 million workers will still find themselves earning less than a real living wage, and struggling to make ends meet.

"For these people, the government minimum won't be enough to cover the basics, save for a rainy day, or provide security for their families.

"That's why we need to see more companies step up and pay a real living wage based on the cost of living."

More than 3,900 employers are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation, meaning they are committed to paying the voluntary rates.

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## ■ JUSTICE SYSTEM

# Violent criminals released after bail law changes

THOUSANDS of suspects in violent and sexual crimes have been released without conditions since changes to police bail came into effect.

More than 3,000 people were released under investigation for offences such as murder and rape over a three-month period, according to a BBC report released yesterday.

Requests for information were sent to all 43 police forces in England and Wales, but only 12 sent data.

Figures covering April to June 2017 included 1,692 people arrested for violent crimes, 768 rape suspects and 31 questioned

on suspicion of murder.

During this time, 6,683 suspected offenders were released without further action, 2,430 were charged and 3,149 released under investigation.

The Home Office said it had asked forces to review their use of bail.

It follows a 28-day limit on pre-charge bail which came into effect last year, as part of a shake-up aimed at ending the "injustice" of individuals being kept under a cloud of suspicion for long periods of time.

Suspects who are released "under investigation" are still subject to police inquiries.



## ■ TRANSPORT

# Four-day strike begins over 'disgraceful' train operators

by Our News Desk

attempts to threaten, bully and harass our members fighting to put public safety before private profit," he said.

"It is the continuing intransigent attitude of the company which means that this latest phase of industrial action goes ahead over Easter in an effort to force them to see sense and to drive them back to the negotiating table for genuine and meaningful talks.

"We know that this action will have a serious impact on services and the responsibility for the disruption caused will be wholly down to

South Western Railway and their pig-headed attitude."

SWR said in a message to passengers: "We're really sorry that once again, you are to be subjected to unnecessary industrial action by the RMT.

"We plan to run our full service on all four days and will do everything we can to minimise any effect this strike action may have. We do however advise you to check before you travel."

A 48-hour RMT strike on London's Docklands Light Railway ended yesterday morning after crippling services.

news@peoples-press.com



DRIVEN: Mick Cash

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RAIL workers launched an Easter weekend of industrial action yesterday in the long-running dispute to keep guards on trains.

Members of transport union RMT on the South Western Railway (SWR) are refusing to work during the four-day Easter break.

The action follows a strike on Arriva Rail North on Thursday over the same issue.

Five train operators are now embroiled in the dispute, which has been raging for almost two years since it first broke out at Southern Rail.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash called SWR "frankly disgraceful" for point-blank refusing talks with the union over the safety-critical guard on board trains.

"Instead, they continue to resort to the crudest possible



**A DIFFERENT MODEL:** Cuban primary school children

Pic: Oklahoma Education Association



**RESISTANCE:** Teachers in Oklahoma are among the lowest paid in the US

**T**HE NUT has a proud history of international collaboration going back years. The work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation has continued that and more recently the union's development of its solidarity work has placed internationalism at the heart of our own campaigns.

It is important not to see our international work as an optional extra, because it is so much more than that.

For a start, the threats we are facing in the British education system are part of a global liberalisation of education which is seeing a growth in privatised schools, the sidelining of teacher expertise and pedagogy in favour of standardised teaching resources and an increase in high-stakes testing, known as the Germ (Global Education Reform Movement).

Educators all over the world are fighting these things and we benefit hugely by working alongside our international colleagues in such organisations as the Kenyan National Union of Teachers (KNUT), which is fighting the for-profit education provider Bridge Academies International, or the New Zealand Education Institute, in its successful battle against charter schools and standardised testing.

Both unions have taken on huge global vested interests and won significant battles: the High Court of Kenya found in favour of KNUT in its criticisms of Bridge and the New Zealand government has announced plans to end charter schools and standardised tests. These victories should give us hope that we can start to win on these things here too.

Another area where we can learn from our international colleagues is union organising. The huge successes of the Chicago Teachers Union are rooted in forensic work re-energising the union in every workplace and taking its campaigns to the community.

The state-wide teachers strike in West Virginia has resulted in a 5 per cent pay increase and similar campaigns are springing up in Oklahoma, Arizona and Kentucky.

The birth of a student-led mass movement against gun violence is another inspiring development, and the Black Lives Matter campaign has given hope and power to black people here.

It is never possible to simply transplant what has worked in one part of the world to another, but that doesn't mean that there aren't serious lessons to learn that we can adapt for our own context.

In Mexico, despite horrendous human rights abuses, teachers are at the forefront of the battle to reclaim education for the community and make sure it is the educators who provide the leadership on what should happen in schools.

And then there are countries where the education system is something to be emulated.

Take Cuba, a small island hamstrung by a decades-long economic blockade but which has literacy rates in line with many countries in western Europe (and better than those of the US). Its "Yo, si puedo" literacy programme has been used in over 30 countries (particularly with disadvantaged communities) including Australia, Nigeria, Brazil and, most notably, Venezuela, which was declared "illiteracy free" in 2003 by Unesco. Over 10 million adults are estimated to have benefited from this programme.

Likewise, Finland has been at the vanguard of educational achievement for decades, with high academic results despite children not starting formal schooling until the age of seven, having short school days, long holidays and no homework. Now the Finns are rolling out project-based learning across the whole country. Think what we could learn from them...

And good practice can be

# Our international work is more than charity. It enriches us as much as it supports our peers

## KIRI TUNKS explains the importance of the NEU's overseas links

found much closer to home. At the recent Challenging Sexism Conference, delegates were hugely enthused by the Agenda project on helping young people develop positive and healthy relationships. It has been produced by academics at Cardiff University in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid, the Children's Commission for Wales and the Welsh government.

Schools in the rest of Britain desperately need government-endorsed resources and statutory relationship and sex education. A year after we were promised guidance in this country, we are still waiting. We should press for Agenda to be on the agenda here.

And then there are the lessons in history and solidarity. Our work ensuring that the genocide at Srebrenica is not

forgotten or the work we do with the Holocaust Educational Trust to remember the Shoah and learn lessons from it. Our union has lobbied the governments of Turkey and Iran to uphold the human rights of teachers and academics. We have spoken out on the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and the attacks on trade unionists in places such as Colombia.

Our now regular delegations to countries including Cuba, Palestine and Nicaragua are increasingly popular with members, who get the chance to see what life is like for educators and students living in struggle.

Of course, we take messages of solidarity and support to our friends, but we also learn a great deal from them about coping with adversity and being resilient.

Delegates return from these

trips energised and empowered to challenge things in their school and to become more active in the union.

As one delegate on last year's Cuba trip said: "It was great to see a different educational model and to see a workforce emboldened by their union. This trip has made me a braver teacher."

We have a growing network of international solidarity officers and the establishment of international networks.

This year at conference, our international guests will be hosted by different divisions so that they can spend time with union members from around the country and exchange ideas and knowledge. This is a powerful initiative which will further embed our international work in the heart of the union.

Many of our members have been active in collecting resources for the camps in Calais, in delivering them and volunteering in the schools.

Others have got involved with the work of the Edukid charity in Palestine, Uganda and Cambodia.

Of course, many more of us will have had the privilege of

welcoming refugee children into our schools, proving that international issues are never far from home for any of us.

The union has a web page of guidance, films and teaching resources developed by our members and we will be the proud co-sponsors of this year's Refugee Week, which runs from June 18 to 24.

Our international work is more than charity. It is a respectful engagement with our peers that enriches us as much as it supports them.

All of this work allows us to be informed, to challenge falsehoods, to shape the narrative of what is happening in education and beyond. It ensures that we have access to a range of global perspectives and this can only aid our own campaigning.

Britain is home to people from every country in the world, so we have a duty to understand what is going on outside our borders.

But we should also recognise how our global connections help us to navigate the wider and ever-changing world.

■ Kiri Tunks is president of the NEU/NUT.



**PASSIONATE:** Heavy rain doesn't stop crowds from attending the Good Friday performance of the Passion of Jesus in Trafalgar Square

HOUSING

# HOMELESS TASKFORCE SLAMMED AS 'PITIFUL'

**CRISIS:** Tory Sajid Javid faces criticism as the number of people living on the streets spiral

by Our News Desk

COMMUNITIES Secretary Sajid Javid's announcement of a new rough sleeping taskforce was slammed yesterday as a "pitiful response" to the national crisis.

Following Tory promises to break the cycle of homelessness, the government team will aim to reduce the number of people living on the streets.

Mr Javid says it will be made up of experts from government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge in areas such as housing, mental health and addiction.

A £30 million fund has also been set up to help deal with high numbers of rough sleepers – amounting to around £72,000 per council.

Mr Javid said the latest plans were part of the government's ongoing work to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027.

The government has faced intense criticism over spiralling numbers of people on the streets and housing minister Heather Wheeler has promised to resign if the problem gets worse on her watch.

Labour's housing spokesman



John Healey dismissed the initiative saying a national crisis which has grown worse every year since 2010.

He said it represented "a pitiful response to a national crisis that has grown worse every year since 2010. You can't help the homeless if you won't provide the homes, and the money announced here is less than one per cent of the Conservatives' annual cut to funding for

new low-cost housing."

The severity of the situation for England's estimated 4,700 rough sleepers was highlighted by the snow and freezing temperatures when a record number of rough sleepers were referred to a specialist helpline by members of the public.

The rough sleeping team will be made up of experts from government departments and agencies that have specialist

knowledge in areas such as housing, mental health and addiction.

Homelessness charity Shelter's Greg Beales said the new measures would make "a genuine difference," but added that most of the people on the streets had become homeless as they could not afford accommodation, a situation made far worse by welfare cuts.

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**EGGS-TRA EASTER TREAT:** Black-capped squirrel monkeys enjoy waxworm and sunflower Easter treats at London Zoo. The annual Easter-themed event is designed so animals can use their skills to hunt down the eggs containing their treats which are hidden



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## CRAIG – THOMAS

Died peacefully on Monday 26th March 2018 at Gartnavel General Hospital, Tommy, beloved husband of Jean much loved dad to Steven and the late Graeme.

**Funeral service to be held at Clydebank Crematorium North Dalnottar on Friday 6th April at 3.30pm to which all family and friends are warmly welcome.**

NEU/NUT CONFERENCE SPECIAL EDITION

# Why union renewal is an imperative

Now is the time to organise around issues and ideas, seeking to challenge what we are against, while making possible what we are for, says **HOWARD STEVENSON**

**E** DUCATION workers around the world are on the move. From West Virginia to Britain's UCU, strikes we are seeing show increasing numbers of union members taking extraordinary and inspiring action.

It is as though the slow-burn of post-crisis austerity has sparked to life and that the bright flames of resistance are increasingly taking hold.

We are also seeing that the disaster that is the neoliberal restructuring of our education system has become much more visible.

Bankrupt academy chains, a huge funding crisis and chronic system "gaming" at the expense of the most vulnerable students are just some of the problems now clear to see.

New possibilities for resistance are opening up. The challenge is to identify the strategies most likely to capitalise on these opportunities.

This is never straightforward, but is arguably most complex in the English school sector.

This is because the system has been deliberately fragmented precisely to weaken the power of organised teachers.

Academisation was always intended to deliver public education to private providers, but it was also intended to neutralise the influence of the one force capable of thwarting that objective – unionised teachers.

Dismantling national collective bargaining, introducing school-based performance-related pay systems and cultivating a fear-driven managerialism must all be seen as part of a class-based strategy to try to defeat teacher unionism.

During this 30-year war on the teaching profession, education unions have been able to maintain their high member-

ship levels, but they have not been able to maintain their influence.

Since the 1988 Education Reform Act unions have been able to mitigate the impact of neoliberal reforms in education, but not been able to fundamentally disrupt them.

There are many explanations for this, not least the need to understand the power of the state and its determination to impose education reforms far more aggressively than in any other comparable country.

However, part of the explanation also lies in understanding the strategies of education unions during this period.

In our book *Transforming the School Workforce* (2010) Bob Carter, Rowena Passy and myself identified three strategies open to education unions – rapprochement, resistance and renewal.

"Rapprochement" referred to situations where unions sought to work pragmatically with governments in order to secure the best outcomes for members.

The underpinning rationale was not to challenge the basic logic of reforms, but to go with the grain of policy and secure the best deal possible within those parameters.

This approach is best illustrated by the social partnership that involved some education unions between 2003 and 2010.

The social partnership model remains controversial, with those involved highlighting several successes (see Carter et al, 2010).

What appears clear in hindsight is that this approach underestimated the scale of the attack on public education and the teachers who work in it.

By working with the system, rather than seeking to challenge it, the pressures of marketisation and high stakes accountability remained intact.

These are the pressures that drive the deskilling and work intensification that bedevil teachers.

We described a strategy of resistance as one which sought to mobilise against the key elements of the neoliberal school system (tests, performance-related pay and privatisation, for example) while also seeking to disrupt the logic of neoliberalism and marketisation.

This is clearly a more ambitious prospectus and one which has been difficult to realise. The approach has been best exemplified by the National Union of Teachers which has consistently sought to challenge the policies identified above, but often with only limited success.

“

The need for union renewal emerges from a purpose – the drive for us all to be able to exercise meaningful control over all aspects of our work



This was in part due to the union's relative isolation (an issue potentially addressed by the formation of the National Education Union) but also because the union's organisational structure continued to reflect the education system it had mirrored, but which no longer existed.

It was also heavily dependent, in common with other education unions, on a shrinking activist base.

Given these limitations we argued at the time that union "resistance" is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition if resistance is to be successful.

The third strategy we identified, drawing on the work of Peter Fairbrother and others, is union renewal.

Union renewal is focused on an active resistance to marketisation and managerialism and the pressures driving deskilling and work intensification, but it is also predicated on a transformation of the union itself.

Emphasis is placed on member connection, engagement and participation – not simply recruiting members but drawing them into activity.

Union renewal is about creating active, inclusive and vibrant union cultures in the workplace where workers see, and feel part of, the union.

It is about deepening union democracy by increasing member participation – oftentimes

by working in more fluid and flexible forms.

Such a shift in union cultures is not easy, it requires the adoption of new practices and it also requires a relentless focus on member development – going out to members, drawing them in and developing their skills and confidence to organise and act collectively.

None of these things are easy and they do not happen by accident.

**T**hose already involved in the union need support to develop these capacities in others.

There is, however, no alternative to union renewal. A union that is not renewing is declining and so union renewal is an imperative, not an option.

Nor can it be seen as simply a technical process, based for example on more recruitment campaigns or member training.

The need for union renewal emerges from a purpose – the drive for us all to be able to exercise meaningful control over all aspects of our work, our working conditions and the wider context in which we work.

Union renewal happens when we organise around issues and ideas, seeking to challenge what we are against, while making possible what we are for.

Moreover, it is already happening and has been happening for some time.

Recent examples include the spectacular Schools Cuts campaign with its focus on member engagement, and the inspiring campaigns successfully challenging academisation.

Young Teacher activity I have witnessed recently is some of the best and most energising union work I can recall seeing.

There are countless other examples while we are also getting much better at recognising successes, sharing them and learning from them.

This is union renewal in action and it is already generating new activists interested in building their union at their workplace and in their communities. My perspective may be affected by the extraordinary experience of involvement in the UCU strikes but I am convinced that the corner has already been turned, and new opportunities are opening up.

Union renewal requires us to connect the issues, the ideas and the organisation to make sure that when the opportunities arise unions can mobilise their collective strength and seize those possibilities. There really is a world to win.

■ Howard Stevenson is Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the School of Education, University of Nottingham.

## FRANCE

# Leftwingers deny anti-semitism after Melenchon booed

by Ben Chacko

FRENCH socialists hit back yesterday at slurs suggesting the left shares the anti-semitic prejudices of the right, after zionist groups forced France Unbowed leader Jean-Luc Melenchon out of a march against anti-semitism on Wednesday.

The Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (Crif) had said Mr Melenchon was as unwelcome at the event as National Front leader Marine Le Pen because of the supposed prevalence of anti-semitic views on the left and far right.

The march was called in honour of murdered 85-year-old Mireille Knoll, who police believe was killed because she was Jewish.

Crif's stance was attacked by Ms Knoll's son Daniel, who said everyone should unite against anti-semitism. But Mr Melenchon was booed and told to "fuck off" when he joined the march.

Mr Melenchon went to a

parallel street, saying that the march should not be diverted by a row over his presence.

"What is important is the message – that every Jew knows they are under the protection of the entire national community, and that our reserves of love for our people will never be exhausted," he said.

Rabbi Yann Boissiere said the treatment of Mr Melenchon was outrageous.

"We must absolutely not put on the same plane the National Front, a fascist party whose anti-semitic culture is proven, with the rebellious parties," he said.

In France's l'Humanite newspaper, Audrey Loussouarn said the far-right Jewish Defence League, known for racist attacks on mosques and Muslims and seen as terrorist by the government, had forced Mr Melenchon out while providing "physical protection" for Le Pen supporter Gilbert Colard, who it described as "a great defender of the Jewish state."

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## UNITED STATES

# Arizona teachers join battle for substantial pay increase

by Our News Desk

TEACHERS in Arizona are now demanding a 20 per cent pay rise after victories for their counterparts in Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Oklahoma's Republican Governor Mary Fallin hastily signed a tax rise package on Thursday night to give teachers pay rises of between 15 and 18 per cent in the hope of preventing a state-wide school shutdown next week.

The measures include a surprise increase in tax on oil and natural gas extraction from 2 to 5 per cent in a state which has previously fawned on the energy industry.

While teachers in the state are still planning to walk out on Monday, Ms Fallin says she hopes it will be a "one-day rally for education" rather than a prolonged strike.

But that isn't certain, since the pay rise offered – the first for Oklahoma teachers in 10 years – falls short of the \$10,000 demanded and new funding for schools is also mil-



**VICTORY:** Teachers celebrate in West Virginia's senate earlier this month when legislators voted to raise pay by 5 per cent after a nine-day strike

lions short of union proposals. Oklahoma's education funding per pupil is 47th of the 50 states, almost \$3,000 below the US average.

"They need to fund our schools better, and until that happens, we're going to walk out," primary school teacher

Adrien Gates said. "We need to take this all the way."

But the successful showdown with Republican legislators, following the 5 per cent raise won by West Virginia teachers, has inspired Arizona's teachers to take action too. Primary school teachers in the state are the

lowest paid in the US, while secondary school teachers are 49th of 50 states.

"West Virginia woke us up," Arizona Educators Association president Joe Thomas told a crowd in Phoenix on a day of action for education on Wednesday.

Teachers wore red as part of the #RedforEd campaign calling for an end to years of cuts by Republican administrations keen to offer tax breaks to big business.

National Education Association president Lily Garcia said public services had been eviscerated by cuts since the bankers' crash of 2008.

"It has been an unmitigated disaster, and it's now coming home to roost on all those folks who blindly cut taxes, not caring how that was going to impact communities," she said.

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# We need to build a union that is also a social movement

It is through engaging with communities that we can win our battles, writes **DAWN TAYLOR**

**T**HE educational landscape has become almost unrecognisable over the lifetime of the National Union of Teachers.

The removal of collective bargaining by a Conservative government removed one of the biggest levers for unions in the late 1980s, and the neo-liberal project has succeeded in some of its aims through the fragmentation of education by academies; marketisation and competition; growth in standardised testing and league tables; end of the national pay framework and performance-related pay and the privatisation of education services.

For some time the education trade unions failed to punch their weight, but we have changed too.

The historic decision to form the National Education Union created a stronger voice to speak up for those working in education and challenge government policy.

This is a game-changer for education professionals, but there must be clarity on how we make the most of this opportunity within its organising strategy.

We need focus, because if the fight for a work-life balance were easy, if discrimination wasn't rife in the work-

place, and if members didn't need training to challenge the direction of travel in education policy, then we would not need to have our member-led organising to take us into the next phase of the union.

It is our organising agenda that has evolved over recent years to make the NUT influential on policy and power because of its members and how we are engaged.

The membership has bloomed alongside the growth and support of the union's activist base, one that puts the members at the centre and gives them agency.

This model of organising has developed real strength for our members, the kind that has rebuilt the collective voice and influenced policy.

Communities matter a great deal when it comes to winning: they are one of the most influential factors in changing political direction.

It is because the members are reforging relationships between parents and teachers, and between our union and our communities, that real power is growing in the current hostile environment. The only way we can build real power is through a union which is a social movement.

This doesn't happen through a glossy messaging campaign, nor even the best-placed Facebook ads: it happens

because of the agency of members and their relationships with the families they live in, among and work for in schools.

When parents and carers pick up children or attend progress evenings they are often meeting the very people who spend more of the waking day with their child than they do.

Educational professionals prepare a whole new generation for becoming adults and these ties to the community

cannot be underestimated.

We can use our collective power when we win over over the broader community, not only to the value of the staff at the school, but also to the vital message about the importance of unions in our society.

When we change a workplace struggle about funding into a community struggle for the education system that we all want, it can be transformational for the working class and be one of the most powerful lessons we will ever teach.

It is the organising agenda that has been developed that has given our members the key to their own liberation by having campaigns that take every opportunity to become a part of the community and come to influence the power that brings with it. Without the agency of the workers and their community there can be no win.

This belief that organising is for, and by, the lay members is the one we must take into the new union, and keep at its heart that real change happens from the bottom up.

If we truly want to continue to grow we cannot just tell the members that this is our union, we must behave that way at every level.

■ Dawn Taylor is a member of the NEU (NUT section) national executive.



Communities are one of the most influential factors in changing political direction

**T**HE National Education Union wants to shape the future of education. This is what members said they wanted from the amalgamation of the ATL and NUT: they wanted the union to be a "game changer." This is a big ask.

How to realise this aspiration lies at the heart of the strategic campaigns of the NEU.

For 30 years, education policy in England has been framed by neoliberalism. The belief that market mechanisms will lead to improvement has led to the fragmentation of education delivery to engender competition between schools; the liberalisation of terms and conditions for education workers; and an increase in standardised high-stakes testing for children to inform league tables and "consumer choice."

Because of this situation, we have seen a narrowing of the curriculum and a decline in children's mental health; teacher workloads rising to unsustainable levels; a decline in teachers' professional status; real-terms pay cuts; and, to top it all, since 2015 there have been real-terms cuts in school funding for the first time in a generation.

Successive governments' ideological belief in neoliberal methods has made them immune to evidence and advocacy.

It is because of this that the

NEU believes the only way to shift the debate is through a campaigning model that takes up ideological and political issues as well as economic ones. The union's campaigning model also emphasises membership participation and working with allies wherever possible.

At its heart, campaigning is about building power and influence to effect change. The NEU believes it necessary to identify strategic campaigns to fully resource and genuinely try to win. Strategic campaigns are those that, if successful, will help to unpick the entire neoliberal



At its heart, campaigning is about building power and influence to effect change

# If we want to win, we have to think strategically

Clarity about aims and means is needed if the NEU is to free education policy from the neoliberal stranglehold, argues **DAVID WILSON**

eral education edifice by striking at the key links in the chain.

Each NEU campaign has a clear aim. Defining an aim makes it easier to understand how far you have to travel to be successful, which can give an indication of the resources and time needed. Defining a campaign aim also allows the identification of who the target or decision maker is that needs to be moved.

Once a specific target has been identified, it is easier to construct a strategy to apply pressure. A clear strategy then

informs which tactics should be adopted at any particular time.

This may sound obvious, but it is amazing how many campaigns fail to follow this simple model, confusing tactics with strategy or being unclear about the aim or target.

The School Cuts campaign initiated by the NUT and ATL conforms to the campaign model described above. Its aim was clear: to reverse the cuts in funding imposed since 2015. The target was primarily the government, but also opposition parties. The strategy was to unite

heads, teachers and parents in applying political pressure. The tactics included developing a website to show the effect of cuts on individual schools.

The campaign resulted in 750,000 people changing their votes at last year's general election. Thousands of teachers and parents were involved in highlighting and organising around the issue and, as a result of this pressure, the government found an extra £1.3 billion for schools that was not previously available.

This isn't enough, and the fight to win back the money

lost since 2015 continues, but it is an indication that campaigning can move things.

Over the next few weeks, the membership of the ATL and NUT sections of the NEU will be deciding on priority campaigns.

For each, the question that will be asked is how do we win? This is the key question that the trade union movement needs to give attention to.

■ David Wilson is assistant general secretary (campaigns) of the National Education Union.

■ BRAZIL

## Lula slams elites as 'unjust'

BRAZIL'S former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has accused Latin America's elite of being hostile to democracy.

"The elite doesn't want democracy – for them, it is no more than the poor yelling that they are hungry," he said in an interview with former Ecuadorean president Rafael Correa.

Lula, as Mr da Silva is universally known, was the most popular president in Brazil's history and still leads in the opinion polls. But he may be unable to stand at the next election because of a conviction for corruption that is widely seen as stitched up.

"In Brazil, there is a pact between the media, the justice system, the office of the attorney general and the police," he said.

"First, they criminalise people through the media and then, when the person is condemned, they carry out the judicial process."

Lula said the coup that ousted his elected successor Dilma Rousseff in 2016, ostensibly for breaching state spending guidelines, was punishing governments that put Latin American interests ahead of those of the US.

■ SYRIA

## Bomb kills US troopers

TWO soldiers of the US-led coalition in northern Syria have been killed by a roadside bomb, which also wounded five more, the Pentagon said yesterday.

It did not reveal whether they were US soldiers or where the attack took place, though it might have been the same incident as a roadside bomb explosion in the mixed Arab-Kurdish town of Manbij reported by the Syrian military.

The type of weapon used indicates an attack by one of the jihadist groups fighting the Syrian government, rather than Syrian, Kurdish or Turkish forces.

Rebels of the Jaish al-Islam group, which occupies Eastern Ghouta, yesterday denied Russian reports that they had agreed to evacuate.

They had been offered safe passage to Islamist stronghold Idlib if they agreed to pull out.



**CASUALTY:** A wounded Palestinian is helped by fellow protesters after he was shot by Israeli troops

■ PALESTINE

# SIX SHOT DEAD AS ISRAELI ARMY OPENS FIRE ON NAKBA PROTESTS

**GAZA STRIP:** Thousands flock to besieged enclave's borders in a massive show of opposition to Tel Aviv's stranglehold

by Our News Desk

AT LEAST six Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops yesterday as demonstrations in Gaza were attacked with lethal force.

Gaza's ruling Hamas movement has called for mass sit-ins along the besieged enclave's border with Israel in the run-up to the 70th anniversary of the Nakba ("catastrophe") on May 15, the day that marks the forced expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinians from their homes during the establishment of the Israeli state.

The vast majority of Gaza residents are descendants of Palestinians who fled or were driven from communities in what is now Israel.

Yesterday's protests involved giant tent cities being set up within a few hundred yards of the border, while thousands

marched up to the Israeli lines.

Buses took Palestinians to the border while mosques called on their congregations to participate.

"The large crowds reflect the Palestinian people's determination to achieve the right of return and break the siege, and no force can stop this right," Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said.

On the anniversary itself, Hamas says that Palestinians will seek to march across the border.

The Israeli Defence Forces said that Palestinians rolled burning tyres at the lines and threw stones, prompting soldiers to open fire at "the main instigators."

The Palestinian Health Ministry reported that over 500 people had been wounded and at least five killed by gunfire.

The sixth confirmed victim was a farmer, Amr Samour, killed by an Israeli tank shell in his fields before dawn as he gathered parsley for market.

Israel said it had directed fire at "suspicious figures near the



**UNDER FIRE:** Tear-gas canisters land among Palestinian protesters near the Gaza Strip's border with Israel

border fence," though he was killed more than a kilometre away from it.

"I was working in the next field," said his relative Yasser Samour.

"We heard shelling landing on the field where Amr works.

We ran there and found him hit directly."

Israel said it had doubled the number of troops guarding the border.

"We are identifying attempts to carry out terror attacks under the camouflage of riots,"

Major General Eyal Zamir added.

He warned Palestinians to stay away from the border and said that Hamas bore responsibility for any violence that took place.

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NEU/NUT CONFERENCE SPECIAL EDITION



**T**WO years ago, I made a speech at the NUT annual conference, highlighting the need for the union to increase recruitment of young teacher activists.

Two years on, the need remains just as urgent, if not more so, as education in Britain continues to face crisis after crisis, from cuts to funding, to the creeping threat of privatisation, to the undermining of the philosophical foundations of public education.

Both the Southend and Sutton Associations will be presenting motions promoting recruitment of young teachers at this year's annual conference. This article will summarise many of the issues raised, coupled with wider issues around union engagement.

Young teachers – in NUT parlance, that is members under 35 years of age – make up 33 per cent of the membership of the NUT Section of the National Education Union. Yet the average age of a union officer is 53, as of November 2017.

That is not to say that the union has not supported young teachers well in the past, having established several representative bodies within the union, but the time is ripe to push forward and specifically target young teachers to encourage them toward officer roles.

As a proudly lay-led union, it is absolutely vital that those who constitute the future of teaching take on leadership responsibilities.

This is, however, part of a wider problem with activist recruitment across teacher trade unions.

As the nature of teacher training changes, it has become more difficult for unions to make “first contact” with new teachers.

Last year, over half of newly qualified teachers undertook training other than through universities, largely severing the traditional route through which trade unions have been able to recruit new and student teachers.

# Educate, agitate, organise: the need for young NEU activists

The formation of the National Education Union is a historic opportunity to expand education trade unionism, writes **PHIL YEELES**

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As the nature of teacher training changes, it has become more difficult for unions to make ‘first contact’ with new teachers.

As the Sutton Association notes in its motion, the average union recruitment of PGCE students is 95 per cent, whereas it falls to just 50 per cent among School Direct trainees.

This places a heavy responsibility upon workplace representatives, who must make the case for union membership directly, often to an audience for whom the trade union movement is entirely unfamiliar, and who may well be hostile to trade unionism, given its consistently negative depiction in the mainstream media.

This is compounded by the fact that not every school has a union representative; in my own area, Cambridgeshire, we have a significant proportion of schools with no union rep, and therefore no simple route through which to recruit new teachers.

This is detrimental to the entire profession, as trade union effectiveness is predicated upon worker engagement. Difficulty in recruiting members means difficulty in

making gains for all teachers, including non-members.

But it's not quite all doom and gloom. The formation of the National Education Union is a historic opportunity to expand education trade unionism, and one which the NUT has called for for some years.

Unity is strength, as they say, and the incorporation of the ATL and the NUT into a new education union can only help the cause.

The inclusion of teaching assistants and other education staff is also significant; after all, we are all on the same side. With more members, and more resources, the National Education Union will be able to expand recruitment in the coming years.

In an environment where teacher retention is, frankly, alarming (with 45 per cent of respondents to a recent union survey of young teachers saying that they were intending to leave the profession within five years) this will be essential in improving the lot of teachers



and, by extension, pupils.

So here is a call to action: get involved and build your union. If you are a young teacher, you are the future of the union and of the profession, and future gains will only come with passionate activists willing to work for the benefit of teachers, schools and, crucially, children. Become a rep. Join your local committee. Become an officer. Get involved in local campaigns. Spread the word about the union to new teach-

ers within your school. Don't be afraid to rock the boat: remember that we're all in it for the betterment of education, of our working conditions, and of our pupils' learning conditions. If we don't do it for ourselves, it won't happen.

■ *Phil Yeeles is a primary school teacher in Cambridge, and president of the Cambridgeshire Association of the National Education Union (NUT Section). His blog can be found at [www.yeel.es](http://www.yeel.es).*

**Struggle on the Streets**

the best photos from the week's protests around the world

**ABOVE:** A protester, wrapped in a Catalan flag, takes a stand against the arrest of Catalonia's former president Carles Puigdemont**LEFT:** Students of Mehmet Akif College in Kosovo protest against the arrest and deportation of five Turkish teachers in Kosovo, the school is said to be owned by cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blames for an attempted coup two years ago**ABOVE:** Council workers in Athens protest outside the Greek Parliament demanding their contracts are renewed in light of continuing austerity measures**ABOVE:** Protesters fly kites and wave Palestinian flags during a demonstration near the Gaza Strip border for The Great March of Return, a six-week protest that is scheduled to end on May 15**LEFT:** A group of students walk the 50 miles across Wisconsin to the hometown of US representative Paul Ryan, who has blocked gun reform, to call for tighter gun laws following the Florida school massacre



**SILENT VOICES:** Mass silent walk to mark the six-month anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire in west London and (bottom) Sajid Javid MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



**Diane Abbott**

shadow home secretary

# Grenfell tragedy compounded by Tory council crass indifference

Grenfell survivors, fed up with Kensington and Chelsea Council dragging its feet over rehousing, have asked for it to be placed into special measures. The Tory government response will be eagerly awaited

**L**AST week, survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire called for Kensington and Chelsea Council (RBKC) to be placed into special measures after it was confirmed that not everyone would be rehoused within a year of the fire.

This is a community traumatised by the loss of their loved ones and their homes – in what the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) calls the worst fire in terms of fire deaths in living memory – and its views must be heeded.

Yet both the government and the council have been missing in action when it comes to properly listening and responding to the concerns of this community.

Health professionals estimate that the mental health of up to 11,000 people could be affected by the fire. The horror and loss caused is unfathomable and the disregard that has followed is unacceptable.

Writing to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid the community group Grenfell United explained why Kensington and Chelsea Council's failure to meet targets "had to stop."

Its letter reads: "RBKC has failed to meet the targets you set and it has failed the survivors, bereaved and the community," adding that "promise after promise has been broken," and concludes: "the government

now needs to step in and put RBKC under special measures."

Even the government seems to have lost patience with the failing Tory council which, it was recently reported, has spent nearly £21 million in keeping Grenfell Tower survivors in hotel rooms.

The local MP Emma Dent Coad says that "without exception they [those housed in hotels] want permanent homes which suit their needs, but are not being offered anything suitable."

A recent report from the government's official Grenfell recovery taskforce said that the council's record on converting plans into action was "patchy," that progress regarding rehousing had been "too slow" and confirmed that the government's own deadline for rehousing all survivors by the first anniversary of the fire was unlikely to be met in full.

Not only does Theresa May's promise in June to offer rehousing within three weeks lie in tatters, but so does the later promise to rehouse everyone within a year of the fire.

Briefing MPs on the issue in

the House of Commons recently, Javid said that nine months on from the fire, just 62 out of 204 households had been resettled into permanent accommodation, saying there have been "totally unacceptable" delays in the process and admitting that "the suffering that these families have already endured is unimaginable."

In total, 188 had accepted offers of temporary or permanent homes and 128 had moved in. Among these, there were still 82 households in emergency accommodation, mainly hotels, including 25 families and 39 children.

Javid also said that he expected the council to "take on board its recommendations and do more to listen to the community, to improve links with the voluntary sector and to act on the feedback that it gets from the front line," but all the evidence of the last nine months suggests this will not be the case, as Grenfell United have so poignantly pointed out in its letter.

Whoever Javid tries to blame, it's clear that the government

has failed to ensure its own promise is met when it comes to rehousing the victims of last June's catastrophe.

As people in Grenfell join the silent march for justice each month on the monthly anniversary of the tragedy, it becomes clearer that the national government has failed to meet its own commitments.

And when it comes to the broader picture in terms of learning the lessons of what happened at Grenfell, the government continues to refuse to implement improved fire safety regulations – despite the report Lakanal House and Hackitt report recommendations – or to provide the extra funding to ensure that all local councils can retrofit their tower blocks with sprinkler systems that could help make them safer.

In response to a question by Jeremy Corbyn during the Budget last year, Philip Hammond failed to commit to

this extra funding, while a sprinkler system is being retrofitted in Parliament.

If sprinklers are good enough for MPs, they are good enough for residents in tower blocks.

As of February, 301 of 314 high-rise buildings with Grenfell-style cladding have failed safety tests and only seven of the social housing blocks among these have completed cladding replacement.

There are thousands of towers in social housing schemes, student accommodation and privately owned blocks across the country in which residents will be sleeping uneasy.

Additionally, the National Education Union has also raised serious concerns that many new schools are being built without sprinklers, despite guidance to the contrary.

In terms of Grenfell, Labour believes that what the government must do now is give a reasonable timescale when it comes to rehousing.

The government needs to take affirmative action in the face of the continuing failures in this area and house the survivors immediately.

If this means taking the council into special measures to get this moving, then they should listen to calls from the community and do it.

Nationally, the government must set aside vital funding for local authorities and housing associations, allowing them to fit sprinklers into tower blocks and protect the lives of tens of thousands of people across the country. It should also end its reckless cuts to our fire and rescue service.

The government's lack of urgency is painfully apparent, but Labour is not complacent and is committed to investing in our housing and safety.

**■ You can follow Diane at [www.twitter.com/HackneyAbbott](http://www.twitter.com/HackneyAbbott) and [www.facebook.com/DianeAbbott](http://www.facebook.com/DianeAbbott)**



## ★ Star comment

### Spanish repression should cease – along with the Western silence which colludes with it

IMAGINE the scenario in an autonomous national region within the Russian Federation.

A majority of elected deputies in the region's parliament have decided to hold a referendum on independence from Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin, the Russian government and the courts declare that the referendum contravenes the Russian constitution.

But the regionalists (or "nationalists," as some call themselves) go ahead and hold it anyway.

The majority of electors stay away from the ballot, as national police forces try to close polling stations by force, while the overwhelming majority of voters choose separation.

Subsequently, the separatist leadership announces independence but refuses to confirm its decision unequivocally to the Moscow authorities, who then impose direct rule, dissolve the regional parliament and order fresh elections in which the regionalists win a majority.

Despite this, regionalist leaders are accused of fomenting rebellion – although they have no record of inciting violence – and some flee the country as others are arrested to face trial and very long prison sentences.

The Russian government applies for international warrants to have the exiles detained and sent back to Russia for trial.



Throughout such developments, would most European and other Western governments have remained silent, or said nothing more than that the Russian constitution should be upheld?

Rather more likely, the air would have been thick with denunciations of Putin thuggery and heavy-handedness.

The arrests would have been seen as proof of Putin's authoritarian rule, aided and abetted by the Moscow regime's judicial puppets.

The international arrest warrants would have been contemptuously rejected with lectures about the West's cherished democratic values and freedoms.

But these developments refer to Spain and Catalonia, not to some region in Russia – hence the absence of international outrage.

It is the right-wing Spanish government which sends in police mobs, dissolves elected assemblies, arrests and imprisons non-violent politicians and seeks to keep them in jail for years on end.

And it is Western governments and the EU which issue barely a squeak of criticism of the Madrid authorities.

Ironically, it is the Russian government which has spoken out loudest against repression and in favour of dialogue to resolve the conflict in Spain and Catalonia peacefully, constitutionally and democratically.



Meanwhile, Catalonia's ex-president Carles Puigdemont was taken from his car by German police last weekend while trying to reach Denmark and Catalan politician Clara Ponsati was arrested just a few days ago in Edinburgh. Both now face extradition to Spain.

The Catalan separatists acted unwisely in calling last October's referendum, with no clear mandate from the Catalan people to hold it in the way and at the time that they did. Puigdemont and his cohorts should be accountable for any gross misuse of public funds.

Politically, the Morning Star aligns itself with the majority of Catalonia's communists and socialists, who prefer federalism and working-class unity to separation.

But we also recognise that separatist and nationalist leaders are unlikely to receive a fair trial and that, in any event, political show trials will not resolve the conflict in Catalonia. Spanish repression should cease – along with the Western silence which colludes with it.

# End the mistreatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military courts

The state of Israel is believed to be the only country in the world in which an estimated 500-700 children are prosecuted in military courts each year, writes **BERNARD REGAN**

**T**HE United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.

Around 140 countries are signatories to the convention, including the state of Israel. The government of Israel has been criticised however by Unicef for stating that it is not applicable to children in the West Bank, which it has occupied since June 1967.

In the eyes of the convention anyone under the age of 18 should be treated as a child, yet this is not the case for Palestinian children arrested by the Israeli military in the West Bank.

According to the Israeli Prison Services, the number of children held in the Israeli prison system between February and November 2017 amounted to an average each month of some 310, of whom 60 were between the ages of 12 and 15.

The state of Israel is believed to be the only country in the world in which an estimated 500-700 children are prosecuted in military courts each year.

These figures are similar to those quoted in the June 2012 independent report Children in Military Custody, produced by a group of lawyers which included the Right Honourable Sir Stephen Sedley, a former Judge of the Court of Appeal, and Baroness Patricia Scotland QC, a specialist in children and family law. Their visit, which took place



under the Conservative government, was funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The British report said that while the age of criminal responsibility for Palestinian and Israeli children was the same at 12 years, the minimum age for custodial sentences for the two was not.

For Israeli children the age was 14 while for Palestinian children it was 12. Again although it was generally the case that Israeli children had the right to have their parents present during questioning, the Palestinian children did not.

Similarly there were vast differences in other aspects of the treatment of Palestinian and Israeli children.

The length of time a Palestinian child might be held before

seeing a judge was eight days in comparison to 12-24 hours for the Israeli child.

There were big discrepancies in the length of time a child might be held in detention without charge – some 188 days for the Palestinian, in contrast to 40 days for the Israeli child.

However one of the most shocking aspects of the treatment of Palestinian children by the Israeli military is that of the whole process of arrest and detention reported by Defence for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P).

According to its latest report, of the 137 affidavits collected during 2017 of West Bank children detained and prosecuted under Israeli military courts, some 74.5 per cent endured some form of physical violence

following arrest and 62 per cent were verbally abused, intimidated or humiliated.

Additionally of these 137 children, 26 were held in solitary confinement for an average period of 12 days and one was held for 23 days.

This is in complete contravention of the convention on the Rights of the Child to which the Israeli government is a signatory.

In a DCI-P report of 2011 the list of abuses included blindfolding, strip-searching, physical violence, extracting confessions during interrogation, documents presented in Hebrew (a language most Palestinian children would not know, at least in written form), transfer on floor of vehicles, hand ties and other abuses. On July 8 2013, replying to a

letter written by Kiri Tunks on behalf of Action for Palestinian Children and co-signed by Sir Geoffrey Bindman QC and Lisa Nandy MP, the then Conservative minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for the area, Alistair Burt MP said: "I share your concerns about the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons."

The letter went on to explain the representations that have been made, but the truth is that little change has taken place.

The findings in the British lawyers' report were largely echoed by those contained in the Unicef report Children in Israeli Military Detention produced in February 2013. They produced 40 and 38 recommendations respectively. None of which have been implemented.

Tragically this matter has not gone away and it was for that reason that 138 members of Parliament signed the early day motion (EDM 563) tabled on November 20 2017 by Richard Burden on the Military Detention of Palestinian Children by Israeli Authorities.

Among the Labour Party signatories were Hilary Benn, Chris Bryant, Kate Hoey, Clive Lewis, Grahame Morris, Laura Pidcock, Dennis Skinner, Andy Slaughter and Stephen Twigg.

Conservative Party signatories include Crispin Blunt and Peter Bottomley. Members of the Liberal Party, Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, Green Party and the Independent member for North Down also signed.

The plight of Palestinian children held in military detention by the Israeli authorities has not improved since the two reports were written.

In addition to those challenges, children in the refugee camps supervised by the United Nations relief and works agency face a major threat to their education with US President Donald Trump's threat to cut UNWRA funding by \$350 million.

If implemented, it could lead to half a million Palestinian children in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon being without schools. An estimated 30,000 teachers, doctors, nurses and other staff would lose their jobs.

These children, already living in the most difficult circumstances, face an even bleaker future. As a first step, ask your MP to sign EDM 563.

The situation is critical and set to become worse. Standing by and doing nothing should not be an option.

If you are attending the National Education Union Conference in Brighton then make a start by coming to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting on Monday April 2, at 5.45 pm in the Syndicate Room inside the Brighton Conference Centre where you will hear reports from the 2017 and 2018 union delegations who, among other activities, visited schools in the West Bank.

■ Bernard Regan is a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and was a member of the NEU 2018 delegation.

**T**HIS weekend clergy will be informing their congregations that there is more to Easter than

chocolate eggs and bunnies.

No doubt they would prefer their congregations, politicians and the public to focus on the suffering of Jesus and the meaning of his death by crucifixion.

And perhaps our hypothetical clergy have a point. The earliest traditions about Jesus that gave rise to the Easter story suggest that he was brutally killed because of overturning the tables of the moneychangers and dovesellers in the Jerusalem Temple.

This was at Passover when relations between the Jewish populace and the Roman authorities would have been tense, not least during a festival remembering the Israelites escaping slavery under another imperial regime.

Whatever the precise explanations given for Jesus's execution, it seems that the Roman authorities were convinced enough that he was a seditious threat and so he was put to death as a bandit.

Roman crucifixion was a cruel, humiliating and painful death, partly designed to let onlookers know who was running the world.

But what should have been a failure for the followers of Jesus was instead rethought in sacrificial terms and as something central to the early Jesus movement by picking up on Jewish stories about martyrdom and their inspirational and redemptive significance for the ongoing survival of the community.

The most famous of these was (and is) Hanukkah, the annual commemoration of the Jewish revolt against Seleucid rule which also included gory stories about martyrs and their function in keeping Jewish ideas alive.

Stories about martyrs and martyrdom from the ancient world are unafraid of explaining the gruesome details.

Today, this is something typically forgotten in popular understandings of Easter where we are more likely to see manufactured controversies about whether the word "Easter" is mentioned in connection with chocolate eggs, something to which Theresa May pandered last Easter.

Politicians regularly promote an Easter that is understood in banal terms, though if we look carefully there is always an ideological twist.

David Cameron, for instance, used the Easter story as an occasion to justify his intensification of neoliberalism.

He even used an Easter reception to ground his outsourcing of the state by claiming that Jesus invented the "big society" (remember that?) 2,000 years ago and that the Tories were simply carrying out the Lord's work today.

Of course, the state does have concepts of death and its sacrificial benefits but regulates death accordingly.

The deaths of civilians in wars can be rendered euphemistically and conveniently as "collateral damage" or merely

# Easter and the return of martyrdom

## JAMES CROSSLEY sees parallels between the death of Jesus on the cross and the martyrdom of those fighting for the Rojava revolution today



**BRAVE:** Fighters of the Bob Crow Brigade and (below) a memorial to Anna Campbell



"unfortunate" but necessary for the greater good.

The death of a soldier or police officer, or someone dying for their family, can be remembered as an acceptable or heroic sacrifice.

But the language of martyrdom remains alien and can conjure up notions of irrationality, particularly when associated with a group like Isis.

As with the crucifixion of Jesus for Christians, martyrdom may remain a concept known in contemporary English socialism, but it is still a relatively harmless concept typically displaced to a heroic past when mouthing the words to The Red Flag.

However, martyrdom in its more uncomfortable sense once again came to the fore with

the death of the activist Anna Campbell in Afrin.

Campbell had gone to fight with the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) for the progressive Rojava revolution.

The motivations of those who have volunteered to help or fight in Rojava have been misunderstood by certain commentators, such as Simon Jenkins in the Guardian who thought she should have used her skills and idealism to "more productive ends" such as aid projects and thought her fighting in Afrin "bizarre."

More generally, in some of the reporting of the deaths of British volunteers prior to Campbell, there has been a tendency to focus on their anti-Isis motivations while claiming it is only the foreign Kurds who interpret such deaths as martyrdoms.

Since Campbell's death there has finally been some attempt to understand why people like her have dedicated their lives to such a dangerous cause in a context where martyrdom is normative.

What we know about Campbell is that she was a committed activist prepared to take great risks for her political beliefs. But we do have more detailed ideological explanations from other British and Irish volunteers in Rojava about their revolutionary rationale.

Named of course after the

great trade union leader, one group of volunteers called the Bob Crow Brigade have publicly discussed their reasoning and they openly embraced the language of martyrdom.

They unashamedly took the term "immortal martyrs" from the Kurdish idiom *Sehid Namin*, to denote those who have died for the cause, in this case the socialist cause.

The Bob Crow Brigade were fusing these Kurdish ideas with half-remembered martyrdom traditions from the radical and revolutionary left and the ways in which the deaths of figures such as James Connolly, Rosa Luxemburg, Fred Hampton, Che Guevara and, more recently, Ivana Hoffmann, were understood.

The Bob Crow Brigade updated The Red Flag. Indeed, in one widely circulated picture associated with the Bob Crow Brigade, the revolutionaries were pictured on a roof with the graffiti: "With the blood of the martyrs our flag is red."

This was more than an annual mouthing of a socialist hymn about a glorious past. Death for the Rojava revolution was happening all around them and could happen to them.

But the Bob Crow Brigade argued that martyrdom, and everything it entailed, could jolt the Western neoliberal

mindset into realising that violence will be used against those who want to defend the gains made by the left.

By embracing notions of martyrdom, groups like the Bob Crow Brigade can be understood as developing means of coping with the possibility of imminent death.

Martyrdom for these volunteers can also be seen as a means of constructing a degree of political agency in the face of the might of organisations like Isis, as well as providing a counter-narrative to the idea that those fighting for the Rojava revolution were to be labelled "terrorists."

But martyrdom was also assumed by such volunteers to be an inevitability when fighting against the seemingly indestructible force of capitalism and challenging the dominant Western acceptance that there is no coherent alternative imaginable.

This was understood as reclaiming the traditional view of revolution and liberation, namely that violent rupture in capitalism is a near inevitability if overthrowing capitalism is to be taken seriously.

**W**ith parallels in Turkish leftism, martyrdom was understood to be a form of vanguardism or a specialist act which would function as an inspirational example of the significance of the Rojava revolution back home and show the possibilities available for growing the British and Irish left.

Martyrdom from the perspective of these volunteers was also constructed in terms of hope and motivation for the future and the continual building of a communal society.

But in this understanding of death, the socialist or communist ideal was understood to emerge in a victorious future. Those lucky enough to live in these times will have benefited from the actions of the fallen martyrs.

The martyrs would be remembered for the consequences of their actions and it is in this sense that groups such as the Bob Crow Brigade could argue with sincerity that the "martyrs are immortal."

We should not generalise about the motivations of all the volunteers who have gone to Rojava, but we do have the accounts by volunteers publicly available to see that there are thought-out explanations.

These volunteers have put themselves in incredible danger to support progressive politics in the face of fascistic threats.

It is little wonder that they have brought back with them the language of martyrdom in its most stark sense of dying for a humane cause.

Following our hypothetical clergy this Easter, those of us who lead relatively comfortable lives, who can barely comprehend these sorts of risks, can at least have the decency to acknowledge that these are people whose political reasoning should be appreciated on their own terms.

# Billy Strachan – just ‘anot

As Britain marks 100 years of the RAF defending the empire by dive-bombing and shooting freedom-fighting locals, **PETER FROST** remembers one RAF hero with quite a different story to tell

**A**S THE entire country celebrates the centenary of the founding of the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1918 it would be all too easy to believe the airborne heroes of the defeat of nazism were all Boris Johnson lookalikes who took off from the playing fields of Eton. In fact 574 Battle of Britain pilots came from countries other than Britain. Over 7,000 West Indian men and women served in the RAF and there were thousands of others of every nation who answered Britain's call and helped to defeat Hitler and his nazis. Others of every race and colour came from Africa, the Indian sub-continent indeed almost every corner of the Earth.

Here we'll tell the story of just one of them. It's a great story, interesting enough that Lenny Henry once tried to make it into a film. Sadly his script – A Wing and a Prayer – never made it to the screen. A film about a black hero was fine, but not one about a black communist hero it seems.

This is the story of Billy Strachan, a young Jamaican descended from a family of slaves. He was one of the very first volunteers arriving in England in March 1940, aged 18, just three months after he had left school.

He had sold his beloved saxophone, his bike, indeed all his possessions to raise the boat fare to Britain. With £2.10 in his pocket and a suitcase containing one change of clothes he arrived in a dank, wet, most un-Caribbean-like London.

After a night in the YMCA he went straight to the Air Ministry in Kingsway to try to join up. But this was racist London where “No dogs, no blacks” signs were common in rental premises. “Nigger” was so common a word that famous squadron leaders even used it to name their dogs.

The RAF guard on duty outside the ministry told him to shove off, in far from respectful terms. A sergeant came by and told Strachan, who had come nearly 5,000 miles to join the fight against Hitler, that he and his sort should go back where they came from and join up there.

Finally a young officer came by. He told Strachan he was educated and knew precisely where Jamaica was. It was in

west Africa. Strachan decided it might be best not to correct him but to follow him inside. Here he was given strict medical, education and intelligence tests. The next morning he was wearing his RAF uniform.

After 12 weeks of basic training as a wireless operator and air gunner, he was made a sergeant. He joined a squadron of bombers making nightly raids over heavily defended German industrial targets.

Strachan's first crew were from various countries of what was still the British empire. They flew a bomber named Vizagapatam, named after the people of the Indian district who paid for the plane.

Strachan flew 30 raids over enemy territory. Others were not so lucky. The casualty rate in Bomber Harris's command was very high.

Those heroic 30 tours could have entitled Strachan to a job on the ground but instead he applied for pilot training.

A fast learner, Strachan was allowed to fly solo after only seven hours' training. His instructors were less keen on his tricks and joyriding and a crash landing in training severely damaged his hip, but he still qualified as a pilot in record time.

Then came 15 missions as a bomber pilot. He said: “I suppose we had the overconfidence of youth. We never thought it would happen to us.” In fact one raid resulted in a German bullet in the leg.

Sergeant Strachan was promoted twice more, first to flying officer and then flight lieutenant. Promotion brought a personal servant, his own batman. The man had actually been batman to King George VI. Strachan described him as a real smooth Jeeves type.

“I was a little coloured boy from the Caribbean and I instinctively called him ‘Sir,’” Strachan recalls.

“No, Sir,” the batman hastily corrected, “It is I who call you ‘Sir.’”

Strachan would become a legend among the RAF aircrew. He was famous for his avoidance of German fighters.

“The trick,” he explained, “was to wait until the enemy was right on your tail and, at the last minute, cut the engine, sending your lumbering bomber into a dive, letting the fighter overshoot harmlessly above.”

Strachan's reputation grew but on his 15th trip as a bomber pilot his nerve finally snapped, before he had even left Lincolnshire: “I remember so clearly. I was carrying a huge bomb destined for German shipping. Our flight path was directly over Lincoln city and its magnificent cathedral perched high on a hill. It was a foggy night, with visibility down to 100 yards.

“The climb to clear the cathedral spire was always difficult, particularly with a heavy bomb load. I asked my engineer to make sure we were on course to clear the spire on top of the cathedral tower. He replied: ‘We are just passing it.’ I looked out, shocked that the spire was not where I expected, below us, but just a very few feet beyond our wingtip. I hadn't seen the spire at all – and I was the pilot!

“There and then my nerve went. I knew I couldn't go on – this was the end of me as a pilot! I flew out to sea, dropped my bomb load and flew back to the airfield.” He would never pilot a bomber again.

After the war, most of the black airmen and airwomen returned to Africa or the Caribbean, justly proud of the part they had played in the defeat of the nazis.

Some did stay only to find post-war Britain was not universally welcoming to those with darker skin, even war heroes.

After the war Strachan served as a liaison officer in the RAF sorting out racial disturbances. Defending some of the cases gave him a taste for law and advocacy.

Once demobbed, he returned to Jamaica for a short while and tried for various jobs. Racism

would often raise its head, Strachan's family were quite light-skinned for Jamaicans – what islanders call “high colour.”

At one job interview he was asked: “Which of your parents is European?” Billy was having none of this. “Neither of my parents is European,” he snapped back before turning on his heel and leaving without another word.

In the end Strachan resolved that he would study law in Britain, so that he could eventually go back to the Caribbean with skills useful for the liberation struggle.

A close friend, Dr David Lewis, who would become famous as a round-the-world-yachtsman, expert on traditional Polynesian sailing craft and an east London GP and huge enthusiast for the new National Health Service, introduced him to Marxism and Strachan became a communist.

Much later in life, he would tell one of his three sons, Chris: “Because of the way my life was to go if I hadn't discovered Marxism I would have undoubtedly ended up in a mental institution.”

Strachan's overriding passion was his hatred of racism. He always described it as a deeply vile philosophy. A more physical problem was his crushed hip.

An air crash early in his career had left him with a really painful leg. It wasn't until 1952 that it was operated on by a communist doctor friend in Prague. Even then he would walk with a noticeable limp for the rest of his life.

Post-war his ambition was to help get the British out of the West Indies and he dedicated his life to this but he knew he would need to live and support himself so he also set about building a professional career.

What he actually built was a powerful reputation in the world of justice becoming senior clerk to the magistrates in courts all over London.

He would author several definitive legal guides on subjects from drink driving to adoption.

Alongside his professional reputation he earned an equally powerful position as a leader of the anti-imperialist struggle, particularly all across the Caribbean.

In the Communist Party (CPGB) Strachan became a leading worker on the party's

**RAF LEGEND:** Strachan (first from left) was famous for his avoidance of German fighters



“

A fast learner, Strachan was allowed to fly solo after only seven hours' training

Caribbean advisory committee.

Along with Fenner Brockway, Kay Beauchamp and Tony Gilbert, he would found the Movement for Colonial Freedom (now Liberation).

He would spend much time and effort working in this and other broad organisations fighting racism.

This work across the world made him many friends and political allies but some serious enemies too. In the red-baiting height of the late 1940s and early 1950s Strachan was flying to Jamaica with Ferdinand Smith, the Jamaican and US communist trade union leader.

**T**he British government had tried to ban them from international travel and US McCarthyite anti-communist forces diverted Strachan and Smith's plane to take them to jail in New York.

Strachan recalled that “ironically, I could see the Statue of Liberty through the bars of my cell window.” This illegal arrest sparked a major diplomatic incident and it took a huge campaign led by British Labour MPs like Maurice Orbach to free the pair.

Back in London wherever Strachan and his wife Joyce

# ‘Another bloody immigrant’



Pic: The Strachan Family

set up home, the flat or house would become a both a welcome refuge and a hotbed of political activity for all sorts of Caribbean and other colonial radicals, communists and freedom fighters.

In 1952 Strachan launched one of the first left-wing newspapers for Caribbean people living in Britain. Strachan envisaged his Caribbean News as a tool to combat the right-wing West Indian immigrant paper the Gleaner.

Ranji Chandisingh, another communist, joined Strachan as editor. The pair would spend many an evening together discussing politics or putting the

latest issue together.

Strachan went on to introduce Chandisingh to his friends, Cheddi and Janet Jagan, leader and general secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana. Chandisingh would become a Guyana minister and eventually Guyanese ambassador to the Soviet Union.

This is not the place to tell the detailed story of Guyana's long and troubled fight to throw off British imperialism's yoke but suffice to say much of the planning was carried out in any one of Strachan's humble front rooms.

One comrade to whom Strachan rented a room was Trevor

Carter from Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

In 1954 Carter came to London as a student. He moved in with the Strachans and soon joined the Young Communist League (YCL).

Carter's cousin, Claudia Jones, was the communist famed for founding the Notting Hill Carnival in 1958, in the aftermath of the Notting Hill riots of that year.

Strachan had seen the Notting Hill riots for himself. Indeed, on one occasion he had averted much of the violence by encouraging young West Indians not to respond to racist provocation. Strachan's

home was the scene of many an early discussion of the carnival – now Britain's biggest anti-racist cultural event.

In 1963, on Strachan's advice Cheddi Jagan invited Carter to come and work with the People's Progressive Party in Guyana.

Carter spent three years developing the country's outstanding education programme.

When he returned to London Carter would play a major part in developing progressive education policies.

He joined the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) as a senior education liaison officer,

later becoming the head of equal opportunities. Carter was offered an MBE for services to education but refused to accept the award.

In 1947 Strachan attended the Caribbean Labour Congress (CLC) in Trinidad. The CLC was an organisation uniting all the people of the British-controlled Caribbean and in fact dated back to the 1920s.

He returned to London having agreed to set up a branch in the capital of the empire – the heart of the web of evil and exploitation that was the British empire.

Strachan was elected secretary of the London branch that represented in London all the British-controlled Caribbean territories fighting for national independence. Under Strachan's leadership the CLC became a leading anti-imperialist organisation.

Strachan's political circle included Britain's first two black peers, Learie Constantine and David Pitt. Others he met with and advised in his London home included his long-term comrade, Forbes Burnham from Guyana, Michael Manley from Jamaica, Errol Barrow from Barbados and Jack Keishall from Grenada.

Strachan worked closely with Granticy Adams, president of the Barbados Labour Party; Vere Bird, president of the Antigua Labour Party and Robert Bradshaw of St Kitts and Nevis.

A key figure in these struggles was Richard Hart, the secretary of the CLC, who was based in Jamaica and who worked closely with Strachan and his many London-based comrades.

Just a year before his death in 1998 Strachan spoke at a memorial meeting for Cheddi Jagan. His speech is a masterly summing up of the fight for freedom in the Caribbean. Sadly it is far too big a story to tell here.

“

Because of the way my life was to go if I hadn't discovered Marxism I would have undoubtedly ended up in a mental institution

Strachan finished his speech to the packed meeting with a final tribute to Cheddi Jagan.

In reality that tribute will serve us well as a lasting epitaph to Strachan and the many other comrades who, after playing their part in defeating Hitler, knew there was another just as important battle to win.

“We passionately believed that the abolition of exploitation of man by man, oppression and human degradation and then a fair distribution of social wealth could be achieved not simply by superficial measures, but through a deep-going transformation of the existing socio-economic order.

“We instilled these ideas in our minds. They served to inspire the imagination of our people. We were internationalists. Ours was a global and dialectical outlook that linked our own many-sided concerns to the multifaceted struggles and trends taking place globally.

“We were certainly not passive observers but active participants in various events and actions. We were workers, thinkers, internationalists and socialists.”

**H**e never lost his political skill and his ability to attract significant political allies. Towards the end of his life, Strachan, who had always loved horse riding, played a key role in founding the Disabled Riders Association.

Skilfully Strachan took the vice-president role but left the more prestigious position of president to Anne, the Princess Royal.

Strachan concluded his remarks at the Cheddi Jagan meeting by declaring he believed Jagan was the greatest Caribbean political figure of his era. That may be true, but no single man or woman deserves the praise alone.

It takes many people, and in the still to be won battle for a free Caribbean, Strachan and a hundred other comrades also deserve a place of honour as heroes of that struggle.

Strachan finished his working life as he started it, flying high in the battle to liberate the workers of the world. It is a battle we have still to win.

So when you are looking at those TV and newspaper tributes to the part the RAF played over its 100-year history in places like Korea, Aden, the Falklands, the Gulf, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq and 100 other squalid imperialist adventures, just remember there were other sorts of heroes too who played their parts in far more decent and honourable battles.

## WEATHER OUTLOOK



### TODAY

Wet and windy across southern and central parts of the UK, along with some wintry showers across northeast England and eastern Scotland. Drier and clearer elsewhere with some patchy frost.

### NEXT FEW DAYS

Most places having a drier but rather cloudy Easter Day. Heavy rain will move north later Sunday into Monday, turning to snow in places. Staying cold and unsettled into Tuesday.

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## Fighting Fund

**YOU'VE RAISED: £16,376**      **WE NEED: £1,624**



THE EAGLE-EYED comrades out there will notice that we haven't made a penny more for today's total. We are not worried, however, as it's bank holiday weekend so there is no post and no staff to count the dosh.

Unfortunately though this does mean that you'll have to wait until Wednesday's paper to find out if we did indeed smash through our target (and I

have high hopes that we will) as the staff won't be able to total up the figures until Tuesday.

So, by all means, don't let that stop you sending through your money, online or through the post – it will all help, big or small as the more we raise the better the chance this paper has at surviving.

And I'm sure you'll agree that considering today's bumper

edition – which will no doubt keep you occupied inside while the weather's miserable outside – it's more vital than ever that the paper survives.

After all there aren't many newspapers out there which will report on the daily struggles suffered by teachers and other education staff.

These hardworking teachers carry out one of the most

important jobs around and it's up to us to show them our support and willingness to campaign alongside with them, whether they're asking for better wages or better deals on their well-earned pensions.

You can be sure the Star will support their battles.

And don't forget – no edition on Monday, so we'll see you on Tuesday.

### Give by post...

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## Commie Chef

### Banana cake

THIS is a cheap and easy cake to make and a very nice one to eat. It's not too sweet and the bananas contrast nicely with the spicy flavour of the cake itself. This recipe is adapted from

one in a French cookbook whose title translates literally as Eat Healthily for Three Times Nothing (Claude and Emmanuel Aubert Manger sain pour 3 fois rien). This recipe might cost a little more than that, but not much.

### Ingredients

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3 oz/80g sugar
- 3.5floz/10cl milk
- 200g self-raising flour
- level tsp bicarbonate of soda

- ½ tsp cinnamon or mixed cake spice
- 6 medium bananas, not too ripe, quite firm, cut in half lengthways

### What to do

Preheat the oven to 210°C/410°F mark 7.

Add the sugar to the beaten eggs and mix well before adding the milk.

Mix together the bicarb, spice and flour in a separate bowl and add this a little at a time to the wet ingredients, mixing in well.

Line a cake tin with cooking parchment, or grease it well with butter or margarine.

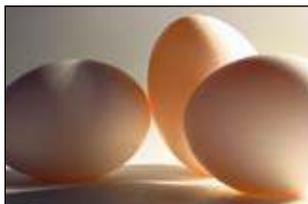
Lay the halved bananas on the bottom and pour the batter over them.

Bake for 40 minutes and test with a skewer or knitting needle.

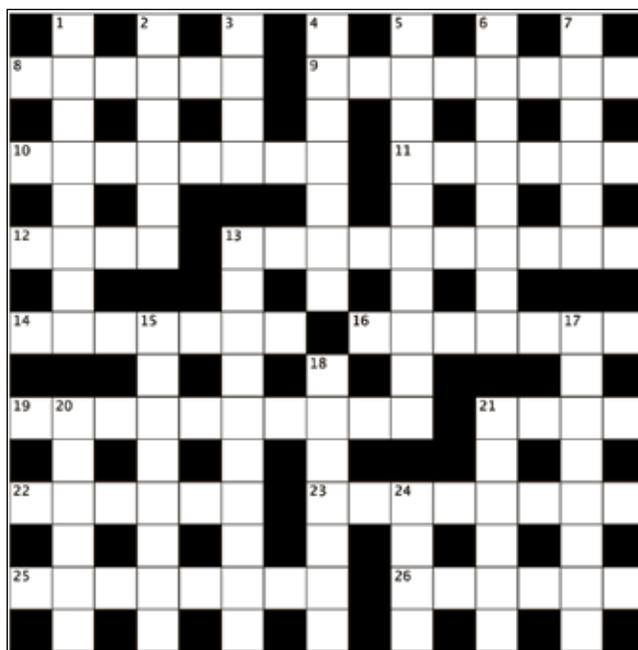
If it comes out dry, it's ready. If not, give it another five minutes.

When it's baked through, let it stand in the tin for a couple of minutes then turn out onto a cake stand or any kind of grill that will stop the bottom going soggy.

There's nowt worse than a soggy bottom.



## CROSSWORD 1,232 set by Alamet



### ACROSS

8. Quickly remove top of van in river (6)
9. Suitable notice of match (8)
10. Exchanged card (club) inside 26 (8)
11. Democrat's second in command holds electronic instrument (6)
12. Knit many extra small halter tops (4)
13. Nuisance is about, makes slow progress following article on parchment (10)
14. Slab of ice in offensive trifle (7)
16. Coincide on circuit (7)
19. Creator of "Organ Trio I: Fantastique" (10)
21. Star's refusal to go to museum (4)
22. Lots of marks (6)
23. Dwarf needs herbal brew containing a lot of ice (8)
25. Son reaching a climax with oration (8)
26. Sign worker found inside outbuilding (4-2)

### DOWN

1. Approach cartoon organ? (4,4)
2. Partners long to tell (6)
- 3, 24. Test pencil with everything or leave it until later (8)
4. Within endless dance there's footwear (7)
5. Elders move around rarely (in a 13 way) (6,4)
6. Manager each leaves for new eye protection (3,5)
7. Funds old punishment 11 (6)
13. Tractable, accepting many years using more words than necessary (10)
15. Getting out of Spain, raining ruined African (8)
17. Champion one, God willing, taking pancake up to the top of Everest (8)
18. Exotic road over mountains (7)
20. City included in fully developed procedure (6)
21. Common, but not hit when climbing (6)
24. see 3

Solution on Monday...

## QUIZMASTER with William Sitwell

### TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- 1 In what year did the National Union of Elementary Teachers change to the National Union of Teachers?
- 2 Which bird is also known as the sea swallow?
- 3 What would you find on a map's cartouche?

### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. Normally in cookery, a tablespoon is equal to three what? **Teaspoons**
2. The TV series *Only When I Laugh* was set in which type of building? **A hospital (right)**
3. Ragnar is the name of the main character in which TV series which began in 2013? **Vikings.**



## DAILY SUDOKU (bank hols challenge)

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

Solution on Monday...

# TV and Radio Weekly Preview

with Amy Smith



**Saturday Hamlet, 9pm BBC2**  
 Watching Andrew Scott is always fascinating, his sorrowful face roams between delicate emotion and overblown performance. Here, the Sherlock baddie takes on Hamlet, a role that couldn't be better suited for his

contorting talents. This three-hour modern-dress production was filmed during its acclaimed run at the Almeida theatre in London. Purists may be pleasantly surprised by how CCTV and rolling news bulletins fit so snugly into Shakespearean storytelling.

## Film

**Sunday Selma, 11pm BBC2**

This film is not perfect, the rousing music as white people finally realise that racism exists is truly annoying, however, the intimate scenes where Martin Luther King confronts his fears combine brilliantly with the brutality of the scenes in Selma.

## Documentary

**Tuesday The Abortion car Journey, 1.30pm BBC World Service**  
 Women from Texas explain how they manage their health in a state with one of the most restrictive abortion rights in the US.

**Tuesday The Long View, 9am BBC Radio 4**

It's difficult to take a breath without another Donald Trump drama erupting so this slow news look at the US administration is welcome, comparing Trump's trade plans to the so-called "founding fathers."

**Wednesday My Dad, the Peace Deal and Me, 9pm BBC1**

Comedian Patrick Kielty dives into his own personal history to explore the Troubles in Northern Ireland - his father was killed by paramilitary gunmen in 1988. Kielty's focus is on just how successful the peace process has been.

## Drama

**Saturday Moonraker, 2.30pm BBC Radio 4**  
 Toby Stephens steps into an unseen sharp suit for this dramatisation that stays faithful to Ian Fleming's original text.

**Monday Kiss Me First, 10pm Channel 4**  
 I grew up with the brazen teen series Skins so have high hopes for co-creator Bryan Elsley's new offering that sees two unlikely friends find solace within a virtual reality game. Action will actually flip between real and animated worlds.

## Entertainment

**Tuesday Cunk on Britain, 10pm BBC2**  
 Philomena Cunk was a definite highlight on Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe. Here, Diane Morgan stays in character as Cunk, blows through British history, asking awkward questions of experts and satirising the classic history documentary format.

**Friday Have I Got News for You, 9.30pm BBC1**  
 Jeremy Paxman steps up to the middle chair for the latest series of the news quiz that can be both funny and teeth-clenchingly annoying.

## Sport

**Wednesday Commonwealth Games, 12.15am BBC1**  
 Of course the Commonwealth Games is a bizarre notion but I'm all for watching more sports, especially when the Brownlee brothers are competing in the triathlon.

## What to miss

**Saturday: Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway, 7pm ITV**  
 In the event that you read other newspapers than the Morning Star you will be fully aware that Ant McPartlin has headed back to rehab, leaving best mate and presenting partner Declan Donnelly (pictured) to front this ghastly show on his own. Will he manage it? Can the audience cope without their banter? Is this worth staying in for on a Saturday night? Yes, yes and no.



## Yesterday's sudoku

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

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## Arts ahead



### STAFFORD/TOURING COMEDY

#### Grumpy Old Women to the Rescue

Gatehouse Theatre  
Eastgate Street

March 31

Fed up with flogging their guts out and always having to be in charge, the Grumpy Old Women – Jenny Eclair, Dillie Keane and Lizzie Roper – have put their knobbly old feet up in retirement, free at last to practise their extreme colouring-in, ukelele orchestra and novelty fudge-making. But with the world in a bigger mess than ever before, is there anything that can tempt them off their backsides to unleash their superpowers and once more come to the rescue? Ninety minutes of “full-fat, batteries included” comedy promised. Touring until end of June. [grumpyoldwomenlive.com](http://grumpyoldwomenlive.com)

### LONDON DANCE

#### Balletboyz: 14 Days

Sadler's Wells  
Rosebery Avenue, EC1  
April 26-28



After its premiere in the autumn of last year, Balletboyz return with this unique project – four pieces created in just 14 days with choreographers Javier de Frutos, Craig Revel Horwood, Ivan Perez and Christopher Wheeldon. With music by Scott Walker, Charlotte Harding, Joby Talbot and Keaton Henson, they've created a series of works playing with the concept of balance and imbalance, described by one critic as “a paradox of muscular impact and weightless flight” never been seen before on stage. [sadlerswells.com](http://sadlerswells.com)

### LONDON MUSICAL

#### Caroline, Or Change

Hampstead Theatre  
Eton Avenue, NW3  
Until April 21



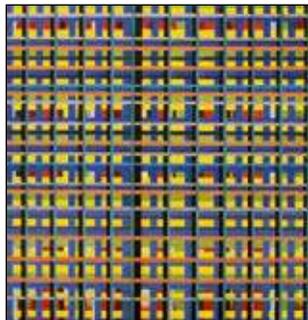
With Donald Trump in the White House and protest in the air, this 2003 musical by Tony Kushner and the composer Jeanine Tesori gets a timely revival. Inspired in part by Kushner's own boyhood, it's an almost entirely sung-through story of race, religion and the grotesque economics of exploitation starring the great Sharon D Clarke (pictured). Recommended. [hampsteadtheatre.com](http://hampsteadtheatre.com)

### NEWCASTLE EXHIBITION

#### Sean Scully

Until May 28  
Hatton Gallery  
King's Road  
Laing Art Gallery

This major retrospective of work by Sean Scully, renowned as the master of post-minimalist abstraction, revisits two seminal sites in his career – Newcastle, where he studied painting at the university, and Liverpool. On show in two galleries are works demonstrating the confidence of Scully's earlier works and his continued fascination with stripes and the spaces in between. [hattongallery.org.uk/laingart-gallery.org.uk](http://hattongallery.org.uk/laingart-gallery.org.uk)



## Attila the Stockbroker

on the road diary

# Barnstorming all over with a footy break at the oasis of Wrexham FC

**J**UST surfaced to write this week's column after a wonderful band gig last night at the Dublin Castle in Camden, the first in London with my brand new “1649” Barnstormer.

Word is getting around about the fact that we're moving in uncharted territory – mixing early music and punk with songs and tunes based around the time of the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and other radical visionaries of the English revolution.

Our substantial audience included a fully kitted out Roundhead re-enactor soldier, an expert on John Milton and Andrew Marvell's poetry and a bloke who's written a book about the Commonwealth era of 1649-1660. Plus, of course, the usual wide mix of poetry fans, punk rockers and activists including, I'm happy to say, four old anti-fascist comrades from the gig and street battles of the '80s. Ancient and modern indeed.

That gig was the fifth in a week: we started last Friday at Centrala in Birmingham, a lovely community space hosting all kinds of events with beautiful acoustics for the ancient sounds of the crumhorn, cor-

namuse and recorders which feature so strongly in the sound of our band.

Some representatives of the more traditional end of the early music community turned up, and sadly, soon were gone, hands over ears. “It's too loud!” That's why it's called Renaissancecore, folks.

But we have a solution. Read on...

The next day, last Saturday, we were playing in Wrexham and that afternoon I took the opportunity to visit the Racecourse Ground for the local team's match with Maidstone United.

Wrexham and Brighton fans have a firm bond, the result of our shared support for each other during long battles against profiteering bastards who nearly destroyed our clubs.

They are now community owned, and it was heartwarming to walk round with Marc, one of the directors, and feel the bond between the fans which comes from a successful fight to save your club – a feeling that we at Brighton know only too well.

When the game began I discovered that we had something else in common, since their cen-

tre forward was Chris Holroyd, who started 16 matches for us in League One 10 years ago as a central striker without ever remotely looking like putting the ball in the net.

He played exactly as I remembered, didn't have a shot and I was subsequently astonished to learn that he is Wrexham's top scorer.

It didn't matter though: they won 1-0. I really hope they make it back into the League when the Conference this season and that their Kop, currently a derelict, empty wasteland covering a quarter of the ground, is soon restored to its former glory.

The gig in the evening was at Saith Seren, the local pub of the organisers, fan group Partisans CPD Wreccsam. Like the ground it is community-owned and is a hub of the local Welsh language community. Hospitality and reception were wonderful, beer amazing. Diolch!

And from there to Lancaster, a packed gig in a tiny pub, and a long journey back home through the night (huge thanks to sound man and driver Dave for his sterling efforts on our behalf!) for the following day's gig.

It was a Labour Party fundraiser at the lovely Schooner

harbourside pub in my home town of Southwick, and as an experiment we performed totally acoustic – as, of course, we'd always have had to do back in 1649.

It was a resounding success and means that, upon request, the more fragile end of the early music and folk scene will be able to enjoy what we do in comfort. Although the bombe and rauschpfeife will still cause a bit of consternation, I fear.

Robb Johnson, Steve White (of Protest Family fame) and Lawrie and the Volunteers served up fine sets too and a good wedge was raised for forthcoming battles in our newly marginal East Worthing and Shoreham constituency.

Tonight, the full-on Barnstormer is at my other local, the Duke of Wellington in Shoreham – fittingly, a few hundred yards from where Charles II escaped after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, the fact that gave me the idea for the new songs in the first place.

Loads more gigs coming round the country: hope to see you somewhere soon.

■ *Attila the Stockbroker* [www.twitter.com/atilatstokbroka](http://www.twitter.com/atilatstokbroka)

### THEATRE REVIEW

# Shouldering the burden of history

**MAYER WAKEFIELD** recommends a resonant play on the black British experience, then and now

#### Black Men Walking Royal Court, London

★★★★☆

**POET, rapper, beatboxer and now theatre-maker – Testament is a man with many strings to his bow.**

Encouraged by Eclipse Theatre's artistic director Dawn Walton – also the shrewdly adept director of this show – and inspired by David Olusoga's 2015 television series *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, he set about writing *Black Men Walking* by climbing the Peaks alongside a group of black men who climb them monthly to catch a break from their very different daily lives.

Exploring centuries of black British history from John Moore, a Freeman of the City of York in Tudor times, to one of Britain's first black footballers Paul Canoville, the play is a stark reminder of both historical



Pic: Tristram Kenton

and current racial injustice in Britain.

But it's also a portrayal of hope and perseverance, located deep within the personal experiences of four superbly crafted characters.

“Posh boy, trekkie and old-man weirdo,” is how the final member of the ensem-

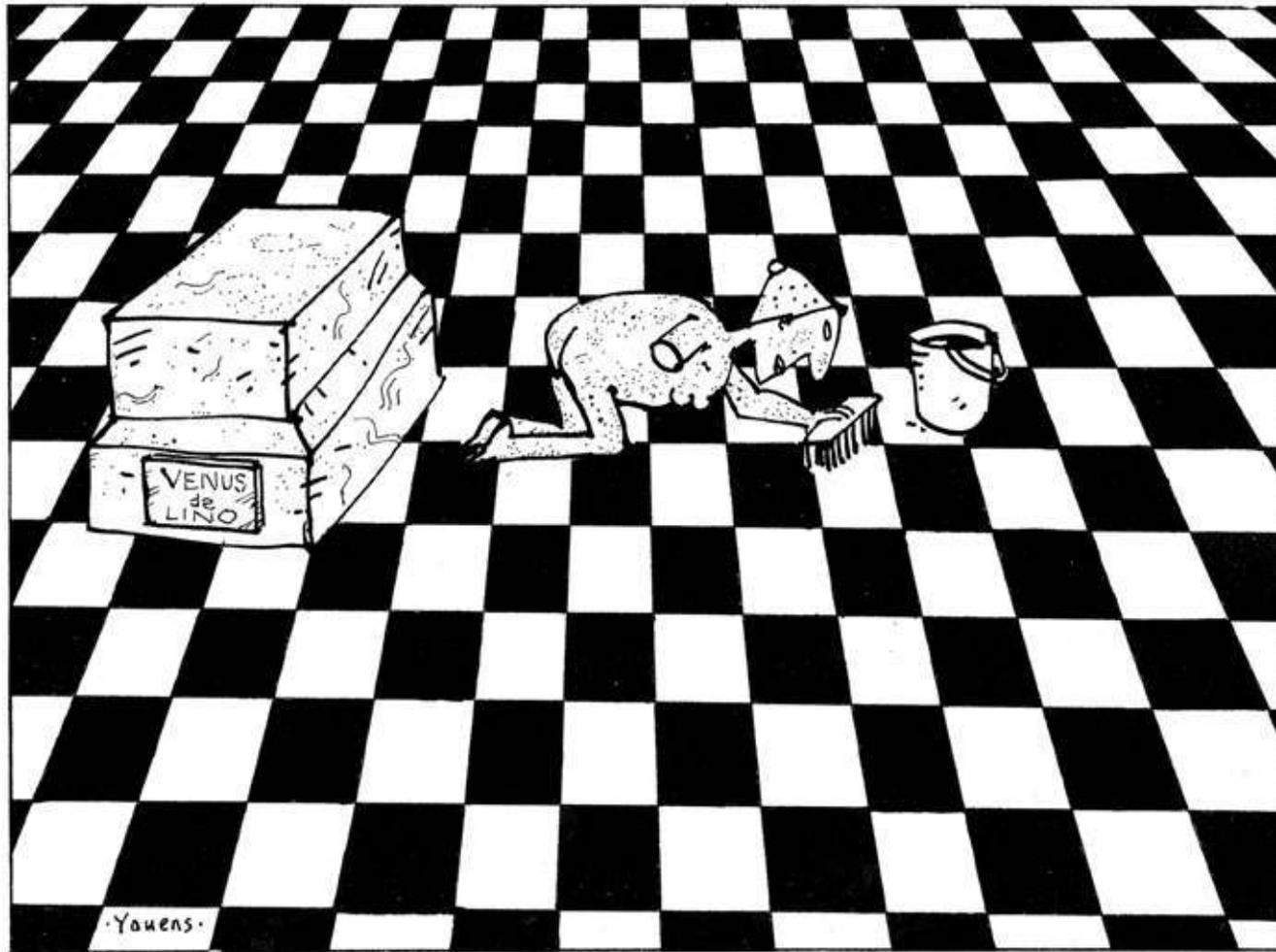
ble, rapper Ayeesha (Dorcas Sebuyange) describes them. But Matthew (Trevor Laird), Richard (Tonderai Munyevu) and Thomas (Tyrone Huggins) have a lot more to them than that, as she soon discovers as they bond over hip-hop and history. Initially, the three male

actors appear to somewhat over-exaggerate their characterisations but, as the show unfolds, you begin to see real complexity in their eccentricities. Full of both wisdom and fear, Huggins is particularly impressive as the ageing leader.

All have very different experiences of life in Britain and, as Testament leads us on a walking tour through those experiences, he manages to craft a work of unassuming depth which speaks both for, and to, multiple generations. He conjures a powerful rhythm which ebbs and flows like the Peaks themselves, switching from prose to poetry to rap with an assured fluidity.

Early on, a weary Thomas wonders whether history's only purpose is perhaps “to let you know when you're consigned to it.” *Black Men Walking* proves there is far more to it than that.

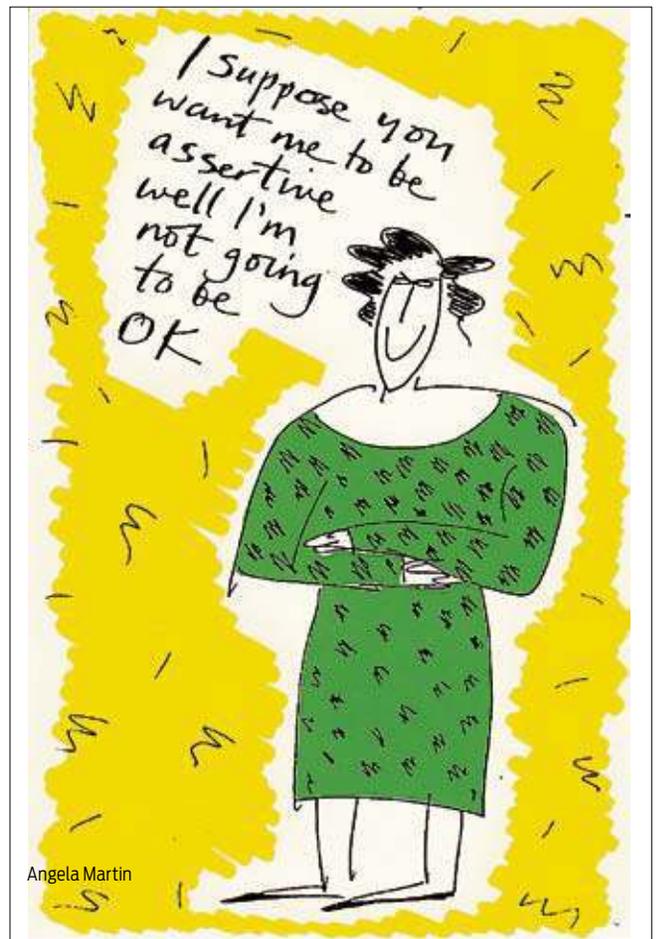
Runs until April 7, box office: [royalcourttheatre.com](http://royalcourttheatre.com)



Paula Youens



'That's an excellent suggestion, Miss Triggs. Perhaps one of the men here would like to make it.'



Angela Martin

PICTURE THIS

IF THERE'S a volume missing from the annals of British humour, it certainly is the new book *The Inking Woman*. About time too, given that it's been nine decades since women over the age of 21 won the right to vote.

Its inspiration came from its authors Nicola Streeten and Cath Tate who organised an exhibition with the same title at the Cartoon Museum in London in 2016. The realisation that a celebratory anthology marking 250 years of women's cartooning should be put together was a natural progression.

This compilation of single-panel gags and traditional strips are bundled together to provide a full appreciation of the abundance and variety of styles. Here is work from the daring Mary Darly of the 18th century and the pioneering Victorian Marie Duval through to Suffragettes Mary Lowndes, Louisa Thomson-Price and Dora Meeson Coates.

And contemporary cartoonists such as Riana Duncan, Kathryn Lamb, Christine Roche, Paula Youens, Cath Jackson, Angela Martin, Grizelda and Lee Kennedy all get a look in.

The index, running to well over 300 names, disabuses the perception that women cartoonists are few and far between and around a third of them are included in the book. Space and time constraints mean that some are absent because they were uncomfortable with gender-defined criteria or the selection process itself.

The few newspaper editorial

cartoons are by the Guardian's Nicola Jennings, Bluelou – known to Morning Star readers and presently of Tribune – and Martha Richler of the Jewish Chronicle. Regrettably, the field is still dominated almost exclusively by white middle-aged men and that's something that has to change in the future.

As Toni Morrison has pointed out: "All good art is political, there is none that isn't," and so, ultimately, are the works in *Inking Woman* – wide ranging and whimsical satires on social and human

vagaries and everyday idiocies. The encyclopedic format has the benefit of each new page offering the unexpected and Marcia's Mihotich's delightful design has clarity and elegance.

It's an instructive and hugely entertaining work – hats off to Nicola Streeten and Cath Tate.

**The Inking Woman: 250 Years of Women Cartoon and Comic Artists in Britain** by Nicola Streeten and Cath Tate is published by Myriad Editions, price £19.99.

MICHAL BONCZA



Cath-Jackson



Jo Nesbitt



Grizelda

"Well, you're the only one who thinks we're a sexist organisation."



Christine Roche



Marie Duval (from Some Naughty Nursery Rhymes series)



Kathryn Lamb

OUR PAPER

# Women's Day edition offered a rare space

I THANK the Star for its International Women's Day edition (March 8). The issue has given space for women's real concerns to be voiced.

I support women not because I am one, but because women's issues have hitherto been buried. It's a matter of justice even more than gender.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady is reported in that edition of the Star as saying: "There's so much pressure on women to look good, be the perfect wife, the perfect mother and to bring home a salary."

"Men are not judged in the same way and the expectations and aspirations we ask of them are much lower."

Seeing that women's unwaged work, ie the work associated with motherhood, family creation and community cohesiveness, has always upheld society, it's a bit rich

to then demand of us that we "contribute to society" by bringing home a salary. As though, if we don't, we're not pulling our weight.

Half of the work women do is unwaged, and in terms of importance, is more necessary than the waged upholding of the present unbalanced economic edifice with its continuous churning out of unnecessary items.

It also, as Ms O'Grady suggests, puts inhuman extra pressure on women.

These facts must be aired in the name of justice. I know of only two publications which do this, and one of them is the Morning Star.

MARYLIN  
WARBIS  
London E3

BREXIT

# 'Transition' is an excuse for Tories endless failure

THE media is heralding a triumphant Brexit "transition" agreement. It is, of course, nothing of the kind. There's no transition, simply a delay. Britain will stay inside the EU until December 2020, paying out billions, subject to its laws, but without any say in its decisions.

What has Theresa May negotiated in return? The EU's agreement that during the transition we can negotiate trade deals.

As if a country leaving the EU did not have a natural right to make international arrangements to come into effect when it leaves. Thanks for nothing.

It's as close as makes no difference to the "vassal state" that some in government had been saying was unacceptable. No matter, they say now, keep your "eyes on the prize."



PROMISES UNKEPT: David Cameron

But that prize is getting further away, not closer. And on March 27 May hinted that timetables for leaving the EU's customs union "might need to be revised" – in other words, extended.

When we voted to leave in June 2016 it was in the expectation – Cameron even promised it – that Article 50 would be

invoked the next day. Yet come June 2018 we will be even more than two years away from leaving EU control over our borders, our laws, our economy.

Employers can continue to freely import cheap labour until December 2020 – a further 21 months – so that they can put off having to invest in technology and training British

workers. And as the fishermen point out, the EU can squeeze British fishing out of existence, and the government won't be able to lift a finger. The battle for Brexit is not over. The forces opposing us have more than two years to turn delay into the denial of democracy that they seek.

Expect more and more "reports" from corporate interests seeking to maintain the status quo. Expect more and more moans from parts of the civil service that everything is really too complicated and they need more time. Expect more delaying tactics from our unrepresentative Parliament.

The people must speak out, the campaigns left dormant after the referendum will have to be reactivated. That's becoming more and more urgent. The outcry against the transition agreement has begun, in the fishing communities. It must spread across the whole of Britain.

WILL PODMORE  
London E12

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■ TRADE UNIONS

## TUC could be loud in Corbyn's cause

AS A fellow lifelong union activist and Labour party member, I fully support Aslef leader Mick Whelan's article (M Star March 13).

We must maintain the historic link in the Labour movement.

Mick correctly referred to those years when the "New Labour" apparatchiks were embarrassed by the history and values of the trade union movement. In my opinion, "New Labour" basically accepted the Thatcherite neoliberal society.

At the TUC Congress, Jeremy Corbyn has made clear his passionate support for the labour movement as a force for good in society. That should be supported by all Labour Party members, no disaffiliation.

The trade unions however, could more strongly support

Jeremy Corbyn's TUC rostrum condemnation of "the 1980s time warp of neoliberal dogma."

The TUC itself could be explaining, in its 150th anniversary, that the exploitation and casualisation of today's workforce is the result of neoliberalism since the 1980s. That should be explained much more clearly.

This 150th anniversary is the opportunity for the trade union movement to learn the lessons from its history.

That should include the internal divisions created by a TUC affiliate, the EETPU, and how that weakened TUC unity and helped the Thatcher government to defeat the trade union movement.

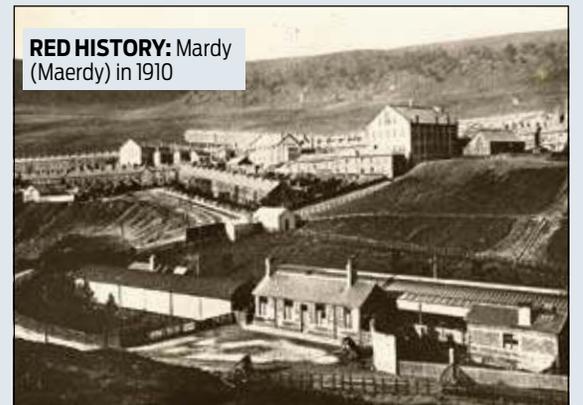
STEVIE STEVENSON  
 Swansea

GRAHAM STEVENSON  
 explores the Star archives

DAILY WORKER

## 80 YEARS AGO TODAY...

RED HISTORY: Mardy (Maerdy) in 1910



### Communists were strong in Wales

A STRIKING tribute to the work of Communist councillors was reported in the Daily Worker of April 1 1938. Miners' lodges in the Mardy and Ferndale area had formally asked the Labour Party not to stand in elections soon due.

One of the seats had been held by a Communist who had had to leave the area and miners were confident that the replacement candidate, Will Picton, would "carry on the good work."

Labour had rejected the appeal and was to contest the ward, an attitude that had little support amongst miners and their families.

In Pentre, Labour officially asked for Communist support against a supposed Independent, usually a cover name for Tories. In the very next ward, Labour was opposing the sitting Communist councillor, Jack Davis.

Whilst in Tylerstown, locals were so supportive

that the Communist candidate was already considered to have won. But the people of Pontymoel were outraged that an attempt to "oust" communist Mavis Llewelyn from her seat was to be made.

Meanwhile, in Stepney, Communist councillor Phil Piratin drew attention to the fact that the police were "not sufficiently competent to control fascists."

This seemingly "compelled" them to ban working-class events such as May Day demos, which had been held for 50 years with the "utmost order and discipline."

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 **£72**

■ ANTI-SEMITISM

## Was mural a copy of earlier artwork?

THE mural that has caused so much furore, and is said to be "obviously" anti-semitic, may have drawn inspiration from a painting I dimly recall from my childhood (apologies to the mural artist if this is not so).

As I recall, it was a painting depicting the six most wealthy bankers, families and industrialists at the turn of the 20th century, symbolising how they control the lives of everyone else.

Two were Jewish (Rothschild and Warburg) but four were not (Rockefeller, J P Morgan, Carnegie and occultist Aleister Crowley). Anyone claiming that all six are "obviously Jewish," are themselves guilty of anti-semitic stereotyping.

The fact that the mural artist claims that these six depictions are of early 20th century tycoons (largely unknown to most people today) strengthens my presumption that it is a copy of something painted much earlier.

Are there any art historians among your readers who have a similar childhood memory?

JOHN COX  
 Pontypool

■ POLITICS

# Neolib won't back down – nor must socialists

JUST as ordinary Labour Party members like me were starting to think that the days were over of the scurrilous attempts by the twitching corpse of Labour's disintegrating neoliberal wing to destroy Jeremy Corbyn's principled leadership, out they crawl yet again – this time seizing upon the Russian spy outrage and the concocted anti-semitic non-story to undermine Corbyn at every conceivable opportunity.

These people parade every available media studio offering their rent-a-mouth bile to any unprincipled journalist who'll give them the time of day. Or is it that a biased media deliberately searches these people out to create yet another hysterical anti-Corbyn feeding-frenzy?

I've never quite worked out which it is; it's probably both.

One Labour backbencher, who predictably didn't wish to be named, was recently quoted in the Guardian as saying (referring to Corbyn): "Putin's constant and shameful apologist might just as well stand aside and let the Russian ambassador write the speeches and brief the media himself."

And on the orchestrated anti-semitic feeding frenzy, failed Labour leadership candidate David Miliband tweeted, "It's terrible that the leadership has brought our party into such gross disrepute. At least now the veil of unctuous denials, whitewash reports, diversionary attacks, has been breached."

"Unctuous," really? As a perceptive psychoanalyst might have said: "Talk about projection!"

Such absurd statements ignore the fact that Corbyn

has been a far more active and consistent critic of Putin and his regime, and of racism and anti-semitism, than either the Tories, or those Labour MPs and grandees who are so determined to wreck his reputation.

Tory prime minister John Major used to call the equivalent MPs in his own party "bastards," I think I'd better keep to myself the term that I privately use for the equivalent individuals in the Labour Party.

These people are a disgrace to our party, we should be censoring and/or suspending any members, including MPs, who come out with such fraudulent statements and slurs, and ordinary members – the many – have had enough and aren't going to put up with it any longer.

DR RICHARD HOUSE  
 Stroud

■ RELIGION

## Belief is not compatible with dialectic

I WELCOME Bryn Rowland's letter (M Star March 16) on the somewhat mixed history of Christianity.

Communist philosophy is based on dialectical materialism which has no place for the supernatural.

I recommend the Communist Party of Britain's recently produced booklet on the subject.

Communist economics is based on the law of value, also known as the labour theory of value.

Communist politics is based on an understanding of the role of the state.

Religious believers would not want to join communist parties or organisations.

IVOR KENNA  
 London EC1

Community Listings

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**BRISTOL: Bristol, Bath & Gloucester CP Branch.** Meets second Wednesday of the month. For details ring Mike on (0117) 9633-164 or email bristoldistrictcpb@hotmail.co.uk.

**CAMBRIDGE: Cambridgeshire Communist Party meets each month, with politics, Marxist Education and campaigns.** For information of next meeting contact Phil on info@cambridgecommunist.party

**EDINBURGH: Edinburgh Branch CP.** Monthly meeting first Wednesday of each month. 6-8pm in the VCR Room, Central Library, 7-9 George

IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EG.

**LEEDS: CP West Yorkshire Branch.** Meeting third Saturday of every month at 11am at the Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds. All welcome. Contact 07866 479-489.

**LEICESTER: CP branch.** Contact: cpleics@yahoo.com, (01780) 238-463.

**LONDON: Communist University in South London — Free, open Marxist education classes.** 7.30pm on the third Thursday of every month at Ruskin House, 23

Coombe Road, South Croydon CR0 1BD. communistuniversity.wordpress.com cuisl@communist-party.org.uk

**LONDON: South East London CP.** Meets monthly. Find out more at www.selcp.org — southeastlondon@communist-party.org.uk.

**LONDON: Communist University in South London - Marxist study and research.** 7.30 pm on the third Thursday of every month at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 1BD. communistuniversity.wordpress.com. cuisl@

communist-party.org.uk.

**MERSEYSIDE: Merseyside Branch CP.** Meeting on the first Thursday of the month. Contact branch secretary Thomas Butler for details of venue on tom89efc@yahoo.co.uk.

**OXFORD: CP branch.** Meets monthly — all welcome. For details: 07769-557-664 or oxford@communist-party.org.uk.

**SHEFFIELD: South Yorkshire CP Branch.** Meets second Monday of the month. Ring Carrie on 07531 079-268 or Bryan on (0114) 2334-758.

Readers & Supporters

EVENTS

**BRISTOL, BATH AND GLOUCESTER — Readers and Supporters Group:** are hosting a production of 'We Are the Lions, Mr Manager!' - Friday April 6th 7.30 pm (doors open 6.45pm) Box Office 01749 870078 St Michael's Church Hall, 160a Gloucester Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8NT £10 waged £8 unwaged.

**COATBRIDGE — Lanarkshire Readers and Supporters Morning Star sale:** Every Saturday outside Asda. Call Ronnie on 07906 195-404.

**DUMFRIES — Morning Star sale:** Every Saturday from noon at the Midsteeple. New readers and sellers welcome. Call Stuart on 07780 804-561.

**DUMFRIES — Readers and Supporters meetings:** New members welcome. Email stuart.hyslop1@hotmail.co.uk for details.

**DUNDEE — Morning Star sale:** First Saturday of every month at 11.30am at Brooksbank Clock, Murraygate. Ring Raymond Mennie on 07894 901-688.

**EDINBURGH — Regular Morning Star sale:** Every Saturday at the bottom of the Mound, noon to 2pm.

**GLASGOW — Morning Star sale:** Every Saturday, 1-4pm, at Buchanan Street stall (opposite Gordon Street).

**GLASGOW — Unison Scotland Readers and Supporters Group meeting:** Should Britain Remain in the Single Market and Customs Union? What is Best For Workers? Speakers: Dave Watson, Unison Scotland policy head, and Professor John Foster, secretary of Radical Options in Scotland and Europe. Chair: Kate Ramsden, Unison NEC member. Friday April 13, 6-8pm, at Glasgow Unison Branch Office, 84 Bell Street, Glasgow G1 1LG. All welcome.

**GLASGOW — Postponed Scottish Morning Star Spring Conference:**

**NEW DATE Sunday April 29.** An Industrial Strategy for People. Speakers include: Richard Leonard, leader Scottish Labour Party, Roz Foyer, Lynn Henderson, Vince Mills Tam Kirby. Chair: Denise Christie. STUC, 333 Woodlands Rd, Glasgow, G3 6NG. Register at door from 10.45am.

**LEICESTER — Readers and Supporters Group:** Contact Dave Wilford at dave29wilford@hotmail.com or 0116 2897-975, or David Grove at davidgrove20@gmail.com or 01780 238-463. We hope to reinstate regular meetings this year.

**LONDON — Regular Readers and Supporters meeting:** Contact Mary on 07719 383-322 or email london-morningstargroup@gmail.com.

**MANCHESTER — Entertainer:** If any readers' groups run fundraisers and need a performer, they can always contact Dave Puller on 07815 006-671 or email d.puller@ntlworld.com.

**NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK — Readers and Supporters Group:** Sean Meleady: 07758145671 and email smelea@hotmail.co.uk.

**NORTH DEVON — Morning Star sale:** Every Saturday: Contact G Sables on gerrard.sables@phonecoop.coop.

**SHEFFIELD — Regular Star sales pitch:** Thursdays and Saturdays, Sheffield city centre — contact symorningstar@gmail.com for details.

**SHROPSHIRE — Regular paper sales:** Call Jim, 07896 976-833. Email shropsmorningstar@gmail.com.

**SWINDON — Paper sale:** Every Saturday. If you can help, contact Pete at jackobadenski@yahoo.com.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE — New group:** For details of activities contact George 07511 546 085.

The Red List

March 31-April 7

SATURDAY 31

**Defend Afrin demonstration**  
Assemble at 2pm outside Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1 for march to Parliament Square  
Protest at Turkey's military aggression against Afrin in north-west Syria, part of the de facto autonomous Rojava region. Organised by the Defend the People of Afrin Platform.

**NEU/NUT Conference Fringe Meeting: Education Under Blockade**  
5.30pm in Syndicate Room 1, the Brighton Centre, Kings Road, Brighton  
With Ana Gloria Calderon of Cuban teachers' union SNTCED, NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney, NEU/NUT section president Kiri Tunks and Cuba Solidarity Campaign national secretary Bernard Regan, plus reports from the NEU/NUT Cuba delegation. Open to conference delegates/pass holders only.

**Book event: Wobblies of the World — A Global History of the IWW**  
7pm at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1  
Professor Peter Cole launches a new international anthology of writings on the Industrial Workers of the World, which reveals a fascinating story of global anarchism, syndicalism and socialism. Entry £3, redeemable against any purchase.

**31st and 5th: The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff**  
■ 31st: 7.30pm at the Cat Strand, High Street, New Galloway, Castle Douglas  
■ 5th: 7.30 pm at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1  
Folk trio the Young'uns perform their show telling the story of Longstaff, a veteran of the 1934 hunger march who was at the Battle of Cable Street, fought with the International Brigades and then in World War II. For tickets, go to theyounguns.co.uk and follow the links or contact the venue direct.

SUNDAY 1

**CND 60th anniversary celebration at Aldermaston**

Noon at the main gate of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston  
Join us for speeches, poems, music and memories marking the 60th anniversary of the first Aldermaston march. To find out more, call (020) 7700-2393 or email information@cnduk.org.



**Sunday 1**  
**CND 60th anniversary rally**  
Noon at the main gate, Aldermaston  
Speeches, poems and music marking the first Aldermaston anti-nuclear march 60 years ago.

MONDAY 2

**Book event: Wobblies of the World — A Global History of the IWW**  
5.30pm at Mayday Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4  
David Struthers launches a new international anthology of writings on the Industrial Workers of the World, which reveals a fascinating story of global anarchism, syndicalism and socialism.

TUESDAY 3

**Opening of Amnesty International photography exhibition**  
3.15pm at the library, 22 The Triangle, Bournemouth  
The town's mayor and mayoress unveil the exhibition, whose main focus is the historic plight of refugees and will feature 30 photographs taken by photographers from the Magnum picture agency over the past 70 years. On until April 28.

**Why We Need an Anti-War Government**  
7.30pm at Labour Club, 12 Belmont Road, Whitstable  
Stop the War Coalition national of

ficer Ian Chamberlain gives a talk.

WEDNESDAY 4

**Book event: Tottenham's Trojan Horse? A Tale of Stadium-led Regeneration in North London**  
7pm at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1  
Author Mark Panton talks to Haringey community activist Dave Morris about the demolition of properties for the fans' walkway at the new Spurs football ground, the Our Tottenham network of community groups and the Haringey Development Vehicle. Entry £3, redeemable against any purchase.

**4th-7th: Book events: The Last Earth — A Palestinian Story**

■ 4th: 7pm at Tollcross Community Centre, 117 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh  
■ 5th: 7pm at Unison, 84 Bell Street, Glasgow  
■ 6th: 7pm Dalhousie Building, Dundee University, 75 Old Hawkhill, Dundee  
■ 7th: 1.30pm at the Spectrum Centre, Margaret Street, Inverness  
Gaza-born author Ramzy Baroud discusses his new book and the urgent need to situate Palestinian refugees back at the centre of the Palestinian discourse, along with contemporary issues facing his people's liberation movement. For the Glasgow event, please register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/44512125967.

THURSDAY 5

**Book launch: Digital Demagogue — Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Trump and Twitter**  
7pm in 117 Boardroom, University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London W1  
Professor Christian Fuchs introduces his new book on the expressions of ideology, nationalism and authoritarianism in the age of big data and social media. He will further discuss the prospects for overcoming capitalism and renewing the left. Free, but please register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/41214808602.

FRIDAY 6

**Cuban guitar music from Ahmed Dickinson Cardenas and Eduardo Martin**  
7.30pm at Aros Theatre, Viewfield

Road, Portree, Skye  
Performances of original works by Martin. For tickets, priced £10, concessions £8, under-16s £5, call (01478) 613-750 or go to aroscommunitytheatre.co.uk.

**Live Cuban music: Bembe Cubano**  
8pm at Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Town Hall Approach Road, London N15  
Jesús Cutino y Son de Cuba, Tumbao Tivoli, Camina Banda and Philips Man y Lolo MC bring you the rhythms and flavours of son, salsa, timba and much more. To book tickets, priced £11.50, call (020) 8365-5450 go to berniegrantcentre.co.uk.

SATURDAY 7

**Global ban lobbying training day**  
10.30am at 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1  
Learn communication and lobbying skills so that you can press your MP to back Britain becoming the first nuclear-armed country to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Open to women only. Lunch provided. £5 donation suggested. To book, go to eventbrite.co.uk/e/44043470205. Organised by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

**Liverpool Anarchist Book Fair**  
11am at the Black-E, 1 Great George Street, Liverpool  
Including a talk by Peace News editor Milan Rai on his book 1917: The Nonviolent Russian Revolution. Find out more at liverpoolanarchistbookfair.wordpress.com.

**Chartism drop-in day: Ernest Jones and Chartism**  
Noon at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 The Crescent, Salford  
See newly acquired objects related to the history of the fight for the vote. The focus is on Chartism and one of the movement's later leaders, lawyer and poet Ernest Jones.



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## Racing Guide

with Farrington

■ KEMPTON, HAYDOCK PARK AND RACECOURSE

# Have a Sharp Defence this afternoon at Musselburgh

As the build-up to the Grand National continues, there is still plenty of racing to keep track of across the country

**D**ESPITE being in that seemingly fallow period between the Cheltenham Festival and the Grand National there is some decent racing this afternoon and the value wager could well be **Sharp Defence** in the opening seven furlong handicap at Musselburgh at 1.50.

Nicely drawn in stall number four, the four-year-old has tumbled in the handicap, but on his best form from 12 months ago he looks vastly over priced at around the 16/1 mark.

He should also get a really nice tow into the race with several runners that like to be at the sharp end and he looks a solid each-way play and sporting nap.

The big race of the day at the Edinburgh track is the Gold Cup over one-and-three-quarter-miles at 3.35 and with more rain forecast this could turn into a real slugfest down the long home stretch, especially as a number of these like to be at the front of affairs of course headed by the front-running Brandon Castle.

Such a make-up could suit the likes of the 10-year-old Clever Cookie and our selection, the lightly raced **Time to Study**.

Mark Johnston's charge acts on soft ground, has a really good record going to post fresh and I suspect we have yet to see the best of him having just the 11th start of his career.

I fancy he could make up into a group horse by the end of the season and he gets the vote over Carbon Dating and the progressive American Gigolo.

The big sprint at 2.25, the Borderlescott Stakes, can go to **Alpha Delphini** who was in glorious form at the back end of last season.

If the son of Captain Gerrard carries on where he left off last season, a ready win over course and distance on very similar ground, then he should be very hard to beat and looks sure to start favourite here.

It's a big day on the all-weather at Kempton as well with the always competitive Roseberry Handicap over a mile and three furlongs at 4.20 in which the unexposed **Contrast** should be able to take care of his more experienced rivals.

Judged on his previous runs over a mile he could well defy his breeding [by Dutch Art] and excel over this extra yardage in a fast run race following his success over this distance in a relatively slowly run race at Lingfield in a small field.

The Matchbook Casino Handicap (1m2f) at 3.45 has a relatively small field, but a few improving sorts and I think this could be the season where we see a big step forward from **Stanley**.

The Richard Hughes-trained course and distance winner looked green on more than the one occasion last year and is quite probably a whole lot better than his current handicap mark of 80 and this looks a really good starting point for him this year and he has the top-weight Time to Blossom to beat.

On the national hunt front, veteran **Killala Quay** is set to outrun his price at Haydock Park 3.15, while the stayers event at 4.25 could go the way of **Condaw Native** who has been running consistently well all season, is still improving and won't mind any more rain.

**CLOSE GROUP:** Riders at Musselburgh in 2015



### WEEKEND TIPS

#### Farrington's Doubles

##### Saturday

#### SHARP DEFENCE

Musselburgh 1:50 (nap)

#### STANLEY

Kempton 3:45

##### Sunday

#### BROWNVILLE

Ffos Las 4:45 (nap)

#### STEEL NATIVE

Ffos Las 2:25

#### Houseman's Choice

##### Saturday

#### EMENEM

Kempton 4:20

##### Sunday

#### SHELNEVERWALKALONE

Southwell 5:20

### ■ MEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE

## McNamara upbeat despite another Dragons defeat

by Our Sports Desk

STEVE MCNAMARA is convinced Catalans Dragons are not far off an upturn in fortunes but bemoaned his side's simple errors in yesterday's 32-16 defeat at Salford.

McNamara's position will come under increasing scrutiny after the Dragons crashed to a seventh defeat in their opening eight Super League matches.

Tries from Jake Bibby, Niall Evalds, Greg Johnson, Josh Jones and Kris Welham, plus 12

points from the boot of Robert Lui, completed an easy victory for Salford and left Catalans at risk of being cut adrift at the bottom of the table.

McNamara said: "Credit to Salford, they proved to be tough to beat but we beat ourselves.

"Penalties and handling errors are killing us at the moment. We're not in the best run of form at the moment but we're suffering from some basic errors like catching and passing the ball.

"We know it's not a case of

sweeping everything out and starting again, we're not too far away from turning things around.

"In situations like this, it's easy to think that we're a long way away from getting some points on the board but I genuinely think we're not.

"We have to look at ourselves, the game is too difficult without giving ourselves further challenges like giving away penalties straight after tries."

The former Bradford and England coach believes a lack

of players in pre-season following the World Cup is affecting his side.

He added: "We're implementing change in lots of different areas on and off the field, we've not had a lot of time on the field this year but we're working hard to build our combinations and put ourselves on the right path."

Salford clinched their third successive home win leaving coach Ian Watson to reflect on a job well done.

He said: "It was a really good, professional performance.

"We knew that they would come over here and challenge our middles so I'm really pleased that our pack stood up to the challenge.

"Josh Wood was really good, he's done a great job for us at nine and as a seven. He's been able to play in both positions to a high level,

"I'm really confident in his ability. He's got the ability to get on the end of breaks and offloads and he did that really well for us."

Watson was particularly pleased with the victory given a

stomach bug had gone through the camp this week but hinted at changes to his line-up for Easter Monday's trip to Leeds.

He said: "We had four players laid up earlier in the week, so for us to come out with a win in that game was a big result for us.

"With the short turnaround on Monday we may make changes and though they will want to play on Monday, we may take the decision out of their hands and rest them ahead of Warrington next week."

**SPORT ON TV**
**Saturday**

■ **BASEBALL:** MLB, Tampa Bay Rays v Boston Red Sox — BT Sport 11pm; Los Angeles Dodgers v San Francisco Giants — BT Sport 12am (Sun).

■ **BASKETBALL:** NBA, Boston Celtics v Toronto Raptors — BT Sport 2 12.30am (Sun).

■ **CRICKET:** Second day of the fourth Test from Johannesburg, South Africa v Australia — Sky Sports Cricket 8.55am; third day of the second Test from Christchurch, New Zealand v England — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket 11pm.

■ **FOOTBALL:** Premier League, Crystal Palace v Liverpool — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Premier League 11.30am, Everton v Manchester City — BT Sport 1 5pm; Ladbrokes Premiership, Motherwell v Rangers — BT Sport 1 12pm; Serie A, Bologna v Roma — BT Sport 2 11.15am, eir Sport 1 11.25am, Sassuolo v Napoli — eir Sport 1 1.55pm, Juventus v AC Milan — BT Sport 2 7.30pm; Ligue 1, Dijon v Marseille — eir Sport 1 3.55pm; Bundesliga, Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund — BT Sport 2 5pm; Sky Bet League Two, Luton v Barnet — Sky Sports Main Event 5.30pm.

■ **GOLF:** PGA Tour, Houston Open — Sky Sports Golf 7pm, Sky Sports Main Event 7.40pm; LPGA Tour, ANA Inspiration from California — Sky Sports Golf 11pm.

■ **RACING:** From Musselburgh — ITV4 1.30pm.

■ **RUGBY UNION:** European Champions Cup, Munster v Toulon — Sky Sports Action 2.30pm, Sky Sports Main Event 2.55pm; European Challenge Cup, Edinburgh v Cardiff — Sky Sports Action 5.30pm.

■ **TENNIS:** WTA Tennis, Miami Open — BT Sport/ESPN 6pm.

■ **WINTER SPORTS:** Curling World Championships from Las Vegas — Eurosport 19.30pm.

**Sunday**

■ **BASEBALL:** MLB, New York Mets v St Louis Cardinals — BT Sport/ESPN 6pm, Los Angeles Dodgers v San Francisco Giants — BT Sport/ESPN 1.30am (Mon)

■ **BASKETBALL:** NBA, San Antonio Spurs v Houston Rockets — BT Sport 2 8.30pm.

■ **CRICKET:** Third day of the fourth Test from Johannesburg, South Africa v Australia — Sky Sports Cricket 8.55am, Sky Sports Main Event 9am; fourth day of the second Test from Christchurch, New Zealand v England — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket 11pm.

■ **CYCLING:** Tour of Flanders — Eurosport 19.15am.

■ **FOOTBALL:** Premier League, Arsenal v Stoke — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Premier League 12.30pm, Chelsea v Tottenham — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Premier League 3.30pm; Bundesliga, Werder Bremen v Eintracht Frankfurt — BT Sport 2.30pm, Mainz v Borussia Monchengladbach — BT Sport 15pm; Ligue 1, Lyon v Toulouse — BT Sport 17.45pm.

■ **GOLF:** PGA Tour, Houston Open — Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Golf 7pm; LPGA Tour, ANA Inspiration — Sky Sports Golf 11pm.

■ **MOTOR CYCLING:** British Superbike Championship from Donington Park — Eurosport 2 3.30pm.

■ **RUGBY UNION:** European Champions Cup, Clermont Auvergne v Racing 92 — Sky Sports Action 12.30pm, Leinster v Saracens — BT Sport 2 3pm.

■ **WINTER SPORTS:** Curling World Championships from Las Vegas — Eurosport 14.30pm.



**BETTER DAYS:** Clapton FC (red) take on FC Romania at the Old Spotted Dog in 2014

Pic: CreativeCommons/ScaffoldRobin

**MEN'S FOOTBALL COMMENT**

# An SOS call to save the Old Spotted Dog

**CLAPTON FC NEWS** reports on the ongoing plight of the Essex Senior League club as fans continue to boycott home games in order to save their stadium, London's oldest football ground

**T**he Old Spotted Dog has taken a further step up the endangered species list.

The situation at London's oldest football ground is now at a critical level, with a potentially unprecedented instance of a liquidation being pushed through despite a High Court injunction in place precisely to stop that happening.

It could leave Clapton's historic home in the sole control of the club's chief executive Vince McBean, instead of the charity which was set up to run it. And Mr McBean would have much more freedom to do what he likes with it.

The recap of the story so far reveals why Clapton's fans' groups, who are already boycotting home games, feel the ground is in grave danger if this happens...

**Charity Commission investigation**

Mr McBean was due to attend an interview with the Charity Commission on March 2 2017.

This was his final opportunity to answer the Commission's serious questions about his conduct and mismanagement of Newham Community

Leisure Limited, the charity that leases the Old Spotted Dog from the freeholder.

Mr McBean had already postponed the meeting twice, on December 22 2016 and January 19 2017.

**New company set up to replace charity**

Veer court CIC was listed at Companies House just one week after the second postponement, on January 26 2017.

Its only listed director was Mr McBean.

**Voluntary liquidation attempted**

A bid for voluntary liquidation of the charity NCLL was launched on March 1 2017, the day before Mr McBean's scheduled interview with the Charity Commission, seemingly in an effort to transfer the assets to the freshly incorporated Veer court CIC.

With no charity left for them to investigate, the Charity Commission meeting was cancelled and Mr McBean was off the hook — briefly.

**High Court injunction stops liquidation**

On April 10 2017, a trustee of NCLL and a life member of Clapton FC successfully halted

the voluntary liquidation process and a High Court injunction was obtained.

On July 19 2017, a High Court judge directed that the Charity Commission should be involved and any liquidation could not be completed until they had their say.

A long process of waiting for their report began.

**Winding up petition**

Unknown to the Charity Commission, or the people that had obtained the injunction, a winding up petition was presented to the High Court on October 6 and their case was heard and approved by the Court in January 2018.

**Liquidation attempt part two**

This began another liquidation — this time involuntary — due to debts to an external creditor who has claimed they are owed money.

The purported creditor is Taylor Bridge Legal Services (TBLS), though there are no records available to show what the alleged debt is for or even how much it is supposed to be.

TBLS is run solely by an ex-solicitor called Antoinette Olivia Taylor who was struck

off the Roll of Solicitors in November 2012 for multiple cases of dishonesty and misrepresentation.

**Asset of Community Value**

A welcome complication is that Clapton fans managed to establish the ground as an Asset of Community Value in May 2017.

This also covers the adjoining garage, which NCLL actually owns the freehold on, unlike the rest of the ground where it is the leaseholder only.

Six months' notice would need to be given to give the local community the opportunity to raise the funds to purchase it before it could be sold to anyone else.

This presents a ray of hope for the future of the ground as it cannot easily be sold off but in reality the cost is likely to be out of reach.

As has been seen recently at Dulwich Hamlet, there are likely to be property companies waiting to swoop on valuable London land.

Despite the land being designated for sporting use, developers are often happy to sit on the land and even leave it unused until the council gives in and

lets them build.

**Boycotting fans**

Relations between Clapton's fans and Mr McBean had already deteriorated over the years.

Fan groups Friends of Clapton FC, Real Clapton and Clapton Ultras had sponsored the club's kit, volunteered and promoted the hell out of games, helping attendances to averages of nearly 400.

However, things hit absolute rock bottom last season when fans turned up to a midweek game to find admission prices had been raised completely unannounced.

Last summer's liquidation bid was the final straw and Real Clapton members voted to call for a boycott of home games, which was backed by all other fan groups, to avoid giving money to the person who was attempting to liquidate the charity.

Home attendances have since fallen by almost 90 per cent with the Ultras' iconic Scaffold stand looking empty and forlorn, though away crowds have kept on growing.

**Garage sale**

Mr McBean is rumoured to

be keen to sell the freehold on the garage to cover the alleged debt to TBLS and then continue to transfer the lease on the Old Spotted Dog ground itself into his own name, under his Veer-court CIC company.

This would allow him to continue as he was without the scrutiny of the Charity Commission, creating a new platform from which to continue operating, bypass regulations and avoid any critical scrutiny and legal action.

#### Where we are now

That the situation has been allowed to get to this stage seems to be unprecedented and exposes failings at several stages – the High Court issued an injunction that halted the original liquidation, the Members Voluntary Liquidation (MVL).

Months later, the same High Court allowed the next Compulsory Winding-Up Petition to proceed to Companies Court and appear to have failed to check the records at Companies House which still haven't been updated to show a winding up petition, and at the Insolvency Service who are currently failing to act despite being made aware of the problem recently.

It is understood that the Charity Commission report into McBean's mismanagement is now complete and awaiting publication. However, the report is yet to be published despite the severity of what could happen if the Charity Commission fails to step in.

#### What happens next

Statutory body after statutory body has failed to act so far.

Even so, the Insolvency Service, which is now responsible for the liquidation, and the Charity Commission, which has written but not published its report, remain the last hope to stop the destruction of a historic football ground and ensure its assets are used for community good.

The Insolvency Service must resolve the issue in conjunction with the Charity Commission, who must publish their report immediately and follow through by taking the appropriate actions that it raises.

We are told that Real Clapton will soon put out a call to arms on how you can help, with supporters holding an open meeting on the future of the Spotted Dog on April 11 at 7pm at Durning Hall, Forest Gate.

In the meantime, you can contact them on [info@claptonfc.info](mailto:info@claptonfc.info) with any offers of support, suggestions or questions.

Anyone with fond memories of the Old Spotted Dog's history, or with bright hopes for its future, is encouraged to help.

■ This article was first published on March 26 at <https://claptonfcnews.wordpress.com/2018/03/26/old-spotted-dog-on-the-endangered-species-list-an-sos-call/>

■ The Star contacted Mr McBean for comment and the time of publishing still awaiting response

## ■ MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Unarmed Clark's brother calls on protesters to leave Kings alone

**UNITED STATES:** Following the death of Stephon, demonstrations have been held outside of the basketball stadium

by Our Sports Desk

HOURS after an emotional interruption at his brother's funeral, Stevante Clark helped defuse tension in California's capital city by asking protesters not to block thousands of fans from entering a downtown NBA arena for a third night.

Police in riot gear stood waiting outside the Golden 1 Centre as fans wove through barricades and fencing Thursday to enter for a Sacramento Kings-Indiana Pacers game.

But protesters never came, heeding calls from Stevante Clark and Black Lives Matter organisers to avoid the arena. Instead, they blocked rush hour traffic on nearby downtown streets.

The March 18 shooting of Stephon Clark, 22, by Sacramento police officers has sparked near daily protests, with his name becoming a rallying cry for police reform in California and beyond.

Two officers responding to a call of someone breaking car windows shouted that Clark had a gun before firing 20 bullets at him, but he had only a mobile phone.

Delivering Stephon Clark's eulogy on Thursday, the Reverend Al Sharpton praised dem-



**TENSION RISING:** A protester (left) talks with a Sacramento Kings ticket holder on Wednesday night

onstrators for their restraint and urged them to follow the lead of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr and his advocacy of non-violent protest.

"I want the folks in California to know that there's nothing wrong with how these

young people are standing up," he thundered. "They're not being violent, they're asking for you to stop being violent to them."

More than 500 people packed into the church to celebrate Stephon Clark's life, remembering

his dance moves, intelligence and love for his two young sons.

Stevante Clark interrupted the musical and scriptural celebration by hugging and kissing the casket, leading the crowd in chanting his brother's name, pounding his chest and

shouting. Others on the stage attempted to calm him, with limited success.

Sharpton hugged and consoled him and told the crowd not to judge how families grieve.

"This brother could be any one of us, so let them express and grieve," Sharpton said. "We are proud of them for standing up for justice."

The Kings and their owner have been supportive of the Clark family.

The team announced plans to set up an education fund for Stephon Clark's children and a partnership with Black Lives Matter Sacramento to bring "transformational change" to the city's black communities. Former Kings player Matt Barnes attended the funeral, as did Mayor Darrell Steinberg, who promised to work with Stevante Clark days after he disrupted a City Council meeting.

The protests have caused disruption, though largely peaceful, around the arena, a focal point of the city's revitalisation efforts in a downtown that's struggled economically and has a heavy homeless population.

Some businesses have been shutting down early while commuters have been snarled in rush hour traffic due to closed streets during the protests.

## ■ MEN'S RUGBY SEVENS

# Australian captain to miss Games with fractured skull

by Our Sports Desk

Australian rugby sevens captain James Stannard has been ruled out of the Commonwealth Games after sustaining a fractured skull after being punched by a man outside a restaurant early yesterday morning.

Rugby Australia said that Stannard was taken to St Vincent's Hospital, where he is in stable condition, after being struck by another man at 3.10am. It said New South Wales Police have charged a 22-year-old man over

an alleged "one-punch" assault.

Rugby Australia said Stannard was with a group of teammates, along with head coach Andy Friend, at the time of the incident. It said Stannard was struck by a man in an unprovoked attack after reportedly having a conversation with him outside the restaurant.

Several members of the Australian men's sevens team were witness to the attack and two of Stannard's teammates, Lewis Holland and Ben O'Donnell, along with Friend, were able to detain the man shortly after

the attack, until police arrived.

The team had earlier been celebrating at a farewell dinner for Friend, who did not have his contract renewed by Rugby Australia and will leave the team later this year.

Stannard, 35, played in a Commonwealth Games warm-up match on Thursday in Sydney. The rugby sevens programme at the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in Queensland state is from April 13-15.

Stannard had assumed the captaincy in the absence of the injured Holland.

"They're shocked and the team will have to show again that they are a very resilient team," Rugby Australia high performance general manager Ben Whitaker said of Stannard's absence.

## ■ MEN'S FOOTBALL

# Russians told to avoid 'exotic tea'

by Our Sports Desk

**THE Russian Football Union warned players yesterday against drinking "exotic tea" or smoking shisha pipes as it tries to avoid any doping cases ahead of its home World Cup.**

**In a guide to help players avoid failing drug tests by accident, the RFU says players should be wary of accidentally consuming banned substances.**

**It recommends players always read the label on exercise supplements and check online whether they're contaminated with banned products.**

**The RFU also advises players "not to consume**

**exotic tea," to avoid smoking shisha and to be wary of possibly contaminated meat from China or South America.**

**It wasn't immediately clear what prompted the tea warning. An Algerian player was banned after a 2015 positive test for cocaine he said he accidentally consumed via a friend's shisha pipe.**

**The Russian guide comes as Fifa investigates allegations that positive drug tests in Russian football in previous years were covered up. Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko said last month Fifa is investigating current Russia international Ruslan Kambolov.**



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■ MEN'S CRICKET

# WOODS MARKS HIS RETURN FROM INJURY WITH VINTAGE DISPLAY AT BAT

by Our Sports Desk

MARK WOOD has spent the winter dreaming of a hero's return for England but got a significant variation on the story he envisaged in Christchurch yesterday.

Wood, in his first Test since last July following a lengthy recurrence of the ankle injuries which have been the bane of his professional life, helped Jonny Bairstow turn the tourists' fortunes around against New Zealand.

Instead of a maiden five-wicket haul on day one of this second and final Test, No 9 Wood hit a career-best 52 as he and Bairstow (97no) engineered a recovery from 164 for seven to 290 for eight.

The increasingly adventurous stand of 95 between two cricketers, who have known one another more than half their lives, offset eight wickets shared by Tim Southee and Trent Boult.

Alluding to his tale of the unexpected, Wood said: "The worrying thing is I've got a [Test] 50 before a five-for – so I've done that the wrong way round, haven't I?"

"But I loved batting out there with Jonny – a lad I've played with and against since about 11 or 12 years old.

"I had loads of fun – I thoroughly enjoyed it."

The two first met playing in opposition for Northumberland and Yorkshire age-group teams, and the 28-year-old Geordie said: "When I went out to bat,

obviously we were in a bit of trouble and Jonny knows that I like to have fun and a bit of crack out there.

"We were just having a laugh: 'Oh, [Neil] Wagner's bowled another bouncer,' which put my mind at ease really, and you just forget the situation you're in."

Wood went on to outscore his senior partner.

Asked if that was the plan, with a smile, he said: "Obviously.

"I get to 20 and think I'm like [Don] Bradman – and try too many shots.

"[But] Jonny, being a batsman, knows how to construct an innings – [whereas] at times I chanced my arm a little bit.

His only regret was the tim-

ing of his dismissal, Southee's fifth victim, leaving debutant No 10 Jack Leach with a tough challenge, to which he rose, as he and Bairstow closed out the day.

"I was just more disappointed I got out the last ball before the second new ball, having worked so hard, to leave Leachy on his debut going in against the new ball.

"That was a bit rubbish. But apart from that, I had a great time while I was out there.

"I like that bit of arrogance about the way Jonny bats ... it takes the bowlers off their gameplan and maybe there was a little bit of panic stations at one point."

There was little to cheer New Zealand as Bairstow and Wood launched the recovery follow-

ing an earlier collapse of three wickets for one run.

Ross Taylor lightened the mood at one point on the boundary when he obliged a spectator by signing a piece of sandpaper, in a set-piece parody of the ball-tampering crisis which has beset Australia in South Africa and landed world cricket with a week of regrettable headlines.

Otherwise, Southee admits it was simply a case of the hosts keeping their cool to ensure England's counter-attack did not get out of hand.

"They played exceptionally well when their team needed it," he said.

"But I think the effort from the guys has been pretty good throughout. They tried most things."

FRIDAY'S RESULTS

Championship

Barnsley 2.....2 Bristol City  
Brentford 1.....1 Sheffield United  
Cardiff 3.....1 Burton  
Leeds 2.....1 Bolton  
Millwall 2.....0 Nottingham Forest  
Norwich 0.....2 Fulham  
Sheffield Wednesday 4.....1 Preston

League One

Wimbledon 0.....1 Fleetwood  
Blackpool 1.....2 Doncaster Rovers  
Bristol Rovers 2.....1 Bury  
Northampton 0.....4 Charlton  
Oxford United 1.....1 Scunthorpe  
Plymouth Argyle 4.....0 Southend  
Rochdale 3.....1 Shrewsbury  
Rotherham 1.....1 Peterborough  
Wigan 3.....0 Oldham

League Two

Barnet 2.....1 Crewe Alexandra  
Cambridge United 3.....1 Crawley  
Cheltenham 0.....1 Carlisle  
Colchester 2.....1 Luton  
Grimsby 0.....0 Stevenage  
Lincoln 3.....2 Exeter  
Mansfield 0.....1 Accrington Stanley  
Newport County 1.....1 Coventry  
Notts County 0.....0 Wycombe  
Port Vale 2.....1 Chesterfield  
Swindon Town 1.....1 Morecambe

WEEKEND FOOTBALL

Premier League

Crystal Palace..Liverpool, 12.30pm  
Brighton.....Leicester  
Manchester United.....Swansea  
Newcastle.....Huddersfield  
Watford.....Bournemouth  
West Brom.....Burnley  
West Ham.....Southampton  
Everton.....Man City, 5.30pm  
Arsenal.....Stoke, 1.30pm\*  
Chelsea.....Tottenham, 4pm\*

Championship

Birmingham City.....Ipswich Town  
Hull City.....Aston Villa, 5.30pm

League One

Walsall.....Portsmouth

WSL One

Yeovil.....Liverpool, 12pm\*  
Arsenal.....Chelsea, 12pm\*  
Everton P.....P Bristol City\*  
Birmingham.....Sunderland, 2pm\*  
Man City.....Reading, 2pm\*

WSL Two

Durham.....Oxford United, 12pm\*  
Brighton.....Tottenham, 2pm\*  
Sheffield.....Millwall, 2pm\*

Scottish Premiership

Motherwell.....Rangers, 12.30pm  
Aberdeen.....St Johnstone  
Celtic.....Ross County  
Hibernian.....Partick Thistle  
Kilmarnock..Hamilton Academical  
Dundee.....Hearts, 12.30pm\*

Scottish Champ

Dumbarton.....Livingston  
Dunfermline Athletic.....Queen Of  
The South  
Falkirk.....Brechin City  
Inverness CT.....St Mirren  
Morton.....Dundee United

Scottish League One

Alloa Athletic.....Arbroath  
East Fife.....Ayr United  
Queen's Park.....Airdrieonians  
Raith Rovers.....Albion Rovers  
Stranraer.....Forfar Athletic

Scottish League Two

Annan Athletic.....Berwick Rangers  
Cowdenbeath.....Stenhousemuir  
Elgin City.....Stirling Albion  
Montrose.....Edinburgh City  
Peterhead.....Clyde

All kickoffs 3pm unless noted  
\* denotes Sunday game

■ MEN'S FOOTBALL

# Fulham keep pressure on Championship pair

by Our Sports Desk

FULHAM maintained their push for automatic promotion from the Championship with a hard-fought 2-0 win over mid-table Norwich at Carrow Road yesterday.

The Cottagers secured the points thanks to two goals in four minutes midway through the second half, with midfielders Stefan Johansen and Tom Cairney on target.

The Canaries had their moments but it was a deserved

victory for the visitors who kept the pressure on Cardiff and Wolves in the battle for a top-two finish.

Fulham dominated possession in the first half with their neat passing game but never seriously troubled Angus Gunn.

Pretty passing patterns were constantly breaking down on the edge of the box and it was a similar story at the other end when the Canaries had occasional bouts of possession.

Daniel Farke's team did fin-

ish the half strongly, however, and would have had a clear sight of goal but for poor passes from first Mario Vrancic and then Josh Murphy.

The hosts also started the second period brightly and it took a superb fingertip save from Marcus Bettinelli to deny Srbeny after the German striker took aim from just outside the box.

Fulham introduced highly rated 17-year-old Ryan Sessegnon from the bench seven minutes after the restart as they attempted to assert some

authority on proceedings, but Norwich continued to press and Murphy was only just wide with a sweetly struck volley.

Fulham made the breakthrough on 66 minutes when Gunn made a fine stop to keep out Aleksandar Mitrovic's close range header from a Matt Targett cross but Johansen was on hand to fire home the loose ball.

The Cottagers swiftly doubled their lead with Cairney making it 2-0 on 69 minutes.

This time Lucas Piazon sent

in a low cross from the right and the ball deflected off Zimmermann into the path of the influential midfielder, who drilled home past an exposed Gunn.

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