

**December
2019**

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SCHOOLS UNDER THREAT!

Our members in schools are at breaking point facing average cuts of 8% per pupil next year with some schools losing even more money due to a new funding formula being introduced by the government.



There are schools in Knowsley which are facing Academisation, Restructuring and Redundancies, which all have a negative impact, not just on our members, but on the education of children in the borough.

Our schools should be safe, healthy and happy places for children and young people to learn in. But dedicated support staff are bearing the brunt of the cuts in admin, facilities, cleaning and even the classroom, meaning some children will be unable to get the much needed support they need to achieve their potential.

At the time of writing Branch Officers are seeking a meeting with KMBC for emergency talks to try and avoid members receiving redundancy notices in one Knowsley school, on the day they will be breaking up for Christmas.

But this matter is about more than our members jobs, it is also about our childrens futures. If the cuts to education continue it is our children who will really suffer. Today schools are cutting back on prit-sticks, paper and teaching assistants— Tomorrow they will be closing the doors on our children's education altogether.



RECRUIT A FRIEND AND RECEIVE £10

UNISON has extended the national recruitment campaign "Grovement" by a further two weeks. Therefore, our "recruit a friend" scheme will run through until Friday 13th December. Simply put name and contact number on the new joiners form and give it to your rep to receive £10!

KNOWSLEY UNISON NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

It is that time of year again where your union prepares the Annual General Meeting for which all members are invited. For 2020, your branch has agreed to run two AGMs to accommodate for members who have previously struggled to attend a lunch time meeting. The meetings will have the exact same business/Agenda and therefore you are only expected to attend one.

We will publish the full agenda including motions in the New Year but we can confirm we have excellent guest speakers attending in Glen Williams (National Chair of UNISON Local Government Service Group) and Lizanne Davenport (Regional Disputes Team).

The Annual General Meetings for which you are encouraged to attend one will be held on:

**Friday 28th February 2020
12.30 pm
Huyton Council Chamber, Huyton Municipal Buildings
(Free Buffet Lunch to be provided prior to the meeting)**

**Monday 2nd March 2020
4.00 pm
Huyton Council Chamber, Huyton Municipal Buildings
(Tea/Coffee and Cakes to be served prior to the meeting)**

Nominations for:

Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Chairperson, Assistant Secretary, Membership Officer, Education Officer, Lifelong Learning Coordinator, Welfare Officer, Membership Services Officer, Publicity Officer, Health & Safety Officer, Equalities Officer, Affiliated Political Fund Officer, Young Members Officer, International Relations Officer, Retired Members Officer and Auditors (2) should be received by the Branch Secretary in writing with signatures of at least two nominees and one of acceptance no later than the deadline below.

(Nomination forms are available from the Branch Office, Your worksite Steward or the website).

Motions for Debate and proposed Amendments to Rule, signed by a Proposer and a Sec-
onder should be received in writing by the Branch Secretary no later than the deadline be-
low.

The deadline referred to above shall be 12 noon on Friday 13th December 2019

If any members have access requirements please contact the Branch Office

An article from our Branch International Officer—Rebekah McNally

FROM WIGAN TO RAVENSBRUCK – THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF MARY O’SHAUGHNESSY

Mary O’Shaughnessy was born in Wigan in 1898. Her father Denis was an Irish man who worked as a coal miner in the Wigan coalfields.

Life was tough for mining families. Wage rates were low; housing was overcrowded, it wasn’t unusual for two families to share one house. Housing then didn’t have any of the modern conveniences that we enjoy today, e.g. central heating, electricity, indoor toilets, hot and cold running water. Luxuries were unheard of and treats were rare.

Life was tough and it was tougher still for Mary as she was born without a left hand. Mary was bullied mercilessly at school due to this disability. But this tough upbringing stood Mary in good stead for what she was to face in her adult life.

In her early 20s Mary left Wigan to take up work as a nanny with a wealthy family in Angers in France. She worked hard and after some years Mary had saved enough money to buy a small flat in Paris.

Mary was still living and working in France when the Germans invaded and occupied in 1939. Mary joined a local Resistance group. Her work involved directing allied aircrew trapped behind enemy lines to the escape routes across the Pyrenees or via the port in Marseille. This was highly dangerous work and the Nazis eventually became aware of Mary’s activities.

After her Paris flat was raided and ransacked Mary organised her own escape. She was stopped at a French town close to the border with Spain. Here she was betrayed and was arrested by the Gestapo. Mary was sent to Mont Luc prison in Lyon where she was interrogated under torture. Unable to get any information out of her, Mary was sent to the Ravensbruck concentration camp.

By the time of her arrival at Ravensbruck, the camp was severely overcrowded. Conditions were squalid and the regime at Ravensbruck was designed to humiliate, degrade, dehumanise and terrorise. Mary was brutally beaten by camp guards on several occasions.

Prisoners had to stand for hours on roll call before being sent on backbreaking work duty that lasted up to 12 hours a day in all weathers. Mary was ‘pink slipped’, meaning she was excused work duty due to her disability. But the true purpose of the pink slip soon became clear. Mary was soon sent to the Uckermark sub-camp, allegedly for recuperation. But by then it was common knowledge in the camp that Uckermark was really the stopping off point for the gas chambers.

At Uckermark Mary was herded into a crowded wooden hut. The door was shut and locked and Mary and the other prisoners were kept in the hut for three days with no food, water or toilets.

After three days the hut was unlocked and Mary and the other prisoners were dragged out and beaten.

When the death squads came round Mary was hidden by another prisoner. In this way Mary escaped the death squads on three occasions. She was eventually sent back to the squalid horrors of the main Ravensbruck camp.

Mary was liberated from Ravensbruck in April 1945 by the Swedish Red Cross. She returned to the UK and recuperated with her sister in Leigh, Lancashire. She returned to Germany in 1946 to give evidence at the Ravensbruck war crimes trials. She eventually settled in Kenya and her later years were peaceful and contented. Mary died at a reunion in Brighton in September 1973.

Many working class women like Mary O’Shaughnessy took huge personal risks in the Second World War to save the lives of others and they suffered horribly as a result. Yet these brave women are virtually unknown today. Their stories deserve to be told.

There is also another reason for telling stories like Mary’s. Today we witness the rise of the far right and neo-nazi organisations across Europe and in the UK. In this context Mary O’Shaughnessy’s story is a stark warning from history. It is one we ignore at our peril.

Stewards Corner



Introducing....

Michael Andrews



As Unison’s Organising Steward for First Ark employees, I am here to offer advice and representation to members, as well as a connection to the local branch and its officers. Having been employed by KHT for more than eight years, I daresay I’m quite a familiar face, especially in Page Moss where I’m based, so feel free to contact me should you have an issue you’d like to discuss, or if you are considering becoming a member.

Message from your Branch Secretary... General Election 12th December! Please ensure you vote!!!

Some pics of the excellent work carried out by reps during the recruitment month as well as delegate pictures from the National Disabled Members Conference ...



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