

20 March 2018

## End of Year REPORT 2017/18



**The battle for more pay continues.**

Hi all.

**Another year gone and the fight to gain a Labour Government continues.**

I've held the post of 'Labour Link Officer' for the past few years and report at monthly Branch Meetings, I also produce a monthly newsletter which can be found on my LAS Unison Web page for members to read and be kept updated.

I take my role very seriously as its important to be able to take forward members concerns, queries and ideas. I am able to do this as I attend regular meetings with the London Unison Labour Link group.

I'm a Local activist in my area of Epsom Surrey and have stood for election as a councillor in local elections, I regularly get in involved with local and national campaigning and I am a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party.

Labour Link's role inside the Labour Party is to advance the best interests of UNISON members, working for quality public services, equality and decent pay and conditions.

I am a proud Unison member and believe in fighting for a stronger NHS and for a living wage for all care workers.

# Information

**In this year's report I've included this month's report, starting with some useful info:**

“A member commented to me last week that the ‘news’ rarely features the Labour party; which is true for lots of reasons known to the press (and the Westminster ‘bubble’) but doesn't mean that nothing is going on. If you want balanced press reporting, then there are several other avenues:”

National newspapers which carry a wider spread of news are The Mirror, The Guardian/Observer, Morning Star, The Independent and the Financial Times. All except the last are available free online, although they do ask you to contribute (which I do). The FT is pay only.

Commuters will have access to the Metro (same group as the Daily Fail) and the Evening Standard. There is no love lost between the Standard's Editor George Osborne and Theresa May, so it can be fun to read.

Sometimes it is useful to read ‘home thoughts from abroad’, especially re Brexit and foreign policy. I'll look in at the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, The New York Times and the Sydney Morning Herald.

Some TV and Radio channels break the mould from time to time; channel 4 News Democracy, James O'Brian on LBC and Victoria Derbyshire on BBC2.

There are many online only news sources: The Canary <https://www.thecanary.co.uk/>, The Huffington post <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/>, UK uncut, Evolve Politics <https://evolvepolitics.com/> Labour List [labourlist.org](http://labourlist.org); Left Foot Forward [leftfootforward.org](http://leftfootforward.org) Hope Not Hate <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/> and others: [https://blog.feedspot.com/uk\\_political\\_blogs/](https://blog.feedspot.com/uk_political_blogs/)

For fun there is The Poke <https://www.thepoke.co.uk/> The Daily Politik, etc.

There are also very many anti or pro Brexit sites, some MPs blogs and other pressure groups which blog.

For Labour news, as well as Labour List, there is always the main party website: <http://press.labour.org.uk/>

I hope some of you will find these links useful.



**Labour Link** works directly within the Labour Party to take **UNISON's** policies into the heart of the party.

We work at local and national level and have a network of Labour Link officers at branch, regional and national levels who work together and with other affiliated unions.

UNISON has always had a strong working relationship with Jeremy Corbyn and his team and this is something we can build on to hold the Tories to account for their incompetent and wrong-headed policies.

Even where Labour did not win (2017), the party made substantial ground which bodes well for public service workers as your union continues to fight for fair funding and better services. In many areas Labour is back in contention and well placed to mount a challenge at the next General Election – which could be very soon. Given the weakness and instability of the minority Tory government your union will remain on an election footing in anticipation of another General Election in the near future.

While the Labour movement may lack the funds of the Tories and their backers we do have the people on the ground having the conversations with voters on the issues that matter to them. The Tories cannot match us in that – for we are the many not the few.

Now is the perfect time to ensure you are registered to vote. You may have local elections on May 3rd but even if you don't have local elections this year, the government is weak and wobbly and there could be a snap election at any time.

- Senior Tories are on record as saying they want to use Brexit to cut rights at work, including the right to paid holiday.
- Vital public services like our treasured NHS are in crisis due to Tory underinvestment.
- Over the last 7 years of Tory Government working people have had a pay cut.

**Ruxley by-election – The Result!**

As I said in my last report I was busy with my local by-election, well the results are in, we came a commendable third place. You can find the official result declaration here

What the numbers don't show is how well we did. We achieved an amazing 10.5% swing, mainly from the Residents' Association, going from 14% in 2015, when these seats were last contested to, 24.7% yesterday. The changes in vote share were:

RES: 37.2% (-7.4) HOLD.

CON: 31.8% (-0.6)

LAB: 24.7% (+10.5)

LDEM: 6.3% (-2.5)

The key headlines from this result has to be that the Tories can't win a council seat in one of their safest parliamentary constituencies in the country and we have consolidated the 25% share of the vote we achieved in Epsom & Ewell at last year's General Election. Labour in Epsom & Ewell is on the march and bodes well for next year's local elections where we hope to do even better.





Jonathon Ashworth with Tim Eddie

Earlier this year Jonathon Ashworth the Labour Shadow Health Secretary tried twice to visit The London Ambulance Service HQ at Waterloo but unfortunately both times were cancelled.

We were pleased to see that he finally arranged an alternative, an “Ambulance ride out “.

He joined our Branch Secretary Eddie Brand and Our Branch Chair Tim Stephens on an Ambulance and witnessed what life is really like on the front line of the NHS.

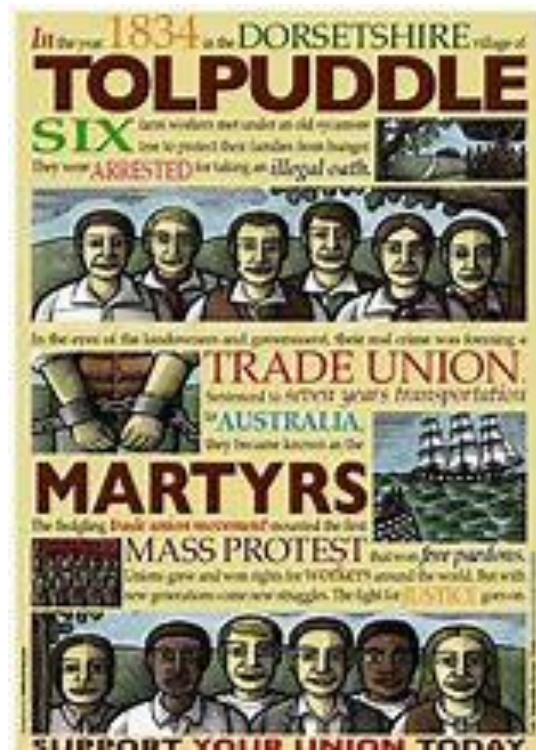
He praised all the staff at the LAS and repeated his support to stop the Conservative NHS cuts.

“It was a real honour to spend the afternoon on the frontline of our NHS with Eddie AND Tim, paramedics with London Ambulance Service. The commitment, dedication and compassion of our HNS staff working under pressure is extraordinary”

**Jonathon Ashworth Shadow Health Secretary.**

## History

### Tolpuddle Martyrs



As the sun rose on 24th February 1834, Dorset farm labourer George Loveless set off to work, saying goodbye to his wife Betsy and their three children. They were not to meet again for three years, for as he left his cottage in the rural village of Tolpuddle, the 37-year-old was served with a warrant for his arrest.

Loveless and five fellow workers – his brother James, James Hammett, James Brine, Thomas Standfield and Thomas's son John – were charged with having taken an illegal oath. But their real crime in the eyes of the establishment was to have formed a trade union to protest about their meagre pay of six shillings a week – the equivalent of 30p in today's money and the third wage cut in as many years.

Sycamore tree with the bloody French Revolution and the wrecking of the Swing Rebellion fresh in the minds of the British establishment, landowners were determined to stamp out any form of organised protests. So when the local squire and landowner, James Frampton, caught wind of a group of his workers forming a union, he sought to stamp it out.

Workers met either under the sycamore tree in the village or in the upper room of Thomas Stanfield's cottage. Members swore of an oath of secrecy – and it was this act that led to the men's arrest and subsequent sentence of seven years' transportation.

In prison, George Loveless scribbled some words: "We raise the watchword, liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!" This rallying call underlined the Martyrs' determination and has since served to inspire generations of people to fight against injustice and oppression.

Transportation to Australia Transportation to Australia was brutal. Few ever returned from such a sentence as the harsh voyage and rigours of slavery took their toll.

After the sentence was pronounced, the working class rose up in support of the Martyrs. A massive demonstration marched through London and an 800,000-strong petition was delivered to Parliament protesting about their sentence.

After three years, during which the trade union movement sustained the Martyrs' families by collecting voluntary donations, the government relented and the men returned home with free pardons and as heroes.

The story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the campaign that freed them inspires us to fight on. The annual festival reflects the spirit of those prepared to stand up and be counted and for those just learning about the history it is a joyful celebration of our solidarity.

**I hope many of you can come and join me at the LAS Unison Branch AGM,  
(21<sup>ST</sup> March 2018 Unison HQ Euston London)**

**And join the Branch officers /Reps/Branch members, share your concerns and catch up with other Labour Party supporting colleagues.**

**Jason Anderson Labour Link LAS Unison Branch**