

Rachel Reeves MP Monthly Report

News from Rachel Reeves, Labour MP for Leeds West

October 2012

KIRKSTALL IN WESTMINSTER

HISTORY BOY RETURNS TO ARMLEY



- and the group did it in style on Parliament's riverside terrace, where next week the local beer Kirkstall Pale Ale, will be on tap.

No visit to the seat of power would be complete without seeing democracy in action - and the group were also invited into the visitors galleries of both houses of Parliament to watch MPs and Lords battle it out in the debates in the chamber.

Rachel said,

"I was delighted to see Parliament visited by Kirkstall residents this week. It was a privilege to show them around behind the scenes, and celebrate the work many of them do putting on events like Kirkstall Festival every year."

If you would like to book a tour of the House of Commons and live in Leeds West, get in touch with Rachel via rachel.reeves.mp@parliament.uk or 0113 263 0411.



In the latest edition of the successful series of film nights hosted at Armley Mills, Rachel welcomed Armley lad Alan Bennett back to his home town.

The playwright introduced the hugely successful film to the audience, with a witty and informative talk.

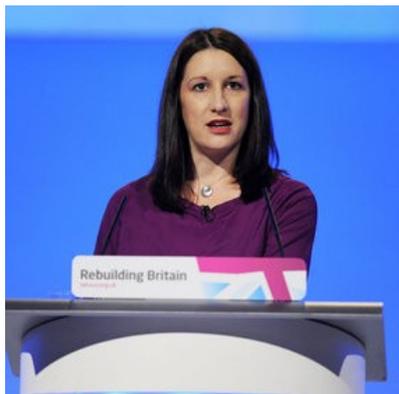
The event raised £900 for Housing Charity [Shelter](#).

Rachel was delighted to welcome a group of Kirkstall residents to Westminster, as members of [Kirkstall Valley Community Association](#) visited Parliament.

As well as meeting Rachel and taking a tour of the Palace of Westminster, the local volunteers had a chat with other MPs, including Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls MP, Fabian Hamilton MP, Owen Smith, Shadow Secretary of State for Wales, Lisa Nandy MP, Jack Dromey MP and Michael Dugher MP.

After the meet-and-greet with high profile figures it was time for a pint

RACHEL'S SPEECH TO LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE



Rachel delivered a keynote address to the Labour Party Conference in Manchester, announcing her work with Labour run Councils to deliver a living wage for their employees.

You can find the full-text of the speech, plus video, on Rachel's website at:

<http://www.rachelreeves.net>

Rachel spent the week speaking on panels with a number of campaign groups and think tanks, meeting stakeholders and speaking to the media.

See appendices for Rachel's pre-conference feature interview with the Independent on Sunday

MORE NEWS VIA Web: www.rachelreeves.net Twitter: [@rachelreevesmp](https://twitter.com/rachelreevesmp)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rachelreeves10



In Brief:



Rachel took part in a panel at Leeds Civic Hall at a meeting of Unite Union and Labour Party members from across the city. The other panellists included Paul Routledge, a Daily Mirror columnist, Jamie Hanley, trade union lawyer and PPC for Pudsey at the last General Election, Steve Hart, Political Director of Unite the Union and Mark Fieldhouse, the regional Unite Chair.

The event was an opportunity to discuss how the Trade Union movement can work with the Labour Party to campaign



The high-rise flats campaign has continued with 18 blocks across Leeds West now surveyed. Rachel and campaigners have knocked on over 1150 doors since the campaign started and Rachel would like to thank all of those who have given their time and support.

There are 10 more blocks to survey and we hope to see you out on the doorstep!

FUTURE BRAMLEY CHESS CHAMPIONS



chess three weeks ago as part of the Chess in Schools programme.

Valley View Primary, Stanningley Primary, Hollybush Primary and Bramley Primary are also taking part in the programme and an inter-school tournament is planned for June next year!

This month Rachel visited Bramley St Peters C of E Primary School to meet pupils who started learning

You can learn more about Chess in Schools and Communities online at: <http://www.chessinschools.co.uk/>

'SWITCH TOGETHER' WITH LABOUR FOR A BETTER ENERGY DEAL

Labour MP Caroline Flint has launched the SwitchTogether scheme to help people obtain cheaper energy. The campaign allows anybody to sign up and the Labour Party will seek bids from energy companies to sell energy to all of those signed up.

'Labour may not run the country, but we can help you cut your bills today' Caroline Flint told the Labour Conference, 'we may be in opposition... But we can help people right now when this Government won't'.

Buying energy for many people at once is known as "collective switching". Labour is the first politi-

cal party in British history to organise a collective switch.

Energy bills are one of the biggest costs facing families but only 20% of people are on the cheapest deal. With so many confusing tariffs on the market, people find switching energy supplier difficult, or give up trying because all the companies seem to raise their prices. That's why Labour has organised SwitchTogether.

The Labour Party does not make any money from this scheme.

You can find out more at www.switchtogether.org.uk or call 0800 048 8112 (from 8:00am-5:30pm) to request a paper form.

CAMPAIGNING AND EVENT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

* Sunday 21st October—11:00am Direct Mail delivery in Kirkstall, meet corner of Station Parade / Morris Lane (by St Stephens Church)

*Saturday 3rd November—10:30am Campaigning in Farnley & Wortley, meet at Co-op

** Friday 14th December—from 7:00pm

Leeds West Labour Party Christmas Fundraising Dinner, The West End House, Abbey Road, Kirkstall

Tickets £20, booking essential. Contact bryonyvictoriaking@hotmail.co.uk to reserve your place.

Rachel Reeves: Expectant! Meet the woman who believes her party's best days lie ahead



Soon to be a mum, she became an MP only two years ago, but she is tipped as an election winner. She talks to Jane Merrick

When Rachel Reeves announced earlier this month she was expecting her first baby, the reaction of many was to congratulate her: at 33, she is the only serving member of any cabinet or shadow cabinet to be pregnant. The second reaction of Westminster's futurology students was: what does this mean for the Labour leadership?

Reeves, who became an MP in 2010, has been pushed forward by Ed Miliband himself as a star of his front bench. When the Labour leader and Ed Balls went to Gregg's flagship store to exploit George Osborne's "pastygate" fumbles, they were joined by Reeves, eating sausage rolls for the cameras. But many in the Labour Party believe she can also be their first female leader, whenever that time comes. A year ago, when Miliband's leadership was running into difficulty, MPs and members looked around for an election-winner – and Rachel Reeves's name came up every time.

Today, Ed Miliband is on safer ground as he begins his second conference as leader. But the party's 2011 reaction shows that, despite his current good run, many are still looking to the future for a leader with the same election-winning formula as Tony Blair.

Sitting in Bramley Baths, an Edwardian swimming pool in her Leeds West constituency which local people saved from closure by the (Labour-run)

council, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury is calmly dismissive of the leadership question.

"That's not my ambition," she says. "My ambition is for Labour to win the next election, and to be part of the team that's leading the change that Ed Miliband's been speaking about.

"I just really want the Labour Party to win the next election – not for me or for Ed Miliband, but for people in my constituency and for people around the country who are being so hard hit by what the Government are doing."

The swimming pool was saved when Reeves held public meetings to bring together a local partnership, the Friends of Bramley Baths, who in December will take ownership of the pool from Leeds City Council, which says it was forced to threaten closure because of government cuts. Despite wearing three-inch heels, the MP walks around the edge of the pool to point out the original features from 1904: the stained-glass windows and white tiled walls, where her constituents, their parents and grandparents have spent a century coming together to meet, swim and play. We then go to a room next door, painted the same colour purple as her top, where there is proper Yorkshire hospitality: mugs of tea and a gigantic cream sponge cake from Morrison's.

Reeves explains Ed Miliband's idea of "predistribution" – ensuring "income and wealth are distributed before government gets involved, through the benefits system and taxes", using minimum and living wages to spread income more fairly and boost skills-based education.

"When the economy grows again, the proceeds of that growth must be fairly distributed. If people at the top of the banks get bigger bonuses, that does nothing for ordinary people who want to see an improvement in their living standards. That's what the next Labour manifesto is going to be about."

Reeves admits that the policy is quite hard for voters to understand: "We're not going to have a pledge card that says: 'No 1, we want a better predistribution of income'. But we need to have a narrative to be able to develop policies."

She insists Miliband will be PM after the next election: "I find him hugely inspirational and I know that he cares passionately about the challenges that Britain faces, that ordinary people in Britain face."

But even if Reeves can see Ed Miliband in No 10 after May 2015, can voters really see it in their minds?

"It's difficult being leader of the Opposition because you're aspiring to do a job that you don't have any chance to prove you can do until you're in it. Conference is an opportunity for Ed Miliband to be centre-stage.

"People are calling out for change; they are desperate for change. In a way which we haven't had at many conferences for a few years, people are looking to Labour for that alternative vision for the country. They want some hope, which they're not getting from this government."

Reeves leaves the door open to Labour signing up to Osborne's spending plans, an issue of heated debate inside the Shadow Cabinet. "At the moment, it's very difficult to know what the economy's going to look like in three months' time, let alone in two and a half years' time."

"Labour have to be cautious: we can't promise to reverse any of the cuts or the tax increases that the Government has put in place. So until closer to the election, we're not going to be able to set out our spending plans and commitments because, if we did that now, the likelihood is we would have to revise them every time a new lot of data came in."

When she discusses the economy, she talks quickly, words spilling out, which suggests her brain is working faster than her mouth can keep pace with. She has been criticised for having an estuarine twang in her voice – she was brought up in Lewisham, south-east London – which could hamper her leadership chances, but I wonder whether it is this that makes some of her words sound strained. When the tape recorder is off and she is more relaxed, the twang seems to be smoothed out.

A year on from joining the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, she seems to have grown in political stature, but she can still sound as if she's reading from a script. Maybe this is the cautious behaviour of someone who wants to keep a clean slate to prepare for leadership. And maybe becoming a mother will make her sound less like a career politician.

Reeves, the daughter of Labour-supporting teachers, went to a state school in Bromley and was a junior chess champion. After studying politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford, her first job was as an economist at the Bank of England. On her first day, she met Matt Hancock, who would later be Osborne's adviser before also becoming an MP in 2010 – he is now Business minister. Was Hancock right to compare himself, as he did in an interview recently, to Churchill and Disraeli? "I didn't see it when I worked with him."

If Labour is the largest party in a hung parliament in 2015, could it work with Clegg?

"I think it would be very hard to work with Nick Clegg. He is fully signed up to what David Cameron and George Osborne are doing. He's lost the trust of people."

But asked whether Labour could work with a different Lib Dem leader, such as Vince Cable, Reeves says: "I think the Labour Party can get an overall majority

at the next election. But we've also got two and a half years until the next election and, during that time, we're happy to work with politicians from all parties."

Did she have any sympathy for Osborne when he was booed at the Paralympics? "I have no sympathy for George Osborne. It was the Tories' biggest-ever focus group, and 80,000 people booed him. The people I feel sorry for are the people who come to my surgeries every week who are just facing desperate situations. Those are the people my heart goes out to, not George Osborne, who should take his medicine."

Reeves is planning to take some maternity leave, and her husband, Nick Joicey, a Cabinet Office civil servant, will take paternity leave.

How will motherhood affect her views on politics? "Ask me this in six months' time or a year's time! In my constituency I meet lots of mums and dads who balance having a job or career and bringing up a family. Having children is one of the greatest joys, but it's a big challenge as well. I'm sure it will make me more in touch with some of the challenges my constituents face."

Her response sounds a little rehearsed, so it is refreshing to hear her joke about names. "We don't know whether it's a boy or a girl yet – but, if it's a girl, it definitely won't be called Ed." Will the baby be called Ed if it's a boy? "Probably not. But I'll have to discuss it with Nick."



Champion idea...

SHE'S used to facing political foes across the despatch box in Parliament but yesterday Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves had a different challenge when she met opponents across a chess board.

The former junior chess champion tested her wits against youngsters from St Peter's Primary School in Bramley, Leeds, in eight simultaneous games of chess. She is pictured doing battle with Annabelle Waterhouse.

Pupils at the school have been learning how to play the game to help with numeracy, calculation and problem solving skills.

The former champion gave out some handy

hints as she battled to checkmate pupils. She said: "It teaches forward thinking and it's good preparation for politicians in life in general. It's fantastic."

PICTURE: SIMON HULME.

Testing their wits in a checkmate challenge

Former junior chess champ and MP takes on primary school youngsters

BY LAURA BOWYER
NEWS REPORTER

SHE'S used to thinking one step ahead in Parliament but Leeds MP Rachel Reeves swapped politics for pawns for the day.

The former junior chess champion tested her wits against youngsters from St Peter's Primary School, in Bramley, during eight games of simultaneous chess.

Pupils at the school have been learning how to play the game since the start of term as part of an initiative to help boost their education.

The scheme is run by charity Chess in Schools and the Community which aims to teach youngsters about the game for one hour each week as part of the curriculum.

Rachel's skills were put to the test – and former champion even gave out some handy hints – as she battled to checkmate pupils.

She told the *YEP*: "I learned to play chess when I was six at primary school.

"It teaches forward thinking and it's good preparation for politicians in life in general.

"It's fantastic."
"Who knows we may have

future international and grandmasters of chess in this school."

Among those testing their new-found chess knowledge against Rachel was eight-year-old Abigail Kelly.

Abigail said: "I was a bit excited about it when I first started playing.

"I enjoy it but sometimes it can be hard.

"I've taught my mum how to play it now."

The school is now one of five schools in west Leeds that teaches children how to play chess.

Other schools include Stan-

ningley Primary, Valley View Primary, Bramley Primary and Hollybush Primary.

Malcolm Pein, chief executive of Chess in Schools and the Community, said: "It's very good for children for all sorts of reasons and it teaches children to think ahead.

"It helps them develop numerical skills, calculation and problem solving.

"There is a lot of scientific research but it shows that if you teach children chess it help with their educational outcome."

TWITTER: @LAURABOWYER
EMAIL: LAURA.BOWYER@YEP.CO.UK

Controversial student night is slammed by MP

'Pimps and Hoes' fancy dress event whips up a storm

BY STUART ROBINSON
NEWS REPORTER

A CONTROVERSIAL 'Pimps and Hoes' student night coming to Leeds this weekend has been slammed for 'glamorising the sex trade'.

The fancy dress bar crawl, which encourages students to dress up as prostitutes and the men they work for, has provoked a storm of protest ahead of it taking place on Sunday.

But organisers of the 'Carnage' event insist their aim is to provide a fun night out for the city's students, who chose the theme for the evening themselves in an online poll.

Outraged Katie Siddall, welfare officer at Leeds University

Students Union said: "To bring an event like this to Leeds glamorises the sex trade instead of informing students about the dangers of it.

"It's also an industry inextricably linked with violence - including in Leeds where one study suggested more than 60 per cent of sex workers experienced violence on our streets".

The Pimps and Hoes event will take place in 25 cities across the UK. Varsity Leisure Group, owners of the sold out event, say they welcome more than 250,000 students each year to their events nationally. Sunday will be the fifth time the Pimps and Hoes theme has been chosen by Leeds' students.

But Rachel Reeves, Labour MP for Leeds West, said: "The truth about so called 'pimps' is that they force vulnerable women into the sex industry and they are often beaten, raped and seriously terrorised so that they do not dare escape their situation. This is hardly

a light-hearted fancy dress theme. We should be educating students and young people on the dangers of the sex industry, not encouraging them to see it as a bit of a joke."

A statement from Varsity Leisure Group which runs the events, said: "Our aim is to give students ... a fun night out with other students from differing ethnic and social backgrounds.

"The fancy dress themes for our events are chosen by the students and not by us.

"We strongly disagree that a fancy dress event such as ours is in any way 'a glorification of the sex industry' and particularly violence against vulnerable women. We would be surprised if the majority of the general public disagreed given the frequency of similar such events and the fancy dress industry surrounding it. This is a fancy dress student event, nothing more."

TWITTER: @LEEDSCLARKKENT
EMAIL: STUART.ROBINSON@YPN.CO.UK

LABOUR CALL FOR BLITZ

LABOUR yesterday called for a crackdown on payroll parasites.

Rachel Reeves, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, told us: "I am very concerned that large agencies are continuing to operate these schemes.

"They avoid paying taxes and at the same time deprive hard-working people of well-earned tax relief.

"I would urge the government to sort this out. During the longest double-dip recession since the Second World War, the government cannot afford companies avoiding their taxes, while they rip off the hard-



▲ **RIP-OFF** Rachel Reeves says staff are deprived

working public." Kevin Green, head of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, said decent agencies were losing out.

"Travel and subsistence schemes can be used perfectly legitimately, but we have concerns about cases where agencies are breaching the rules," he said.

"That puts recruiters who abide by the rules at a disadvantage.

"HMRC needs to investigate the complaints, apply the law and ensure a level playing field," Mr Green added.

