

# The Activist

GMB News From Around The Region



**Selfie-time:** L to R: Emily Warrilow, Desiree Wilburn GMB Senior Organiser, Andy Burnham Shadow Home Secretary, Rachel Harrison GMB Organiser and Jo Cox MP for Batley & Spen

## A PASSION FOR TRADE UNIONS & POLITICS

Pupils with a passion for trade unions & politics came together for a day of inspiration when they met GMB officials, MPs and local councillors. The Politics in Action event was organised by 14 year old GMB activist Emily Warrilow, the region's youngest member.

Pupils from Whitcliffe Mount and Batley High Schools were addressed by Andy Burnham, Shadow Home Secretary and Jo Cox, MP for Batley & Spen. In a Q&A, chaired by Emily, pupils had the opportunity to quiz the MPs on a range of issues from austerity, migration, Syria and the EU referendum.

They also took a keen interest in the GMB presentation provided by Desiree Wilburn and Rachel Harrison on the importance of educating and organising young workers into the movement and recognised the need for being in a union to protect their rights at work.

Emily, who also wants to be a politician, acted as interviewer and presenter at the event. Speaking to The Activist she said: **"Everyone seemed really interested in what the speakers had to say and they asked some really good questions. It's important that young people know their rights when they start work and joining the GMB is the best thing they can do."**

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## CALL TO ACTION

**This is a call out to all GMB activists**

If you can help out in the local elections please get in touch with Steve Jennings, Political Officer, on [steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk](mailto:steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk) or **0345 337 7777**.

He will put you in touch with the Labour Party in your local area. Every hour you can give may be the difference between winning and losing for Labour on the 5<sup>th</sup> May.

**Get In Touch – Make The Difference**



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GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN

0345 337 7777 [www.gmbbyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.gmbbyorkshire.org.uk)

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## Introducing Your Regional Executive Committee



**Back Row L to R** Mark Sykes Leeds Local Govt Staff Branch, Martin Jackson Barnsley Health Branch, John Gibson Leeds & Bradford Aviation Branch, Sue Walker Asda Stores Branch, Paul Harvey Pontefract Central Branch, Garry Warwick Sheffield Local Govt Staff Branch, Diane Wragg Sheffield Mcp & Light Branch **Front Row L to R** Moya O'Neill Leeds Civic Branch, Andy Irving (President) BASF Chemicals Branch, Neil Derrick Regional Secretary, Maria Ford PA to the Regional Secretary and Rob Whitehead Rowntree & Associated Branch. (Missing from the picture are Lesley Day Club Stewards and Bar Staff Branch and James Stribley Doncaster Central Branch).

### GMB - A UNION RUN BY MEMBERS FOR MEMBERS

"It seems a cliché but the GMB is a union where the key decisions are made by members and the reps they elect. That's the strength of this union whether in the workplace or at local, regional or national level.

The Regional Executive Committee (REC), which meets monthly, oversees the work of the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region. The members of the REC are themselves activists, representing GMB members in a host of different workplaces and sectors day in day out. They keep the direction of the union in touch with what's happening in the world of work so that our campaigning edge reflects the issues which matter to our members.

Your REC members have all worked their way through the trials and tribulations which all active reps face - they are committed to ensuring with me, that GMB offers the protection, representation and quality services which our members deserve. I thought it was important that you were introduced to them and the work they do for their union."

**Neil Derrick - Regional Secretary**



Neil Derrick pictured with GMB young members as they get ready to launch their Mental Health Awareness Campaign



### ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION PROTEST

On 1st March, GMB members in engineering construction held three separate demonstrations in Wales, Scotland and Yorkshire against the undercutting of workers' pay on three energy waste power station construction sites. Unscrupulous construction companies are exploiting non UK workers with rates of pay as low as £7 per hour rather than paying £16.64 per hour under the relevant UK collective agreements.

### GREEN CO PROTEST - UPDATE

GMB will be running a protest on the Green Co Blackstock, Council/Veolia Recycling site (S14 1JE) on Saturday, 9th April from 11.00am to mark 20 months since this company began their bullying and abuse of our members and the service.

**Please support this campaign and our call to Sheffield City Council to take the decisive action required to intervene and end this appalling treatment of our Green Co workers.**

People attending should meet at the Horse and Groom pub on Blackstock Road (opposite the site entrance). Several members have been sacked in this time, including both GMB reps and the entire former management team. The living wage has gone and all attempts to take industrial action have been met with mass threats of dismissal. This is a publicly funded service.

Sacked reps and staff will be speaking at the event along with guests from across the trade union movement.

### February 2016 Latest Inflation - (March Figures Due 12th April)

**Headline Inflation Rate (RPI All items)**  
**1.3%** unchanged from last month  
**Consumer Prices Index (CPI)**  
**0.3%** unchanged from last month

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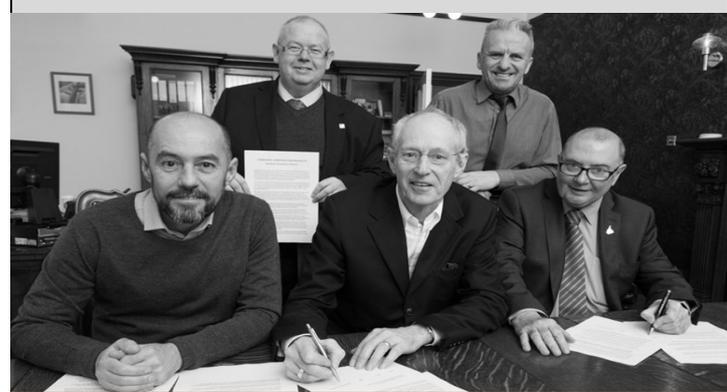
Pictured from L to R are Yvette Cooper MP and GMB workplace reps David Birch, Gwen Turner and Patryk Gornik

## LOCAL MP IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GMB OVER BURBERRY MOVE TO LEEDS

There are still many issues to discuss before the prestigious Burberry clothing company makes the move from its Castleford home to a new site in Leeds. GMB reps at the site, in conjunction with GMB organiser Darran Travis, are making steady progress on terms and conditions. Their goal is to make sure that GMB members will have a long and prosperous career with Burberry.

## GMB WELCOMES CONSTRUCTION CHARTER

GMB has welcomed the creation of a construction charter by Wakefield Council that sets minimum standards for all the local authorities' construction projects. The Charter was signed by Wakefield Council leader, Peter Box, alongside representatives of GMB, UCATT and UNITE. The charter sets out minimum conditions construction contractors on Wakefield Council projects will be required to abide by. Bob McNeill, GMB organiser, said: **"This is an excellent agreement and provides the basis to ensure that workers are treated fairly and decently on future construction projects in Wakefield."**



GMB Organiser Bob McNeill (L back row) pictured with Wakefield Council Leader Peter Box and representatives of UCATT and UNITE

## KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC - LEEDS DEMO

GMB activists will be joining together with thousands of others on Saturday 16th April 2016, for a mass demonstration in Leeds. It will be a show of solidarity with NHS workers and members of the public who share the same concerns about the direction our NHS is going in. Since the introduction of the Health and Social Care Act in 2012 we have seen privatisation of services, a lack of funding and resources and staff who are at breaking point, suffering from increasing levels of stress and a lack of adequate pay awards.

The Civic Hall in Leeds will be open from 11am to collect t-shirts and flags. We will assemble at the Art Gallery from 11.30am to listen to speakers – one of which is GMB activist Sal Young from Sheffield Health Branch – before setting off on a march around the city.

Speaking to The Activist Sal Young said: **"The NHS is the one institution that we all have a vested interest in and at some point either you or your family may need to call upon their services. As an activist I would urge you to come along to the demo and bring others with you for what will be a fantastic day."**

**Refreshments will be provided at 2pm in the Victoria Public House (behind Leeds Town Hall).**



GMB activists defending our NHS: L to R Sue Voyse, Lynn Carter, Stacey Booth, Andrew Aldwinkle, Jon Smith and Cllr Bill Urry

## SAVE HUDDERSFIELD A&E

GMB activist Ian Thwaites from Kirklees Branch can be seen flying the flag for GMB when he joined up to 7,000 people who took to the streets in the fight to save Huddersfield's A&E unit.



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## LIFE FOR WORKERS AT ASOS SET TO GET WORSE

Employees at ASOS, the online clothing giant based in Barnsley, were briefed last month about the introduction of additional security measures across the site.

Employees are already subjected to a high security regime with CCTV cameras covering the distribution site and on-site security officers. Staff are searched when entering and leaving the building, before visiting the toilets and randomly whilst carrying out their shifts. ASOS has now told staff that CCTV cameras will be installed above each work-station.

Deanne Ferguson, GMB Organiser, said: **“We first heard about these proposals when contacted by a GMB member within ASOS. They have genuine fears around data protection and feel they are giving up their privacy rights when setting foot onto the ASOS site.**

**ASOS has not consulted with their own workers’ forum and offered very little explanation as to why the increase in CCTV is necessary. It appears to be another case of ASOS doing what they want when they want regardless of the impact on their employees.**

**No matter where you work or what nationality you are, you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect but this is something we see very little of within ASOS.”**

The GMB has raised its concerns with ASOS but to date has not received a formal response. This is a fight we are not prepared to give up on for our members inside the ASOS distribution site.

**This campaign is a direct challenge against ASOS and not Securitas or the security officers on site.**

## EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL NEWS

Every year hundreds of GMB members in the region are supported with Employment Tribunal claims such as unfair dismissal, sex discrimination, disability discrimination, holiday pay, failure to consult about redundancies, unauthorised deductions from wages and failure to pay redundancy pay. 150 cases were referred to the Regional Legal Department in 2015 with some of those cases involving 100 or more GMB members. In addition to ‘high value’ and multiple cases we often support claims for small amounts of money such as an underpayment of wages. These are the types of cases ‘no win no fee’ solicitors don’t touch because they will not get paid enough! In 2015 we recovered almost **£500,000** in tribunal awards and settlements for members in the region.

The government has placed numerous obstacles in the way of workers who deserve a legal remedy for the bad behaviour of employers, not least the introduction of Employment Tribunal fees. The minimum upfront cost to an unfairly dismissed employee for taking a case that goes to a hearing is £1200.00. This has resulted in a 70% reduction in tribunal claims as workers are priced out of justice. It does not affect our members of course as GMB pays the fees and often later recover them from employers in successful cases.

## HOLIDAY PAY

Spring is in the air and members will be looking forward to summer holidays. A cloud on the horizon for some workers is that they get paid less than normal pay for time off on holiday. The calculation of holiday pay has been the subject of considerable case law and progress is being made thanks to courts interpreting UK law in line with the EU Working Time Directive. Holiday pay claims that were on hold are proceeding again following British Gas losing its appeal (Lock v British Gas Trading Ltd) in the Employment Appeal Tribunal against a judgment that commission should be included in holiday calculations. In *Fulton v Bear Scotland* the EAT ruled that non-guaranteed overtime should be included when calculating holiday pay. Although the position is still not settled in respect of overtime that is genuinely voluntary the direction of travel suggests that as long as it is a regular and ‘intrinsic’ to the job it should also be included. We have a number of cases underway in the region that test this proposal. Paying less for holidays undermines the right to paid leave and GMB will challenge employers wherever it occurs. Make sure your employer includes regular payments for overtime, commission or other regular elements of normal pay when calculating holiday pay.

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Our delegates from L to R: Sally Harris, Alex Burton-Keeble, Charlie James, Ziggy Denyer, Ian Kemp and Lee Bennett.



## NATIONAL EQUALITY CONFERENCE 2016

A team of six GMB activists, dedicated to fighting for equality in the workplace and wider society, represented our region at the GMB National Conference in Cardiff on the 29<sup>th</sup> February to the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Delegates from each of the nine GMB regions gathered to consider and debate a range of motions relating to the various equality and diversity strands, with a view to determining GMB policy in each of the key areas.

The conference was opened by John Phillips, Regional Secretary from GMB Wales & South West Region, who spoke about the positive initiatives supported by the Welsh Government regarding domestic violence, mental health and facilities for workplace equality representatives.

GMB activist Ziggy Denyer, from Rotherham General Branch said: **"It was by far the most interesting, challenging and thought provoking conference I have attended. The motions were varied and interesting and those put forward by our region were greeted with enthusiasm."**

One of the highlights of the conference was when a Plymouth based youth group called 'Out Youth' bravely spoke about the challenges faced by LGBT people. One of the action points to be taken forward from the conference is to establish a new women's group and a LGBT group in our region.

## REGIONAL EQUALITY FORUM

**Does your branch have a representative on the Equality Forum?** GMB's Regional Equality Forum meets quarterly to debate and discuss issues affecting our members both in work and across our communities and to organise campaigns to affect change. If you are interested in joining the forum or would like to get more involved in our campaigns then please contact [Louise.foster-wilson@gmb.org.uk](mailto:Louise.foster-wilson@gmb.org.uk) for more information.

**GET ACTIVE - GET INVOLVED  
YOU REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**International Women's Day (IWD)** is a worldwide event that celebrates women's achievements, from political to social, whilst calling for gender equality. IWD has been observed since the early 1900s and is now recognised each year on the 8th March.



Speaking to The Activist on IWD, GMB Organiser Rachel Harrison, said: **"Women in the workplace owe it to themselves to join a union and get organised. That doesn't mean just putting a card in your purse sisters. It means rolling your sleeves up and getting stuck in."**

**It may be over four decades since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act but women are still paid considerably lower wages than men. The gender pay gap isn't a myth. It's the day to day reality for a lot of working women. Now, as we see an increase in the use of casual labour, an assault on public service workers and austerity measures that hit not just women at work but the services we rely on too.**

**As with everything that has ever passed, from the Match Girl strikers to the Dagenham Machinists to Grunwick workers (who mark the 40th anniversary of their strike this year), it is only by standing together that we will achieve better. It really is that simple. The more women who join a union, the stronger we will be."**

## CALLING ALL YOUNG MEMBERS

GMB will be facilitating its first Young Members' Training Day on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016** at GMB regional office in Wakefield.

### Who can attend?

Any GMB member aged under 30.

### Course Content

Issues facing young people in the workplace - The importance of recruiting young workers into GMB - Organising young members - Representing young members.

**Places are limited - so confirm your place today by emailing [rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk) or call GMB on 0345 337 7777.**

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## PEDAL4POUNDS - GARY CHARLESWORTH



Gary Charlesworth, GMB member from Northern Gas Network, will be once again taking part in the pedal4pounds, a yearly charity cycle challenge which covers 200+ miles over 4 days and is organised by HTAFC. 50% of the money raised goes to Yorkshire Air Ambulance. GMB members have supported the cause and last year Gary was proud to train in GMB colours. In May, he will be taking part again and on the second day each rider gets a chance to wear which ever top they choose. Gary will be wearing his new GMB top on the Lancaster to Liverpool leg.

We are delighted to support this cause for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. Every penny the cyclists have raised over the past 6 years has paid for every rescue flight in the Huddersfield area.

## MOTOR DRIVERS' FUND

Any GMB member is entitled to join the Motor Drivers' Fund especially if they drive as part of their job. For only 20p per week you will be covered in the event of a road traffic offence. Members maybe granted legal assistance and representation and a payment of a hardship grant covering a fixed penalty fine may be awarded. There is a limit of 2 fines per year and the only exceptions are for drunkenness, a criminal act or no insurance.

Contact GMB on 0345 337 7777 to obtain a copy of the Motor Drivers' Fund rules and for an application form or visit [www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk).



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

- **9th April - Green Co Protest** - Green Co Blackstock, Council/Veolia Recycling Site (S14 1JE) at 11.00am
- **16th April - March for the NHS (KONP** - march assembles 11.30am outside Leeds Art Gallery)
- **28th April - Workers' Memorial Day** each office in the region will hold a minute's silence at 10.00am

## WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

The purpose behind Workers' Memorial Day has always been to "remember the dead: fight for the living". On the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016, GMB will hold memorial events to remember all those killed or injured through work, but at the same time ensure that such tragedies are not repeated.

### The Lesser Wealth

By Chris Murphy - LFW Project Manager & Tutor

Fetch my boots, that I once more  
can stand upon the factory floor.  
Arthritic legs will hold my frame  
as I observe the modern game.



Tired eyes will strain to see  
improvements long too late for me.  
Protected labour, striven for  
through health and safety  
workplace law.

And though my body's past repair  
inside my head, I am still there.  
And with all that's left of the fight in me  
this advice I give for free  
know your rights and protect your health  
cause money is the lesser wealth.



GMB Reps Give The Activist The Thumbs Up

## SPREAD THE WORD

Have you got an interesting story to tell that you'd like to share around the region? If so, then we want to hear from you. Write to us at Freepost GMB Wakefield or email: [steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk](mailto:steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk).

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

 @GMBCampaigns

 GMB Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region

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**SIGN A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE UP USING THE ACTIVIST**

**GMB**

**GMB@WORK**

# GMB—EXPERTS IN THE WORLD OF WORK

It can be as simple as a new manager, or a new way of working that causes you a problem at work. Guard against that day by joining GMB now. GMB membership covers you wherever you work. Only GMB members get GMB help. **IF YOU WORK YOU NEED GMB@WORK**

Join now at [www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join) or fill in the form below then hand it to your local GMB representative, or post it—simply write FREEPOST GMB Wakefield on an envelope – you don't need a stamp or any other address details.

|                  |                              |                                    |  |                                      |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| FOR GMB USE ONLY | Section <input type="text"/> | Branch number <input type="text"/> | Membership number <input type="text"/> | Date of joining <input type="text"/> |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|

## GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

### 1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Surname <input type="text"/>   | First name <input type="text"/>                                   | Title Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr <input type="text"/> | Date of birth <input type="text"/>  |
| Home address <input type="text"/>  | Home phone number <input type="text"/>                            | Mobile number <input type="text"/>        | Postcode <input type="text"/>   |
| We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members<br>Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> / Black African <input type="checkbox"/> / Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> / Black British <input type="checkbox"/> / Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> / Indian <input type="checkbox"/> / Irish <input type="checkbox"/> / Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> / White <input type="checkbox"/> / Other: <input type="text"/> |   |   | Tick here if you do not wish to contribute to the GMB collective affiliation to the Labour Party <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Insurance number <input type="text"/>   | I agree to abide by GMB rules <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Signed <input type="text"/>               | Date <input type="text"/>   |

### 2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Employer <input type="text"/>  | Your job <input type="text"/>  |
| Address where you work <input type="text"/>  | How many hours a week do you work? <input type="text"/>  |
| Postcode <input type="text"/>  | Pay number <input type="text"/>  |
| I authorise my employer to pass my bank details on to GMB to activate my union membership – Signed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I give my employer permission to notify GMB of any future change of address <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Pay date <input type="text"/>  |

### CHOOSE EITHER 3 AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended

- I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of

£  or other amounts as may be fixed by GMB from time to time.

- Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to GMB.
- I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
- I give permission to my employer to notify GMB of any future change of address.

Cash

Signed  Date

### OR 4 INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT



Please fill in the form below and send to: Freepost GMB Wakefield

Service User Number

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

|  |  |
|--|--|
| To the Manager of <input type="text"/> | Bank/Building Society <input type="text"/> |
| Address <input type="text"/>           |  |
| Postcode <input type="text"/>          |  |

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)  Date

Name(s) of account holder(s)

|                      |
|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|

|   |
|---|
| Bank/Building Society account number <input type="text"/> |
|---|

|  |
|--|
| Bank/Building Society Sort Code <input type="text"/> |
|--|

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Reference number (GMB use only)