GMB SLAMS ASOS AFTER DAMNING BUZZFEED INVESTIGATION

GMB has slammed ASOS following a damning report from Buzzfeed that highlighted the hazardous effects of working conditions at the company’s Barnsley distribution centre on the site of the old Grimethorpe colliery.

The investigation followed a GMB campaign that raised concerns from GMB members at the site over various health and safety issues, including hot working conditions and a lack of access to water and toilets. ASOS staff are subject to unnecessary levels of surveillance with an increasing number of security cameras, frequent random searches and security checks between the warehouse floor and toilets. GMB has written to the Business Select Committee asking for the site to be investigated.

Neil Derrick, Regional Secretary, said: “These reports show that employment at ASOS is not only stressful, invasive, and deeply exploitative but is also hazardous to workers’ health. Ignoring the concerns of GMB members has now become downright dangerous. “Health and safety issues, round the clock in-your-face surveillance, impossible targets and unfair contracts have created a damaging, anxiety-ridden workplace and our members have been under the cosh for too long. GMB calls on the Business Select Committee to investigate these incidents as a matter of urgency before any more harm can be done to the workforce at ASOS.”

In this issue...
- GMB Slams ASOS
- Young Member Wins At TUC
- Yorkshire Ambulance Gets Make-Over
- Mark Thomas Kicks-Off Red Shed Tour
- Branch Saturdays
- Labour Leadership Results
- Jeremy Corbyn Addresses GMB Delegation in Leeds

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Labour Leadership Results

Jeremy Corbyn was grilled by GMB members in Leeds for over an hour at an event organised by the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. The meeting, chaired by Regional President Andy Irving, was well attended with over one hundred members signing up to come along. The event was good natured with a mixture of pro and anti Corbyn supporters.
You are invited to attend the region’s Young Members’ AGM on Saturday, 15th October 2016 from 12 noon to 2pm at our regional office in Wakefield (Grove Hall, 60 College Grove Road, Wakefield, WF1 3RN).

The focus of the AGM will be to:

- Elect the chair, secretary and committee members for the next 12 months
- Hold elections for regional delegates to the National Young Members’ Summit in Birmingham (12th & 13th November 2016)
- Hold elections for regional delegates to the National Young Members’ Network for the next 12 months
- To review activities/campaigns.

We would encourage any GMB member aged under 30 to attend but the AGM is open to all members with an interest in recruiting and organising young people. Please note however, committee and delegate positions may only be held by members aged under 30.

Pizza and refreshments will be provided and travel expenses will be reimbursed. I hope to see you and your young members there. Please confirm your attendance at the AGM by email to rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk or call 0345 337 7777.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- World Mental Health Day - 10th October 2016
- GMB Young Members’ AGM - 15th October 2016
- Batley & Spen By-election - 20th October 2016
- Campaigning Regional Council - 29th October 2016
ENABLED WORKS GETS A VIP VISIT
GMB members from Enabled Works in Morley have been involved in an exchange visit with Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Minister for Disabled People. A delegation from the company went to London in February to meet her and talk about supported employment for disabled people; Mrs Abrahams reciprocated by visiting the Enabled Works site (which is a supported employment social enterprise workers’ co-operative set up by former Remploy workers) to see first-hand the excellent work carried out by this award winning venture.

The co-operative now has a turnover of £300,000 per year and currently employs 37 disabled people to deliver its contract packing service.

Speaking to The Activist, GMB representative and co-founder Tony Gledhill said: “Tim Roache and the GMB have given us fantastic support, both regionally and nationally. They have supported the co-operative since its start-up in 2012.

GMB is also looking to support other social enterprises which are being set up through a ‘Remploy Trust Fund’ initiative. Justice for ex-Remploy employees is also being fought for by GMB through the on-going tribunal which is nearing its positive conclusion after almost 4 years.”

RAINBOW STAR-OF-LIFE
As part of the Pride celebrations over the summer, Yorkshire Ambulance Service’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Network commissioned a specially decorated ambulance to take part in the parade at Leeds Pride.

The Rainbow Star-of-Life ambulance has been approved to stay in service for the next six months with the intention of raising awareness of LGBT issues.

The vehicle is now being used for frontline ambulance duties right across the region and is coming to a town near you soon so watch out for it.

Pauline Kiely, GMB representative for Yorkshire Ambulance Service said: “We are frequently asked to support members who feel threatened, devalued or unrecognised in the workplace, and this project is one example of how GMB can assist Yorkshire Ambulance Service in trying to prevent these things from happening.”

Yorkshire Ambulance Service is the first service in the country to launch such a project and GMB is proud to be joining them in fully embracing it.

To find out more about this initiative email: gmb@yas.nhs.uk
MARK THOMAS WINS STAGE SPECIAL AWARD AS HE KICKS OFF RED SHED TOUR

Comedian, activist and theatre-maker Mark Thomas has won The Stage Special Award at this year’s Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The prize celebrates sustained excellence at the fringe and is part of The Stage Edinburgh Awards, which this year has seen accolades go to performers including Nancy Sullivan and theatre company Kill the Beast. Mark, who has won three Fringe First awards from the Scotsman newspaper, is currently performing The Red Shed at venues across the UK. The Red Shed is inspired by the Wakefield Labour Club and was described by The Stage’s critic Thom Dibdin as “a wide-eyed tale that has truth at its heart.”

GMB is proud to be a key sponsor of the Yorkshire leg of The Red Shed tour. Mark first performed in public over three decades ago in the Red Shed in Wakefield, an old army hut also known as Wakefield's Labour Club. The Red Shed tour is due to reach Leeds in November and will be at the West Yorkshire Playhouse from the 2nd November to the 4th November 2016, followed by a show at the Square Chapel Centre for the Arts in Halifax on the 9th December.

SHEFFIELD SPEEDWAY DISCOUNT

Diane Wragg from Sheffield S38 Branch has recently taken a party of 16 GMB members to the Sheffield Speedway. Not only did she manage to get a shout-out for GMB when she sponsored a race but also our logo will appear in the programme until the end of the season. As part of the sponsorship GMB members can now get a reduced admission fee of £10 (free for children). For further details contact Diane on 0345 337 7777.

CAMPAIGNING REGIONAL COUNCIL

As part of the drive to open up the region and engage with activists, GMB is to host a ‘Campaigning Regional Council’ which will be for activists, staff and officers. This is so that activists can see what Regional Council is and also to give staff and officers a chance to join Regional Council delegates and activists in discussing some of the key issues of the day.

You are therefore, invited to attend the next Regional Council meeting which will take place on Saturday, 29th October 2016 in the Council Chamber at the Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR, commencing at 11.30am.

There will be presentations relating to the Anniversary of the Grunwick Dispute, the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign and the launch of the Dying to Work Campaign. There will also be a prominent speaker from within the movement which is to be confirmed.

Can you please let Maria Ford know whether you are attending for catering purposes. You can contact her by email on: maria.ford@gmb.org.uk or ring 0345 337 7777.

Please note that the meeting will be finished by 1.30pm at the latest.

THE ACTIVIST
GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN
0345 337 7777 www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk

August 2016 Latest Inflation
Headline Inflation Rate (RPI All items) - 1.8%
Consumer Price Index - 0.6%
BRANCH SATURDAY SUCCESS
For the last seven years GMB has held an activists’ weekend which has been so successful that it is always over-subscribed and many activists have not had the opportunity to attend. To try and bridge the gap and to encourage activists who don’t normally get the opportunity to participate, we decided to organise a series of shorter events called ‘Branch Saturdays’ which were held in September at our Brighouse, Sheffield and Wakefield offices. All three events were a huge success...

Branch Saturday Brighouse - Andy Irving (Regional President) welcomed delegates to Brighouse’s first branch Saturday. A number of guest speakers addressed delegates throughout the day including Tracy Brabin, Labour’s candidate for the Batley & Spen by-election. Cath Pinder from Brighouse General Branch gave an update on the new GMB activist/learning centre in Cleckheaton. Delegates also took part in group work and a Q&A debate on ‘Labour and the GMB’.

Branch Saturday Sheffield - The event was opened by Neil Derrick (Regional Secretary) who thanked our activists for the work they do on behalf of GMB members. Guest speakers included Paul Blomfield MP, who spoke in depth about the current issues in the care sector; Peter Prowse from Sheffield University gave an overview of GMB’s campaign for a £10 living wage and Lou Foster-Wilson did a presentation on GMB’s equality agenda and the support available to branches. Delegates joined in on lively debates ranging from BREXIT, the economy, Tory cuts and future GMB campaigns. Representatives from Pellacraft, UIA and LV were also on hand so they could update on what they can offer members.

Branch Saturday Wakefield - Desiree Wilburn (Senior Organiser) kicked-off the proceedings at Wakefield’s Branch Saturday. She thanked the activists in attendance for giving up their Saturday and also for the work they do for GMB members. The agenda for the day was chaired by Andy Irving. Presentations were given by Cindy Gavin and Amanda Burley on branches working co-operatively; Granville Williams spoke on the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign; Kalvinder Degun spoke on the democracy of the union; Farzana Jumma spoke on equality, Neil Derrick gave an overview of future GMB campaigns and Richard Burgon MP spoke about the role of Labour MPs campaigning with trade unions.

All the above made for great and successful Branch Saturdays. A big thank you to everyone who gave up their time to attend. Please look out for future events.
LABOUR LEADERSHIP RESULTS
Jeremy Corbyn has increased his majority. The number of people voting was just over 80,000 higher than it was in 2015. Although not a dramatic increase it is an increase nonetheless and Jeremy Corbyn has a clear majority with all three groups voting in the contest.

This time he won 59% of members’ votes. That probably reflects the extent to which the party membership has changed, with Jeremy Corbyn supporters joining after his election last year.

Again, he was best at getting registered supporters to back him, but he did not win amongst this group as overwhelmingly as he did last time. This year he won with 70% reflecting the fact that his opponents made an active effort through groups like Saving Labour to get their own people to sign up.

The fact that people had to pay £25 to be a registered supporter, not £3, may also have deflated his support slightly. Jeremy Corbyn’s support amongst affiliated supporters (union members) was up from 58% to 60%.

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<td>59%</td>
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<td>Registered Supporters</td>
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TRACY BRABIN SELECTED TO FIGHT FOR BATLEY & SPEN
Congratulations to GMB member and actress Tracy Brabin following her selection as Labour’s candidate for the Batley & Spen by-election to replace Jo Cox.

The former Coronation Street star won the selection to fight for the seat at a hustings event held at Batley High School. Tracy, who has also appeared in Emmerdale and EastEnders, was joined by Jane Thomas in a contest to secure the Labour nomination for the by-election on the 20th October. Other major parties, including the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and UKIP, have said they will not field a candidate in the by-election out of respect for Jo’s memory.

However, the election will not go uncontested with the English Democrats and National Front amongst others gearing up to contest the seat. If you would like to help out in Tracy’s campaign to secure the seat contact Steve Jennings on 0345 337 7777 or email him at: steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk