

Book Branch News

NUJ Book Branch

www.nujbook.org

January 2007

Diary Dates

9th January, 6.30pm
Book Branch Meeting
All Members Welcome
Headland House
308 Gray's Inn Road
WC1X 8DP
Nearest tube King's Cross

12th- 13th January
Equality for All
Union training course
(See right for details)

6th February, 6.30pm
Book Branch Meeting

For more information on any of the above please contact the Branch Chair.

Book Branch Chapels

A & C Black
BCA (Book Club Associates)
Faber & faber*
HarperCollins (London)
LexisNexis Butterworths*
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
Lonely Planet
Macmillan (Oxford)*
Open University (Milton Keynes)*
Orion*
Penguin/DK*
Random House*
Sage Publications
Taylor & Francis Books*
Usborne*
*recognized

Book Branch News

Editor: Helen Ibbotson
editor@nujbook.org

BBN Deadline

Please send copy for the next issue of BBN by 29th January to
editor@nujbook.org

New Year – New National Organiser!

Sue Harris is the new National Organiser for Books, Magazines, Press and PR.

Book Branch has a new full time official. Sue Harris started work at the end of November. Before joining us, Sue worked for three years as NUJ Assistant Organiser for Broadcasting. She's no stranger to Book Branch though, as before that she was Assistant

Organiser for Books, Magazines, Press and PR, and she's remained a member of the Branch ever since.

Most members meet the National Organiser when they need help with pay negotiations or disputes with management, but Sue can also advise on other issues such as house agreements and recruitment. If you are an M/FoC and you haven't heard from Sue yet, please get in touch and make sure she has your contact details.

Sue is working on her own at the moment while Assistant Organiser Fiona Swarbrick takes a career break to travel around the world. However Head Office is currently advertising for an Assistant Organiser to cover during Fiona's absence, so Sue should be getting some help soon.

I'm sure you'll all join BBN in wishing Sue welcome to Book Branch.

To contact Sue please email her at sueh@nuj.org.uk

Equality Officers

Does your chapel have an equality officer?

The NUJ is now providing specialist training for equality officers, but more people are needed to take up the training.

The course comes highly recommended by those who went to the first one last year, and is a good way to start getting involved and active, and finding out more about equality legislation

There are currently no requirements for companies to have Equality Reps, however this course is the first step towards achieving the same legal status for reps as already exists for Learning Reps. If your

chapel doesn't yet have an equality rep, here are a few reasons why you might want to consider becoming one:

Despite over 30 years of equal pay legislation and the introduction of the national minimum wage, the national pay gap between men and women working full-time stands at around 19%.

The gender pay gap for part-time workers is even worse and can reach 40%.

According to the TUC Equality Reps have been responsible for implementing policies on domestic violence and

bullying as well as job segregation and equal pay.

The Equality for All training courses will be running on the following dates:

*London 12th-13th January
Manchester 27th-28th January
Birmingham 3rd-4th March*

The course is paid for by the NUJ as are travel expenses and accommodation if needed.

Who should attend?

All new or experienced union reps or members who wish to know more about the role with a view to becoming an equality rep. To Apply visit www.nujtraining.org.uk or email deirdreh@nuj.org.uk

Past Times – Future Challenges

NUJ Women's Conference Ponders the Issues

“Why has the long march been so torturous?”

These words describing the progress made by women in labour movement history brought a hush in the large conference hall as delegates to the NUJ Women's Conference listened to a spirited and informative talk by Mary Davis, professor in the Centre for Trade Union Studies, London Metropolitan University.

More than 50 NUJ members gathered at the Welsh Centre on 2 December to take part in the conference entitled Past Times – Future Challenges, organised by the union's equality officer, Lena Calvert. Delegates heard stimulating contributions by women activists in the NUJ, full time officials in other trade unions, the academic mentioned and a representative from Justice for Colombia.

The one male presence, for a brief appearance only, was that of General Secretary Jeremy Dear, who showed himself a stalwart supporter of women's efforts to improve their position within the union and in the wider world in his short but telling speech.

The conference was stimulating and relevant and the souvenir NUJ brief case packed with useful information.

“breaking the mould”

The first outside speaker was Sarah Veale, head of the TUC Equality and Employment Rights Department. She complimented the NUJ for “breaking the mould” through its efforts for women members before outlining some of the work of the TUC on parental rights and against pension inequality, domestic violence (in cooperation with Amnesty International) and age discrimination. She also remarked that she has seen much evidence that women are excellent negotiators.

The core of the conference was the panel discussion by four NUJ members, each offering a perspective from their own experience.

Anita Halpin, NUJ's elected general treasurer, member of the TUC General council, and long-time activist, opened the discussion. She pointed out that current legislation only permits time off to attend the union's Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) for chapel officers, which is one more reason to fight the repressive law. She urged young members to become involved in their branches as the way into learning more about the union. She advocated attending the ADM by becoming a delegate, nomination for which must come from a branch.

“No girls”

Pat Healy, vice president of the National Pensioners Convention and another long-time activist, recalled how she was turned down the first time she applied for a job on a newspaper with the curt response, “No girls”. When she did get on staff of The Times in 1966, women were excluded from the pension scheme. She said that the new pensions law is far short of what is needed, especially for women. She argued that the cost of state pensions has nothing to do with affordability, the government's stance, but only with the amount of funding it has the will to allocate. She concluded that union action is called for.

“It is not only what the union can do for you, but also what you can do for the union.”

Helen Mulholland, a chapel officer at the Guardian and new to trade union activism, told how she saw the problems in her own department clearly but felt too inexperienced to do anything about them. Then a comment by her partner that the NUJ was “only a talking shop” angered her so much that she got active in the chapel – and saw that things could be improved. For example, the union has convinced the Guardian management to invest in training. She recalled that she was inspired by the women on the head platform at the first ADM she attended

and by Michelle Stanistead, president-elect of the union. She also said that the NUJ union training courses are an excellent way to learn about the union. “Union membership is a two-way street”, she commented. “It is not only what the union can do for you, but also what you can do for the union.”

be active at the branch level “for the health of the union”

Nicola Coleman, assistant organiser, NUJ Ireland, reviewed some of the difficulties Irish women face even today, noting that women had to resign from their jobs on marriage until just four years ago. She urged delegates to be active at the branch level “for the health of the union”.

After lunch, the conference continued with the talk by Mary Davis. Her premise is that trade union history is misleading about women's roles because it has been written mostly by men from an exclusionary and patriarchal viewpoint. The myth that women only came into the workforce during World War I is easily disproved as women were the first factory workers in the cotton mills that heralded the industrial revolution. The myth is further perpetuated because women were in the “hidden” workforce: domestic service, for example. The strikes of the matchmakers and chainmakers were actually organised and successfully carried out by women.

Her study of why the pay gap still exists today has revealed three main reasons: 1 discrimination; 2 segregation into certain jobs; 3 the impact of family responsibilities.

“We must ensure that women's demands are heard and acted on.”

Megan Dobney, secretary of the South East Regional TUC (SERTUC), is one of only a few full-time officials in regional TUC bodies. She posed three compelling questions to advancement

...continued from p.2

of women in trade unionism: 1 Does our profession reflect the population? 2 Does our union reflect our profession? 3 Does our union reflect its membership?

She left copies of A Charter for Women, which has been adopted by 16 unions and women's organisations, including the NUJ. It ends with the words: "We must ensure that women's demands are heard and acted on."

In the last part of the conference, delegates heard a timely report from Sohair Soliman, member of the union's Black Members Council and freelance journalist, about women trade unionists in the Arab world. And finally, Aida Avella of Justice for Colombia spoke of the tremendous dangers facing Colombians in defending human rights. **Mitzi Bales**

December 2006 Minutes

NUJ BOOK BRANCH MEETING 5 December 2006 minutes (abridged)

present A & C Black; freelance; JKP; National Organiser (Sue Harris); Ofsted; Open University; guest speaker (Maggie Cohen)

agenda agreed

2) previous minutes

accepted as correct.

3) matters arising: none

4) speaker: Maggie Cohen, Chair of the Trustees of the Working Class Movement Library (see p.3)

5) new members: one new member from HarperCollins.

Accepted.

6) correspondence: NUJ Extra, to be elected at ADM: nominations pack; closing date for nominations is now 12 Feb 07.

Biennial Conference of the National Pensioners Conference, June 2007: nominations are requested for up to three delegates; closing date 23 Feb 07
Training courses calendar: contact the training website for details or to register. Particularly note TU Equality For All course, next running in London on 12 & 13 January. Reps. See p.1

7) workplace reports: See Chapel News on p. 4
Motion: 'Inasmuch as the HarperCollins chapel is planning a series of drop-in meetings to build chapel solidarity and recruit new members, Book Branch agrees to underwrite the programme with a £50 float in the first instance for hospitality and any other expenses.' Prop Mitzi Bales, sec Cath Rasbash. Passed unanimously.

8) reports: treasurer: written report for September – November income and expenditure was supplied. Balance stands at £8130.24. Robert raised the issue of members wishing to go on training courses, but whose employers will not give them paid time off for this purpose. Would it be possible to use branch funds to compensate them for the loss of earnings? It might be possible to plead a 'hardship' argument in special circumstances to justify using union funds but we are not aware of this being tried; in a workplace where the union is recognized, reps have the right to paid time off for certain types of courses; many courses take place at weekends.

MABIC: memorabilia are still

sought for ADM centenary display; subcommittee postulated but not formed. A holding motion on the erosion of public library provision was entered for ADM preliminary agenda. Dona Velluti is doing wonders of recruitment at Harcourt.

NEC: met in Manchester to commemorate centenary of the planning meeting that agreed to set up the NUJ. Sue Harris was endorsed as National Organiser for Books, Magazines and Press & PR. Laurence Shaw was confirmed as Assistant Organiser for New Media and Wales; Jenny Lennox was confirmed as Assistant Organiser for the North. Vacancies were announced for Northern and Broadcasting Organisers, and for a fixed-term 9-month contract for Assistant Organiser in Books/Mags/PPR.
NUJ Women's Conference: See p.2
9) motions: a) 'Book Branch agrees to donate £100 to the George Viner Fund.' Prop Andy Smith, sec Mitzi Bales. Passed.

b) 'Book Branch agrees to purchase 50 copies of the latest Hands Off Venezuela magazine for distribution within the Book Branch for £100.' Prop Sylvia Courtnage, sec Kyran Connolly. As neither proposer nor seconder was present at the meeting and the topic did not appear to be time sensitive, it was decided to defer discussion of this motion to the January meeting.

10) AOB: The new Reps Handbook is now

The Working Class Movement Library

Maggie Cohen, Chair of the Trustees of the Working Class Movement Library addressed December's Book Branch meeting.

The library was founded in Manchester in the 1950s by Eddie and Ruth Frow, who believed that an understanding of the history of the working class movement is essential in order for real change to be achieved. Their personal collection spread to take over the whole of their house, plus an extension, and eventually a new home was found for it by Salford city council.

The core of the collection is in books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets. Incidental collections of banners, emblems, commemorative ceramics, political cartoons etc have also been accrued over the years. Rooms are devoted various topics, for example the GMB, Ireland, the Thomas Paine archive and the Spanish Civil War. Lottery funding has enabled the books to be properly catalogued and this is now available on line. The present building is packed full, and the collections can be visited by appointment.

Further applications for funding are being prepared - to create a state-of-the-art catalogue for all the rest of the collections, and for improvements to the building. Manchester was the world's first industrial city and as such it is appropriate that the area houses not only this library but also the Museum of Labour History and the Co-op archives.

Cath Rasbash

Contacts

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NEC Members

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Andy Smith (South East)

Book Branch Website

www.nujbook.org

Freelance rates online

www.nujbook.org/freeln01.html

NUJ Freelance Directory and Rate for the Job

www.londonfreelance.org.uk

NUJ Head Office

www.nuj.org.uk

National Organiser Books, Magazines and PR

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Chapel News...

Usborne completed their pay negotiations in November and accepted a pay rise of 3.3%, and a promise on the Company's part to "increase its employee pension contribution by a maximum of 2% if the employee increases their contribution by the same amount. Employees may contribute more or less than 2%, but the Company will only match their contribution up to a maximum of 2%. This offer is optional and if you choose not to increase your contribution the Company will not do so either."

Chapel News...

At the beginning of the pay claim a new handbook was given to the chapel officers without prior warning with the stipulation that no pay claim would be settled until the chapel had agreed to at least the first section of it. They managed to negotiate the removal of most of the items they didn't like that had been introduced in the first part of the new handbook, and certainly the ones they found most worrying. The chapel will negotiate the rest in the new year/with the next pay claim.

Chapel News...

Macmillan: next week's chapel meeting will discuss progress in the pay negotiations. Sue Harris is unable to attend the meeting but will suggest Bill Mackeith of MABIC to the chapel as an alternative.

Open University

management forced some members taking early retirement to leave a month in advance of their agreed dates. Various spurious reasons were given for this and compensation is being sought. Workers are being moved into open-plan offices which has engendered ongoing issues. Problems of stress and workload also continue to be addressed.

Lexis Nexis/Reed Elsevier

a meeting was held with the AMICUS rep to discuss strengthening cross-union links.

HarperCollins chapel

activists have set up a chapel email forum, hosted externally to the company intranet. Monthly drop-in meetings are planned and are being financially supported by the branch.

Faber & Faber negotiation meetings are planned for this month, following MABIC scrutiny of and comments on the draft agreement..

Dust off that old ADM photo and archive it!

What's Collecting dust around your house?

It could be something the Book branch wants!

It could be something that belongs in the archives of the branch. That is, the archives to come, which the branch committee has decided to establish before the material of our history disappears completely.

During the early days of the branch, which was established in 1973, there was an outpouring of pamphlets, leaflets and chapel newsletters, along with the first negotiated agreements and other information. It is the belief of the committee that examples of such powerful initiatives should be preserved.

So, if you personally have any early publications, photographs or anything reflecting the activity and energy of your chapel or the branch over the past 34 years, please consider turning them in for archiving. For example, it is known that there were booklets on child care, non-sexist language, chapel organisation and industrial action, among others, but it is not known where copies might be. There was also special material for the 25th and 30th anniversaries that is of importance and interest.

Head office is cooperating with the branch by providing work space and I have undertaken to do the job – alas! having depleted my own files by lending out various bits.

Please get in touch with me if you have anything whatever you think is suitable for preservation.

Mitzi Bales

Phone: 020 7262 0244 Email: mitzibales@britishlibrary.net

An Apology

The preliminary MABIC report on the Faber and Faber house agreement inadvertently appeared in the Book Branch News before the chapel was informed of it. The Branch and the BBN editor apologise for this and are taking steps to avoid such an embarrassment to any chapel in the future.

The Branch is pleased that the Faber & Faber chapel is actively negotiating on its house agreement and offers full support in this endeavour

available and contains many useful resources.

next meeting:

9 January 2007

Headland House

308 Gray's Inn Road

WC1X 8DP