

Women's Network Exchange

NPC Women's Working Party
Issue 43 June 2018

This edition celebrates women's achievements with an article about the Millicent Fawcett statue and a report from the Women's TUC, but there is so much more we have to do including campaigning against negative stereotyping, violence and abuse of power.

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NPC, 62 Marchmont Street, London, WC1N 1AB

Rosie MacGregor

The NPC Women's Working Party at the Women's TUC

March 7—9 2018

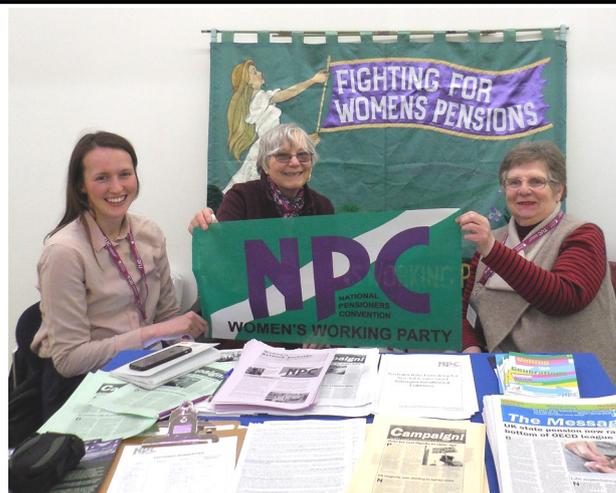
As we do every year, NPC WWP held a stall.

We were able to display one of our new flags as well as our beautiful banner.

Nina Byrd, NPC Assistant National Officer, helped; she is seen here with Janet Shapiro and Arlene Hansell holding up a new flag.

Marion Wilson, NPC Vice-president, attended the WTUC representing Chelmsford Trade Council.

Marion reports on the conference proceedings.



The theme for the 2018 Women's Trades Union Conference was "Celebrating 150 years: fighting for women".

It was well attended, with delegates from 33 different unions, some there for the first time.

The conference was opened by Mary Bousted (Joint Secretary of the NEU) in place of Sally Hunt (University & College Union) who was at ACAS re the UCU strike.

Even though the result of motions was usually to pass them, debates were still lively. Many delegates spoke for the first time

Motions were wide ranging dealing, with everything from - in -work poverty, apprenticeships, work/life balance , flexible working, mental health, domestic abuse, maternity pay, equality for all women. and discrimination against older women.

Some popular topics had composed motions on subjects ranging over the pay freeze, the gender pay gap, menopause and the work-place, women's trade union activism and sexual harassment.

There were 3 emergency motions on :-

- 1.The President's Club
- 2.The Trump administrations attacks on Salvadorians living in the US
- 3.Girls and Women in Palestine

Dawn Butler, M.P. Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities gave a very well received speech making special mention of how the Labour party would tackle the gender pay gap and we were lucky to hear from Mariela Kohon, Director of Justice for Colombia in [person - whereas last year we had to rely on a video link]

Continued on page 2

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More about the WTUC 2018

On International Women's Day we all stood with a STOP sign for our photos to be taken.

This said:

STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

We also saw a very moving video of what it was like for women before the passing of the abortion act. It was made by members of the UCL medical team initially for their students but also for wider circulation.

I have arranged for it to be shown at a seminar organised by the Women's Working Party in September with a panel from those in the film

Marion Wilson

Stop Press:

Ireland has voted by a landslide to repeal its near-total ban on abortion, an extraordinary victory for women's rights that seals the country's transformation from bastion of religious conservatism to one of Europe's most tolerant democracies.

There is now pressure upon the Northern Ireland Assembly. Sarah Wollaston, the Conservative chair of the health select committee at Westminster, said: "This is a great result for women in the Republic of Ireland, and now it's time for people in Northern Ireland to have their say in their own referendum."

Janet Shapiro

Don't miss out! Find out what is happening in London to celebrate 100 years of votes for women

Go and see the statue of Millicent Fawcett in Parliament Square. Millicent was a leading suffragette and this is the first statue of a woman erected there.

The National Portrait Gallery has a free display of paintings and photographs of key Victorians campaigning for votes for women.

For Emmeline Pankhurst, there is a statue in Victoria Tower gardens and her grave is in Brompton cemetery.

The Museum of London has a commemorative display highlighting the milestones of the suffragette movement including a newly commissioned film.

There is a statue in Christchurch Gardens Westminster commissioned by the Suffragette Fellowship to commemorate those men and women who suffered during the struggle for votes for women.

Marion Wilson

VOTE100

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FREE CENTENARY EXHIBITION**

14 JUNE - 28 SEPTEMBER 2018, ADDRESS BELOW

**A stone's throw from Westminster;
Suffragettes & other feminists in Camden
For information contact Irene Cockcroft or
Susan Croft at SuffrageArts**

**c/o- Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre
2nd floor, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds
Road, London WC1X 8PA,**

T: 020 7974 6342,

or access: <http://www.thesuffragettes.org/>



1918 PROCESSIONS 2018

Join us to celebrate 100 years of women voting in the UK.

www.processions.co.uk | 10th June 2018

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THE CELEBRATION ART COMMISSION

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Digital, Culture
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Wish you were here! at the NPC Pensioners' Parliament Winter Gardens Blackpool

WOMEN'S WORKING PARTY
Fringe Meeting
NPC Pensioners Parliament

Travelling Safely



Wednesday 13th June '18

Lunchtime 12.30 - 1.30

Renaissance Room

Winter Gardens

Blackpool

All Welcome

Speakers include -

A British Transport Policewoman
and

A Sociologist and PhD researcher
(King's College - London)

Note that booking forms for the NPC Pensioners' Parliament are available from the NPC office; tickets cost £10 for the three days or £5 for just the 12th June.



If you are here don't miss the Women's Working Party Fringe event.

With the kind assistance of the British Transport Police, Arlene Hansell has prepared advice for safe travel.

Find copies on the NPC stall.

The Women's Working Party has organised a seminar in Liverpool on Saturday September 8th.

There is a charge of £7.50 towards the cost of a light lunch and administration.

Please book before August 31st, by sending a cheque for £7.50 with your name & address, plus email or telephone number to

NPC, Marchmont Community Centre,
62 Marchmont Street,
London WC1N 1AB.

We look forward to seeing you there!



WOMEN'S
WORKING
PARTY

Women's Health Matters

A seminar for working and retired women for networking and to hear speakers on a variety of topical subjects

To Be Held At

**Jack Jones House
Unite the Union
2 Churchill Way
Liverpool L3 8EF**

(Jack Jones House is located approx 5 minutes walk or a short taxi ride from Lime Street Station)

Saturday 8th September 2018

10.30 - 3.30

Deportation and Detention

The Windrush Generation

Post WWII, those of the Windrush generation were invited from the Caribbean to the UK to fill the skills and work gap existing at the time. Their status was that of British subjects within the Commonwealth with the right to remain and go from the UK as they wished. They shared the same rights as the resident population as well as the many other British subjects of the Empire

and former colonies. They worked hard, paid their taxes, built homes and careers, communities. Their children have been educated in this country. In fact they helped to build and run our public services.

Under Legislation introduced in 2013 by Theresa May as Home Secretary they found themselves classified as 'illegal' and denied the right to permanent residency and their rights.

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Deportation and Detention: The Windrush Generation

The 2017 Immigration Act failed to restore full rights to enter and stay in the UK. And their children, estimated to be about 120,000 many of them who were born and grew up in the UK, but who had not applied British Citizenship or permanent residency, have been threatened with deportation. Without a confirmed status these people could actually be deported.

As a result of these laws, people long entitled to reside permanently in the UK, have been denied health treatment, benefits, employment rights and access to other services. What can be more shocking after settling here for more than 50 years to be threatened with deportation to a country that you did not know and one with which you have severed links. Some deportations have already happened and there are stories of people having been detained in the notorious Yarl's Wood Detention Centre pending deportation.

The Home Office is not able to say how many people have been wrongly removed from the UK, or been refused re-entry after travelling overseas. The Home Office had destroyed the landing cards in 2010 and had failed to record the details of each individual.

As the stories broke of the untold anxiety, stress, exclusion, illness and even the death of those caught up in this sorry state of affairs, there was outrage across communities. David Lammy, Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community, described their treatment as 'deplorable, immoral and inhumane'. Most of the people affected are pensioners and as we support their cause for justice, compensation and redress. This deplorable state of affairs was an outcome of the government's pledge to reduce immigration by hundreds of thousands and Theresa May's announcement 'to create a hostile environment for illegal immigrants'. The Windrush Generation were caught up in this kind of

aggressive labelling.

Following pressure from all quarters, the Prime Minister apologised 'over mistakes made.' Home Secretary Amber Rudd, unable to extricate herself from a string of denials of knowledge of targets and deportations, finally resigned and apologised 'for inadvertently misleading Parliament'. Sajid Javid was promptly appointed as Home Secretary. He pledged to 'ensure that all affected will be treated with decency and fairness'.

If just, fair and proportionate treatment for all is to become a reality, it will only come about through the radical reform of immigration laws and practices in a country which is truly welcoming, tolerant and which respects diversity.

Ellen Lebethé

Yarl's Wood Detention Centre

At last, on February 23rd, Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott was allowed to visit the Yarl's Wood detention centre. She was able to speak to women held there pending deportation, cut off from those who could argue their case to remain in the UK.

At that time over 100 women in Yarl's Wood were on hunger strike. Their list of 15 demands included an end to indefinite detention; no detention of people who came to the UK as children; access to proper healthcare; and a meeting with the local MP. Many of the strikers are also refusing to work in the kitchens or gardens at £1 per hour.

The All African Women's Group and Women Against Rape are groups at the Crossroads Women's Centre. They have been active in negotiating for those threatened with deportation.

www.crossroadswomen.net
<http://womenagainstrape.net/category/tags/all-african-womens-group>

The All African Women's Group permits the inclusion of the following personal story quoted anonymously.

I'm 56 years old and from Zimbabwe. I escaped to the UK after my husband was killed for opposing the government and I was told I would be next. I'm an active member of All African Women's Group.

"I was in Yarl's Wood detention centre for three months and it was a horrible, humiliating, terrifying experience. I'm still troubled by what I went through and saw. I'd only been there a few days when I was woken by screams coming from a room close to mine. I looked and saw a woman being brutally dragged across the floor in terror of the two very big guards who were manhandling her. Several of us protested but they told us to return to our rooms. We did in fear of the same happening to us. This is the intimidating and racist way guards operate.

I would say life inside was dangerous and unbalanced. I got increasingly depressed and felt like ending it all on several occasions as I did not know how long I would be detained or if I would be deported. The food was awful, poorly cooked meat pasta and rice, day after day. We rarely got fruits and vegetables. This poor diet and stressful environment affected my health. I got awful stomach pains which I had never had before. It got so bad that I was eventually referred to the doctor, but all he gave me was paracetamol which made it worse.

I worked as a cleaner doing three eight hour shifts a week for £1.00 per hour. I hated it and was often in severe pain but continued suffering in silence as I desperately needed money for sanitary towels and to top up my mobile so I could remain in touch with my sister. It was thanks to her persistence and dedication that I kept going and was released. I'm still fighting against deportation because if I'm sent back my life would be in danger."

More stories continued

Enforced deportations

A vigorous campaign had been conducted to prevent the removal of **Erioth Mwesigwa**. She was a victim of rape and her family had been granted asylum. Sadly she was forcibly removed back to Uganda on April 6th. Roughly treated and strapped down on the Kenyan

Airline flight she became dangerously ill but survived. She is now stranded without resources.

Legal Action for Women seek contributions to keep her safe.

<https://labourlist.org/2018/03/my-story-of-detention-in-yarls-wood/>

Opelo Kgari was more fortunate.

She was brought to the UK from Botswana as a child 14 years ago.

She obtained a last-minute reprieve from deportation.

www.independent.co.uk

The Stansted 15 however, face trial for their attempt to frustrate the forced deportation of so called 'illegal immigrants.

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/stansted-15-face-trial/>

Janet Shapiro

The National Federation of Women's Institutes

The image of Women's Institute is often portrayed as a group of women just sitting around knitting and making jam and drinking tea. While this is true up to a point the WI has exerted extraordinary reach and influence right from the beginning.

Historically the WI has been a force to be reckoned with over the last 100 years.

It started in 1915 by a women from Canada who lost her child through contaminated milk and decided that educating women in household science and child rearing could stop similar tragedies. It caught on and by 1918 the WI National Council was formed and the constitution was written. In the same year 760 WI's were formed.

By 1938 there were 5,500 institutes with a national membership of 350,000 women.

In 1948 the WI started its own college, Denman College for the purpose of educating women.

The calibre of the movement's early leaders was to set the rules for this sensibly structured, self-governing, democratic and independent organisation. Each member had a vote to choose their President and to decide on the annual resolution. Way before all women got the vote in 1928.

Trudie Denman was the first National Chair and guided progress through three decades and was assisted by Grace Haddow, a formidable scholar and the intellectual backbone of the movement, and by Helena Auerbach, a business women who acted as treasurer. All three women had been active in the women's suffrage

movement.

So right from the beginning the WI became a highly organized group of women determined to work hard for home and country and was very involved in the war effort in both World War1 and World War11.

The WI has always been a campaigning and lobbying organisation and instrumental in highlighting injustices and inequalities. It's concentration on social conditions has led to fundamental changes in the lives of ordinary citizens. It has been a force for change, for modernisation, and for the rights of women, but without stridency or nastiness. For example in 1955 the WI was campaigning for equal pay for women.

Campaigning follows the process of prioritising resolutions that are debated by each WI; political and moral issues are discussed. However, the National WI has never allowed itself to be used for sectarian or party-political propaganda. It was the movement's strict adherence to this principle that saw the very public humiliation of the Prime Minister, Tony Blair when he addressed the AGM in June 2000. Unfortunately for Mr Blair, Downing Street decided to ignore the statement from the National WI that they would not tolerate an overt party-political stance and so midway through his very party political speech a slow hand clap started and Mr Blair was well and truly hand bagged!

My local branch was started in 2010 by a mother and daughter who encouraged a wide spectrum of ages and backgrounds to join. Like my own, local branches have members that pay an annual fee and organise monthly meetings. For more information visit the National website www.thewi.org.uk

Maggie Weatherby

Alexandra Women's Institute

When a partner dies?

The agony of registering the death by a partner who is not married and not in a civil partnership

A friend in UNISON who had been in a long term heterosexual partnership for more than 40 years recently and suddenly lost her partner. Naturally she was devastated but the experience was made even worse when she registered his death. There is no named category for a 'partner' when registering a death. There are categories listed for 'relation', 'undertaker', 'solicitor', 'care home owner' but not for 'partner'. This means that a partner

who is neither a civil partner nor married, and therefore not a legal relative, must register a death under the category of 'causing the disposal of the body'. 'Shades of Burke and Hare', she told me, and that her initial sorrow had rapidly turned to anger. There are many reasons why people choose not to marry or are unable to marry and UNISON's south west region is calling for changes in the process of registering a death to bring about recognition of partnerships in the process of burying a loved one. A campaign that NPC might also consider taking up.

Rosie MacGregor

Kendal Bromley



Kendal is an inspiration to us all. A young UNISON member in her early 20s whose energy and commitment in supporting young union members is unequalled. Yet she is never afraid to speak out on important issues affecting us all, including endorsement of matters involving retired members, and is already a seasoned campaigner.

As Chair of UNISON's National Young Members Forum (we have 63,000 members under 27) she is at the forefront of UNISON's work with and for young members.

She is also working hard as a student children's nurse balancing studies at University of the West of England with nursing in Bristol and Swindon and part time life-guarding and teaching aerobics to supplement her income. She tells me the 50+ aerobics is her favourite to teach "as I get to listen to all the 'old' songs which are my favourite! Neil Sedaka, Elvis Presley, the Drifters, etc!"

Generations united indeed!

Kendal's career aims are "to work as a Children's Nurse in the NHS, and maybe progress to being a Health Visitor or School Nurse. Obviously we know the NHS might not be around for my whole career, so I will continue to fight for this!"

She likes to read and has an obscure history interest in the last Russian Tsarina and her children "They're absolutely fascinating, and Alix (the last Russian Tsarina), was the first royal to breast feed (all her children) and her mum Queen Victoria named a prize cow after her!"

"I also love my dog, who is absolutely gorgeous!"

Rosie MacGregor

Spot the Women

Mary Berners-Lee 1924 – 2017

Born in Birmingham, Mary took up engineering studies but switched to mathematics & astrophysics. This led her into computer programming at Ferranti, where following a manual written by Alan Turing she devised a diagnostic program to locate program errors. At Ferranti she campaigned – successfully – for equal pay, two decades before the Equal Pay Act.

She claimed that her biggest contribution was as 'grandmother of the web'. In 1989 her eldest son Tim Berners-Lee proposed a system to access and exchange documents across the internet and built the first web server, website and browser.

Aboriginal Stockwomen

PhD student Tauri Simone uncovers a host of stories of Aboriginal women in Australia who took charge of the pastoral industry over huge territories of Australia. This was extremely tough work that women took over during the Frontier wars, the conflicts between Europeans and Aboriginal people.

Tauri names some phenomenal women.

See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-08/forgotten-legacy-of-aboriginal-stockwomen-subject-of-research/9299478>

Janet Shapiro

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info@npcuk.org

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