

## Your newsletter

### Sussex Partnership - Unison

Welcome to the second issue of woman sense. We aim to empower women members within their workplace, and for members to feel included in Unison local and national campaigns. We want to include submissions by women members for publication in future issues. including your choice for the 'women of substance' column.

We are keen to hear your experiences both good and bad as a woman member within the workplace.

All articles for submission to be sent to the editors at

[jane.marter@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.marter@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)

### women chain makers of Cradley Heath.



Wednesday 19 October 1910 marked the end of a 9 week strike that involved around 1000 women chain makers living in the area immediately around Cradley Heath who refused to work until they all received the newly-agreed wage of 2½d an hour.

Money was collected during the strike by well wishers, which avoided the women being starved back to work. Not being in a modern day union -There was no strike fund for the women at this time.



### Women of Substance.

Mary Macarthur was a trade unionist and women's rights campaigner  
Born December 8, 1880, Ayr  
Died January 1, 1921, Golders Green London  
Known for: being a Scottish Suffragist, a trades unionist and women's rights campaigner.

### Macarthur's Chicken and Egg Conundrum:

Mary Macarthur in 1901, identified herself as a trade unionist having listened to a speech made by John Turner about how badly some workers were being treated by their employers. She became secretary of the Ayr branch of the Shop Assistants' Union, which led her to focus on the improvement of women's labour conditions.

In 1903, she moved to London and became Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League. The Women's Trade Union League, united women-only unions from various trades. The conflicting aims of female activists from different classes, and organisational backgrounds, meant that the league was barred from affiliation to the Trades Union Congress.(TUC)

To resolve this conflict Macarthur founded the National Federation of Women Workers in 1906. The model for the Federation was a general labour union, open to all women in unorganised trades or who were not admitted to their appropriate trade union, because they were women.

Mary was involved in the the formation of the Anti-Sweating League in 1906. The following year she founded the Women Worker, a monthly newspaper for women trade unionists, in which she supported the *women chain makers of Cradley Heath*. In 1910 the women chain makers of won a battle to establish the *right to a fair wage following a 10 week strike*.

This landmark victory changed the lives of thousands of workers who were earning *little more than starvation wages*. Macarthur was the trade unionist who led the women chain makers in their fight for better pay.

In reference to female earnings, Macarthur commented that **"women are unorganised because they are badly paid, and poorly paid because they are unorganised"**.

Then, as in current times;

There has never been a better time for workers to organise within a Union?

**Mary Macarthur, and the Women Chain makers of Cradley Heath- We salute You.**

## In the News;

### Junior Doctors sickened?

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has tried to avert a strike by *NHS junior doctors* by inviting their leader for talks over the threatened new contract that has sparked a revolt. Hunt and NHS Employers, want junior doctors to accept major changes to their terms and conditions to help create the seven-day NHS that David Cameron has pledged to introduce by 2020. Junior doctors are furious about plans they say which would cut their pay by 30%.

### Unison General Secretary speaks out on behalf of Low income families and disabled people.

Twenty signatories to a letter to the Daily Telegraph argue that cuts being debated by MPs as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill will make low-income working families worse off and penalise disabled people who are taking their first steps back to work. UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis, is one of the signatories of the letter. The letter states that "the extensive cuts being debated by MPs this week as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill include restricting child tax credits, removing the work-related activity component of the Employment and Support Allowance and further reducing the benefit cap".

**UNISON's Debt line Service** is available to all UNISON members 24/7 to help them manage money and deal with debt. We offer free confidential advice to help you clear your debts.

### Credit Union

There for You credit union service offers UNISON members access to low-interest loans, and a range of savings products through our UK network of partner credit unions. If you're dissatisfied with current banking arrangements, are struggling with interest rates charged by payday lenders credit unions may provide just the solution. **Get help <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help>**

## What The Trade Union means for you-

**Why you should strongly consider attending the Rally outside of the Houses of Parliament at 1pm on the 2/11/15, and lobbying your MP. -(Contact your Unison rep for more details).**

*The Trade Union Bill currently before Parliament is unfair, unnecessary and undemocratic. MPs need to focus on the real problems the country faces and talk to us about how we can work together for a better future.*

1. First of all, **Sussex Partnership Unison branch will refund your train fare and the cost of a sandwich and soft drink.**
2. The Trade Union Bill will restrict facility time; this could mean a delay for managers and members in having a union representative present at meetings.
3. The Trade Union Bill will restrict the use of union funds for campaigning work such as the "worth it campaign for fair pay" anti cuts, anti-racism campaigns and local campaigns against hospital closures etc. These have been successful campaigns requested by the members and for the benefit of members and also wider society as a whole.
4. A consultation document linked to the proposed Trade Union Bill suggests unions involved in industrial action should give two weeks' notice if they plan to campaign via social media.
5. A higher response rate through postal ballot would be required from members before any industrial action can take place. This threshold is higher than the majority of MPs gained in their constituency during the last general election;- how can this be considered fair?
6. The new laws would force unions to give employers 14 days notice of strike action and allow them to bring in agency staff to cover for striking workers.
7. The proposed document could counter Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights "*Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests*"

***The government are only 33 votes ahead in support of this shameful legislation, you talking with and writing to your MP stating your objections to the bill and finding out their voting intentions could make a crucial difference.***

***To Lobby your MP;*** Lobbying is the practice of individuals and organisations trying to influence the opinions of MPs and Lords. Methods of lobbying vary and can range from sending letters, making presentations, providing briefing material to Members and organised rallies. If you are unsure who your constituency MP is then you can search on **[www.Parliament.uk](http://www.Parliament.uk)**, an email link will then appear alongside their details.

***In the next issue;*** we will be considering the difficult subject of domestic violence. If you are concerned about somebody you suspect to be experiencing domestic violence, before then; ***please contact; 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247. Mankind-is the UK's leading charity for supporting male victims of abuse contact; 0808 801 0327***