

## University of Leeds Branch Bulletin



### Durham Miners' Gala: Unity, Pride & Progressive Politics

A group of branch members and reps attended the 132nd Durham Miners' Gala on Saturday, 9th July 2016. Branch Chair Nick Allen gives an account of the day:

"We arrived in Durham city centre at 8.30am amongst people in political t-shirts and smartly dressed members of brass bands. At Market Place we found a huge gathering of union banners, balloons, marching bands and trade union activists from all generations and sections of 'divided Britain', stretching away down the three main roads feeding into the square.

"Each Banner stopped outside the County Hotel, where assembled dignitaries on the balcony greeted the Banner and the band associated with this Banner played a piece.

"On parts of the route we could see three-quarters of a mile of revellers, bands, people dancing to the bands and, of course, the Banners. Many Banners showed heroes of the Trade Union and civil activism movements including Kier Hardie, Nye Bevan and Lenin. On the Kirklees local authority branch Banner was a photo of Dave Ellis, their FE convenor, who we were saddened to learn had died the day before. A staunch traditional union activist, Dave was known to several of us and we have since sent our condolences to the Kirklees representative. "At the racecourse Davey Hopper, Miners' Association, intro-

duced the guest speakers, including: Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON; Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the TUC; Leeds MP Richard Burgon; two of the 'Miami Five' – Cuban prisoners held by the US government from 1998 to 2011 and 2014 despite the convictions being overturned in 2005; Labour MP Dennis Skinner; Napoleon Gomez, exiled President of the Miners' Union of Mexico; and, finally, Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn.

"Themes of unity, an end to the damaging austerity agenda, the need for progressive politics and the desire to leave the world a better place for future generations, were expressed and reiterated to ever louder cheers. Perhaps the highlight of Corbyn's speech was his reply to how he's coping with the pressure as party leader. He said what he's going through is not pressure, "pressure is not knowing where your child's next meal is going to come from" and the people facing real pressure in Britain were those struggling against poverty, debt, homelessness and job insecurity. Needless to say he finished to a huge ovation.

**"The sense of unity and pride on a day like this has to be seen and felt to be believed. All of our party agreed it was a special event and one that we'd be keen to revisit next year."**

To read more about the Durham Miners' Gala visit:  
[www.durhamminers.org/gala](http://www.durhamminers.org/gala)



### Spotlight on Gender Pay Gap



It's 46 years since the Equal Pay Act came into force (superseded by the Equality Act 2010). And yet the average pay for women is still only 80 pence for every £1 a man earns; or put another way, if each works 5 hours, the woman only get paid for 4 of them, or if we start counting from January 1, each woman on average, effectively works for free from 9 November until the year end.

Closing the gender pay gap was a part of this year's pay negotiations and while the over-arching part of the claim has now been settled UNISON will continue to campaign nationally and regionally on this issue.

This inexcusable state of affairs gets worse after a woman has taken maternity leave at which point the gap 'balloons' according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). Meanwhile male managers are 40% more likely to be promoted than their female peers.

"The gap between the hourly pay of higher-educated men and women has not closed at all in the last 20 years," said Robert Joyce, associate director at IFS and one of the report's authors, although in the lower paid sectors the gap has reduced to 18% from 28% in 1993.

The Public Sector has historically had less of a gap than the national average, which may well be a consequence of both, having the records mostly in the public domain and of course a longer history of trade union activism. That said, in recent years this has increased from 9.5% to 11%.

If you are interested in seeing some impartial thoughts on this subject have a look at: [www.equalpayportal.co.uk](http://www.equalpayportal.co.uk)

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