

## The Launch



**On 12th August eighteen people, representing The Red Shed (Wakefield), Clarion House (Pendle), Bolton Socialist Club, The Red and Green Club (Milnsbridge), The Trades Club (Hebdon Bridge) and Glossop Labour Club met in Wakefield to launch a network to assist us in working towards our shared goals.**

**We agreed to meet quarterly and the next gathering will be at 12 noon on Saturday 11th November at Glossop Labour Club, 11-13 Chapel Street, Glossop, SK13 8AT.**

**If you belong to a Club, Pub or Community Group which shares our values, you will be very welcome to come along. If you wish to receive information about our activities and receive the newsletter, please email: [socialismnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:socialismnetwork@gmail.com)**



**Clubs and socialist organisations represented at our first meeting.**

THE RED SHED (Wakefield Labour Club) are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and have held many events to commemorate it, including visiting speakers John McDonnell and Arthur Scargill. Mark Thomas, who has done a show about the Club, said of the Red Shed: "Working-class communities and socialists will always come together to celebrate their existence and it is through those bonds of friendship and fellowship, forged in this case in real ale, that the hope for change exists."

Each year the Red Shed Players do a political panto which is always hilarious and well worth booking.



THE TRADES CLUB at Hebden Bridge is a celebrated venue for live music and has for several years running been voted into the finals of the NME Small Venue of the Year Awards. Alongside the live music, the venue is a community hub that is committed to hosting political events and fundraisers for local and international campaigns. The Club is also a recent recipient of Calderdale CAMRA's best club award



**The Trades Club**



THE RED AND GREEN CLUB at Milnsbridge have a many and varied range of activities - see, for example, the article about an event in the Club below, by John Newman - a member of the Red and Green Club who also supplies Clubs in the area with Palestinian beer.

BOLTON SOCIALIST CLUB goes back to 1886 and associations with Tom Mann and the SDF. The members of Bolton Socialist Club are still as committed today as they were then with an impressive range of political and cultural activity going on in their amazing historic building.



**Bolton Socialist Club**



**Clarion House**

CLARION HOUSE is another wonderful historic place in a beautiful rural setting. The Clarion House was built to be a non-profit making co-operative with any excess money to be used in spreading the word of socialism. The Clarion is a vision of the future, a vision of a socialist society, a commonwealth, based on co-operation and fellowship, not conflict and material greed. Those early pioneers who built the Clarion chose a place of recognised natural beauty in the fervent hope that the rest of the world (for socialism knows no boundaries) would come to resemble it and become a place of beauty, not only physical beauty - but also moral and social beauty.



GLOSSOP LABOUR CLUB, an independent Club, first established in 1906 during a time of great enthusiasm for socialist ideas, is currently going from strength to strength with a new upsurge of enthusiasm arising from the nomination, followed by the election, of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party. Membership is increasing at a rate not experienced for decades and political and social activity is also on the rise.

## Obituary

JOHN HALLSWORTH was a prime mover in working towards the establishment of the Socialism Network. He very much appreciated the necessity for social and cultural activity in bringing about political change. John valued working class culture and the need for strong working class communities. A highlight of his year was always Durham Miners' Gala, of which he was a 'Marra'.

Throughout a lifetime of campaigning, trade union activity, attending political meetings, promoting the Morning Star, twenty years a councillor (eight as leader of the council), John always devoted a great deal of his time and energy to Glossop Labour Club. He certainly never regarded his work for the Club as an optional extra, or less important than other activity, but as a vital part of the struggle.

The best memorial we could give John would be to continue to build left social clubs and centres of working class culture and community



John (in the middle) with friends from Bolton Socialist Club at the Wigan Diggers Festival 2016



## Progressive Alliances at the Red and Green Club

By John Newman

There's a more optimistic mood in the air amongst those of us who believe that a better world is possible. The Tories are in a mess, the first strike by McDonalds workers has just taken place, and Jeremy Corbyn spent a good part of the parliamentary summer recess at well attended rallies across the country.

Even on the other side of the Atlantic resistance to the tragic and farcical Trump government gathers pace, though there is little coverage in the UK mainstream media.

Against this background the Red and Green club in Milnsbridge, Huddersfield decided to organise a day event to build on the encouraging vote and participation in politics thrown up by the recent general election.

We timetabled the day around a book sale, tea and cakes, political input and discussion, and some musical entertainment. The formula appealed as we welcomed around 40-50 people into the club.

## *Progressive Alliances (cont.)*

The theme for the political input was Progressive Alliances, an election tactic whereby in some constituencies candidates who run an anti-Tory, anti-austerity and progressive policies campaign, might stand aside to avoid 'splitting the vote' if another candidate had the chance of overturning a Tory majority.



We invited Frances Foley from the organisation Compass/Progressive Alliances, and Professor Paul Rogers from Bradford University Peace Studies Department. Frances described the theory behind creating progressive alliances in terms of the political advantages in Labour, Green and sometimes Lib Dem candidates being able to turn over a Tory majority. We were given some statistics from the last election where, if an alliance had been in place, the Tories would have lost and were given a practical example of an alliance in action when the Tory Zac Goldsmith was defeated in Richmond (before the general election).

Paul Rogers built on the theme by proposing some policies that a Labour government could put forward almost immediately on taking office, that would both expand aspects of the economy and create employment. One of the main examples being around renewable energy and the creation of well built and insulated homes. He also talked about a more progressive and ethical foreign policy (remember that?), and tackled the tricky subject of Trident and possible alternatives, given the fact that most of the unions were intent at the moment on preserving jobs, even around this potential for death and mass destruction.

We made sure that after each speaker and discussion, there was an interval for people to consume more cake and scones, or visit the bar and browse the books people had donated.

Over the past couple of years we've usually organised an open event at the club to draw people in, and to introduce them to our political ethos, activities and membership. We operate under the organisational banner of 'Milnsbridge Cooperative Society', and although we are hampered by the fact that ownership of the building is tied up in a complex legal limbo, with a committed core membership prepared to put in the work, a continual programme of music, theatre, performance, poetry and story telling takes place.

The success of the progressive alliances event was that it presented a focus to attract an audience. It wasn't all political talk; after the speakers the Mucipups ukelele band from nearby Marsden entertained, followed by Hokum, a skiffle/blues outfit rooted in the music of 20's and 30's USA.

We sold out of cask beer too!





# Left Culture



## Dave Puller

Specialising in short poems, punctuated with lots of interesting chat, Dave's is a highly entertaining performance which will go down well with any audience.

No two performances are the same but Dave's poetry is both accessible and thought provoking (even controversial!). You never quite know what you are going to get but it is always good. Dave can be contacted by email: [d.puller@ntlworld.com](mailto:d.puller@ntlworld.com) or 'phone 0161 613 1577 or (020) 8510-0815



## Interview with Pauline Town of the Station Hotel in Ashton Under Lyne



The Station, Pauline Town informs me, is a Victorian pub with a long history in the town. Pauline has been running it with her brother, Andy, for 13 years, but the Station is no ordinary pub and Pauline is no ordinary landlady.

Pauline has always been involved in the community. Up until three years ago her focus was primarily mental health. The Station provided social involvement for people with mental health problems and their carers. However, a big change took place when 'We Shall Overcome' was launched in 2015. 'We Shall Overcome' was a response to the general election result and the feeling that something had to be done to combat the government's austerity policies.

The idea was that on one week and all over the country, gigs would take place to protest and at the same time help people suffering from austerity - "A Raised fist and a Helping Hand".

Pauline got involved with 'We Shall Overcome' from day one. It is now an annual event and Pauline is one of the nine people who co-ordinate it nationally. She says, "It is all about helping your own community - each event is autonomous and organised locally but part of a nationwide weekend of events."



*Community activists at The Station (joined by Labour councillors and local MP, Angela Rayner) sleeping out to highlight homelessness.*

"In Ashton", Pauline says, "The Station is a 'We Shall Overcome' venue all year round. The level of poverty in Tameside is horrific - mums choosing not to eat themselves to feed their kids." She works closely with Tameside Against the Cuts and from The Station, Pauline does an outreach daily to homeless people. She makes up 18 packed lunches a day and homeless people come in to pick their food up. "A lot have been knocked around by the system and you have to build up trust. Most people", she explains, "have been treated so badly by the system that they won't go back to try to get benefits."

As soon as you ask for change it is a criminal offence. You get done for aggressive begging, no matter how polite."

Pauline is hoping to come to the next Socialism Network meeting on Saturday 11th November at Glossop Labour Club.

In the meantime, any donations of sleeping bags (preferably all season), tents, underwear (male and female), rucksacks or waterproofs will be very welcome. Take to The Station (at 2 Warrington Street, Ashton under Lyne, OL6 6XB) and experience the lovely welcoming feel as you walk through the door of this amazing place, or bring with you to the next meeting of the Socialism Network.

