



Big questions about how up to £200m was spent by 'All In, All Together' scheme

EDITORIAL

Top prizes for quality journalism

Congratulations to two journalists whose work we have publicised in *MediaNorth*. Peter Apps, deputy editor of *Inside Housing*, has won the Orwell Prize for political writing for his book *Show Me The Bodies: How We Let Grenfell Happen*.

The judges called Apps' book a 'magnificent' work that 'deftly combines vivid, compelling accounts of the victims of the fire with forensic (but no less engaging) detail on the decades of politics and policy which led up to it'.

Guardian reporter David Conn has won the Paul Foot award for investigative journalism for his report on a Tory peer's use of a government 'VIP lane' to provide PPE during the Covid pandemic.

Conn and *The Guardian's* investigations team reported last year that Michelle Mone and her children secretly received £29m originating from the profits of a PPE business that was awarded large government contracts after she recommended it to ministers.

Their work shines a beacon on the best of UK journalism, dedicated to exposing corruption and political cover-ups.

It stands in sharp contrast to press coverage of Prince Harry, who has launched three cases in the High Court, accusing the *Mail*, the *Sun* and the *Mirror* of illegal breaches of privacy. (see page 2).

Liz Gerard, in a forensic

Politicians have a lot to hide from the Pandemic Inquiry

Will we learn the truth about the Covid affair?

The Hallett Inquiry has a big job to get to the heart of what the government did during the pandemic.

One crucial question is how prepared was the NHS to cope with a pandemic, and the inquiry has focused on the years of austerity after 2010 which did such damage to the NHS. This is the topic of the Inquiry's Pandemic Preparedness module now underway.

The evidence presented by Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England between 2010-2019, was unequivocal. Our health and care systems lacked the capacity and resilience to cope with the surge in demand that the pandemic created and that poor population health made

our citizens more vulnerable.

She attacked public health cuts and policy since the 2010 General Election.

It was jaw-dropping to watch the performance of former Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor George Osborne in which they blithely denied that the Coalition and Conservative Governments' austerity policies had contributed to the problems. Indeed, they claimed that austerity policies made it possible to respond to the pandemic more effectively!

One other crucial question is the profligate use of public money thrown at PPE contracts to Tory cronies and other government initiatives.

The Public Interest News

Foundation (PINF) is submitting a very important document to the inquiry about the money dispersed to the big media groups, but from which independent publishers were excluded.

In April 2020 the News Media Association (NMA) and its marketing arm Newsworks announced an agreement with the government under which member newspapers and their online outlets would deliver Covid-related information to their readers on the government's behalf in the form of paid-for advertising.

Under the scheme 'All In, All Together' an initial amount of £35m over three months was allocated to newspapers, but

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Prince Harry v the Mirror

It serves 'em right if Harry wins

Tim Gopsill on the background to a high-profile phone-hacking trial

It has cost Rupert Murdoch more than £1 billion over 12 years; the *Mirror* group has lost more than £100 million: the huge sums forked out to stop people whose privacy had been invaded by the papers and their private lives ruined going to court.

According to a report by the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, 'as many as 12,800 people' may have been victims of phone hacking. There were other dirty tricks as well: blagging or bribing public officials, such as the police, to extort private information on people. Many journalists have confessed to these practices, which were rife throughout the 2000s.

Jaw-dropping accounts

In 2013-14 there was a 10-month criminal trial at which five journalists and junior executives at the *News of the World* were jailed; the top bosses miraculously escaped. There was a public inquiry led by Lord Justice Leveson that heard jaw-dropping accounts of crime and corruption involving the press with government and the police.

Hundreds of legal claims have been launched by victims. Yet not one came to court, as first the *Sun* and then the *Mirror* group paid six-figure sums to prevent having to admit liability for their crimes, which they sometimes deny to this day!

That was until last month, in May, when an unlikely hero rode into town, too rich for money to buy. For Prince Harry it is personal: he believes that his mother, Princess Diana, was hounded to her death by press photographers in Paris, that he has since infancy been made to perform for the cameras, that his private life has been snooped on and sabotaged since his teens, and that since he set up with his American mixed-race wife they have been subjected to endless and insane abuse from the popular media.

They cast Harry and Meghan as villains to aggravate the division in the royal family and generate hatred – a favourite preoccupation.

That was a mistake. It split Harry off from the mainstream royal approach to controversy: say nothing, but deal behind the scenes. The family accept media intrusion on a manageable and tolerable level, but the treatment of the Sussexes is without precedent. Harry bothers them because he stopped playing the game.

He found out about a underhand secret deal between the palace and the Murdoch press,

An unlikely hero rode into town, too rich for money to buy



Rupert Murdoch and other media owners won't be smiling if Prince Harry wins

under which his brother William was paid £1 million-plus in lieu of a lawsuit over intrusion (which is nothing alongside what the Sussexes have to endure).

Palace officials accused

Harry also happens across a leading media barrister at a party who tells him he's got a strong case – not necessarily a reliable lead! – and David Sherborne KC, who had acted with success for Colleen Rooney in the soccer wives' case, launched Harry's phone-hacking case against the *Mirror* in May. Judgement is awaited.

A legal snag with the case is the time lag since the intrusions took place. Victims must start a civil action within six years of the wrongdoing or when they knew about it. Phone-hacking was stopped more than six years ago, but when did Harry know?

For sure he would never have been able to bring a case when he was a working royal. He has accused palace officials of 'seemingly blocking our every move' as part of their strategy to 'keep the media onsite'.

Harry now has five cases in prep, against the *Daily Mail* as well as the *Sun* and the *Mirror*. Meghan has already won a warm-up action against the *Mail*, over copyright – the publication of a private letter she wrote to her father. There are also a libel case against the *Mail* and intrusion cases against the *Mail* and the *Sun*.

Until now, none of the after-effects of phone-hacking have had much effect on the right-wing press.

- The criminal trial ... a few hacks got nicked but the bosses are untouched; there have been no more prosecutions;
- Leveson inquiry it came up with a half-baked plan for better press regulation but they swatted that aside with disdain;
- Civil claims just buy them out; it's only money, and profits weren't affected.

Can a driven ex-royal with deep pockets and nothing to lose stop this rot?

There are still hundreds of unsettled claims, and, if Harry loses, the publishers will stop buying them off. On the other hand, if he wins **MN**

THE DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWS

Who will hold local power to account?

We've had plenty of reports and academic research describing the hollowing out of local newsrooms. The attrition rate, in terms of jobs lost and titles closed, has been remorseless. 320 titles closed between 2009 and 2019 as advertising revenues fell by 70%. Job cuts continue. In March Reach cut 192 jobs on local papers and in June National World also announced cuts.

The Cairncross report was published over four years ago. Its author, Dame Frances Cairncross, on its fourth anniversary, observed, "My report laid out nine recommendations to support and sustain the news media sector. So far, only one of these has been fully implemented. If we want a culture in which journalism can thrive, we need to do much more."

Well-resourced local media can play a vital role providing accountability and democratic oversight, but once they disappear there's a void which speculation and disinformation quickly fills. As one former editor observed: "Councillors and crooks must feel relaxed now that so few weeklies have sufficient space or journalists to cover councils and courts."

We really are missing out on big chunks of knowledge, and that's bad for a community."

In the late 1960s Ray Fitzwalter, then a young reporter on the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, took an interest in the activities of an obscure architect named John Poulson. His probe uncovered a national scandal that ended the political career of the former Tory chancellor and home secretary Reginald Maudling.

It's a striking example of the importance of local journalism.

Let's be clear. The situation today is not all bleak. Against all the odds there is still great reporting being done, especially on titles based in the bigger towns and cities.

And side by side with these we are seeing the emergence of new independent voices like the three subscriber-funded city news websites *Manchester Mill* and its sister titles *The Post* (Liverpool) and *Tribune* (Sheffield). Two new journalists joined the titles in April.

The unique contribution independent news makes

We are also seeing the development of two organisations promoting policies and provide support for the development of independent media. The Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) was launched in 2019 and works with organisations throughout the world to understand the unique contribution independent news providers make to society.

PINF provided a detailed submission to the cross-party Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee which won support. Also on the political front, the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill was introduced in Parliament in May. PINF want a Digital Markets Unit empowered to redress the imbalances between tech giants and independent news publishers. More information at www.publicinterestnews.org.uk

The Independent Media Association (IMA) operates as a cooperative, dedicated to promoting the work of independent media and wants the sector to take a larger place in the media industry. It has over 75 members reaching 3 million people across the UK. More information at: www.ima.press. **MN**

North top of news agenda

Rob Parsons was poached by Reach in July 2021 from his job as political editor of the Yorkshire Post to run *The Northern Agenda*, a daily newsletter with occasional podcasts, which provides great insights into the North's political, economic and cultural life.

At the time he said: "The politics of the North of England have rarely been as high profile as they are now but I want to really get under the skin of some of the big issues affecting this region and help bring some of its untold stories to a wider audience."

He doesn't draw solely from Reach publications to compile the newsletter. This is especially true of the items he has written on the controversy raging around Tees Valley mayor Ben Houchen and the Teesport project.

The newsletter has covered this well for several weeks, as well as the dying crabs controversy in Redcar earlier. In his 22 May newsletter he writes, "The murky nature of who controls the site at the old Teesside steelworks and who stands to benefit is now prompting questions about the less-than-sexy subject of local government auditing. Simply put, is there enough scrutiny of how taxpayers' money is spent by Northern town halls and mayoral authorities?"

He has acknowledged the key role of *Private Eye*'s Richard Brooks' investigative reporting which first asked questions about specifically who benefits from the work being done at the former steelworks site, not something other papers often do.

Sign up free for the newsletter at www.shareyourstories.live/northern-agenda. **MN**

Will we learn truth about Covid affair?

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figures suggest that they received up to £200m over two years. PINF argues that the scheme 'at best lacked transparency and at worst has been characterised by concealment and evasion'.

PINF want the inquiry to use its powers to lay the full story of 'All In, All Together' before the public. **MN**

Prince Harry case shows lack of fairness in courts

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Byline Times article 'Harry and the Press: Read All About It?', demonstrates how unreliable the reporting is. She analysed print and online coverage for 45 days from 28 March to 12 May and concluded 'not one single national newspaper

had presented to its readers a full and fair account of any of the proceedings in the High Court'.

She asks, 'if reporting of these cases is so unreliable, what does it say about what we are served on everything else?' Indeed. **MN**

THE DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWSNick Jones on the demise of the *Barnet Press*

The slow death of local news

Towns and communities across the country are starting to grasp the true extent of the troubling democratic deficit that is opening up due to the decimation of regional and weekly newspapers and a dearth of local news reporting.

Courts and council chambers rarely, if ever, see a journalist in attendance; there are fewer and fewer of the newspaper campaigns that once held local authorities to account; and that all important safety valve and community platform – a page of letters to the editor – has disappeared or is a shadow of what it once was.

Having lived for fifty years in Barnet, the former Hertfordshire market town that gave its name to one of London's largest outer boroughs, I have seen how the local news reporting has gone from feast to famine.

At the height of the boom in display advertising in the 1980s, Barnet was served by four local newspapers, three of which had journalists based in the town.

Way out in front was the *Barnet Press*, a formidable weekly, established in 1859 – which printed twice-daily emergency editions during the 1926 General Strike – but which finally ceased publication in 2017.

All that survives is a weekly free newspaper, the *Barnet Borough Times* (published by Newsquest at Watford) which aims to cover a wide swathe of north-west London (from

Golders Green and Finchley to Barnet, and from Cricklewood to Hendon and Edgware).

Some weeks might go by without the town and immediate locality of High Barnet (population 47,000) meriting a story and when it does more often than not the illustration will be a photograph or image culled from Google.

When asked by the district history society to reflect on the disappearance of the town's weekly papers – and explain why residents find it so hard to discover what is happening locally – I was amazed by the turnout, and also by the recognition, and even anger, over the lack of accountability.

Barnet Council, of which Labour took control last year, is now taking back in-house a wide range of services which the previous Conservative administration had outsourced to Capita – a tale of broken promises, poor service, and vastly inflated fees.

Over the decade-long Capita contract, two dedicated local bloggers, Mrs Angry and Mr

News reporting has gone from feast to famine



The defunct *Barnet Press*, the free weekly *Barnet Times* and the thriving *Camden New Journal*

largest in size of area), some densely populated inner London boroughs maintain weekly papers with strong circulations.

Camden New Journal, the UK weekly newspaper of the year, declared victory in its campaign against Transport for London

Reasonable, tried to hold the council to account. They estimate the deal will eventually cost Barnet a total of £607 million, £250 million more than the original contracted sum.

Both believe scrutiny of the outsourced services, and especially Capita's dismal performance, went under reported because of the slow death of local news reporting.

By the start of the contract the *Barnet Press* and the *Barnet Times* had slimmed down their reporting staff so that they lacked the editorial resources to monitor Capita and then warn the public how costly outsourcing had become.

Of course, everything is not so grim elsewhere in London. Unlike a vast but disparate outer borough like Barnet (population 395,000, second

over bus service cuts in April, and its neighbour the *Islington Tribune* is fighting doggedly for the restoration of public lavatories – so campaigning journalism does still rule OK for some London boroughs.

While there are other weekly newspapers across the country that have strong community roots, and which are managing to survive, the greatest danger from the dearth of local news reporting is without doubt a growing lack of accountability.

Those responsible for the administration of local services no longer face the intense scrutiny that I remember from my early years as a reporter in the 1960s when the work of all manner of public authorities was closely monitored and when questions were asked, and answers received. **MN**

THE DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWS

Granville Williams reads a back issue of the *Pontefract and Castleford Express*

What local journalism used to look like

It was an accidental find, tucked away in the TUC Resources Library in London. A single copy of the *Pontefract and Castleford Express* in a dusty box stuffed with posters, photographs, leaflets and pamphlets on the UK 1984-85 miners' strike.

The newspaper, dated 7 March 1985, was printed two days after the miners had returned to work at the end of an epic year-long strike.

A range of conflicting emotions hit me as I started to read the 30-page broadsheet news-

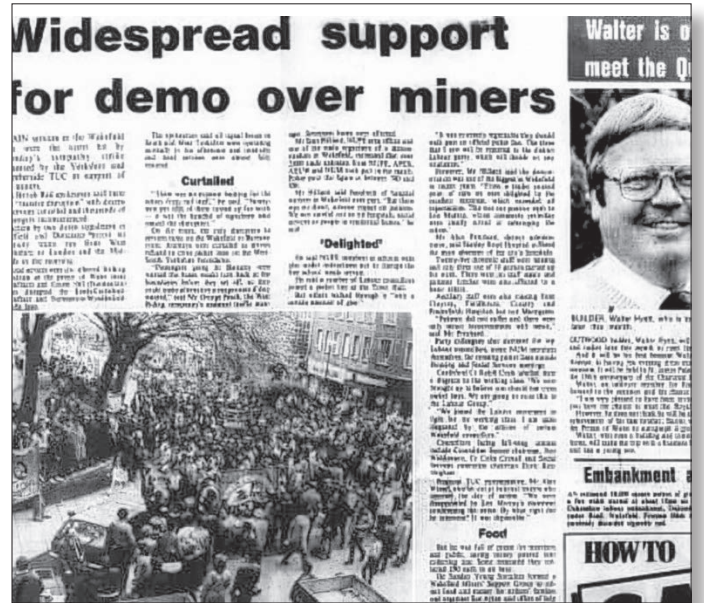
The P&C may look eye-catching in colour, but high-quality news content has virtually disappeared

paper, densely printed in black and white (no colour then), and packed with news and advertising. I had a real sense of excitement as I read the detailed, informative stories.

The paper presented a vivid overview about what was happening in the Five Towns – Normanton, Pontefract, Featherstone, Castleford and Knottingley – to West Yorkshire's mining community at that critical moment. It brought to mind the oft-quoted phrase about newspapers publishing 'the first rough draft of history'.

Take the one written by Chris Page with the headline "Lifeline That Will Live On" and starts: "Miners' wives and mothers have been the backbone of the pit strike in the P&C area. Kellingley Miners' Wives Support Group made 500 meals a day, 7 days a week."

What follows is a full report, with quotes, from the women involved in the different miners' support groups in Featherstone, Ledston Luck, Brotherton, and so on. It quotes one of the key members, Corinne Walters: "The fel-



The P&C covered the 1984/85 miners' strike in a balanced way – unlike much of the national press

lowship women have built up is one of the good things to have come out of the strike."

Three reporters (Chris Page, Mark Witty and Ian Bevitt) and one photographer (Alf Harrison) provided ten different stories and images connected with the end of the strike for the paper.

Reading these you can tell the reporters grafted to write them. They weren't based on recycled press releases, but the results of phone calls, shoe leather and a good knowledge of local contacts. It was a striking example of high-quality local journalism produced by reporters working for the Yorkshire Weekly Newspaper Group (YWNG), a string of papers which included the *Wakefield Express*, *Ossett Observer* and *Hemsworth and South Elmsall Express*.

In stark contrast to the politicised headlines and stories in most of the national press attacking the miners, the *P&C* went in for straight reporting.

The paper did have an opinion column though, written by Peter Brearey, with the head-

News content was the result of phone calls, shoe leather and good local contacts

line "A Time For Calm After The Storm" which argued it was a time for reconciliation, to get the pits working again and make the Five Towns a centre for investment.

My other emotion, as I read the newspaper, was one of anger at what has been lost in local journalism.

In 1952 Lindsay Anderson was commissioned to make the film *Wakefield Express* to celebrate the paper's 100th anniversary.

The film follows the local reporters of the different newspapers as they travel around the area in search of newsworthy events: the local rugby team, a school concert, a constituency political meeting, the launching of a ship and the unveiling of a war memorial, among others.

In 1978 the Falkirk-based Johnston Press acquired YWNG and took the first steps in its frenetic acquisition and expansion which transformed it into one of the biggest publishers of local and regional newspapers. It was listed on the Stock Exchange from 1988.

Until the 2008 recession Johnston Press regularly announced yearly operating profits in excess of 30 per cent.

Then, in 2009, with debts of £465 million and plummet-

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THE DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWS

What local journalism looked like ...

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ing ad revenue, it suffered a catastrophic share price crash from 490.5p to 7.1p. A destructive process of job reduction at YWNG and other JP newspapers, which some journalists call “a death spiral”, has gone on remorselessly since then.

The local offices of the YWNG papers, which were at the centre of the communities they served, were closed, with journalists all moved to Wake-

field. The *Hemsworth and South Elmsall Express*, in a decision announced from above without any discussion with journalists on the papers, was merged with the P&C in January 2016.

The contrast is stark between the well-resourced newspaper produced in March 1985 and now. Then twelve journalists and photographers worked on the P&C, and more than sixty in total across the YWNG titles.

Johnston Press, saddled with debts of £220m, filed for administration in November 2018 and it was taken over by a consortium, with hedge fund Golden Tree Asset Management the leading shareholder, and renamed JPIMedia.

In December 2020 David Montgomery, through the takeover vehicle National World, acquired JPIMedia, then the UK’s third-largest local newspaper group, for £10.2m.

A reminder of the scale

of the collapse of the newspaper group is that in 2005 it paid £160m to acquire the *Scotsman* group of newspapers – fifteen times the value of the entire group in 2020.

It has been a brutal process which has seen local and regional newspapers diminished in terms of their circulation, quality and importance. Local democracy and communities are the poorer for that.

What price ‘the first rough draft of history’ now? **MN**

Tony Sutton goes to Montreal and finds a newspaper that made an important omission on its front page

Where did the local news go?

I didn’t fully appreciate the term ‘news desert’ until I visited Montreal during a wet weekend late in June.

Dodging showers, I slipped into the food court of a giant mall and forked out \$2.50 for the *Montreal Gazette*, the city’s only English-language daily.

I scanned the front page seeking for the big news of the day. The biggest headline: ‘Jazz Notes’, was accompanied by a huge picture and small caption. I read it, wondering why it was so important. No reason: it was a plug for an event taking place the *following* weekend. Bemused, I ploughed on, realising 30 seconds later that the editor hadn’t bothered to put any news on the page.

Flicking through the rest of the 16-page main section, I found a generous newshole, containing columns, soft features, advertising ‘messages’, social pix, events details, an opinion page – and just four news stories.

Tossing that aside, I skipped through three more sections, one with eight pages of national and international news

and business from group stablemate, the *National Post*, another devoted to Sports and the biggest of all, 16 pages of soft *Home Front* features.

That situation is hardly confined to Montreal. Part of the debt-saddled Postmedia group (majority-owned by a New Jersey hedge fund) that controls most of Canada’s big-city papers, the *Gazette* recently announced plans to slash 25% of its journalists, a decision attacked by business and community leaders.

Ron Carroll, president of the Montreal Newspaper Guild local 30111, said morale among the paper’s unionised staff is understandably low these days. “The *Gazette* has experienced many job reductions over the past three decades. We’ve been cut to the bone, and now we’re actually getting into the bone marrow. People are worried about their future and worried about the English



The Montreal Gazette: Where's the news?

community,” Carroll told TV news outlet CTV News.

CTV added that the *Gazette*’s remaining 32 journalists and three managers now work from their homes, doing interviews over Zoom.

The situation in Montreal follows a disturbing trend of corporate acquisitions in the US, which has led to the growth of companies such as Gannett, the largest newspaper company in

North America with more than 300 papers. There, union members recently walked out after accusing CEO Mike Reed of gutting local newsrooms, jeopardising readers’ access to local news, while taking a multi-million dollar salary.

However, unlike many areas of the US, Montreal hasn’t yet hit news desert status. It still has local weekly newspapers, such as the 50,000 circulation tabloid *Suburban* (of which my son Oliver is associate publisher.)

Talking to CBC News, editor Beryl Wajzman said “Community outlets like the *Suburban* are more nimble than bigger, regional publications, and they have been expanding to cover more ground and reach more communities, even as the *Gazette* contracts.

“We do the hyper-local stories that you don’t get in the big papers,” he said, adding that, while his paper might have a political story on its front page, inside there would be a feature about “the grocer who is celebrating his 50th anniversary.”

Note: as we go to press, details have emerged of a possible merger of Postmedia with Nordstar, Canada’s second-largest newspaper group, which owns the *Toronto Star* and more than 70 weekly newspapers in Ontario. **MN**

Laurie Flynn reviews a powerful account of the victorious Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

Victory, against all odds

A VERY BRITISH CONSPIRACY
The Shrewsbury 24
and the Campaign for Justice

Eileen Turnbull

Verso / £14.44

The website, Progressive International, generously introduced me to a brand new word:

LAWFARE.

For this much thanks.

This innovative marriage of words and letters perfectly describes what was done to the Shrewsbury pickets in 1974, to the convicted miners in and after 1984, to the print-workers at Wapping a year later and doubtless to actions now in the planning stage against the social and environmental justice campaigners trying to halt petro-chemical global warming and the staggering inequality of the world today. This one word LAWFARE creatively embodies and reveals the tactics and strategy of wealthy business and political oligarchies worldwide as they try, often very successfully, to denigrate and hobble those who want to protect the planet and share its riches much more equally.

Their playbook involves deploying their contacts undercover and behind the scenes to reinforce their elite powers through subverting the courts, the mass media, via their 'charitable' think-tanks and other newly created fronts. Then their preferential access to the prosecutorial organs of the state is brought into play to strike viciously and unjustly against the people they shamelessly denote as the enemy within.

I had no such one-word category to crystallise what was going on during the Shrewsbury show trials of accused trade unionists as they were put to the sword in front of my eyes half a century ago.

Indeed as I sat in the Shropshire court room in 1974 on the fateful day harsh jail terms were pronounced, I simply gazed appalled and held back sorrow as the sentences were handed down.

As a young reporter I had recently finished serving my time on the weekly paper *Construction News* (before the editor was removed for upsetting industry leaders like the Laings and McAlpines by doing his job and revealing some of their problematic business practices). So, wordless, I had to take a moment or two to remind myself of the modest nature of the goals the pickets were pursuing in the summer of 1972.

- A guaranteed wage of £1 an hour.
- Such luxuries as clean toilets and proper washing facilities on site.
- An end to the Lump, a tax-evading system of phoney self-employment.
- And proper concern for health and safety in an industry then notorious for its wanton disregard for human life.

It was therefore with an enormous sense of relief thirty years later – when I was by then in late middle age – I learned that Eileen and Mark Turnbull had joined in to help the official campaign the pickets had founded for truth and justice and to clear their names. Relief turned to distinct pleasure when sixteen or so years later still, in 2022, I read the manuscript Eileen had written about the campaign.

**A huge
 impropriety lay
 at the heart of
 the anti-union
 prosecution**



By last year I was an old man with fading eyesight who still railed against the massive hypocrisy and injustice of Shrewsbury. As I read I found that *A Very British Conspiracy* (published last year by Verso) was a truly game-changing, inspirational account of a transformational campaign.

This culminated in all the guilty verdicts against all 24 supposed trade union 'criminals' being quashed.

The book shows in compelling detail how the LAWFARE fix was put in. The West Mercia (Shropshire and North Wales) Police had arrested no one on the day of the picketing in 1972 and only moved against the union activists much later. Making arrests in a carefully chosen and remote area they swooped only after a most brazen and deceitful campaign by the building employers and their political allies.

In this they were encouraged and supported by a variety of Tory stooges, political grandees, career-obsessed senior police and government law officers, all of them preparing the ground for the full-on Thatcherite de-indus-

trialisation of these islands through further pummeling outbreaks of LAWFARE after they brought Mrs Thatcher to power 1979.

Eventually however the Shrewsbury campaigners found the key to the locked doors of justice – by diligent, persistent and inspired research in a vast range of archives and libraries, and in constructive conversations with union bodies and individuals across the land.

By patiently bringing on board trade union ally after ally, the money was finally found to brief lawyers with the new evidence. Actions were then brought first before the Criminal Cases Review Board (set up in the wake of the Birmingham Six travesty) and later through the recently inaugurated facility of formal Judicial Review.

Thereby, finally, the campaign won the necessary permission to go before the Court of Appeal. And there in turn, nearly 50 years after the 1973 and 1974 LAWFARE frame-ups, the English and Welsh Court of Appeal ruled unanimously that all 24 guilty verdicts were unsafe and cancelled each and every one.

As her book so powerfully shows, and by dint of tireless investigation, Eileen Turnbull found a huge impropriety lay at the heart of the anti-union prosecution.

The original witness statements had been withheld from the defence, replaced in secret with a second, shall we say, more convenient or plain doctored set. The inconvenient originals were then made to disappear, either dishonestly hidden or altogether destroyed.

Eileen Turnbull's book also

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A transformational campaign

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shows how suborned journalists in the huckster media (in an orchestration carefully conducted by a secretive part of the intelligence services) also played a key part in the dishonest Shrewsbury LAWFARE.

The 'journalists', law officers and other high level martinetts, Eileen shows, committed grave contempts of court-both ahead of the trials and just before the verdicts. They did this by smearing trade unionists in general and Des Warren in particular so as to diminish

and paralyse opposition and protest action against the secretive frame-up.

For these serious offences no-one was ever visited at dawn or questioned. No-one was ever arrested for this all too real conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Or charged with misconduct or malfeasance in a public office. Or fined.

Or jailed for their predatory manipulation and misuse of the law.

So if you want to penetrate how LAWFARE has been un-

democratically deployed in the manipulated decline into our present, sleazoid, 'no such thing as society', 'modern', hedge-fund Britain....

Or if you want examine how against all the odds this huge victory was actually achieved....

Or if you want to hone your own judicious campaigning skills for the challenges ahead....

Or, equally, if you just want to enjoy an inspiring read.... this really is one of the books for you. **MN**

Book Review

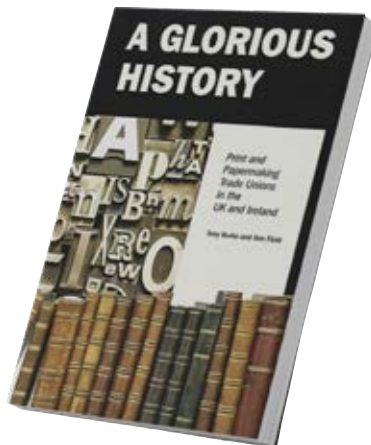
From the other side of the stone ...

Nicholas Jones on the struggles and sacrifice of printworkers

Probably no other industry can match printing and publishing for the strength and intensity of the collective action which has been exercised over several centuries as workers organised themselves to adjust to repeated changes in industrial and employment practices.

A Glorious History provides a page-turning kaleidoscope of the countless guilds, societies, associations, and trade unions that came and went across the country as printers, bookbinders and assorted paper makers struggled to protect their pay and conditions.

Exploitation was commonplace. Some printing works were manned largely by boys and apprentices. Cheap labour led to widespread abuse and ill health.



One statistic from the book's introduction leapt from the page:

"Two decades into the twentieth century, conditions were still so bad in printing establishments that the death rate from tuberculosis was 1:3, whereas the national rate was 1:7."

Here was a vivid reminder of a hidden family secret: my grandfather, who at the age of 12 started work for a printer in

Sheffield in 1883, developed a lung condition that by his mid-twenties had advanced to become tuberculosis and he was sent for treatment to a sanatorium in the Isle of Wight.

He trained as a hand compositor and the book's authors capture the transformation that took place when hand composition was overtaken by the introduction of linotype machines.

A generation of highly paid craftsmen were reduced to penury. Like so many of his compatriots, he went cross country, from job to job, seeking work, for ever reducing rates of pay and worsening conditions.

● **A Glorious History**, published by Unite, 128 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8TN, by Tony Burke, former assistant general secretary of Unite and deputy general secretary of GPMU, and Ann Field, former national officer of GPMU and Unite. **MN**

What's happening?

South Yorkshire Festival

MediaNorth is back again for our regular slot at the South Yorkshire Festival on Sunday 6 August. The event is at 3.00pm in the Unison Room at Wortley Hall. Admission is free.

This year we are very pleased to have Eileen Turnbull speaking. Her book on the Shrewsbury 24 campaign (reviewed in this issue) will be on sale. Eileen will focus on the role of the media in spreading lies and disinformation about the building workers convicted and jailed after the 1973 strike.

Our other speaker is Nick Jones, former BBC Industrial and Political Correspondent. Nick is a regular contributor to *MediaNorth* and over the past year he has documented the way the media has covered the wave of industrial action.

Sylvia Pankhurst Annual Lecture

On Saturday 5 August at 7.00pm at Wortley Hall. The speakers are Lynda Walker and Helen Crickard. Full information here: <https://sylvia-pankhurst.gn.apc.org/>

Festival of Debate

MediaNorth organised an event for the Sheffield Festival of Debate. Titled *Think Tanks: Malign or Benign?*, it was ably chaired by Louise Houghton, editor-in-chief of *Yorkshire Bylines* and the two speakers were Professor Julian Petley, expert on the links between think tanks and right-wing media, and Sam Bright, former investigations editor at *Byline Times*, now deputy UK editor *DeSmog*. If you missed the session you can watch it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVXLR64Wedc **MN**