

NUT REDBRIDGE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

Issue 1

ALL RETIRED REDBRIDGE NUT MEMBERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO MEET
NUT DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

KEVIN COURTNEY

Venue – Ilford County High School (in the Old Library), Fremantle Rd., Barkingside, IG6 2JB
Thursday 15 March 2012 from 2.30pm for tea/coffee and biscuits. Finish by 4.30pm

Kevin will report on matters of urgent interest to the Union in general and retired members in particular

All retired members are welcome. Please confirm your attendance to Lydia Kirby on 020 8501 3194 or email lydiai@tiscali.co.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made for refreshments

UPDATE:

LOCAL EDUCATION NEWS

- Redbridge has received £28 million from the Government to fund new school places over the next few years. This figure is the highest of all English councils in recognition of the borough's rapidly increasing birth-rate.
- Redbridge Council's demand to the Government to have greater control over the establishment of free schools has been turned down.
- Redbridge's Children's Services has been told by Ofsted, in its annual report, that it is 'performing well' and has been given a three-star rating. Early Years' and primary school education were both praised, with the majority of primary schools being judged as good or outstanding. Pupils' behaviour in most secondary schools was also highly commended.
- Redbridge will face increased pressure on its children's services due to a massive baby-boom. By 2017, an extra 8000 school places will be needed.
- A new six-form entry 11-18 comprehensive school, the Isaac Newton Academy, is due to open in Redbridge. The first intake of 180 Year 7 pupils is due to start in March 2012.
- A new £7 million technology and arts facility, with an accompanying canteen, has been opened to be shared between Beal High and Hainault Forest High Schools.

FOCUS: DAY OF ACTION - 30th. November



Redbridge NUT members met up for coffee and cakes in Wanstead on their way to the November 30 Rally in Central London on the day of national strike action to defend public sector pensions

INTERVIEW :

Redbridge Pensioners' Forum

Doris Greenstein, who was a leading member of the RRTA a few years ago, spoke enthusiastically about the Redbridge Pensioners' Forum.

She emphasized both the organization's campaigning role to protect and improve pensioners' rights and its social side. As well as talks by outside speakers, the Forum arranges outings and holidays for members.

Doris, who has recently passed on the job of Vice-Chair to someone slightly younger, stressed the multi-cultural nature of the membership, 100 of who regularly attend meetings. These take place on the first and third Monday of each month in the Gloucester Room at the Central Library, Clements Road, from about 1.30pm. All are welcome. You can contact Redbridge Pensioners' Forum through Beryl Lipscombe on 020 8518 4980 or Anita Golding on 020 8505 5262.

A Victory for Pressure, Persuasion and Fairness

by Nigel May

(NUT Rep at Ilford County High School)

The NUT group at Ilford County High School has succeeded in persuading the Headteacher to withdraw the imposed increase in the basic teaching load of staff without responsibilities.

The unwavering support of the overwhelming majority of members and the backing of our Regional Officer, Anne Mallach and the RTA Secretary, Kash Mallick, were crucial to achieving a successful outcome.

The issue first became clear when the Head's presentation on how to tackle the budget problems focused on a reduction of teaching staff by 6.3fte, with an increase in basic teaching load from c83% to 90%. Whilst several Heads of Department would also see some increases, it transpired that SLT members would not see **any** increase at all. Some, indeed, would teach less. This did not go down well with many staff. A subsequent joint Union group meeting showed the level of opposition and a document summarising staff members' views was presented to the Head and Governors.

Despite the strength of feeling about the proposed changes and the clear communication of our views regarding their unfairness, departing teachers from the School were not replaced and the new timetable was introduced in September 2011.

Through 2011, we held an indicative ballot, followed by a formal ballot, which both demonstrated a high level of support for our view. An 'ICHS NUT' e-mail address was used as a fully confidential means of communication, a questionnaire enabled non-attributable staff comments to be passed on to the Head and we held a number of in-School meetings. The firm support of NUT members enabled the Union's officers to take a strong negotiating position. We were within a few days of taking one-day strike action, when the offer was made to return to the previously existing timetable loading. Furthermore, we were able to negotiate some relief being provided for those currently working the 90% timetable this academic year.

We had to make a stand on this issue to prevent future teachers at the School being faced with an unreasonable workload. In addition, there was the danger that if we lost the battle at ICHS, then other Redbridge schools would seek to solve their budget problems in a similar way.

VIEWPOINT:

FREE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

by Margaret Evans

(Founding headteacher, Seven Kings High School)

We are told that we need free schools and academies to give parents more choice and improve education, although, so far, I have seen more words than evidence.

Such schools will need to be good if they are to earn respect in such a high-performing borough.

Here are some questions for which I seek answers.:

- Who are the sponsoring charities and what are their motives?
- Why is the Government so keen to finance the schools centrally rather than through a democratically elected Council?
- Why is the Government apparently favouring these free schools at the expense of our existing local schools that have to face cuts?
- The 'free' schools are said to be free of the National curriculum. I ask why?
- Lastly, why can the pay and conditions of work offered to teachers differ from the standards required in the various types of Council schools?

Of course, the NUT is suspicious. If I were still the headmistress of a local school, I would be too.

The prospectus of the school that I attended over 70 years ago gave a list of staff and their qualifications.

I would like to see this transparency in the prospectuses of all types of school.

Academies and free schools will not be allowed to be academically selective unless they already are but there is no guarantee that there will not be other types of selection.

I recognize that the Government is desperately short of money and is tempted to unload expensive public services if they can make their action politically acceptable to the electorate.

The academies and free schools will certainly undergo OFSTED inspections but I need to be satisfied that the OFSTED remit is now wide enough to ensure adequate supervision of their practices in this new situation.

Redbridge Teachers' Association Retired Members' Section

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We plan to produce this Newsletter each term and are very keen to receive comments, news items, brief memoirs, photographs and other illustrations for inclusion in future issues, which we hope will contribute to maintaining contact with former colleagues, disseminating useful information and providing a voice for retired teachers