



Shrewsbury 24

Campaign

**THE OFFICIAL SHREWSBURY 24
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

Secretary: Kevin O'Hagan

Chairperson: Eddie Roberts

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Campaign Information Sheet

Please support us in overturning a miscarriage of justice

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign was established in 2006. Our aim is to overturn the convictions and sentences of building workers who took part in picketing during the 1972 national strike. Several of them were sent to prison. We have spent several years researching the background to the trials and have found fresh evidence to support the case. On 3rd April 2012 we submitted an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) on behalf of the pickets to have the case referred to the Court of Appeal, where we are confident it will be quashed.

During our research we have discovered many documents in the National Archives at Kew that have been released under the "30-year rule". However, we have also found that there are a number of Government documents relating to the 1972 strike that have been withheld. The Government have used section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act to claim that these documents should not be seen on grounds of national security. We believe that these papers show the extent of the political interference into the case at the time.

On 16th December 2013, together with General Secretaries Len McCluskey Unite, Bob Crow RMT and Steve Murphy UCATT, we served a petition at Downing Street signed by tens of thousands of people calling upon the government to release the documents.

On the 23rd January 2014 David Anderson led a backbench debate in Parliament, ably supported by fellow Labour MP's John McDonnell Tom Watson and Steve Rotheram. The motion called upon the government to release all documents relating to the Shrewsbury pickets. They succeeded in winning the vote 120 for, 3 against. The government's response was that the papers are to be reviewed in 2015. There is no guarantee that the papers will be released in 2015. The youngest of the twenty four picket is now 65 and the oldest is 87. Four have passed away since the trials.

You can **watch the debate** here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/house-of-commons-25859595> or **read it in Hansard**:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140123/debtext/140123-0002.htm#1401238200001>

We currently have an **Early Day Motion 449** calling upon the government to release the documents. We would urge you to contact your MP and ask them to sign it.

E-mail: 24@shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk Website: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk

Seventeen national trade unions have affiliated to our campaign as well as many individual branches and trades councils. We have also received support from the TUC who gave a guest Blog spot to Ricky Tomlinson on their *Stronger Unions* site:

<http://strongerunions.org/2012/08/01/the-shrewsbury-24-overturning-a-40-year-miscarriage-of-justice/>

[How you can support us](#)

We would ask Trade Unions, Trades Councils and Labour Party Branches to affiliate to us if you have not already done so. Affiliation/donation sheets can be downloaded from our website. The link is: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign Committee work on a voluntary basis. All funds which we receive contribute towards legal bills. The Campaign can provide speakers to trade union meetings to talk about the issues surrounding the 1972 strike and the subsequent arrests and trials. We can also provide up to date information about the latest research that we have carried out and the new evidence that we have discovered. Ricky Tomlinson will try to be available for as many meetings as possible.

[History of the Shrewsbury 24](#)

2014 is 42 years since the first-ever national building workers strike. In 1972 construction workers faced hostile and powerful employers, lump labour and isolated workplaces that changed constantly whenever a contract finished. Health and safety measures on building sites were non-existent building workers faced dangerous working conditions on a daily basis. UCATT, the T&GWU, FTAT and the NUG&MW, were the main unions who had members in the industry. The building workers irrespective of which union or trade they were in organised effective picketing of sites throughout the country. At the end of the twelve-week dispute, in September 1972, they succeeded in winning the highest ever pay rise in the history of the industry.

Five months after the strike ended 24 pickets were picked up and charged with over 200 offences, including unlawful assembly, intimidation and affray. Six of the pickets were also charged with *conspiracy* to intimidate. None of the pickets had been cautioned or arrested during the strike. Approximately 70 police had accompanied the pickets on the Shrewsbury building sites at all times on 6th September 1972. There were no police complaints laid against the pickets at the time.

At the first Shrewsbury trial, beginning in October 1973, three of the pickets were found guilty of conspiracy to intimidate, unlawful assembly and affray. They were sent to prison: **Des Warren** for three years, **Ricky Tomlinson** for two years and **John McKinsie Jones** for nine months.

Jailing these building workers remains one of the most notorious anti-trade union acts of the state in recent times. All the might of the police and criminal justice system were used against the pickets to deter trade unionists from organising effectively. The convicted Shrewsbury pickets were blacklisted from the industry and most were never able to work in their trade again.

Many trade unionists will recognise that these issues are the same as those that face us today, although the industries may have changed. Working people are being subjected to major attacks on living standards, pensions, health & safety and employment rights at work. Strong trade unions, then and now, are the only way that we can defend our hard-won rights and living standards.

[For further information please go to our website.](#)

E-mail: 24@shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk Website: www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk