

Picket no.24

Tuesday, 2nd September

Wednesday, 20th August

Several hundred of the staunchest marched from Tower Hill to Wapping. Police strikebreakers set up roadblocks in the side streets to prevent a repetition of last week's effective march to Aldgate. The march took place against the background of worry about the secret talks.

Upon arriving opposite the plant, marchers began to move up to the fence. Police, sensing that they were being outflanked, moved in to make an arrest lest an uppity worker get out of line. Pickets moved in to protect their own, suffering four arrests.



Saturday night, 23rd August, Wapping

The march assembled for the 77th trek to Wapping. About 1500 rallied. But instead of taking the accustomed route to Wapping it headed up for the Aldgate roundabout. The first armoured scab coach was seen with the march a little distance from Aldgate station. Here the procession spread right across the road. The march passed by Commercial St, the major scab route. Continued round to Commercial Rd and Cannon St Rd where a scab coach was coming right at the march. As the coach struggled to turn itself around pickets rushed forward to confront the thieves. Strikers and supporters managed to make their feelings known until the bus weaved in and out of traffic to make its escape. Some arrests were made.

Just afterwards the head of the march began to move south on Cannon St Rd rather than remain where it was. The march passed Cable St where mounted Kinnocks were lined up to block any progress eastward. Continued down to The Highway and then to Virginia. After an hour there cleared from road. Three scab juggernauts brought out Virginia St at 11.30pm. At 12.30pm a number of pickets moved out to Thomas More St anticipating a scab movement there. Six artics and some smaller vehicles moved out under police strikebreaker protection. Four arrests were made to clear the way.

Wednesday, 27th August

In the afternoon pickets assembled at Temple tube for a march to Wapping. Very early on with only a small number of pickets present, an armoured coach pulls up at the Temple. Overcoming hesitation and acting as a body, pickets give chase. The coach very hastily shuts its door and runs away.

About fifteen hundred assembled for the march thru Fleet St and out to Wapping. En route stopped at a well-known-by-know office building on the Embankment where someone tried to provoke the pickets with a copy of the Sun poking out from the safety of a window up several floors. The marchers decide to stop here. Police move in to make arrests and there is fighting. The arrests were apparently later released without charge to continue in the march. Police try to get the march moving again, summoning the stewards to bring this about.

Arriving at Wapping there are speeches in the park. Dean, as previously announced incorrectly, has not chickened out. She is heckled. She feels fortunate to be able to give a two minute speech. MP Leighton goes on for a while then hugs Dean to show "she has at least one friend here."

A few hundred stayed on for the regular evening march. Again there are roadblocks in the area but the march goes down St Katherine's way to be confronted with another cop roadblock at Tower Hotel. March finishes at Wellclose.

Saturday, 30th August

In the afternoon there was a quick march of several hundred starting in Fleet St. Strikers did not want to undercut the evening picket. March was sponsored by the AUEW. Arrived quickly at Wapping to hear somebody or other making speeches.

In the evening two thousand gathered at Tower Hill for the regular picket. The very short march to Wapping took about two hours, stopping continually to stand in the road. Many drifted round the area. At Wellclose later in the night police try to clear the road. Clearly pickets, 500 to one thousand, are in no rush to move. Police form a knot of thugs to attack the most resistant point. Several arrests are made. After a while the road is cleared.

I'll tell you a story
And it won't take long
A very sad story
Of a lad that was wronged.

See the lad came to Wapping
With heart brave and true
To help sacked print workers
Defeat you know who.

Well the lad voiced his protest
Last May the third
But Murdoch and Hammond
Didn't like what they heard.

So along comes old Maggie
She decides what to do
Give extra powers
To her boys in blue.

See the pigs are the muscle
And Maggie's the brain
To destroy people's lives
Is the name of their game.

So into the demo
Did charge P.C. Bob
Coshing women and children
He's only doing his job.

Well our lad took a beating
All about his body and head
When he slumped to the ground
The pigs left him for dead.

And because Murdoch hates unions
And Thatcher does too
Put them all on the dole
Is their one point of view.

So look to the future
When our lives start anew
After we've stuffed Rupert Murdoch
And stuffed Maggie too!



Mary

If any Wapping picket needs a lift to spirits or morale after all this time take a look down by the barrier at Wellclose most nights of the week especially on march nights. There you will see a little frail old lady, slightly stooped. Usually accompanied by her daughters and granddaughters. She is a resident. She has been on the picket line from day one. She has been on the Fleet St marches to Wapping. She has always got a smile and a cheerfull word for anyone. She is an example to us all. I have seen her tired but she is tireless. In her efforts I have seen her cold, but her smile and her heart are as warm as coals. I have seen her afraid, but standing brave against all odds. This lady deserves nothing but the highest praise from us all. Long may she reign, my Queen of Wapping.

Income: £113.99 Sun Publishing Chapel collection; £5 Sun Tea Wagon; £10 resident; £1 picket; £2 Sogat; £1 NGA comp; 50p nobody; 50p Sogat member; £5 K&H Printers; £1 NUPE picket; £1 printer; 50p warehouse striker; £1 machine striker; £29.65 bookshop sales; £5 NGA machine member; £5 Southampton.

Concise written contributions welcome.

Published by picketing print union members

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