

# Nudge Nudge

NUJ Daily Express, Sunday Express, Daily Star and Daily Star Sunday chapel newsletter

February 2004

## Last chance saloon

The management is being urged to re-enter meaningful negotiations on pay, as the chapel makes a determined attempt to secure a settlement without industrial action.

The NUJ group chapel met in Manchester on 29 January with representatives from London, Glasgow and Broughton, and agreed: "We want a settlement."

The chapel decided to suspend sending out ballot papers on industrial action to allow the company "one last chance".

"We are being reasonable," said NUJ organiser Barry Fitzpatrick, "given the profitability of the company and the productivity already contributed from sweeping job cuts and the success of the Broughton operation. We are prepared to compromise to secure a settlement."

The pay claim remains 6% but we are willing to negotiate on the figure if there is significant movement on the following key issues:

- A flat-rate payment to protect lower paid journalists
- An increase in the minimum holiday entitlement from four weeks to five weeks.
- An increase in sick pay from 10 days to six months per year.
- Applying the agreed percentage pay increase to all casual journalists.

Chapel officers despatched a letter to company director Paul Ashford on 29 January.

The letter reminded Mr Ashford of the importance of reaching an agreed settlement but also alerted him to the fact that the ballot could be re-started "within 45 minutes". It has already been approved by the NUJ National Executive Committee.

The chapel called for a one-day meeting at a neutral venue in London with management and NUJ representatives from London, Broughton and Glasgow within the next two weeks.

### INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Members who have not been involved in industrial action before should remember:

1 The ballot will ask you to vote on two options.

A Are you prepared to take part in a strike?

B Are you prepared to take part in industrial action short of a strike (which for this purpose is defined to include overtime and call-out bans)?

2 If any form of action is agreed, there will be further chapel meetings to decide when, where or if action needs to be taken.

3 Provided industrial action is lawfully conducted, after a ballot, members are protected by law from dismissal or disciplinary action by the company. This protection lasts for a period of eight weeks before another ballot becomes necessary.

### 5% PAID FOR ALREADY

Since the Daily Star increased its price on 5 January, more than £1million extra has flowed into the company coffers, enough to fund a 5% annual pay rise for all journalists on the four Express titles.