Dundee celebrates life of Mary Brooksbank

On Saturday 18 December, Dundee sees events to commemorate the birthday of Mary Brooksbank.

Among speakers taking part are Dundee community activist Siobhan Tolland, Labour MSP Mercedes Villalba, Scottish Green MSP Maggie Chapman and Republican Socialist activist Mary McGregor. There will be a social event afterwards featuring the brilliant Madderam Band.

Mary Brooksbank is the best known Dundee woman trade union and socialist activist of the twentieth century and the event takes place on what would have been her 124th Birthday.

Mary Brooksbank was born in Aberdeen and came to Dundee as a child. She began working in the jute mills, for which Dundee is famous, at an early age and organised women workers into unions – leading strikes and agitating over pay and conditions. She was inspired by attending classes of Glasgow socialist John Maclean through the Scottish Labour College movement to join the Communist Party, but was expelled in 1933 for opposing Stalin. She supported Maclean's aim of an Independent Scottish Workers Republic and continued to be politically active for decades.

But as well as being a political activist, Mary was also renowned as a musician and songwriter. She played violin, sang and wrote the famous "Jute Mill Song" and other songs – her work was recorded by Ewan MacColl. So it is fitting that the tribute to this inspirational woman's life will include a musical performance by Madderam, finalists in the Up and Coming Artist category at the 2021 MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards earlier this month. (Do check out their album *Ebb and Flow* on Bandcamp.)

The event starts at 1.30pm at the Weaver Statue in Lochee High Street, Dundee with speeches and music, and moves on at 2.30pm to the Ancrum Arms Logie Street for the social and band. Participants are asked to follow full Covid guidelines and ensure that they are tested and vaccinated before they attend.

Further details:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/1312705905866570

Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mary-brooksbank-commemoration-social-tickets-225538901927

This event is organised by Republican Socialists, which you can find out how to join here: https://join.republicansocialists.scot/ or contact them here: secretary@republicansocialists.scot