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ASLEF *Journal*

February 2009

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FOR STATE
PENSIONS
IN 1909 ...***



PENSIONS

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SIGNED, SEALED – AND SNUBBED



IT really irritates me when people try to pull the wool over my eyes. I've always believed that if you've got something to say, you should say it. It's the only way issues can be discussed and resolved. I can't stand people who make promises to your face when you know they intend to stick to it only so long as you're in the room and the ink's still wet on the paper.

It irritates me with management, I can't stand it in business and I loathe it in government.

I have known countless disputes that begin when managers 'misinterpret' an agreement. Often it's not a case of interpretation at all – it means that at a later stage they find what they have agreed to be inconvenient. If you've shaken hands on something, you should abide by it. Both sides need to be clear about what they are agreeing, and then accept that they'll stick by it. It is precisely a failure to do this that has led to a current ballot in EMT.

It's the same with the firm that won the contract to be the sole provider of aggregate materials for the Olympics development. When they put pen to paper a couple of years ago, Aggregate Industries undertook that '74% of the aggregate materials will be transported by rail and 25% by water.' It simply isn't happening – to the detriment of our freight train drivers. We are taking up what we see as a breach of faith in Parliament, as we report in the article on page six. It is appalling that a commitment can be given so easily and ignored so effortlessly.

The government's policies on Royal Mail and Heathrow fall into the same category. Labour's manifesto said clearly that Royal Mail would not be privatised: now Peter Mandelson, safe with his peerage in the Lords, shamelessly invites private firms to take shares in the postal service. What sort of moral example does the government give to industry and management when the government leads the way on breaking unequivocal promises?

The government also knows that it cannot possibly meet the formal undertakings it has given to the international community on global warming now that it has said it fully supports the expansion of Heathrow.

The attempts to justify this particular breach of faith are insulting. They were even trying to fob us off with the argument that we might still meet our promised targets because (maybe) planes will become more eco-friendly by the time the extra runway is built!

And trains, like pigs, might fly.

KEITH NORMAN
GENERAL SECRETARY



Tony Benn has a word with the President in the EC room

BENN'S GEMS HIT THE EXECUTIVE ROOM!

AT Labour's conference last year, the general secretary invited Tony Benn to come along to head office to lead a political discussion with the executive committee. Last month Tony took up the invitation, making his usual positive and fruitful contribution. These are just a few of the gems he dropped into his opening remarks ...

- Thatcher knew exactly what she was doing, which is why she attacked the unions in the way she did. Unions have less rights now than when the Liberals were in power at the

start of the 20th century.

- Democracy, especially local democracy, is under enormous attack. Its function now is to act as the local agents of the Treasury.

- We've all seen the failure of the markets – and yet the government today is about to hand over the Post Office to the open market. It's bonkers!

- I believe that the majority of the public today are to the left of a Labour government. They still believe in publicly owned social services, in care for the elderly, in basic human liberties. Trade unionists and

rank-and-file Labour are not isolated extremists – they represent the views that most people hold.

- The answer isn't to leave the Labour Party. If you go off into some splinter group, you go into isolation where no one's going to take any notice of you.

- Investors in 1945 were begging for rail to be nationalised because they were massively in debt. Make no mistake, they are only there for the money and the ride. They have no loyalty to your industry.

- The TUC should be challenging the BBC about the abysmal coverage given to the wider labour movement. The BBC has hundreds of economic pundits - and no industrial correspondent.

- We should give up protesting – you do that when you've lost and you're miserable about it. We should start demanding. The suffragettes didn't protest about the poor treatment of women – they demanded the vote!

- I don't think young people these days are apathetic. I think they're angry – because no one pays them any notice and no one listens to what they've got to say.

- I was campaigning recently, so I went to a bus stop. Within a couple of minutes, a public meeting turned up – the people on the bus. I got on and we started a discussion. Maybe we should start to look at trains in the same way!

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ASLEF E-PETITION

THE union has received a response to the petition it added to the No 10 website late last year calling on the Prime Minister to expand the electrification of Britain's rail network. General Secretary Keith Norman describes the government statement as 'largely positive' as it concedes the benefits of electrically powered trains, and says the government is beginning to prioritise routes.

'It is heartening that the union and the government have shared objectives on this issue,' Keith says. 'I hope the

promised early progress report will include dates for beginning work, especially as the government looks for ways to boost economic activity in the UK. I would also be happier to see our government looking at a 'human' and 'public' case as well as a 'business case'.

The response from the Prime Minister's office says, 'The Government recognises that further electrification of the rail network would deliver a range of environmental benefits. In general, electric trains are also lighter, quieter, more reliable and cheaper to operate than

diesels. In certain configurations they can carry more people.

'The Government is working closely with Network Rail and the wider rail industry to identify and prioritise routes where there is a good business case to electrify. In general terms these will be busier routes where the high initial cost of installing electrification can be offset by ongoing savings from running electric trains.

'The National Networks Strategy Group will report on progress early in 2009.'



COMPANY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

EWS - London & South East, Bro P Dodgson, Stratford Branch

EWS North East- Bro M Macguire, Tyne Yard Branch

EWS East Midlands & Anglia Constituency, Bro R Hurst, Toton Branch

EWS- South Wales Constituency, Bro S Bailey, Barry Branch

CrossCountry Trains, Saltley Constituency, Bro I Clarke, Saltley Branch

CrossCountry Trains, Bournemouth, Cambridge and Leicester Constituency, Bro D Sullivan, Bournemouth Branch

DRS Works Council Representative ~ South Constituency, Bro R H Smith, Crewe Branch

East Midlands Trains, Neville Hill Constituency, Bro D Caslin, Leeds Branch

First Capital Connect - Brighton & Blackfriars (City of London) - Bro T Farmer, Brighton Branch

REST DAY WORKING

Rest Day Working is sanctioned on

LOROL until 27 June 2008
Hull Trains until 28 March 2009

LondonMidland until 28 March 2008

Virgin West Coast until 31 January 2009

GB Railfreight until 28 March 2009

First Great Western until 28 March 2009

DRS until 28 March 2009
Freightliner Intermodal until 28 March 2009

Merseyrail until 27 June 2009

South West Trains until 27 June 2009

EUROSTAR PAY

Eurostar members accepted a one year pay deal of a 4.7% increase wef 1 November 2008 plus an improvement to the season ticket allowance.



The Shinkansen system of high-speed trains serves as the heart of the Japanese rail network

DEFINITELY PLANE RUNWAY, MAYBE HIGH SPEED TRAIN

Despite the huge range of opponents to the extension of Heathrow (outlined in the December Journal) Transport Minister Geoff Hoon last month announced government backing for a third runway at the airport. The scheme, which is estimated to cost £9 billion, is likely to begin construction in 2015 and take five years to complete.

As a sweetener the government is talking about possible improved rail links from Heathrow, but as Keith Norman points out, 'The rail plans are vague and imprecise while the airport ones are hard and fast. If the government had committed itself to both equally it would have had a much more sympathetic response from this union.'

Speaking about 'the possibility of a north-south high-speed rail line' Mr Hoon announced that he is to set up a company - High Speed 2 - to 'help consider the case' for new high-speed rail services between London and Scotland. It will also 'develop a proposal' for a new line between London and the West Midlands which could link to Heathrow and Crossrail through a new international interchange station. In addition it will 'consider the case' for electrifying Great Western and Midland Mainline. It is his 'intention' that there is a report in a year's time.

'It doesn't have the same ring about it as the definite approval given to the £9 billion airport endorsement,' Keith says.

TRAINS MORE POPULAR THAN AIR FOR SHORT-HAUL



Keith points out that there is mounting evidence that travellers prefer to use a train rather than a plane for short-haul journeys.

The success of Eurostar continues apace, with news that the number of passengers travelling on the London to Paris and Brussels service rose by more than 10% last year.

During 2008 a total of 9.1 million passengers used Eurostar, despite disruption caused by the fire on a Eurotunnel freight shuttle train in the tunnel in September.

Meanwhile the Spanish rail network reported that passenger numbers on its expanding high-speed rail links soared last year, contributing to a 20% drop in passengers using domestic flights.

'These two announcements alone confirm that expansion of a high-speed train network would be considerably more popular with the public than the Heathrow plans,' Keith says. 'Surely the logical thing would be to develop high speed rail connections first. Then the need to expand Heathrow could be considered against the success of the new lines.'

The argument is that if rail was used for all the short-haul journeys, then the necessary long-haul flights from Heathrow would be reduced and therefore the airport could cope without the need for expansion.

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- take part in the monthly poll
- view the up to date ASLEF rule book
- get up to date with the latest ASLEF news
- find out the current elections taking place
- add your views in the members only discussion forum
- read EC, district council and committee minutes
- learn about legal, financial and travel offers



OLYMPICS SHOULD USE MORE RAIL FREIGHT

ASLEF has complained that an undertaking that 50% of all materials for the Olympic site would be moved by rail freight is being ignored. Alan Simpson, the convenor of the union's group of MPs, has written to the department arguing that this needs to be urgently reviewed. Alan stresses, 'There are 2000 tonnes of steel being sent into the Olympic park each month which could easily be switched to rail as most of it comes from EWS's existing customers.'

Key concerns for the union have been that

- Up until December 2008 450,000 tonnes of bulk materials have moved in or out of the main Olympic Park site park by road rather than by rail.
- Local contractors are not required to meet sustainability targets with the result that 100,000 tonnes of contaminated spoil have been transported across Essex so

far.

- At present around 200,000 tonnes of waste from the washing plants is transported by road at a rate of 1000 tonnes per day to Peterborough.

- 150,000 tonnes of material have been delivered to the Aquatics centre by road. Originally this was transported by rail but the contractor found a cheaper local option and the Olympic Delivery Authority agreed the material could travel by road.

- There are 2000 tonnes of steel being sent into the Olympic park each month which could easily be switched to rail as most of it comes from EWS's existing customers. Rail is not used because there is no consolidation of the material suppliers and contractors pick their supplier on price only. There are numerous products from kerbside materials to insulation which should be transported by rail.



Keith Norman says, 'It is a matter of grave concern to us that the Olympic traffic has been much less than expected, and could have very serious repercussions especially on train drivers working in EWS.'

'That is why we are calling on the government to ensure that all the commitment about using rail in providing sustainable Olympic construction are met, and are urging the Olympic Delivery Authority ODA to require contractors to transport as many materials as possible by rail by consolidating material suppliers.'

VANDALS IN COURT OVER EWS CRASH Two men aged 20 and 17 are due to appear in Chippenham Magistrates' Court later this month charged with causing a freight train to crash in Trowbridge. They were charged with endangering the safety of persons upon the railway.

This resulted from an incident at 5am on 14 October when an EWS train, travelling towards Bath, hit an industrial wheelie bin that wedged under the train.

PASSENGERS DOWN AS CREDIT CRUNCHES Transport for London (TfL) has reported its passenger growth figures were less than half of what it had budgeted, blaming the strain of the economic slowdown. John Biggs, chair of London Assembly's budget committee, claims that the downturn also means police in the capital are anticipating an increase in thefts and burglaries in the coming months.

RUN FOR THE RAILWAY CHILDREN The Railway Children charity has asked the union to advertise its search for volunteers to fill places for running events of varying distances throughout the UK. They say there's something to appeal to everyone 'whether you're a seasoned professional or a novice'. If you are interested, please contact Katie Mason on 01270 757596 or events@railwaychildren.org.uk. She will arrange to send you a runner's pack including a running vest, training programme and fundraising advice.

UNION HELPS MAKE UNIVERSITY ACCESSIBLE

ASLEF's Proud to Education initiative is inviting members in the Derbyshire area or Nottinghamshire area or working for East Midlands Trains to think about studying at university on a 'trial run' basis. It offers a chance to study a programme at University level about a subject with which you are most familiar – and could even already be an expert, like what you do at work.

'Lots of people already access university level short courses through 'Learning Through Work' and many even go on to complete Degree and even Masters Degree qualifications. Although there are no exams, students are required to complete assignments

The full cost of the programme is £650, but there are a limited number of places available at a reduced cost of £300. For further information contact Chris Nutty on 07748624369 or cnutty@hotmail.co.uk

PAY LEVELS OUTSTRIP INFLATION

The Labour Research Department reports that despite falling inflation, negotiated pay increases have remained steady and have in fact risen slightly on last month's headline figure. The median (mid-point) pay settlement levels recorded by Labour Research Department's Payline database rose to 3.9% in the three months to November, a rise of 0.1%. The November Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation figure was 3.0%. In October the pay settlement level was 3.8% and the RPI was 4.2%.

The three-month pay settlement levels have remained fairly stable throughout the year, despite a small dip last month, while inflation started the year at 4.1%, rose to 5% in July and September, before falling back to its current level.

The Payline figures show a clear difference between the private sector, where the three-month median increase is 4.2%, and the public sector with 3.0%. There is little difference between manufacturing settlements – a 3.9% increase – and the service sector – 4.0%.

NEW £25 MILLION STATION FOR EAST MIDLANDS



A NEW £25m railway station near East Midlands Airport which was due to open at the end of last year, is to open later this month. East Midlands Parkway station at Ratcliffe on Soar, owned by Network Rail, was due to open on 14 December but will now open on 26 January.

It will be served by 100 train services a day with trains to and from London every 15-20 minutes at peak times and will include a park-and-ride terminal for Leicester, Derby and Nottingham.

MOBILE PHONES GO UNDERGROUND IN GLASGOW

COMMUTERS in Glasgow are the first in the UK to be able to use their mobile phones while travelling underground. Commuters can now access mobile phones on subway station concourses and platforms across Glasgow to make calls, send texts, e-mail and access mobile internet.

A rather gushing press release says this is a great improvement on Canary Wharf where commuters have to 'put their lives on hold when taking to the tube'. No mobile means putting your life on hold? We hope not.

BERNARD'S A YOUTUBE STAR!

READERS may recall that last September we ran a feature on how the Bristol branch was working with its local passenger campaign group to improve rail services. A short film about the group's activities called 'The Bristol Metro' is now featuring on YouTube, with ASLEF's Bernard Kennedy playing a lead part in the first section. For you cyber-spacemen, these are the links

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=EkveZOOzG0s>

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=ifT_Ysz8ZxY

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=stnlCz3DpVI>

JIMMY KNAPP CANCER FUND TOPS HALF MILLION

THE fund set up in memory of the late Jimmy Knapp, the former RMT general secretary, has now raised over £500,000. The Fund's income is managed by Unity Bank, which makes no charges, so that every penny raised goes towards tackling cancer and supporting people who are living with it. The Fund was set up by Jimmy's friends and family after Jimmy's death in 2001. It makes contributions to five UK cancer charities and more information can be found at More information concerning the fund's activities can be found here at the organisation's website (www.jimmyknapp.org).

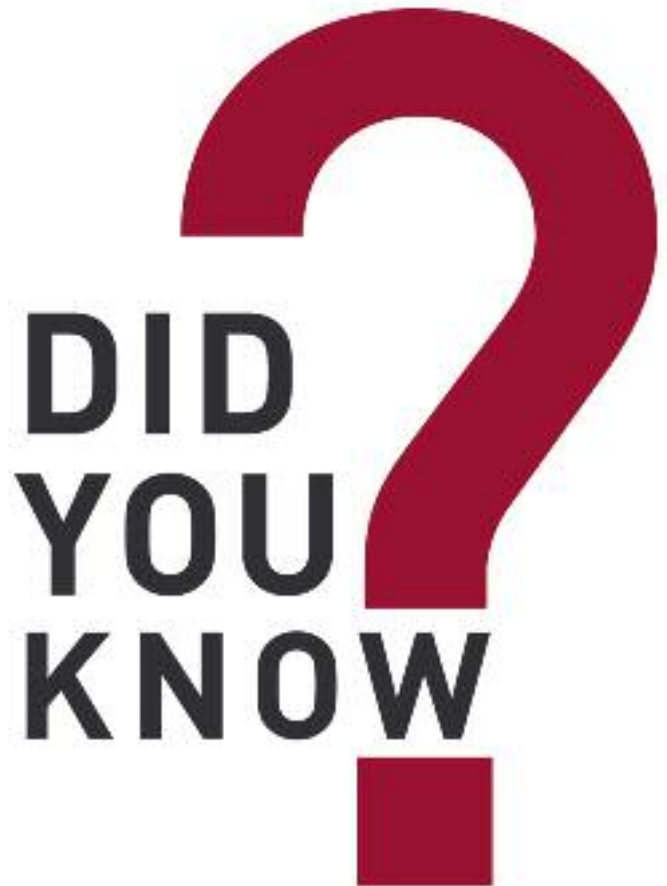
Keith Norman called the half-million pound milestone 'a fitting tribute to a brave and impressive man'.

LORRIES CAUSE MORE DAMAGE THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT

A REPORT to the European Union by Dutch consultants CE Delft has found that lorries are responsible for 20% of road congestion in the EU, despite representing just 3% of road vehicles, and it predicts an increase of 54% in emissions from European road freight by 2030.

The study also debunks the road haulage industry's claim that lorries pay their full costs through existing taxes and charges. It found that existing charges only cover infrastructure costs, and not 'external costs' such as pollution, congestion, noise and accidents.

'Every day seems to bring fresh impetus for the EU to ensure that rail must be used for long-haul freight traffic,' says ASLEF's Keith Norman. 'This report proves that road haulage is massively subsidised by not paying its full costs. There should therefore be no problem with subsidising rail freight.'





CrossCountry Councillors Ian Clarke, John Hay (Secretary), Dave Sullivan (Chairman), Miles Bidgood.

CROSSCOUNTRY FINDS HARMONY IN HARMONISATION

Look away now if you don't want to be deeply shocked – because this is an unusual notion for a union magazine. It borders on a good news story! Over to its authors, Company Council members **Dave Sullivan, John Hay, Miles Bidgood** and **Ian Clarke**

THE CrossCountry franchise commenced a little over a year ago - on 11 November 2007. The interim period has been one of considerable activity for the Drivers' Company Council as the re-franchising brought together 430 former Virgin CrossCountry Drivers with 102 former Central Trains Drivers. The salary gap between them was over £7,000.

In the summer of 2007, as soon as the DfT announced that Arriva had been awarded the franchise, the Company Council, along with our full-time officer Colin Smith, made it clear to the company that we needed to begin discussions on harmonisation as soon as possible. At the same time we needed to ensure that acceptable arrangements were put in place to deal with the closure of Brighton CrossCountry Traincrew depot, something that had been determined by the DfT franchise re-mapping.

Brighton depot closed on 13 Dec last year,

and all the drivers at the depot were given two options. They could either transfer to other CrossCountry depots with a relocation package, or opt to take an enhanced severance package. Roughly half have opted to remain in CrossCountry, four have opted to leave the industry, and the remaining drivers have transferred to FCC at Brighton. We should offer special thanks to Mick Whelan, the District 6 Officer, to the FCC Company Council, and to the Local Reps at Brighton FCC for their help in making those jobs available, and at the right time. We wish the former Brighton drivers all the best at their new depots.

Discussions with the new management on Harmonisation commenced in early 2008, but did not progress to our satisfaction. Difficulties led to the cessation of the Rest Day Working sanction for a period, and then later a ballot for industrial action. The result of this first ballot did result in further talks,

but the goodwill shown by the EC in not announcing strike dates immediately was not, in our view, reciprocated by the company's negotiating team. They came up with a Pay & Harmonisation offer which was by no means acceptable.

As a result, a further strike ballot took place, and on 11 July we finally achieved a deal that we considered acceptable. Both ballots achieved a result in favour of action of approx 94%, and we would like to thank the CrossCountry membership for their support. We would urge all members to support their negotiating teams, as this has proved invaluable to our negotiating position. Thanks also to the EC whose support provided us with the necessary tools to get the job done.

The Pay & Harmonisation deal achieved - and subsequently accepted in a referendum by the membership - sees all CrossCountry Drivers on a common set of revised terms and conditions effective from 14 December 2008. Pay is to be harmonised in steps - with a common salary in place on 28 May 2010. This will be a minimum of £47,551, greater if RPI is above 2.75% in 2009/10 (the deal is RPI + 0.75% or 3.5%). The revised terms and conditions now allow for the registration of lateral transfers, and has flexibility for those depots wishing to operate a strict 4 day week with a fixed Rest Day pattern.

We would like to offer our thanks to both Vince Cunningham (initially) and Alan Roberts (greater part of 2008) who came onto the Company Council representing the constituency for the former Central Trains Drivers. Their input has been invaluable, and has helped to ensure that all CrossCountry Drivers have had proper representation, and assisted greatly with the harmonisation discussions.

Long standing member of the CrossCountry Company Council Mick Williams of Derby has now retired, and we would like to offer him our best wishes for the future. Unfortunately due to ill-health Mick was unable to take part in the final pay and harmonisation discussions.

The Company Council will be re-constituted from February, and we are sure that those who are elected to undertake the role will be able to continue to make strides on behalf of the membership with their support.

...AND MORE CELEBRATION!

AT THE risk of shocking readers with a further good news story, the South East region of the TUC and the National Pensioners Convention recently organised a number of events to celebrate a century of the state pension. It was in January 1909 that people of 70 years old first went to post offices all over the country to cash their pension cheques. The haunting fear of the barbaric conditions of the work-house was finally a thing of the past. This historic moment was celebrated at the Shaw Theatre in London on 11 January with a theatre event, a jazz band, speeches and an old-fashioned sing along.

The only regrettable fact is that the five shilling pension of 100 years ago represented a quarter of the average wage. Today's state pension of £90.70 is less than 17% of the average wage.



Supporters flood into the Shaw Theatre for the celebration of 100 years of the state pension



CALL FOR MAXIMUM WORKPLACE TEMPERATURES

As part of ASLEF's Squash campaign to improve cab conditions, we have argued for legislation defining maximum temperatures suitable for the workplace. There is obvious logic to this, as legislation exists about minimum temperatures at work.

The law currently provides for a minimum reasonable temperature of 16 degrees Celsius (61 degrees Fahrenheit) or 13 Celsius where the work is physically strenuous. This is contained in the Approved Code of Practice to the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

The absence of a standard for maximum temperatures would obviously be beneficial. In the case of train drivers, we have a further hurdle to jump because the Regulations do not include the driving cab as a workplace.

A few months ago a poll on the ASLEF website asked, 'There is a legal minimum temperature in the workplace of 16 degrees. There is no legal maximum temperature. Should there be?' 95% of respondents were in favour.

ASLEF supports any change in the law which would strengthen our arguments and move us in the right direction. That is why we are asking members to support a Petition calling on the government to introduce laws on maximum temperatures at work that has been placed online by an USDAW member.

The petition is to be found at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/workinghot/>

ONLINE LONDON PENSION FUND FACILITY

Steve Grant, the union's London officer and pension fund trustee, reports that there is a new self-service facility available online for members at www.tflpensionfund.co.uk

'This allows active members to view basic details like Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) and transfer-in details, to see their last benefit statement, run retirement calculations and AVC estimates.

'Pensioners can see their basic details and update things like their address as well as being able to view and print payslips and P60s.

'Deferred members can see their benefit statements and run retirement calculations.'

Steve points out that you will need your Membership number which will be on any communication you have received from the fund. 'Members will need to register at which point they will be given a username and password,' he says.



DIGITAL RADIO SYSTEM OPERATIONAL IN UNDERGROUND

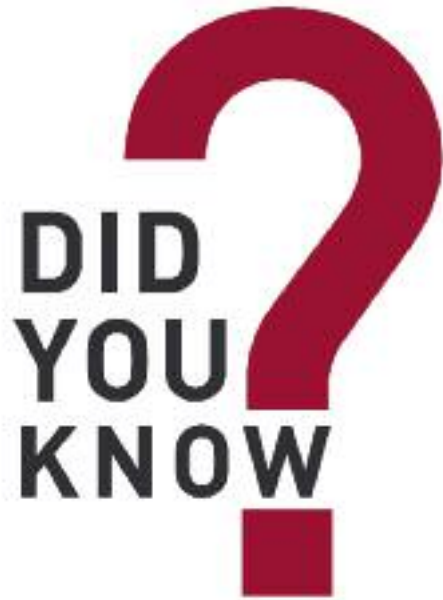
The police digital radio system is now operational in all London's underground railway stations.

Poor communication underground was identified by a London Assembly report as a factor which hampered the emergency response to the 2005 Tube bombings. The 7 July outrages sparked a drive to ensure that stations were brought within the range of the Airwave radio system.

The police acknowledge that further upgrades will be needed to cope with the additional demand expected for the 2012 Olympics.

TORIES TO DROP POLICY OF COMBINED TRACK AND TRAIN OPERATORS

The Conservatives' promised review of transport policy has still not emerged, but speculation is growing that they will drop their current policy of seeking to integrate track and train operations. Shadow Transport spokesperson Theresa Villiers said recently the Tories would like to see a board to supervise Network Rail more closely – indicating that they see a future for the body.



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VENEZUELA: A DECADE OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS



a report by **Colin Burgon**, who is Chair of the Labour Friends of Venezuela group of MPs and represents the Leeds constituency of Elmet

FREE-MARKET economics have been fatally discredited by the financial turmoil of recent months. For years it was said that there was 'no alternative' to policies that had led to privatisation, lower wages and greater inequality. Now the need for progressive alternatives has never been clearer.

In the past decade a number of Latin American countries have led the way on developing socially progressive policies. This is no surprise as this was the first region to have neo-liberal policies forced on it – often at the barrel of the dictator's gun. As a result, living standards were thrown backwards, millions fell into extreme poverty and basic public services were sold off.



Chávez brought social justice to Venezuela

Venezuela, under Hugo Chávez, is one example of how progressive governments in Latin America are now radically improving the lives of their most excluded citizens.

This month - February 2009 – marks the 10th anniversary of Hugo Chávez being elected as Venezuela's President.

WHO BENEFITS FROM OIL?

Although Venezuela had been awash with oil for over 50 years, it was not until Chávez was elected that it was used for the good of most Venezuelans. Previously it had enriched a small national elite and ensured cheap oil supplies to US multi-nationals.

Hugo Chávez therefore inherited a country where the majority of people were in desperate poverty.

Over the past decade, his government has transformed the quality of life of working people, in particular in health and education.

One of the greatest achievements is the development of a free Venezuelan national health service, which it estimated has saved over 100,000 lives. Venezuela has more than 20,000 new doctors who live in the shanty towns alongside the poorest people. Millions of adults have learnt to read and

write, illiteracy has been abolished and many now finish schooling and even to go on to college or university.

No longer are people left to starve. Cheap subsidised food is available and more people have access to clean water. The minimum wage is now one of the highest in the region.

As a result, more than two million people have been lifted out of poverty and levels of extreme poverty have been halved.

BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE

Previous governments also failed to develop Venezuela's infrastructure, with little focus on providing adequate housing, public transport or on planning to ensure proper access to services for the people.

While there is much more to do, the infrastructure is now being developed. For example in 2006 the first new over-ground train line to be built for decades in Venezuela was finished. New metro and trolleybus services have been built in a number of cities and the Chávez government plans to build a nation-wide rail work to help develop the whole country.

Unsurprisingly, the Chávez government has widespread support. In the past decade, Venezuela has held 14 national votes - and President Chávez and his supporters have won all but one.

A small and privileged elite has lost out under this progressive redistribution of economic and political power. They have doggedly fought to win back their privileges and drive back social change.

PEOPLE THWARTED COUP ATTEMPT

This opposition, along with its allies in Washington, briefly overthrew the Chávez government in a military coup of 2002. This failed when the Venezuelan people took to the streets to demand Chávez's return. The opposition then tried to paralyse the economy and has repeatedly boycotted elections it did not think it could win.

The opposition views are aired throughout most of the Venezuelan media, which is 90% privately owned and which virulently attacks Chávez. Unfortunately, these false stories turn up regularly in the British media.

Venezuela's achievements have shown that it is possible to create a society based on equality and social justice.

Developments there are an inspiration for people across the world. But the threats continue from those opposed to Venezuela's new direction.

On this 10th anniversary, it is important that British people learn from Venezuela's social change and give it their support. Trade unionists have an important role to play in raising awareness of the inspirational advances in social progress and democracy taking place in Venezuela.

● For more information on solidarity with Venezuela visit www.vicuk.org



The first trade union humanitarian flight to Gaza being unloaded, including one of the ambulances. Photo: ITF

TRANSPORT UNIONS SEND AID TO GAZA ...

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), along with Jordan's transport union, last month organised the first planeload of humanitarian supplies for the people of Gaza following the Israeli invasion. The trade union relief operation touched down in Al-Areesh in Egypt containing three ambulances, medical supplies, food and water, for onward distribution in Gaza by the Red Crescent. The aircraft was made available free for the flight by Royal Jordanian Airlines.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said he hoped this would be the first of several mercy flights, but added, 'Vital though these medical supplies are, they do not lessen in any way the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.'

.. WHILE TRAIN DRIVERS PROTEST IN NORWAY ...

The Norwegian Locomotive Drivers Union organised a short stoppage of all passenger trains in the country and all metro and tram drivers in Oslo last month to demonstrate its support for the Palestinian people during the Israeli invasion. Trains halted while this announcement was read out as 'information to passengers from train drivers':

'Because of the situation in the Gaza Strip, the Locomotive Drivers Union in Norway has decided to demonstrate our solidarity with the Palestinian people. This will be organised by adding two more minutes of stoppage at the station. The same action applies to all passenger trains in Norway simultaneously.'

We demand the immediate withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Palestinian territory!

Thank you for your understanding.'

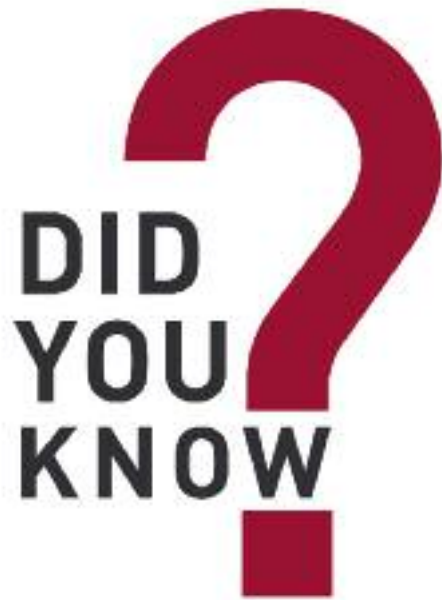
... AND DEMONSTRATE IN LONDON

ASLEF members were among the tens of thousands to join the 10 January demonstration against the Israeli invasion of Gaza. The event was supported by a wide section of the public including trade unions, left groups, Greens, Christians, Muslims, Jews and celebrities like Annie Lennox and Brian Eno.

The demonstrators called for an end to the killings and denounced the UN-condemned invasion which Archbishop Tutu has said, 'Bears all the hallmarks of war crimes.'



Posters at the London event showed the women of Gaza mourning the 800 children known to have died in the week before the demonstration



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RAIL PENSIONS – WHERE A



Writing on behalf of the Executive Committee, **Simon Weller** reports on the union's Executive Committee's involvement in negotiations and outlines its approach to further talks ...

IT MAY appear to have gone 'All Quiet On The Pension Front' - but the reality is quite different. We have been in wide-ranging discussions about the future of our pensions for the last 12 months. This article is to review where we've come from and outline where the EC feels we should be going.

Following the joint unions' campaign in 2006 to defend the railway pension scheme, a Railway Pensions Commission was set up to examine the current Railway Pensions Scheme (RPS) around the four tenets of the joint union campaign. These were

- Cap employee contributions at 10.56%
- Keep benefits at their current level
- Streamline the scheme
- Open the scheme to all employees

The Commission's proposals were wide ranging, controversial and more or less the opposite of what we wanted. Broadly, they proposed

- the closure of the current RPS to new entrants
- cessation of BRASS II and
- the creation of a lesser 'career average scheme' as opposed to a defined benefit, final salary scheme.
- With this as the backdrop, meetings were organised early in 2008 under the auspices of TUC Deputy General Secretary, Frances O'Grady with all the recognised unions and industry stakeholders. When I attended this meeting on behalf of the EC it was immediately apparent that a meeting of 100-plus representatives of the differing employers and unions was unworkable. We agreed each section should

form working groups, with ASLEF involved in the TOC and FOC sections.

NO TWO-TIER SCHEME



At subsequent meetings of our sections ASLEF made it clear the

Railway Pensions Commissions' proposals were simply not acceptable and we saw no point in discussing them.

We are not in the business of creating a two-tier pension scheme or providing labour-unit cost savings for the employers and their shareholders at the expense of our deferred wages. They knew what they were taking on when they bid for the franchises.

Whilst this comes as no surprise, we recognise the need to make changes to the scheme to ensure it remains sustainable, equitable and, above all, open and affordable.

We also recognise it is neither desirable nor necessary to rip out the current scheme root and branch. We identified a number of adjustments to ensure a future for the scheme. We have been negotiating around these changes and our original four points with representatives of ATOC and the freight operators.

EARLY RETIREMENT



One area we examined was the subsidised early retirement factors for ages 50 to 59. These were a legacy of the late '80s and early 90's with the restructuring of British Rail along sector lines. The British Railways Board encouraged managers to take early retirement in the run up to

privatisation.

In rough and ready terms you should lose around 5% of your pension for every year you go before the normal retirement age of sixty. In reality most only lost 2% to 3%, meaning those who remained in the scheme were subsidising those who took retirement before 60.

Obviously, this wasn't particularly equitable as those who benefited tended to be the higher paid and those who provided the subsidy (after the surplus ran out) were those who didn't retire early, predominantly the lower paid. Changing the early retirement factors so they were cost neutral - still allowing for early retirement but without those leaving gaining at the expense of others - had profound savings for the scheme; as did adjusting the very conservative actuarial assumptions based on pay rises and promotional scales.

EFFECTS OF THE SLUMP



So far, so good. But the spanner in the works was the recent collapse of international capital where the pension scheme had nearly 35% wiped from its value. This prompted the pension fund trustees to convene a special committee to examine the effects of the slump on the scheme's future funding.

The 2007 valuation, the basis of our negotiations, had come at a high point in the stock market and did not provide any buffer or flexibility in funding the new market conditions. Our view as negotiators was we should not panic or make knee-jerk decisions which may have far reaching consequences.

The employers seemed to see this as an opportunity to



make swingeing cuts to the scheme's benefits so they could pass those savings on to their shareholders.

The trustees proposed an increased level of funding by 3.75% for sections with strong covenants (TOCs) and 7.5% for standard covenants (FOCs). They also made recommendations on the joint contribution rates, moving away from the back-loaded rates from 2004 and using adjusted rates based on the 2007 valuation.

AGE OF RETIREMENT



For us this was not bad news - but the employers still seem dead set on increasing the normal retirement age from 60 to 65 (something we are fundamentally opposed to) and they suggested a cheaper, inferior, career average scheme for new entrants. This would have created a two-tier scheme and had a detrimental effect on the continued sustainability of the railway pension scheme. This is what Network Rail is attempting to foist onto its staff.

At the last meeting we made our joint position clear

ARE WE NOW?



■ We are totally opposed to any introduction of Career Average schemes for new entrants.

■ Normal retirement age shall remain at 60 years old.

■ We recommend adjustment to outstanding actuarial assumptions.

■ Contributions to be maintained at current level if revised rates are lower.


■ Deficit recovery, if necessary, should be set over nine years.

■ Introduction of cost neutral retirement factors 50-59 across all sections of the TOC RPS.

■ The joint union and employer pensions' forum should continue to meet, as appropriate, to keep a watch on the ongoing pension situation.

The employers were unwilling at that meeting to make a joint recommendation along those proposed lines (subsequently confirmed in writing).

THE EC POSITION

 As a result the ASLEF Executive Committee met on 3 December and resolved

■ We should agree a

consistent response from the joint unions to be communicated to the employers in the strongest terms possible.

■ We should react to any attempts to move outside our position with a firm and decisive industrial response.

■ The Union proposals should be applied across all TOC pension sections.

■ We should brief our pension committee members and Lead Officers of the firm line we are taking.

■ We should communicate our position to members in the most effective and widespread way possible. Keeping members informed must be a high priority.

■ We need clarity on the impact on protected staff of moving benefits.

■ Our approach to the FOC pensions should be consistent with the TOC position.

It remains the EC's overriding principle that we will defend the shared cost, defined benefit, final salary pension scheme. We do not accept the days of blue-chip final salary schemes for normal workers are over.

OPINION

DO THE PUBLIC NEED CHRISTMAS TRAINS?

Lee Davies of our Gateshead & Newcastle Branch points out the problems

THE sensationalist headline in the Independent on Christmas Eve read, 'Millions Stranded in Trains Fiasco'. The story went on about the 'farfical blame game' for the 58-hour railway shutdown over the Christmas bank holidays.

The government blamed ATOC, TOCs blamed Network Rail and the newspaper said, 'The failure to act has led to another festive season in which anyone wanting to travel by rail Christmas day or Boxing Day will be stranded.' What rubbish! In nearly 25 years of working for the railway I've never known of services on Christmas Day. On Boxing Day there have been limited services in certain areas. However, 34 MPs supported a motion complaining about the situation.

Major engineering works are programmed to take advantage of the Christmas shutdown, giving engineers total possession of the lines.

Besides, who are the customers for all these services on Christmas Day? Certainly not the 34 MPs! There is very sparse traffic on Christmas morning - and I should know as I live near the A1M.

They cite football fans wanting to get to matches on Boxing Day. Fine. Let them travel by train - but who will pay for the damage they cause when they do so? Then we're told people need to get to the Boxing Day Sales. Why not start them on the 27th - or have the January Sales in January?

The Guardian ran a poll asking, 'Should trains run every day of the year?' It pointed out that French, Spanish and German trains run on Christmas Day. The poll result was 79.6% 'Yes' and 20.4% 'No'.

Don't get me wrong. I don't have a problem with trains running on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. I have - reluctantly - worked these days in the past. But people wanting services on these days should consider that railway workers have families too! And they may have to pay a premium price, such as taxis charge.

Also - how do drivers, guards and other staff get to work? I couldn't get a bus home from Newcastle on New Year's Day after work. Nor could I catch a Tyne & Wear Metro - but the TOC I work for ran a near-full service, mostly moving fresh air bar the Anglo-Scottish services.

And how is engineering work to be accommodated? We no longer have the diversionary routes that existed a decade ago. Some - like Leamside - are closed. Others can't be used for lack of route knowledge now that all TOCs have their own workforce.



I don't mind a debate about Christmas and Boxing day trains. But first let's consider how to suitably recompense the people who will have to operate them at this time of year, and how to draw up a fair rostering system. Not to mention who will pay the extra costs involved in running the service.



FROM STEAM TO PENDOLINO: DON'S DONE IT ALL!

DONALD SEWELL is a presence. He's physically big and his deep husky chuckle resonates around the room at Euston where we meet. As he leans back into his chair, hands folded over each other, he radiates contentment with himself and his life. This interview was clearly going to be more of a pleasure than a job.

Don might be the last driver to pass out under steam – but you learn not to make any definite claims in the ASLEF Journal, because there is always someone who knows more than you do! One sure

thing is that during his career Don has driven vastly more types of traction than most, and infinitely more than anyone entering the profession today.

'I was born in Jamaica, and I

local paper and started at Lostock Hall.'

Had Don always wanted to work on the railways? He chuckles. 'Actually, I was a lot more interested in the wages,'

I remember having to lean out of the cab in thick fog, edging along

came over to England to rejoin my parents. I'd only been in the country for a couple of months when I started on the railway in Preston. That was in December 1961. I'd seen an advert in the

he confides. His interview was, he says, somewhat different from the psychometric testing of today. 'They asked a few questions and sent me for a medical!' he says. 'That was it.

As I was only 17, I wasn't allowed to work after ten at night – and I'm still not keen!'

Don worked on steam as a fireman for eight years, gradually moving up the ladder to become a passed driver on 12 August 1968. For the first six months, until the era ended, he drove steam trains.

'It was all about waiting for a vacancy for a driving job in those days,' he recalls. 'I knew people in Northampton who had passed, but retired without becoming a driver. Eventually I decided to make a break, so my family and myself left the north-west and came down to

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk

Euston.

'To be honest in those days Preston was like the Hovis adverts – there were cotton factories and mills, everyone had coal fires and sometimes when the smog came down you couldn't see a yard in front of you.

'It was very different from where I'd been brought up in Montego Bay!'

In the intervening years Don has enjoyed a career that will never be repeated. He's been behind the wheel of steam, diesel, electric and now Pendolinos. But which does he prefer? Does he have a lingering affection for steam?

'Well, yes – apart from the dirt! But it could be a pleasure – the train almost sang at times. It was musical. There was

much of an issue, to be honest. I tend to slot in wherever I am.'

Perhaps this attitude is why Don says he encountered little prejudice. 'Even in the early days, I never saw it. In fact,' and he lets out a trade-mark laugh, 'I was a bit of a celebrity! They'd come out to have a look at me at places like Blackburn and Carlisle!'

Don is set to retire this spring, after 48 years of rail work and ASLEF membership. So what will he do when that happens? I'm met with a guffaw. 'Me? I'd head off to a Jamaican beach for a rest – but my wife wouldn't want to leave the grandchildren. So it looks as if I'm not going. But the ideal for me would be six months here and six months in the Caribbean. But I'm sure my

I used to prefer the 87s, but now I'm a Pendolino fan

much more control over the machine, you and your mate were on your own. Utterly isolated. I remember having to lean out of the cab when the fog was thick, edging along. You needed to know every inch of the track to drive safely. It was a very different job then. Much more physical. Now it requires more concentration and mental work.

'Besides, we soon found out that diesel really did stink – something that didn't escape my wife! She said my clothes always smelled of the stuff. She didn't care for it in the house. And it was still a very manual job. We still needed a steam boiler to heat the train.

'The modern trains are the best to drive. I used to prefer the 87s, but now I'm a Pendolino fan.'

And how did Don adapt to living in the capital?

'I looked forward to it. I'm a country boy by birth, so the big city was a huge attraction – even though my main motivation was the mileage, and the bonus money. There was such a variety of work then – freight, sleepers, motorrails, paper trains, parcel trains, postal trains ...

'But the actual move wasn't

wife will have the last word!

And my children will keep me busy because I do a bit of DIY.'

So, I joke, he's not the senior man at home? 'I'm not even the senior man here!' Don tells me. 'Can you believe it! 48 years and there's still two men in front of me – Alan Clark and Jimmy Phillipson!'

And with a final chuckle, this man with an unrepeatably rail career leads me off to a Pendolino where we've arranged to take a few pictures. He leans back in the driving seat and tells me, yes, this has got to be better than steam



Don is set to retire this spring, after 48 years service

WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

100 years ago a 'late Swansea boy' reported on the happy family of Yeovil and 50 years ago a diesel driving Scot explains a desire to vomit ...!

100 YEARS AGO

The Journal of February 1909 contains the observations of W. Warwick, an Organising Secretary, of his visit to Yeovil, where he finds the skeleton of apathy in the cupboard of a happy depot ...

"On December 6th I attended an open meeting at Yeovil, as mentioned at the close of my last report. When I opened up correspondence with the branch secretary re the same he promptly closed with my offer, and added the following to his signature – "late Swansea boy". It is a pleasing feature in my experience that wherever I go on the Great Western Railway I find some one who, at some time during my tenure of office as secretary, were members of that branch. There are about equal numbers of Great Western and London and South-Western railway locomotive at Yeovil, totalling up a sufficient number to formulate and run what should be a very interesting and prosperous branch, and I am pleased to say I found them with every facility to hand for that purpose in the shape of painstaking and able officials, a very suitable and convenient club-room, also a larger hall at their disposal for open meetings. I also found them with an interesting improvement class, conducted jointly between the men of the two companies, and I had the honour of attending the same on Sunday morning prior to the open meeting in the afternoon. Taking them altogether, the locomotive-men at Yeovil might be a very happy family, so to speak, but there is just a small skeleton in the cupboard in the shape of a little apathy as to society matters. This applies more especially to the one company's men. However, there was a good attendance at the open meeting, and if I did not mistake the tone and feeling of the men at the close there is every reason to believe that all this will soon be removed and the whole of them realize that in unity and brotherhood in their own Society lies their hope of salvation."

50 YEARS AGO

In February 1959 Toram Beg's "Scottish Opinion" appeared under the heading 'Are we all that dim?' He's got no time for the glamour of steam ...

".....Here in Scotland I've been appalled at the number of enginemens who are accepting the fatuous inference that the introduction of the diesel engine is going to reduce the status of a driver to a fellow who merely pulls a wee handle or two; a man who does not require to know any more than how to start and stop his engine, and who no longer has the pride of craft which the older generation of "steam" men possessed.

When I meet that type, I feel inclined to say," Excuse me while I puke."

For as one who was "raised in steam", and who has his fair share of sentiment for the passing of the steam locomotive, I'm certain that to the lad who cares to look at the diesel (or the coming electrics) with seeing eyes, there is every bit of the potential which went to make "pride of craft" in my generation.

I'm prepared to argue this technically, but this isn't a technical article. To the gloomy one, however, who holds the view that he's now merely a moronic puller of handles, I would say: "Have a look under the polished panels in your cab." "

Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott

RUGBY PAIR PASS ON

I WOULD like to inform ASLEF members of the deaths of two former members of our branch.

Cyril Truman, who had been an ASLEF member since 1955 and retired in 1981 has died at the age of 91.

Alec Coulthard passed away at just one year younger, having been born on 1 June 1918. Alec died at home after a long illness on 12 December. He finished his railway career at Rugby as an engine and road learning instructor.

Alexander Lakic – Secretary – Rugby Branch

KEN GOODMAN – A FRIEND TO MANY

KEN'S wife Susan informs us of the passing of Ken Goodman who died with his family present after a few days in hospital. Ken retired from EWS in 2003. His railway career began at Kidderminster on 1 February 1956. On becoming redundant he moved to Hereford on 17 August 1957 as the senior fireman. He then progressed from second man to Driver. Ken also served on the LDC. On his wedding day he and his bride had their photo taken on the front of the King Class Loco 'King George V'. He was a good friend to many, which was evident at the church funeral service which was full of people who came to support his wife Susan, sons Richard and Andrew the rest of the family who celebrated Ken's life. Many thanks to all who attended – and RIP, Ken.

Peter Smith – Reporter - RMS

WALTER WOOD – A RAILWAY FAMILY

WITH sadness I report the death of Walter Wood at the age of 79. Walter died in hospital on 16 November following a short illness. He was born into a railway family, as his father was a driver at the Longsight shed. Walter, however, chose Belle Vue when he started in the industry in 1946. He worked there until the Beeching culling of the Manchester sheds when he followed his preferences under PTR and ended at Newton Heath.

A mild and quiet man, he was very knowledgeable and a good communicator – something that was put to good use when he moved to Manchester Victoria as a transition inspector until retirement. Walters' love of football was inevitable as he was born within a goal kick of Maine Road. Our thoughts go to his wife and family.

S. Black – RMS – Newton Heath

JOHN MALCOLM – A LOYAL ASLEF MEMBER

JOHN MALCOLM passed away on 7 December aged 80. He had not been well for

DOUG 'TOMO' THOMPSON – A POPULAR ACTIVIST

IT IS with great sadness that I report the passing of Brother Doug 'Tomo' Thompson on 7 November last year. He was born on 19 April 1921.

Doug started his railway career as a cleaner at Colchester Depot, then he moved to Newark to get his fireman's check. He later moved south to become a driver at Tilbury Riverside steam depot. He later became a foreman (TCS) at Boston and moved south again to become foreman at the new Ripple Lane Depot where he remained until he retired in 1984.

Doug was popular with the men and in those days he helped many struggling Drivers with young families to get their foot on the ladder to affordable housing when offering a bit of overtime. He will always be remembered for saying to them when filling out the time sheet, 'Make it fit!'. Doug was an active member of the Labour Party, and served on Thurrock Trades Council and on various police liaison committees.

The Crematorium at Corbett's Tey was standing room only, and it was very fitting to see his trade mark 'Arthur Daley' Trilby hat placed ceremoniously on top of the coffin. Our condolences go to Doug's wife Phyllis, daughter Denise, son Philip, his four grandchildren and one great grandchild. Philip is carrying on the railway tradition as a Driver on National Express East Coast at Kings Cross. We will all miss 'Tomo'.

CLIFF BLACKWELL – Reporter - Tilbury Branch

some time although he was able to attend the retired driver's dinner at the Bowling Club on 28 November. John came to Haymarket Loco in June 1946 starting as a cleaner, progressing to fireman and retiring as a driver at Edinburgh in 1993. He was a loyal member of Edinburgh No 2. His funeral service was well attended by colleagues past and present.

David Dobie – RMS Section – Retired.

WEST BROMPTON LOSES THREE

IT IS with great sadness that I have the duty to write and inform the wider membership of three very sad and poignant losses to key people who have played their part in the history of this great branch. I am sure that the founders of the Branch in 1889 would have been as proud as me to know our great esteemed colleagues and what they achieved. All three played a vital role in the union movement. They will be sadly missed by colleagues and family but will live forever in the memories of the West Brompton members and the wider circle of friends who knew them.

DAVE O'CONNELL

DAVE was a great friend and trade unionist. A former branch secretary, he started his activities with ASLEF while on the Central Line, then progressed to the Piccadilly then District and finally onto the Victoria before leaving on ill health grounds. I met Dave at Euston station when we were on our way to Blackpool for a Branch Secretary's course. His love and passion for working people and his concern for their conditions of service never ceased to amaze me. Dave touched

everyone he worked with by his belief for the socialist movement and respect for others. He will be sadly missed by all the officers and members of the branches he served. I have very sincere and fond memories of this great man. I also will never forget his passionate and heart felt rendition of the Red Flag and his undying love for his son and a dodgy football team. He was a truly great man and the world is a worse place without him. RIP mate.

STEVE STOKES ('STOKESY')

STEVE was a former branch Secretary of West Brompton Branch who started as a local representative and ended up attending many AAD conferences and other ASLEF functions. Steve was elected to represent the District line on the now disbanded Sectional Council 3, then progressed to be re-elected onto the new Trains Functional Committee. He had utter knowledge not only of District Line agreements, but also those on the Met and LER. He was a font of knowledge on how agreements had developed to protect the conditions of service of train crews on the London Underground. Steve played a key role in organising the 'wild cat' strikes that hit the Tory government so hard - and by doing so procured a decent wage for Train drivers on the LUL and set a bench mark for rates of pay for other rail operating companies. Steve was a gentleman and had a great sense of humour. He'll be sadly missed by all who knew 'Mr Stokesy'.

LES AUGUSTINE

LES was another great man, but for different reasons. Les was a driver who always supported ASLEF and never questioned the

leadership of his union. Although not a regular branch attendee, Les was 100% ASLEF and would follow the union line at all times.

He was a kind soft-spoken man who got on well with all his colleagues. Les started as a Guard on the Northern Line and after passing his motorman's exam transferred to the District Line and into West Brompton Branch. He remained a member of our branch until his untimely death. Les had been on restricted duties and was moved to a position at Bollo House on the Piccadilly Line. Everyone who worked with Les liked him. No one had a bad word to say about him. He was warm hearted and caring and he certainly cared for ASLEF and West Brompton Branch 226. He is another fine man who will be greatly missed.

Dave Bacon – Reporter – West Brompton branch

CECIL LANCELOT YORK – A GREAT CHARACTER

I HAVE to inform you of the passing of one of ASLEF's finest stalwarts, retired Immingham driver Brother Cec York who only last July celebrated his 90th birthday with a group of former workmates and family.

'Cec' as he was fondly known was born on 11 July 1918. He followed his father's footsteps onto the footplate and once again followed his example by joining the ranks of the ASLEF fraternity. His father became an EC member and Cec, after being on the LDC from the early 1960's until the early 1970's, went onto the Sectional Council B when the late Bro Les Cookson was Chairman/Secretary. Cec was delegated to represent Immingham, Grimsby, Frodingham, Lincoln and Doncaster until his retirement in the early 1980's, and remained a member of the union's Retired Members' Section all his life.

He will be sadly missed by one and all.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family.

D.A. Doherty – Reporter – Immingham Branch

Joe Padgett BEM, a retired member of Immingham Branch, adds:

On 22 December relatives, friends, neighbours and workmates of Cec gathered to pay their last respects at the Grimsby Crematorium. He died on 12 December, just five months after his 90th birthday, which was reported in the August 2008 Journal.

Many friends, including Anne, his daughter, Terry Hubbard, son-in-law, his sister Doreen and Bob Francis, travelled to Grimsby to pay their last respects. There were about 50 former colleagues, mostly in their 80's, and I was especially pleased to see some branch committee members even though they had not known Cec personally.

He was dismissed from his first job as a delivery boy, which he started at 14, largely

for talking to people for too long! He then worked on tug-boats at Immingham and I think he told me he later became an apprentice boilermaker at Ardsley in East Yorkshire.

Called up in 1939, Cec was sent to the British Expedition Forces who found themselves being chased to Dunkirk, but he managed to escape to England. He was re-mobilised in 1941 and after a period in South Africa, ended up driving ammunition trains in North Africa.

He was stationed at Cambridge after the war, returning to Immingham in the early '50s. He was also a magistrate in Grimsby for many years. He was a great character who had a good, full life and will be remembered for many years to come.

BROTHER DAVID JOBSON – A GENTLEMAN

IT saddens me to report the sudden passing of retired Immingham driver Bro Dave Jobson who only retired last October having just passed age 61. We suspected ill-health at the time.

It was a great shock for us all to hear that this very popular, loving, caring gentleman had collapsed and died in the early hours of Christmas Eve during a short stay in hospital.

His popularity was well known throughout the three depots (all different companies) of Immingham, Cleethorpes and Lincoln. He lived on the outskirts of Lincoln and often lads from the depots would descend on the town to have a few beers with Dave, go to the bowling alley and taste the cuisine - namely, curry! Many a tale has been recounted of their adventures.

Dave started on the railway in 1961/2 at Lincoln when steam was still on the go. He drove a mixture of passenger and freight until he was made redundant and moved to Waterloo as he'd forgotten to cancel his preference of choice of depots under the old PT and R agreement. But he returned not long afterwards, and finished his last few years in the Pilot link.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to know you and work with you, old friend. You will not be forgotten. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Dave's wife and son. Rest in Peace, Brother.

D. A. Doherty – Reporter – Immingham Branch

HERBERT ('MO') STANLEY

SADLY I must report the death of retired member Herbert Maurice Stanley ('Mo') at the age of 82 years. Herbert worked at Leicester Beal Street depot. He was a great character who was liked and respected by all grades and colleagues. His funeral was attended by many ASLEF members from many depots, both still employed and

SAFETY ROUNDUP



BY UNION SAFETY ADVISOR DAVE BENNETT

SPADS THE RSSB reports that SPADS remained fairly level throughout 2008. At the end of September 2008, SPAD risk stood at 16% of the March 2001 baseline level. However, during the summer of 2007 a lowest level of 8% was reached. This is attributed to the introduction of TPWS.

It is our view that the full safety benefits of TPWS will not be realised while the issue of TPWS 'reset and continue' remains.

OBJECTS ON THE LINE DUE TO WEATHER The monthly number of train collisions with objects on the line due to adverse weather is quite variable. January is the worst month, on average, and January 2007 was particularly bad.

INJURIES TO TRAIN DRIVERS AND OTHER TRAIN CREW Around half of the risk to train drivers arises from areas such as shock/trauma resulting from suicide and fatal trespasser events, and other sources of public behaviour, such as vandalism and level crossing misuse.

KEY FACTS: NOVEMBER 2008

Latest figures available show that there were 29 Category 'A' SPADs, which is seven fewer than in November 2007. By November 2008 there had been 302 SPADs, as compared with 285 at the same point the previous year. Over the 12 months November to November the total number is 325, which is the same over the period.

The figures show that there have been nine SPADs that were risk-ranked 16 or above, including three which were rated at over 20. Again, both these figures were the same as during November 2007.

There were six TPWS interventions where TPWS applied the brakes before, or in the absence of, driver action, and 11 where the driver initiated braking before the system.

The figures include nine SPADs by multi-SPAD drivers while six were reported at multi-SPAD signals

Further information on SPADs can be found on the RSSB website at http://www.rssb.co.uk/pdf/reports/monthly_spad_nov_08.pdf

retired, and who spanned more than 30 years of age difference. We were all invited to, and welcomed at, a wake held for Mo by his wonderful family. It was another demonstration of the wonderful comradeship and quality that exists within our ranks.

T. R. Perkins

Retired member – Leicestershire

GRAHAM TOMKISS REMEMBERED AT SHREWSBURY AGM



Members gather round the bench at platform 3

Shrewsbury Branch held its AGM on 18 December where its officers were elected (or otherwise) for the coming year. I am pleased to report that it was a relatively painless affair for most, with few serious casualties, while of those who were wounded, many still remained easily recognisable to their kinsfolk.

Bro Steve Carser stood down as Branch Chairman. He took on the role a couple of years ago through a sense of duty. Despite not really wishing for the position, and 'having greatness thrust upon him', he performed his responsibilities admirably with a relaxed easy going authority. In the absence of any incriminating photographs the Branch was unable to get him to change his mind, and so instead thanked him for all

his hard work and gave him a round of applause in appreciation. He remains one of our most popular and respected members who intends to remain a Branch activist and I'm sure more thanks will be forthcoming.

Following the AGM, the Branch and about 40 members from places such as London, Machynlleth and Wolverhampton, along with the LM Company Council, EC member Dave Calfe and District Organiser Mick Whelan gathered on platform 3 of Shrewsbury Station to attend a dedication ceremony of a bench commissioned in memory of our Branch Secretary, Graham Tomkiss who sadly passed away last December.

The proceedings were conducted by the Railway Chaplain, Rev. Ron Keen



The inscription



A place to spend a few moments with 'Shropshire's finest'

who thanked everybody for attending, gave readings and recited poems - and reminded us all that we should celebrate the past and be glad that we were fortunate to have known Graham. The District Organiser, Mick Whelan spoke of the great sense of compassion that Graham had for any members who found themselves in times of adversity and how he had always been one of the best in our union for assisting members enduring hardship issues.

I'm sure that a great many railwaymen will, like myself, find themselves sitting on the bench in the early hours of the morning and spending a few moments and thoughts with 'Shropshire's finest'. On behalf of the Tomkiss family and Shrewsbury Branch I would like to offer our sincere thanks to our member 'Ballistic' Bob Meredith who organised the ordering and delivery of the bench and to Dave Calfe and Mick Whelan for juggling meetings and other arrangements to be at the ceremony.

Alan Griffiths – Chairman –
Shrewsbury Branch

DISTRICT 8 GOES FESTIVE!

ON Friday 12 December Tony West and I were invited by Steve Grant to attend a Christmas Social of LUL members at Liverpool Street. Among the other guests were representatives of Thompsons Solicitors, Tube Lines and the LUL board. It was a very informal gathering where members of all branches of the LUL met to chew the fat on whatever topic came to mind. Also, having representatives of the LUL board present was an opportunity, as they say, to 'talk to the organ grinder and not the monkey!' Steve took the opportunity to inform us that he would be taking over as lead officer for the Retired Members Section and other Consultative Committees until further notice.

It was a shame that we could not stay longer but we had to scurry off to another engagement at a LUL branch at Barking.

Peter Smith – Reporter - RMS

EASTLEIGH OLD BOYS REUNION

THE next reunion of the Eastleigh Old Boys will be held on 14 March between 12 noon and 1600 in the old BRSA club at Eastleigh.

Drivers, guards, station and shunting staff – young and old – are all very welcome. Come along, meet old friends, exchange new stories and enjoy the company.



Was it the camera or the festive libation? Here, vaguely, we see Vicky Phillips (Thompsons Solicitors) Steve Grant (District 8 Organiser) and Tony West (ASLEF RMS National Secretary)

A LIFT FOR THE SPIRITS IN IPSWICH

ON Friday 6 November Tony West and I were invited to a reunion at Ipswich. On the way down there we had the good fortune to meet one of the members from Ipswich who was travelling on the same train. 'How are you getting to the function when you arrive at the station?' he asked. 'By cab,' we told him.

Next thing he was on the phone to his dad, a retired member, and it was arranged that he and his wife would pick us up! We would like to thank them all for their kindness.

When we arrived Kelvin Higgins, the committee and all present made us most welcome as we circulated round the guests and did what is now called 'networking'. Tony and I introduced ourselves, and many already knew Tony from his days as the union's Assistant General Secretary. It was pleasing to see such a good mix of new and old members, as well as their ladies.

Proceedings opened with a fine three-course meal, and we'd like to congratulate the caterers on the quality of food, presentation and service. Once

we were fed and watered, Kelvin invited a guest speaker to address us. This was a local historian who, although never employed on the railway, has a keen interest in it. He spoke about a book he has written on the East Suffolk Line, explaining why he has chosen to document parts of the railway and thereby create a record for posterity.

Kelvin then gave a short speech giving a bantered pedigree of some present, finishing in congratulating one of his members on his retirement and presenting his wife with flowers. He then invited Tony to speak, Tony gave a short update on what drives ASLEF and the Retired Members Section to do what it does for its members. He said our union strives to provide a good living wage and safe working conditions. He also stressed the benefits of time off to rest from the stress of the job, enjoy family life and benefit from the fruits of our labour. He pointed out the efforts ASLEF is making to ensure the continuity of the railway pension.



Reunited in Ipswich. Left to right - Kelvin Higgins, Reg Richardson, Fred Howard, Tom Mole age 90, George Lown and Tony West

Finally Tony spoke about the RMS's work to secure a decent state pension, including our work with the National Pensioner Convention and lobbying politicians. Over the last 100 years the state pension has fallen from 25% of the basic male wage to 15% - and is still falling.

On the back of this contribution, I went on an RMS-recruiting spree while Tony tried to sell the last of the prize draw tickets. It was a pleasure to see so many retired members living to a good age and enjoying life, and I'd like to thank all those present for making our visit such a pleasant occasion.

Peter Smith - Reporter - RMS

SPEECHES AND BADGES AT THE SPA

LEAMINGTON SPA Branch held its latest meeting and AGM on Sunday 7 December. We were very pleased to be joined by Dave Calfe, the EC Member for District 6, who was making his second visit to us this year. Also joining us were representatives from our branch's 35-strong Retired Members' Section. Vic Waite, Roy Woodward and Harry Checketts reported on their activities over the last year.

Dave spoke prior to the normal Branch activities, concentrating on the following national issues: discussions relating to the Railway Pensions Scheme and contribution levels, legal proceedings involving a former GS, industrial action on CrossCountry trains and the resulting harmonisation talks, reciprocal travel arrangements for non-safeguarded staff between TOC's, and pay deal discussions and negotiations regarding non-duty day working.

Health & Safety rep Steve Day thanked all members of staff who had purchased the 'Leamington Traincrew Depot' badges that were recently produced by him for us. He especially wanted to

thank RMT Branch Chairman Colin Gaskins, who produced the original design and also helped with the distribution of the badges and collection of the money. All 100 badges were sold, with a total of £95 being donated to the Railway Children Charity. Steve has received a letter of thanks from them

which is available for all to see. Both Steve and Colin thank everyone for their generosity and support.

We'd also like to thank Dave Calfe for his latest visit to us, and welcome him to further meetings in the future.

Nick Walker - Reporter - Leamington Spa Branch



Dave Calfe with members of the Leamington Spa branch



YOU TELL US

These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB or by email to journal@aslef.org.uk Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can.

This month we continue our STAR LETTER feature. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

RESPECT TO YOU, ROB

I would just like to thank Rob Porter for his frank but true account of what happened to him at work which you printed in our ASLEF journal in January 2009.

I was unfortunate enough to have a fatality in June last year and so many points Rob mentioned were identical as in my case. Well done for printing a true reflection of what CAN happen to ANY of us at ANY time.

Greatest respect
Gary Arrowsmith - Driver - Newcastle

PAUL'S CASE HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO CONTACT REPS

The December Journal published a letter from Brighton Representative, Paul Overington.

The letter effectively covered two issues, sleep deprivation and hardship moves.

Paul also wrote about the sad circumstances surrounding Luke Veness. Unfortunately, no

FATALITY INCIDENT LINKED TO HEART PROBLEM ★

I HAVE very deep respect for Rob Porter for the article he wrote in the January edition of the Journal. I know just what he went through in June 2003 – because I too have been there. Although it was many years ago, I still often wake with it on my mind.

I was a driver at Tonbridge from my appointment in 1959. I was taking the empty sandite unit from Tonbridge to Ashford Chart Leacon Depot and I was approaching Pluckley the fitter/operator came through and requested that I booked the unit riding rough.

I told him to put it in the repair book as it would carry more weight coming from him. This is what he did. As he replaced the log book I looked in front of me and said, 'Oh my God' and let go of the deadman's handle. This has the effect of locking the wheels.

About 20 to 30 yards in front of us we both saw a man sitting on the track. He waved. Then he lay his head across the rail.

As Brother Rob said, the sound of the train hitting him is still with me to this day. Our efforts to stop a train going the other way met with failure, but when it reached Charing Cross they found the deceased's shirt tangled around one of the collector shoes.

I thought I was able to get over it as at the time I was a member of St John's Ambulance which had made me accustomed to the sight of blood. I thought it wouldn't affect me. I thought wrong.

This all took place in January of 1962. I was able to carry on for a while as I was also a relief train crew supervisor and a safety advisor to schools. This was a big help as it kept me off the track for a while. But then I was told I must attend the Coroner's Court at Ashford. I was supported by an ASLEF rep, a driver at Orpington.

The first thing that hit me was the deceased relatives sitting there, glaring at me. After hearing the evidence from the fitter and myself, the Coroner asked why I hadn't stopped quicker. My rep jumped in. 'Excuse me, doctor,' he said. 'A train travelling at 75 mph is just impossible to stop in much under a quarter of a mile on dry rails. It's not like a wheel-barrow that stops as soon as you let go of the handles. This driver did very well to stop as quickly as he did.'

The doctor asked whether the weight and speed had caused this. 'Yes,' was the reply. The doctor then gave his verdict, which was possible suicide.

On 17 December 1962 I suffered a heart attack. Both my own doctor and those at Tunbridge Wells Hospital were of the same opinion. They believed that the incident on the line had been the prime cause of my heart attack. I was put onto the sick list and eventually told over the phone that I was leaving railway service due to ill-health.

Still, after all these years, I still sometimes wake up having gone through it again in my sleep. Unfortunately unlike Brother Rob I wasn't given the chance to carry on. I feel for him. It is not a nice thing to have to live with for the rest of one's life.

G R HOWIS – Retired – Kent

senior representative had been made aware of Luke's situation and therefore we think the criticism of ASLEF is misplaced. We would welcome Paul contacting one of us, so we can understand what support and advice Paul gave Luke. Local Representatives are in regular contact with drivers and this is crucial in the support ASLEF can provide. We like to believe our representatives will guide members to the people who can offer assistance to them for any situation they may find themselves in.

Members should feel they can contact any union representative when they may need advice and support.

Our condolences and thoughts go out to Luke's

family at this sad time.

Graham Morris (District Organiser) Simon Weller (EC member) and the Southern Company Council.

FATIGUE IS A REAL PROBLEM

Having read the article by Paul Overington 'Sleep walking to tragedy' in the December 2008 issue of the Journal, I thought I would write in support of his views concerning fatigue and sleep deprivation as a serious problem for drivers network-wide.

I am a driver with over 16 years seniority and I have an unblemished record. In November 2007 I too was suffering from sleep deprivation and feeling

suicidal. I visited my local GP and was diagnosed as having severe anxiety. In my case when I approached the management and union I got the help I needed. The union on my behalf approached the company and rearranged my shift patterns. Counselling, which is still ongoing, was arranged to aide my recovery.

I agree that this is a serious issue and, as Paul Overington states, it needs to be higher on the agenda of concerns for the union and train operating companies to work together on addressing.

I wish to add my heartfelt condolences for the family of bro Luke Veness and sincerely hope that tragedies like his can be stopped from occurring in the future.

I would appreciate it if you could withhold my personal details.

ASLEF member

END OF THE LINE FOR MIKE

I'm writing to offer my thanks to Bro Nigel Roebuck of Rotherham branch for his assistance during my recent retirement from EWS.

Nigel kept me fully informed of the situation regarding my future employment prospects during the nine months I was off sick. He attended the offices of the solicitors when I had to sign legal documents to terminate my employment. Without his help, the process of retirement would have been fraught with ignorance on my part and I am sure mistakes would have been made. Nigel also acted as a go-between as EWS seemed slow to make the decision to retire me, especially as there were redundant drivers at Cornforth due to a depot closure.

I've enjoyed almost all of the 46 years that I have served both as man and boy – and I'm sorry to leave. Indeed that was not my decision. It was made by the company's medical officer. My official retirement was 8 November last year. During my railway career I have enjoyed and relished my involvement as an ASLEF rep at a variety of levels. The pinnacle was my time as a Company Council rep, which began with Transrail, then EWS. It was during this period that restructuring took place, and the base built upon which our present conditions were created. Like it or not, the way was found to raise our standard of living. Our rates of pay gradually made ours a better-paid rather than poorly-paid profession – even if the hours we did were still long, especially in the freight sector.

My worse experience was the closure of Ellesmere Port. It could be said that this was a success from a union point of view, as no one lost their job. The regret lay in the extra miles people were forced to travel to and from the new Warrington depot.

I wish you all well for the future as I sail off into history, soon to be forgotten.

Mike Peebles - Derbyshire

THANKS TO BROTHER JOHN

I feel that I must say a big 'thank you' to Bro John Swain (industrial relations rep) at Edgware Road depot.

During a recent ongoing (now resolved) case to do with ill-health retirement, he was always helpful, keen and interested in my case. He took the trouble to phone me on a regular basis, and found things out for me when I needed to know. I would say to those who snub the union (ASLEF) you never know when you will need them - and when you do need help, it is extremely forthcoming. John did a good job and deserves this praise. He attended every meeting when I needed him to do so, and was very knowledgeable.

Thanks mate !!

Mick Moloney - Ex-driver - Edgware Road

THANKS FROM BRIAN

I WOULD like to thank both the other two candidates who took part in the election for the vacant post of EC member for District 7 for the way they conducted themselves while the ballot was in progress. I am also grateful to all those branches and individuals who supported me in the election and have continued to do so. Thanks also to the many members who have contacted me with messages of support and congratulations. I hope to see you all in the future. I would also like to place on record my gratitude for the excellent work carried out on the EC by my predecessor Bryan Davies.

And by the way, the suit is still in fashion ...!!

Brian Corbett EC member - District 7

EWS REDUNDANCIES – WHAT HAPPENED?

Redundancies at EWS are inevitable, again. The letters have arrived on the door-mats.



GS Keith Norman makes a presentation to Mick at Arkwright Road

MICK WILLIAMS IS HONOURRED AFTER 46 YEARS SERVICE

HAVING just left the railway after taking early retirement with over 46 years' service, I would like, through the Journal, to record my thanks and appreciation. Firstly to ASLEF and its full-time officers, executive committee and head office staff. Also to all the drivers I have represented over the years. There are numerous names that I would like to list but space doesn't allow. However some I feel I must mention.

I was first elected to Cross Country Council in 1996. The council at that time was made up of four members, Mark Fitchell, Jeff Towner, and the late Carl Dutton - all first class representatives.

At a later date some of the afore-mentioned representatives were replaced by Mike Maddock, Bill Hartford and Mark Friend, who were again first class representatives. In the year 2000 the Cross Country Council joined with the West Coast Company Council. We worked together to improve rates of pay and more importantly working conditions.

My thanks go to past and present members of West Coast Company Council for their friendship.

I also wish to thank all the local reps that I had the pleasure to work alongside for their support and friendship. The depots I feel I have to name are Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, and Derby – all depots that I was allocated to represent. I wish all train drivers well for the future.

Mick Williams – Nottingham

Change of address form

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone.....

Branch.....

Membership No.....

Employer.....

I'd like to know what happened to the 'triangle' between EWS, ASLEF and Scotrail.

Scotrail have just recruited 4 people from 'off the street' and Ayr EWS depot has known of seven drivers at risk for a few weeks.

And why was rest day working at EWS not removed with immediate effect? Notices have been posted on local boards about 'drivers at risk' since the news, and rest day working, which keeps drivers numbers down, was not rescinded company-wide. This is disgraceful.

While ASLEF still has the bargaining tool that is rest day working, may I suggest that they include retention of seniority within the footplate line of promotion at ALL TOC's/FOC's. If suitability is allowed to crawl in under the door, ASLEF can expect a fall in membership. Any driver who has had health issues, a SPAD or been disciplined for speeding will soon withdraw

their funding. What would be the point if they are going to be at the bottom of the pile when tough times call upon their company?

At these difficult times, I believe almost instant communication between drivers and head office is essential. The same goes for letters for inclusion to the Locomotive Journal. Why be a month behind with bad news? And please don't say all communication should be via LDC or Company Council.

I personally believe we are all responsible for informing the ASLEF family of what our individual companies are up to at any given time.

Here's hoping,
Eric Dalton - EWS Driver –
presently – Ayr

TOC PRIVILEGE NOT WORTH THE PRINTING

I READ with interest about the union's campaign on staff travel boxes. I feel there is discrimi-

nation between drivers who are safeguarded and the majority who are not.

In these times of government wanting us to use the trains to save us using our cars due to rising petrol costs, isn't it about time non-safeguarded drivers are given staff boxes (maybe after ten years in the grade)? This would be like non-safeguarded staff getting travel in other countries free but not in our own. Why should you lose your staff travel facilities when you retire even though

you may have done 25 years service if you joined after 1 April 1996.

Remember your TOC privilege travel card is not worth the paper it's printed on for long-distance travel. Where is the privilege of paying more IE £55 Euston to Manchester private and the public paying £25 for the same journey. I would like to hear other views and read union updates in the Journal. Fraternally

Ian M. A. Fish – Retired
Members



Paramedic Becky Tinsley with Jay Smith. Behind are Zoe Clark and members of ASLEF's Wolverhampton Branch

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7317 8600 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk



SALISBURY BADGES A special numbered production limited to 500 badges celebrating Salisbury Depot featuring five locos fanning out in front of Salisbury Cathedral. The badges are available for £5 each plus a fixed £2 postage and packaging for up to every four badges purchased. Please make cheques payable to 'ASLEF Salisbury Branch Funds' and send to Mr J. Morris, 38 India Avenue, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP2 7HF.



LONGSIGHT BRANCH has produced a Commemorative Badge Limited to 500 Numbered Copies. They are available for £5.00 plus £1 p&p from the Branch Secretary Fred Clarke at 80 Brookfield Avenue, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 1JE. Please make cheques payable to F.Clarke.

SLOVAKIA HOLIDAYS - Alpine Chalet located in the heart of the High Tatra mountains, sleeping 9. There is something for everyone whether it's walking, skiing, golf, spas or just relaxing. Fully renovated. 10% Discount to staff, quote ASLEF. Check out the web site at WWW.SLOVAKIACHALET.COM

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DIESEL HYDRAULIC ITEMS wanted by collector. Anything considered, especially speedos, power handles etc. Rob 01822 834 150

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GARRY 'GAZ' CLARK APPEAL

ON 6 November a delegation from the Wolverhampton Branch, along with Zoe Clark, visited the County Air Ambulance based at RAF Cosford to hand over a cheque for £2,387.50p in memory of Garry Clark who tragically passed away in April this year. The money had been raised by a church collection at the funeral, local fundraising (swear boxes and football cards) and a national ASLEF appeal.

We were met by representatives of the County Air Ambulance who took time to show us around the helicopter and base facilities. They explained that the charity receives no government funding and exists solely on public donations. It costs around £5.6 million a year to run the charity. For more information visit www.countyairambulance.com

Also we would like to let colleagues in the Midlands know that we raised £3,304 for Garry's three children (Aaron, Isobelle and Dan). The money has been placed into trust funds.

On behalf of the branch and the Clark family I would like to thank all those who contributed, especially all the branches who donated to the national appeal and the local collectors including Beryl Jones and Karen Bannister from the RMT.

NIGEL HARKNESS – Secretary – Wolverhampton Branch

ASLEF'S legal services – your rights for their wrongs!

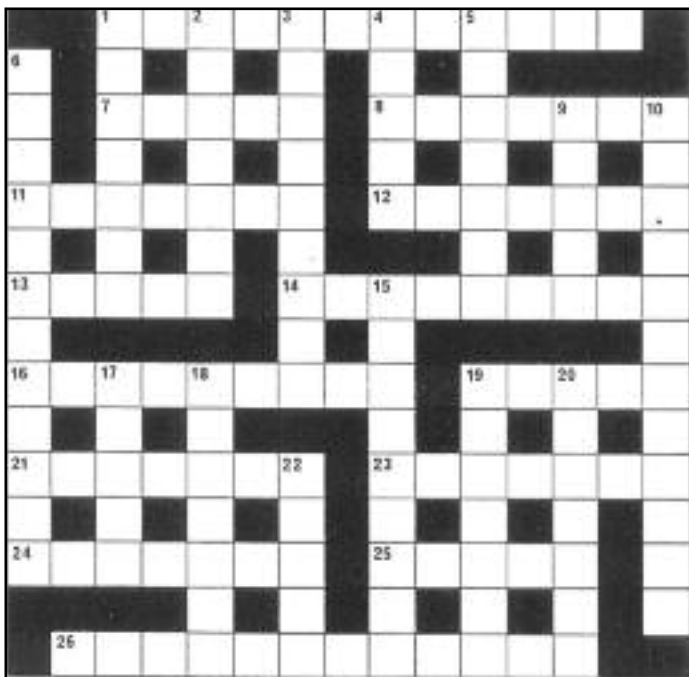
FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. In the first six months of this year we have secured £1,442,369 in compensation claims! Call the helpline on 0808 100 8009

EMERGENCIES If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' Emergency Hotline on 0800 587 7530.

SACKINGS OR OTHER PROBLEMS AT WORK Harassment, discrimination or bullying? If your local, branch or district representative is unavailable, call the Industrial Relations department at union headquarters (020 7317 8600) or email info@aslef.org.uk



Prize Crossword No. 34 set by TLC



Solution to Crossword No 33 which appeared in the January edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Tim Reeves** from **Epsom**.

ACROSS 1 Dining car 8 Cape Canaveral 11 Odds 12 Civic 13 Flea 16 Ninepin, 17 Release 18 Soldier 20 Baby sit 21 Oboe 22 Gypsy 23 Eden 26 Annual Meeting 27 Very Cheap **DOWN** 2 Idea 3 Iranian 4 Glacier 5 Alec 6 Cardinal Point 7 Railway Siding 9 Going Slow 10 Palestine 14 Spain 15 Alibi 19 Royalty 20 Beseech 24 Tube 25 Etna

Thanks for all your responses to the 33rd ASLEF crossword in the January edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the 14th of the issue month.

ACROSS

- 1 Bond Street, Piccadilly, and King's Cross for instance (4,8)
- 7 Civilian dress worn by a person entitled to wear a uniform (5)
- 8 'As well as', in addition to (7)
- 11 Station staff who assist with luggage (7)
- 12 Drink favoured by James Bond (7)
- 13 Payments made by tenants to their landlords (5)
- 14 Hinged flaps for reducing the speed of an aircraft (9)
- 16 Those who hold religious services (7)
- 19 Paris Underground (5)
- 21 Team game usually played by schoolgirls (7)
- 23 Where Lonnie Donegan left his chewing-gum overnight (3-4)
- 24 One who doubts the truth of a statement (7)
- 25 Trains run on them (5)
- 26 Station on the Central Line (8,4)

DOWN

- 1 Small South American primate (7)
- 2 Station cafés (7)
- 3 '— — — —' and Bristol fashion' (4-5)
- 4 Place to keep the family photographs (5)
- 5 One who pays compensation for loss or damage (7)
- 6 Divisions of a railway carriage (12)
- 9 Liquid refreshment (5)
- 10 Tube station on the Metropolitan Line (5,7)
- 15 Soft fruit (9)
- 17 — — — — Dame, French Cathedral (5)
- 18 Showing indifference to comfort or luxury (7)
- 19 Fortified Portuguese wine (7)
- 20 1982 Film starring Dustin Hoffman (7)
- 22 Money, wealth (5)



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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