ANNUAL CONFERENCE: views from the branches in Swansea

FREIGHT: a suitable case for treatment – and investment
children’s saver plan

save for your child’s future for less than the cost of a bag of sweets...
tax free policies from 71p per day

for further information call us on freephone 0800 328 9140
visit our website at www.enginemens.co.uk
or write to us at Railway Enginemen’s Assurance Society Limited,
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE
When we work together, we win

In this edition you will read the president’s view that the union doesn’t trumpet its achievements as we should. It’s an opinion I heartily endorse.

The fact is that members expect ASLEF to do well, so no one says anything when we do. To some extent this is only fair. It’s the same with passengers. If their train arrives on time, no one says a word: it’s what they’ve paid for. You only get a reaction if it’s late.

Similarly when the union does its job – as it has been doing in the Squash campaign – it’s greeted with silence. We really ought to be aware, and proud, of the things we achieve together. It gives us encouragement and confidence.

Our achievements in the cab conditions campaign have not been dramatic. Rather, it has been a case of gradual but relentless progress. But we have, since Squash began in March 2007, radically altered working conditions for the vast majority of our members. That is something to be proud of.

The union worked at every level to bring the issue of cab conditions to the top of the agenda. It was raised by national negotiators. It was pursued by local reps and health and safety reps. Ordinary members posted Squash stickers in cabs, reported poor conditions to management and sent us hundreds of photographs of appalling cabs. We lobbied MPs and even went out on the streets on International Safety Day to publicise the issue.

And when ASLEF members work together, the union prevails. This month alone, South West Trains agreed to equip all its units with air conditioning and First Capital Connect has agreed to invest in improvements to desks, switches, seating and windscreen wiper.

Yet we should remember that if we had not prioritised the issue of cab conditions, nothing would not have happened. We worked together, and made a difference.

It’s trumpet time!

Keith Norman
General Secretary
Government proposes £683 million transport cuts

The coalition government has announced that the budget of the Department for Transport (DfT) will be cut by £683 million in the coming year. ASLEF’s general secretary Keith Norman said it was a ‘quite incredible’ proposal when only the previous week the government had declared that ‘a modern transport infrastructure is essential for a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life’.

‘This is a blatant example of the government facing in two directions at the same time,’ Keith said. ‘It is more ‘con public’ than Con-Lib.’

Although details of the government intentions have not been revealed, it appears that the promised new £1 billion rolling stock for Thameslink is under threat. A total of £638 million will be taken from Passenger Transport Executives and other local transport schemes. Rolling stock being procured under the High Level Output Specification is now uncertain.

The Department has said ‘planned spend’ on new trains in the coming year for which contracts have not already been signed will be dropped.

Transport for London, already almost at crisis point, will lose £108 million, Network Rail stands to lose £100 million.

‘This is not cutting waste’, said Keith Norman. ‘It is undermining the rail network. ASLEF will make our opposition to these plans very plain to Philip Hammond, the new Secretary of State for Transport.’

Compensation after fatal crossing collision

ASLEF member David Jarrad, 56, from Hull can no longer travel on trains after suffering a nervous breakdown after a fatal collision on a railway crossing. David has previously endured two suicides under his train. The final straw came in June 2005 when his train hit a car sitting on a crossing between Thorne and Goole.

ASLEF instructed its lawyers, Thompsons Solicitors, to pursue a claim for compensation against the insurers of the car driver and the case went to trial. The judge agreed that the driver had caused the accident and Mr Jarrad has been paid compensation. He said, ‘I’ve now retrained as a care assistant but I’ve had to give up a job I really loved and taken a large pay cut in the process.’

Keith Norman wished David well and added: ‘This case shows the impact fatal collisions can have on train drivers who are left dealing with the fall-out long after the crash has been cleared up. Train drivers are always the unacknowledged victims of these incidents.’
SLEF has much to be proud of, said EC president Alan Donnelly in his address to the union’s annual conference (AAD): but we don’t trumpet our successes in the way we should. If there is one thing we are bad at it is selling ourselves, especially to the most important people – ASLEF members.

Alan began by extending the good wishes of all the conference to general secretary Keith Norman who was not able to attend the AAD because of imminent heart surgery. Keith had done much to strengthen the union and under his leadership for the first time in decades the union’s financial position was secure. ‘Keith wanted to come to this conference because leading a well financed union in Wales where he was born was to be the highlight of his career. We are all deeply sorry that that has not come to pass.’

Alan said that although there had been many changes over the previous year, much remained the same. ‘A year ago we had a crisis in freight. We still have. We had company councils and officers striving to save jobs and conditions. We still have.’

He stressed the importance of the debate about the structure of the union. ‘Transparency is the objective. We have made many improvements but the job is not done. It never will be done. We need to constantly review how our union works.’

CONFIDENCE IN REPS
Alan stressed the need for confidence in elected representatives – an area where ASLEF representatives were streets ahead of politicians. ‘Many people have got into power and instantly forgotten where they came from.’ This needed to change, he said. But he was also critical of the notion that political parties were ‘one man bands.’ Much of the recent General Election had consisted of the character assassination of Gordon Brown, as if he were the Labour Party, rather than its members and policies. ‘The election was more like the X Factor, more showmanship than political debate.’

‘The expenses scandal had showed something desperately bad in our system. We need more trust.’

Alan was naturally concerned about the election result. ‘The last time the Tories were elected it was on a slogan that ‘Britain isn’t working’ because one million people were unemployed. A couple of years later there were three million out of work. That is what we have to worry about. That – and the fact that Labour’s minimum wage could become the coalition government’s maximum wage.’

The president said the coalition showed that while the Lib Dems talked about concern for working people, ‘What they really want is to share the table with the capitalists.’ Labour, he said, needs to regroup and re-energise itself.

PRIDE IN THE UNION
Without wanting to be complacent, Alan said ASLEF can be proud of its achievement in resisting reductions in income and compulsory redundancies and said the heat had – temporarily at least – been taken out of poor relationships with the TUC. ‘When our recognition at Croydon trams was challenged by its largest affiliate, we proved that, despite our size, we are a powerful trade that won’t be bullied by anybody.’

Alan was proud of the growth of the union’s education programme and the success of the National Forum which was attended by ordinary members playing a part in a transparent and open union.

‘We now have long term strategies to safeguard our finances,’ Alan said as he reported that the union’s head office had been sold. ‘We are looking for a more suitable building that is less costly to maintain,’ he said. He argued that internal communications had improved. ‘It is there if you want to access it,’ he said. ‘But you can’t force people to receive it.’

The president paid tribute to ‘the most important people in this union’ – our local representatives. ‘They face all kinds of problems every day - and deal with them,’ he said.

‘We have much to celebrate and much to sell about our union,’ he concluded, in all areas including its equalities work which was often more recognised outside the union than within. ‘There has been talk of our media profile being lower than other transport unions,’ he declared. ‘But we are not interested in appearing on TV shows and comedy programmes. The ASLEF general secretary attended two meetings at Downing Street last year. Which would our members prefer?’

Let’s take pride in our union, says president
Labouring on in union

THE ASLEF conference rejected a call to disaffiliate from the Labour Party although the Shrewsbury branch favoured support for a new ‘workers’ party.

Andy Botham from Derby argued it was the wrong time to get out of the Labour Party ‘at the very moment that we have the opportunity to affect them’. And even at the very worse said Paul Keenan of Newcastle, ‘better the devil you know than live in the wilderness.’

Acting general secretary Simon Weller told the conference we needed to say to Labour, ‘We want you to start delivering on what we want and on the policies we have democratically agreed. It’s up to us to define what we want - and to insist that they implement it.’ He regretted that one aspect of disillusion in the party had led to a decline in the high level of political involvement for which the union was noted, and resolved to increase political education to remedy this position.

Shaun Seymour (Feltham Electric) argued, however, that, ‘The problem is that the Labour Party we all want doesn’t exist’ while Hull delegate Gary Wareing said, ‘New Labour has failed and it has demoralised Labour members: ‘We are not in the party to implement capitalism in a nicer way than the Tories,’ he declared.

President Alan Donnelly drew a parallel with ASLEF members who, when their union was low, stayed in and turned it round. ‘If we can do it in our union, we can do it in our political party.’

The union’s Shrewsbury branch had called for support for the ‘Campaign for a New Workers Party’. Alan Griffiths said Labour planned to be a party of business and seemed to be ashamed to be a party of workers. ‘My branch will not forget Mandelson accusing the postal union of ‘scare tactics’ for defending a public service, nor Labour ministers queuing up to condemn striking BA workers.’ He said that more students ended up in debt as a result of a Labour government elected on a pledge of ‘education, education, education’ and it had failed to support public railways - even though it was popular with the electorate.

JOINING THE PARTY

Last year Lincoln branch affiliated to the local constituency party and driver Richard Doran decided it was about time he joined as well. When he heard nothing from his local branch at Gainsborough, he went along to a meeting to complain.

‘I turned up to have a bit of a moan,’ he said. ‘I came out as a candidate in the local election and the agent for the constituency!’ Both tasks were rather akin to Mission Impossible. The constituency has been Tory since 1924 and the council seat Richard challenged for had been held by the same Lib Dem for the previous 23 years.

‘I knew we had no chance but I saw it as an opportunity at least to show some Labour presence in the community, so I spent my rest days passing out leaflets.’

In fact, Richard didn’t do too badly, ending up second in his election with over 600 votes to the winner’s thousand.

‘I was too tired to be disappointed!’

COLLECTION FOR LUCY

Lucy Wiemers, whose dad is a driver in Swansea, suffers from terminal leukaemia. When the ASLEF conference delegates heard of her plight they dug deeply into their pockets and raised £800 to show their concern and to bring some light into her life. The union agreed to top this sum up to £1,500.

UNION SENDS SOLIDARITY TO BA CABIN CREWS

The conference sent a message of solidarity and support to BA cabin crew staff, members of the Unite union, who were facing a ‘reactionary and bullying’ management in their current dispute.
Protecting freight in the recession

The union is taking a number of initiatives to protect employment for all freight drivers in an ‘unprecedented’ crisis in the sector. This will include:

- a close examination of all rest day working
- the union to enter pay talks seeking as a priority the securing of a clean four day week
- ensuring pay talks seeking a four day week as a priority, including 156 rest days a year
- seeking a commitment from all TOCs that they will recruit drivers initially from within the driving grade, and wherever possible within freight
- continuing to campaign for moving more freight on rail and the development of a dedicated freight line from Glasgow to the Channel Tunnel.

Franchise bid strengthens public rail call

A lively debate at the union’s annual conference concluded with a reaffirmation of the existing policy of calling for the re-nationalisation of the railways – but it also recognised that the East Coast franchise bid had a part to play in that aim. The bid will be a publicity exercise to expose corrupt franchises – and there will be tight control over money spent on it.

Acting general secretary Simon Weller explained that the bid was an attempt to inform and define a debate that is wider than railway. ‘It is about how we run public services as a whole. Surely we don’t oppose workers’ control of public services?’

Simon said the union would spend very little on the campaign – but argued that we need to define exactly what we meant by ‘re-nationalisation’.

‘Do you remember BR? It was an under-funded state capitalist enterprise that managed the decline of the railways. This exercise is about exposing a corrupt franchising system and opening a wider political discussion. We want to expose the cartel system of rail franchises.’

Delegates including Tony Cashman (West Brompton) wanted the bid ended because he said union members want subsidised nationalised railways - and making a franchise bid is against policy. He also said the idea had not been put to a conference, nor had the membership been consulted. Shaun Seymour from Feltham also argued the bid was a change in policy away from nationalisation. ‘Besides,’ he said, ‘everyone in the country knows franchising fails – we don’t need to spend money to prove it. They know the best cooperative is a nationalised railway.’

Concerns were expressed that the media would attack this initiative and there were discussions around franchising models, but by a narrow margin endorsement was given to the executive’s position. Tosh McDonald said it was a new idea and ‘there is nothing as painful as the birth of a new idea.’
ASLEF Travel Club

North Cyprus – the Med’s secret Gem
Discover the picturesque harbour town of Kyrenia surrounded by impressive scenic beauty, unspoilt beaches, ancient sites & Crusader Castles.

WINTER SPECIALS
PIA BELLA HOTEL 4* B&B from £ 455 pp
A stroll from the harbour excellent service, close to many shops & restaurants
FREE UPGRADE TO SUPERIOR ROOMS FOR ALL OUR CLIENTS

BRITISH HOTEL 2* B&B from £ 429 pp
Family-run, situated in an enviable position overlooking the horseshoe shaped harbour

Ask us for more deals to North Cyprus – local airport departures available.
www.asleftourism.com/membersite
To book please contact ASLEF Travel Club on 01789 261112

Aslef Travel Club
Packwood House Guild St
Stratford upon Avon
Warwickshire CV37 6RP

ASLEF LGBT
T-Shirts
ON SALE NOW!

Navy blue polo shirts with the embroidered ASLEF/LGBT logo on the front and ‘Pride in our union ASLEF LGBT’ printed on the back.

T-shirts cost £9.50 which includes postage & packing. Cheques should be made payable to ‘ASLEF’ and sent to 9 Arkwright Road, Hampstead, London, NW3 6AB.

For more information speak to your LGBT District Rep or contact Head Office on 020 7317 8600

The King’s Head
www.kingsheadgower.co.uk
Visit Gower, Wales
Area of natural outstanding beauty

Stay in a quality 4 star Inn with fantastic rooms & sea views (dog friendly).
Come and play on the best courses in Wales and sample the scenic views of Gower at the same time.

info@kingsheadgower.co.uk
01792 386212
Rail pensions secure – for the moment

DAVE TYSON, a former ASLEF president and now Trustee Director of the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS), told this year’s annual conference that last year’s world financial crisis led to the value of the RPS falling from £19 billion to somewhere in the region of £14 billion at the height of the crisis. However by the start of this year it has risen again to around £17.5 billion.

At the end of 2009 it had a value of £16.3 billion, made up of
- £1.2 billion in property and
- £1.9 billion in private equity.

Dave explained that the job of the trustees under the stewardship of the Trustee Investment Committee, the staff at RailPen and the investment managers, was to deliver returns so that pensions could be paid. They invest with over 40 investment managers, the biggest being Black Rock who hold just under £3 billion.

He said he had recently been at a monitoring meeting where one manager said he would only invest in sound companies like Nestle or British American Tobacco. ‘His view of the world was that the cheaper a product could be produced and profit maximised, then all was well and good. I thought, “if it’s as easy as that, why are we paying these firms?”

‘In fact if we had a person in-house doing the work and delivering large returns, they would quickly be enticed away by a big investment firm. We pay investment managers for their specialist knowledge.’

Personally Dave has a moral issue with investment with a tobacco firm, but he explained that he has to do what is best to maintain and grow the fund. The trustees do have investment principles that take account of environmental and ethical issues and it is being constantly revised.

STILL CHALLENGES TO FACE

Although it was good news that the scheme is “clawing its way back” to its previous value, serious difficulties remain. One factor is that we are living longer.

Currently we have a membership of 339,000, of whom 86,000 are active members, 108,000 deferred members and 144,000 are pensioners.

The RPS is unusual in that it is an industry-wide scheme with 100 sections and over 200 sponsoring employers so each section has to be measured individually as well as establishing how strong each employer is. This is known as the Covenant Assessment. If an employer fails (like East Coast) the government steps in as the employer for a period.

Dave also spoke about the ‘great idea’ of the Pension Protection Fund. Every UK scheme pays a levy to the PPF which then takes schemes into the fund, along with their assets, if the employer becomes insolvent.

Pensions continue to be paid and those expecting to do so have 90% of their benefits preserved. ‘However, although I agree with the principle, I fail to understand why TOCs have to pay into a fund they will never use.’

The change of government brought uncertainty – and Dave was disturbed to hear the Prime Minister saying final salary schemes are ‘unaffordable’.

Dave warned that employers will want to reduce benefits and seek longer deficit recovery periods. ‘They may want to provide an alternative to our current pension provision,’ he said, before concluding that he was certain that a strong union like ASLEF ‘will do whatever it takes to protect pensions for ourselves and for future members and pensioners.’

Tony takes the chair

AAD delegates this year gave Tony Venson the responsibility of chairing their conference – and he says they gave him a harder ride than when he first did it in 2005. ‘They know me better now,’ he smiles.

He says, with irony, that a manager recruited him into the union. Tony hadn’t been a driver long when he was reported by a supervisor for an offence of which he was entirely innocent. ‘I felt a huge sense of injustice and vowed that it wouldn’t happen to me again. As I cooled down I also resolved that it wouldn’t happen to anyone else either.’ A union activist was born - and before long Tony was an active member of his branch committee, the Black and Ethnic committee and the Company Council.

He says he gets his work ethic from his dad. ‘He worked permanent nights at Fords in Leamington for 31 years to make sure my brother and four sisters had as much as anyone else.’

His brothers and sisters still live in Tony’s home town of Coventry but he is now based in Rugby where he’s worked for Freightliner Heavy Haul since he became a driver in May 1992.

‘Chairing conference means you’ve got to stay on top of your game for the whole event,’ he says. ‘But it’s an honour and a privilege and I’m proud to have done it for a second time.’
FEELS GOOD TO PAY LESS FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE

✓ Comprehensive cover at affordable premiums
✓ SAVE UP TO 40% on high street prices
✓ Annual Multi Trip insurance from £29.02
✓ Purchase online at www.benefitsinsurance.co.uk
✓ Use code “ASLEF” when purchasing

Benefitsinsurance.co.uk is a trading name of Intermediated Services Ltd which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FRN - 501719)
Franchising: the view of the passenger

Do passengers standing on the platform waiting for a train care about franchises and who runs their train? Anthony Smith, chief executive of the independent passenger watchdog Passenger Focus, gives his organisation’s view …

The passenger rail industry exists to serve passengers. It’s a complex undertaking involving detailed engineering, logistical and retail operations – but without passengers, there is no railway. So it is crucial that passengers’ needs and aspirations are taken into account when letting franchises.

Our research shows more passengers than ever are saying that things are looking pretty good on the railway, but it also reveals areas which need addressing. A major cause of concern is value for money. In Wales, passenger satisfaction with stations is generally lower than the Great Britain average. And in Scotland and across Britain, passengers stress the importance of improving disruption handling.

We believe many of these issues could be addressed in the franchise process. In recent times we have spoken to over 13,000 passengers and fed the results to the Department for Transport and bidders.

So what do passengers want?

- **A PUNCTUAL RAILWAY**
Punctuality is the single biggest driver of overall satisfaction. Conversely, the biggest cause of dissatisfaction is the way the industry manages delays. In simple terms, the best way to improve overall passenger satisfaction is to get the trains to run on time. This has improved but it is time to look again at how punctuality is measured and reported.

- **VALUE FOR MONEY**
The cost of fares is a key part of a passenger’s assessment of whether they feel they are getting value for money. There are some good deals on Advance Purchase fares but tickets for those travelling at short notice or requiring even a small degree of flexibility can be very expensive. It is also clear that many passengers don’t trust or understand the fare structure.

  Some simple measures could be included in a franchise, including offering direct debit schemes for buying annual season tickets and carnet tickets for the regular but more infrequent traveller. Also important to passengers’ judgement of value for money is being able to get a seat and the management of disruption.

- **MORE SEATS AND MORE SERVICES**
  Passengers consistently ask for more later-evening and weekend services. Crowding during peak times is a problem across the network – and all the long-term forecasts show that the railway is only going to get busier.

- **MANAGING DELAYS**
  Weekend travel is too often disrupted by engineering work. We want to see more emphasis on reducing the number of bus replacement services. Passengers who have bought a rail ticket don’t want to travel by bus.

  We also want to see improvements in proving real-time information that keeps passengers informed.

  So how can franchising help address these priorities and concerns? There has been much talk in recent months about the structure of franchising. Passenger Focus welcomes plans to increase the length of franchises.

  We believe increasing the time-frame could potentially result in greater investment by the private sector. It gives train companies an incentive to invest more and attract more passengers to the railway. Longer franchises also allow operators to keep focussed on its services, learn from passengers and build on satisfaction ratings.

  On the other hand, consideration must be given to how performance will be reviewed over such a long period of time and how the franchise can remain flexible and respond to a changing economy, passenger needs and operating environment. It needs a clear and transparent way of monitoring performance. For instance, we would support the National Passenger Survey being used as a tool to measure satisfaction and targets being linked to this as happened at South Central for example. Where a train company consistently fails passengers, they must be compensated.

  In the worse cases, contracts must be terminated.

  Individual passengers don’t much care who runs the railway. They want value for money, sufficient services at times they wish to catch the train and trains that run on time. The crucial thing for them is that an operator is appointed which recognises and acts on passenger priorities.

- **Anthony Smith is the chief executive of Passenger Focus. A qualified solicitor, Anthony worked for five years as principal consumer lawyer for the Consumers’ Association, publishers of Which? and then as the legal consultant for Consumers International. Prior to joining Passenger Focus, Anthony was deputy and acting director of ICSTIS, the regulator of premium rate telephone services.**
The emerging reality is that the new government is highly likely to apply the same policy to rail upgrades - even on rail projects which have in principle been signed off. This means that Network Rail’s agreed funding in this control period could be revisited even though this would involve an interim review and a replay of the Office of Rail Regulation ratification process.

Dramatic announcements of spending cuts are flooding out from government so we at Freight on Rail are keeping a close watch on Transport and Communities and Local Government departments as well as the Treasury. It’s our job to prove that rail freight is beneficial to society and to the economy. We also have to highlight that it only receives limited targeted government interventions which help the industry become more efficient - for example by using longer trains - and gives the industry the confidence to invest longer term.

**PROTECTING EXISTING COMMITMENTS TO THE FREIGHT NETWORK**

The Strategic Rail Freight Network (SRNF) will provide a reliable robust strategic network with diversionary routes to cater for the growth in intermodal rail freight. Thus it will connect national major freight routes, including links to the ports. Crucial schemes which lay the foundation for the network have already in principle been committed between 2009 and 2014 by the previous Labour government - so it is critical that these upgrades take place. If they were cancelled it would be a major blow to the UK building a low carbon economy. It is vital that we protect the £50 million that has already been committed for gauge and limited capacity work on the cross country route from Felixstowe to Nuneaton.

**FUTURE FUNDING**

We also believe that future funding should be prioritised for the Strategic Rail Freight Network from 2014 onwards. This is vital if we are to see the realisation of the full benefits of the Strategic Rail Freight Network - but it is going to be difficult to achieve in the current climate. To be blunt, our best chance of success is for us to prove that rail freight upgrades can reduce the need to fund new roads.

The prime example here is showing that further upgrading the rail infrastructure between Felixstowe and Nuneaton is better value for money and society than upgrading the A14. This is one of the road projects that has been put on hold – and it is now estimated that it will cost £1.3 billion. However the full – and so far unfunded - rail upgrades could cost up to around £250 million.

If this rail route was upgraded it would mean this traffic could bypass London - and release freight capacity for traffic growth from Tilbury and Shelefarn. It would mean that rail could
have up to 40% of the Felixstowe market and remove 40 million lorry miles from the roads annually with between 45-56 daily trains out of the Haven ports.

**DEEP SEA TRAFFIC**
During the recession, rail freight has increased its market share in deep-sea traffic by 12%, despite the fact that imports over the quay decreased by between 10-20% last year. These figures bear out the Rail Freight Group/Freight Transport Association forecasts (which are supported by DfT and Network Rail) that indicate that by 2030 rail freight volumes will have more than doubled with intermodal (container) traffic growing five-fold by 2030.

**NEW INTERNATIONAL RAIL FLOW**
DB Schenker has launched a weekly rail freight service between the UK and Italy. The route goes via the Channel Tunnel which travels between the Hams Hall freight terminal near Birmingham and Padova. This builds on the company’s twice-weekly service between the Midlands and Milan. The new 42-hour service has been taken up by retailers, food producers and manufacturers not because of any commitment to the environment – but because it offers time saving of at least 24 hours on road transport.

**SAFEGUARDING THE REVENUE GRANTS**
We are also campaigning to safeguard the three year budget for the revenue grants – Mode Shift Revenue Support (or MSRS). These are awarded for actual lorry miles taken off the roads with a resulting reduction in congestion, pollutions and exposure to accidents. They also compensate rail for the lack of a level playing field with road and air freight.

Without these grants, trainloads of rail freight will be forced back onto our congested roads. Additionally, capital grants (Freight Facilities Grants or FFGs) remain important in off-setting the initial start up costs of the transfer to rail.

**RAIL FREIGHT NEEDS TERMINALS/INTERCHANGES TO EXPAND**
It would be wrong to underestimate the far-reaching effects on rail freight that will be caused by the fundamental changes being carried out to the spatial planning system. Rail freight cannot grow without new terminals and the planning system is critical in delivering these facilities.

According to the Coalition Programme for Government, it is intended to retain local and national policies, using National Policy Statements, to define national policy and establish the need for a national infrastructure. However, there is a danger that the proposed ‘decentralisation’ will make it difficult to obtain planning permission for a range of facilities such as small wind farms, incinerators and medium-sized rail freight terminals which have wider economic and environmental advantages but face local opposition and competition from other land use, such as housing. Without incentives it will even be difficult to get planning permission for housing which is normally opposed locally.

Strategic transport decisions need to be made at the right level and it remains to be seen how well allowing local authorities to set up Local Economic Partnerships will work in practice, once regional strategies are abolished. Safeguarding rail routes and land for future use is critical. We will have to constantly remind the government of its manifesto promise to introduce a moratorium on building on any disused rail lines in public ownership because once land beside the railway is relinquished, it is lost to society forever.

**KEEP UP THE PRESSURE**
Please lobby your MPs during these fast-changing times and remind them that the government is legally committed to challenging carbon dioxide emissions reductions which rail freight can help to achieve. Remind them that rail freight is the low-carbon energy-efficient and safer alternative to road which relieves road congestion and helps build the low carbon economy and green jobs.

I urge you to write to your new MPs asking for their commitment to these key policies, stressing that continued opposition to mega trucks is vital if rail freight is to flourish. There is a useful briefing sheet for lobbying MEPs on mega trucks on the Freight on Rail website at www.freightonrail.org.uk
Conference welcomes inspiring guest speakers

The union would like to thank Rhodri Morgan, Edwina Hart and Simon Woolley for addressing ASLEF’s 2010 conference (AAD) in Swansea. Rhodri was Cardiff West’s MP for 14 years and First Minister for Wales and Leader of Welsh Labour from 2000 until last year. Edwina Hart, who has been Wales’ finance and health minister, has been the Welsh Assembly Member for Gower since 1999. Simon Woolley is the director and founder of Operation Black Vote and an Equality and Human Rights Commissioner. This is some of what they told delegates …

RHODRI SAYS COALITIONS CAN WORK - BUT NOT THIS ONE!

RHODRI MORGAN AM began by sending his best wishes – and those of all the Welsh Assembly – to Keith Norman, ASLEF’s general secretary who is awaiting a heart operation. Rhodri hoped Keith’s recovery would mirror his own.

Rhodri said it was appropriate that we were holding our annual conference in Swansea because it was the location of the first passenger railway - from Swansea to Mumbles. Opened in 1707, it pre-dated Stephenson by a century.

He pointed to the strange situation where the two parties in government at Westminster were the two in opposition in Wales. He predicted ‘punch-ups’ between Westminster and the Assembly - especially about rail electrification. ‘The line from Paddington is the last major high speed line in Europe not to be electrified,’ he declared.

Rhodri said the coming months would be a clash between the economics of Keynes – who argued for increased public spending when the private sector failed to inject money, jobs and confidence into the economy – and the monetarists.

He said coalition government could work – but he felt the gap between the Tory and Lib Dem manifestos were so huge he foresaw ‘grave difficulties’ for the government. More important, he stressed, is how Labour moves ahead and renews itself.

Working people should represent working people in Labour’s Hart land

EDWINA HART declared that it was time to challenge the way Labour’s politicians were chosen. ‘We need a balance of gender and race and we need to halt the way the road to Parliament is university, researcher and then MP,’ she said. ‘We need representatives who have experience of life and who understand what really matters to the people in their constituencies.’

She said she hoped the upcoming election of the Labour leader would be about policy rather than personalities. The point is to establish Labour as a centre-left party again, and not to always seek the middle ground,’ she said. ‘We have a moral responsibility to take a socialist vision forward.’

She spoke about her youth when everyone joined a union as a matter of course, and how union membership taught values that were central to being a politician. ‘My experience in unions taught me vital lessons about solidarity, negotiations – and how to sit through endless meetings! That is very valuable if you work in a coalition government, as we have in Wales!’

She concluded by regretting ‘our Labour government had 13 years to change the anti-union laws – and they did nothing.’
FIRST AID FREIGHT
Union representatives have called for first aid kits to be placed in all freight locos because lone working is increasing and yards and terminals are being de-staffed. Concerns were also expressed about noise levels in 66 locos. One driver who complained about excessive heat in the cab was told he could ‘get out and stand in the shade of the train’!

REPT TRAINING
The union is to concentrate on providing in-house, grade and industry training for its representatives rather than the more generalised TUC courses. Efforts will also be made to provide subsidised childcare facilities. ‘Women should not have to choose between family obligations and union activity,’ said Allyson Jones from Women’s Representative Committee.

SIMBID SPEEDS
On safety grounds, the union is to campaign for a maximum line speed of 40 mph when working over Simplified Bi Directional Lines (SIMBID). In the interim period before an agreement is reached, ASLEF will advise all members to adhere to this limit when working trains in the ‘wrong’ direction.

CALL FOR IMPROVED WOMEN REFUGES
The AAD called for the union to work with the union’s Parliamentary group to lobby the government for more funding for Domestic Violence refuges which would enable the construction of specialist units to facilitate women who have older sons. Some women might not welcome near-adult males in their safe haven, but on the other hand it is imperative that women do not feel obliged to stay in an abusive situation if they can’t take their adolescent sons with them.

CONCERN AT SLOW PROGRESS ON TRANSPORT FACILITIES
Keith Martin from Eastleigh pointed out ludicrous arrangements where staff from a single depot could take a day out together and while some would have free travel, others would have to pay considerable sums to go along. This was especially true for non protected members in the freight sector.

A compromise claim was rejected that called for safeguarded staff to be issued with a pass to allow unlimited free travel on all TOCs, and staff employed since privatisation to receive 16 days free travel on all TOCs.

The union is developing a long-term strategy which would involve fabricating a national response from companies. But Simon Weller warned, ‘It does not look likely that this will be achieved by negotiation alone’ while Alan Donnelly pointed out that if there are empty seats, it costs the companies nothing.

The union’s finance manager Tony Yates-Watson retired this month after what Keith Norman called ‘five years of achievement’
Mohammed Latif is a serious, committed and principled man who manages to combine all kinds of activities you wouldn’t expect. He’s a proud Englishman with roots still embedded in his native Malawi, a man who works nights to help support aged relations and a Muslim who spent much of his holidays last summer working in Malawi promoting a Christian charity …

‘o, hello! You’re Mohammed?’
‘Well, no. Not exactly. I am called Mohammed as a mark of respect to the Prophet.’
‘The Prophet? But didn’t you spend last summer working for a Christian charity in Malawi?’
‘Yes. Why should that surprise you so much?’ he asks with a smile. ‘Do you believe the myth about all Muslims being fanatical extremists?’
‘Yes, I am a Moslem but my wife is a Christian. It’s a question of respecting each other’s beliefs. Why should she convert to my religion if I’m not prepared to convert to hers? It’s a personal thing for everyone: our children make their own religious choices. They’re in their 20s now, but when they were small they were Christened and went to a Catholic school - but I introduced them to the mosque as well.
‘That way they can be saved from ignorance, from judging without knowing.’
‘It’s quite heavy stuff for the start of a chat, but Mohammed is a serious and thoughtful man. This driver at Lillebridge was born in Malawi, coming to London early in 1974 with his family when he was 18. He describes Malawi as being ‘like a series of small English villages like Amersham or Chesham, with a hotter, but similar climate – and without a winter’. But Malawi is also one of the poorest countries in the world. Its population have a life expectancy of under 40. Mohammed’s family, who ran a small business, had arrived there from India in the ‘30s.

When he arrived in the UK Mohammed joined the RAF – which worried his mother to distraction. She was so afraid of him being killed or injured that he bought himself out after his training. She wasn’t much happier about his then joining the Territorial Army, but Mohammed felt a sense of social duty to join up.

He’d really intended to study in the UK, but it didn’t happen at that time - although he has since got a series of qualifications, including a degree in Business Management. He’s also something of a sports enthusiast and coaches football, tennis, squash and badminton.

Shortly after leaving the RAF, Mohammed began to don another uniform – that of London Underground. After a period as a guard, he progressed to driving and now works permanent night shifts for Tubelines, driving the engineering trains used for fixing and supplying equipment to build and repair track.

He says his work is ‘almost a military operation’ as materials are delivered to up to 400 people working on a project throughout an entire weekend. ‘Everything needs to arrive in order and in sequence. It is a precise operation. I feel good to be playing a role in it. ’
‘It was my choice to work nights because this allows me to take my share of looking after an uncle and aunt who are in their 80s. The family takes it in turn to see to their needs. The couple are very British – they need their afternoon tea and trips to the library! We look after them so they can stay in their own home where they’ve been for 40 years. It’s what they want and it gives them some independence and dignity.

‘They looked after us when we were little and now we are giving something back.’

‘It’s just a question of giving time, which is
the best thing you can give anybody. It’s the opposite of that horrible phrase, ‘Time is Money.’ No it isn’t: it’s much more valuable than that.’

Mohammed has always maintained links with the country of his birth, even if he is now thoroughly British. ‘I’ve always sent off little parcels to schools or hospitals there,’ he says. ‘I think of what these small gifts would have meant to me if I’d still been in Malawi. I send letters as well, explaining my life in the UK, and

encouraging children to finish their schooling. ‘A few years ago he discovered MACS (the Malawi Association for Christian Support) – the charity that took up most of his holiday last year. One of the major drivers of the organisation was Eileen Eggington, a retired police officer who quickly realised how useful Mohammed’s talents could be to the charity. ‘I know the language - Chichewa – and the roads. I’ve also got Heavy Goods and Public Service driving licences, which I picked up during my 13 years as a soldier in the Territorial Army. I learned parachuting as well, but that hasn’t been quite so useful’

‘Anyway, Eileen persuaded me to go with a party of MACS people to Malawi last summer. At first I couldn’t see how I could do it. I had no funds.

‘But in the end the whole family went - and it cost us something like £15,000! But what we did there in terms of practical aid was enormously beneficial. We oversaw building and eco projects that are funded by the charity as well as doing some physical labour ourselves.

‘The volunteers who came with us offered skills like painting, decorating, plumbing and electrical knowledge, and we also had a doctor and an architect in the party. ‘I suppose it’s not everyone’s idea of a summer holiday – I drove 20,000 km in two weeks and we worked most days, although we did manage to visit the wonderful Liwonde National Park. But it was really a working visit. That’s a better description.’

Mohammed would like other drivers to get involved in the MACS project. ‘We can’t measure how fortunate we are in the UK,’ he says. ‘It would mean so much to sponsor a book or a student – or anything really. MACS says, ‘It would mean so much to sponsor a hospital bed for a year, so with gift aid it is £15 a month. It’s so little in UK – but it can do so much for people in Malawi.’

Details of MACS aims, history, projects, working visits and appeals can all be found at www.malawimacs.org

Almost 1 in 100 women still die in pregnancy and one child in five dies before the age of five, over half being victims of malaria. More than 70% of adult hospital admissions are related to HIV infection.

WE OVERSAW BUILDING AND ECO PROJECTS IN MALAWI AS WELL AS DOING SOME PHYSICAL LABOUR OURSELVES

WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

100 years ago a union organiser agonised about working alongside strike-breaking dockers at Newport, while 50 years ago management techniques at disciplines were incisively examined …

100 YEARS AGO

In the July 1910 Journal, Organising Secretary H. Parfitt reported on the dockers’ dispute at Newport …

“….. All work at the docks was then stopped by the employers, drivers, firemen, guards, shunters and so on all being practically locked out for several days. On the day of the late King’s funeral, a meeting of railwaymen was called, to which Mr. J. Holmes and myself were invited, and both of us attended, as both societies had members working on the Alexandra Dock and Railway, which are within the area of the dispute. The employers were supposed to be anxious to use imported labour as soon as they could get the Newport Corporation to provide adequate protection in the shape of police and military, and arrangements were actually made for 500 police to be brought from other towns for this purpose, besides military.

“Supposing that blackleg dockers took the place of legitimate workers, what attitude should our members take? Do we expect them to go on working with blacklegs and thus assist in defeating the legitimate worker who is a fellow trade unionist?”

50 YEARS AGO

D. K. Pullen in the July 1960 edition, offered this view of management behaviour at a discipline hearing …

“First, you subject the “criminal” and his advocate to ten minutes of the “Silent Treatment” while you go through the motions of reading a file of papers on the desk before you. Out of the corner of your eye you watch the victim as he sits twiddling his hat round and round in his hands, deafened by the crashing silence. You note that the advocate is doing his best to look important as though he’s got all the time in the world.

“Then the fun begins. When the advocate is beginning to get into the swing of things, make an astute interjection. Don’t let him make his case; he might find some weakness in your own if you do! Keep up a flow of interruption. The atmosphere is bound to become a bit strained but if you find your efforts to put the advocate off his stroke are meeting with little success, produce an ace. This consists of making yourself look really important, lowering your voice and remarking as casually as you can that whatever arguments are adduced, you have no intention whatever of reducing the punishment.”

Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott
HAROLD WRIGHT A LONG AND FULL LIFE

HAROLD WRIGHT was born on 16 June 1922 and started his career on the railway in 1942. He moved through the ranks of Fireman and Driver before taking up a Forman’s position. By the time he took early retirement in 1963 to look after his sick wife Dorothy, Harold had worked at Gorton Tank, Manchester and Newton Heath, Dean Lane and Failsworth.

During his half-century of happily married life Harold and Dorothy had four children - Gillian, John, Colin and Raymond. He became father-in-law to Anne, Alex and the late Nancy, these unions making Harold a grand-father to seven and a great-granddad to twenty-four. Unfortunately Dorothy died in 1986.

Harold had many interests and always enjoyed getting out into the countryside with his little dog Kim at his side. Harold died on the 2 April after a long illness. We all celebrate his life, and those of his wife and daughter-in-law Nancy.

(Many thanks to Harold’s son John for providing the information for this obituary)

Peter Smith, Reporter, ASLEF Retired Members’ Section

TOM MAXWELL JEFFS BEM

I AM sorry to tell you that my father, Tom Maxwell Jeffs, passed away on 27 May in Scarborough Hospital aged 90.

He was based at Copley Hill depot in Leeds where he became an ASLEF branch secretary. In 1971 he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to the union.

Later he moved to Low Moor, Bradford, where he worked until he retired.

John Jeffs, son

JOHN ERIC KNOWLES NOTTINGHAM MAN

I AM writing to inform you that my father, Mr John Eric Knowles of Nottingham, sadly passed away at the age of 90. I know he spent many happy years working as a Secretary for ASLEF and made many friends during that time.

Elaine Erica Baum, daughter

JACK PAYNE EARLY 125 DRIVER

IT IS with great sadness that I report the death of Jack Payne on 25 February. He had been ill in hospital for some time. His funeral was held at Westerleigh in Bristol on 10 March.

Jack was one of the first drivers to learn and work the Inter City 125 High Speed Trains on the old Western Region of British Rail. He was also very involved in the Boy Scout Movement and reached high ranking Scout Movement and reached high ranking

(Skip) Mentor status. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to Olive, his wife of 62 years and all his family, friends and workmates in the Bristol Area.

Bernard Kennedy, Secretary, Bristol Branch

DENIS (JOHNNO) JOHNSON HOLBECK TO NEVILLE HILL

DENIS has died aged 70 after a long and distinguished railway career that began at a 15-year-old at Holbeck and ended at Neville Hill where he and I became friends.

Denis, who survived an horrendous accident at Kirkstall, had a no nonsense approach and didn’t suffer fools gladly. He was also a born connoisseur of the great British cup of tea, very rarely having an empty pot.

He will be sorely missed – something reflected by the number of people who attended his funeral.

Denis was truly a great character of the railways and although gone, he will not be forgotten. Our sympathies to his son Carl and grand children Bradley (15) and Faith (11).

Daren Morgan Knottingley Branch (ex Leeds)
Thompsons and ASLEF – dynamic duo!
JUST a wee note to thank Thompsons solicitors for settling my recent claim. I’d recommend them to anyone who has an accident at work.
After my incident I wasn’t sure if it was worthwhile forwarding a claim - yet after a brief phone call my mind was put at ease - and their team went into immediate action.
Special thanks to Mr. C. Holstead from the Newcastle/South Shields branch. He was truly professional and kept me informed at all times. Perfect teamwork from Thompsons and ASLEF!
David Chapman, Driver

Why no men in the garden?
I WRITE with regards to the Women’s Committee meeting on 22 June and the associated garden party which was advertised in the May and June Loco Journals. Whilst appreciating the open meeting is specific to women, I fail to understand why the garden party is not open to all members?
This would be a great opportunity for members to meet the representatives and learn of the valued work they undertake.
To restrict the garden party to women does not bring true equality to the membership. It segregates by default, something that as a union we fight hard against.
This is not a criticism of the Women’s Committee, merely a point I wish to make.
Rob Porter, Gateshead and Newcastle Branch

Help, support, ASLEF
I WISH to place on record my thanks and appreciation to Kevin Lindsay District Organiser for Scotland, along with Ian Smith Company Council Chairman and his colleagues. Also Grant Murchie Perth Branch Secretary for all the help and support I received with regards to my recent clause 8 (c) exceptional circumstances transfer from Perth to Inverness. I would also like to thank ASLEF and Perth branch for the Appreciation Certificate, badge and tankard which I was both proud and humbled to receive. It goes to show once again that ASLEF is more than just a diary.
Peter Pestana, Driver, Inverness

Integrity?
IF Ronnie Biggs, Buster Edwards and the Krays had gone into politics – what position in the coalition would David Cameron have given them? After all, I see

he describes the latest fiddler, David Laws, as ‘honourable and having integrity’!

Ron Kettle, retired driver, Southend

End of an era for Terry O’Connor
AS I leave the industry, I would like to pass on a few words to my ASLEF colleagues.
I started my career in 1966 as a direct recruit guard on the Northern Line at a weekly wage of 224 shillings per week (that’s £11.20 in today’s money). I transferred to the Piccadilly line and achieved promotion to Motorman in 1970. From there went to the Victoria Line and eventually to Lilliebridge as Night Link Driver. I have been an ASLEF member for nearly 44 years. During this time I have acted as Branch Secretary at Wood Green and Seven Sisters and as a SC3 rep for three years from 1977.
I would like to thank Alan Puncheon, my ASLEF rep at Lilliebridge, for his support and steadfastness during my long term sick leave and subsequent early retirement due to ill health.
A special thank you for my retirement certificate and long service membership badge. They will be much treasured.
Terry O’Connor, ex-Lilliebridge

Another side of down under
I’VE seen a few complementary letters in the Journal recently from drivers who have moved to Australia.
The latest mentions the price of lager over there, which is pretty irrelevant to

The General visits the Bishop!
Severe damage to the overheads caused travel problems for guests and members attending the Bishops Stortford Branch Meeting on 11 May. But despite their problems, all were in good spirits.
The tone was set by our unhealthy health and safety rep giving a comprehensive report – despite the fact that he’d just been released from hospital after falling over a 12-inch wall!
Surprisingly our guest speaker, general secretary Keith Norman, steered clear of the general election, preferring to concentrate on the future of ASLEF, reminding members that they are the strength and future of this fine society. He also talked about the sale of Arkwright Road and the search for a suitable base of operations before fielding a range of questions and comments.
Keith finished by presenting long service badges to four of our members. These were Paul Oram (5 years), Francis Pepper (20 years), our EC member Nigel Gibson (20 years) and our health and safety rep John Bone (45 years).

Thanksto Keith Norman, Steve Wright and Alan Edwards for attending – and special thanks to Michaela Hawkes for providing the fine buffet which was enjoyed by all.
Dave Lowe, Bishops Stortford branch
But I do know that my Australian grandchildren are taught in a primary school where rigid, outdated teaching methods are used – and where each class has access to only one computer.

The primary school where my UK grandchildren are taught uses modern and interesting teaching methods and, like many other primary schools here, has a 34 computer suite. I estimate that my Australian grandchildren are about 18 months behind their UK cousins in standards of education.

W. G. Richards, Retired Member
Section, Lancs

Thanks from productive North East

FOLLOWING the successful referendum on Northern Rail East Productivity, the Northern Rail DEC East would like to thank the following people:

- Graham Cox - may your retirement be a long one
- Bev Hickling - for standing in with a weeks notice
- Tosh McDonald - for helping with negotiations
- Colin Smith - for allowing us to get on with it
- Nick Whitehead - for having a cool head when others were losing theirs.

We would also like to thank all Eastern ASLEF LLC Reps for the hospitality shown to DEC East Reps during the Depot visits. Finally we would like to record our gratitude to ASLEF Drivers on the East of Northern Rail for the support and patience they showed during the protracted talks.

DEC East, Rob Porter, Robin Coulthard, Steve Holley and Pauline Cawood

Brighton website memories

I HAVE begun work on a website showing the history of the Brighton Motive Power depots and the creation of ASLEF's Brighton Branch.

It is in some ways a response to the fact that over the years much has been written about the various forms of traction that operated in and around Brighton – but there is very little about the footplate-men who actually worked on them.

If you visit the site I hope you will not only enjoy seeing it develop but perhaps also let us share any relevant pictures you have. The address is www.thebrightonmotivepowerdepots.yola site.com

Paul Edwards, Brighton Branch

Diploma difficulties

I HAVE been trying to procure release to attend the TUC-funded 'Diploma in Occupational Heath and Safety' course at Preston College since December 2009. Despite all manner of argument all my attempts to obtain release have been refused.

It is a course that I believe would be of great benefit not only to my brothers here at Wigan Wallgate, but also to the union as a whole. I have no doubt that if a management grade wanted to attend a similar course, release would be forthcoming with gold stars. While I am passionate about my role as health and safety rep, it does not seem that Northern shares my ideas. They are dictating what knowledge the union's health and safety reps can gain.

You know the old saying that 'a little knowledge goes a long way'? Well, not if Northern Rail can help it!

Keith Garry, Health and Safety rep, Wigan Wallgate

Our DOO decision was right

IN the June Journal, John Metcalf said the EC should hold their heads in shame for backing Driver Only Operations (DOO) on Scotrail services. I would like to give some
background and explanation for our decision to agree the extension of this existing service.

The Scottish government has agreed to fund an extension of the railway between Airdrie and Bathgate on the existing Helensburgh to Airdrie service. This gives a third line between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The proposals include building 15 miles of new track and 4 new stations between Airdrie and Bathgate along with new rolling stock. Trains from Helensburgh to Airdrie currently stop at 21 stations and are worked under DOO. On completion in December this year, these trains will then continue onwards to Bathgate and then eventually through to Edinburgh. Presently trains from Bathgate to Edinburgh stop at 4 stations and are worked by train crew consisting of a driver and conductor.

Should the EC have rejected this extension – especially as the service runs DOO from Helensburgh to Airdrie? Should we have gone down the RMT line and ballotted our members? And remember, DOO operates on 53% of Scotrail trains – and this particular route has been DOO since the early 1990s. So are we now saying that is unsafe? Or are we saying that on arrival at Airdrie, DOO should no longer apply and that a conductor should then work the train forward to Bathgate? I don’t think so.

Personally I would like to go back to having a Driver, Second man and Guard on all trains but again I don’t think that’s going to happen!

This initiative has resulted in a new depot opening at Bathgate for 32 drivers and additionally Scotrail have confirmed that no conductor will be made redundant. In fact there is going to be increased employment with some 120 new jobs being created including ticket examiners, additional maintenance staff, cleaning staff, station staff and shunters.

Hopefully this gives an understanding of why the EC made its decision on this extension. In doing so we have not only safeguarded jobs but increased employment opportunities for our members and outside staff. That is not something I am ashamed of!

Hugh Bradley, Executive Committee Member, District 2

Meticulous preparation, favourable outcome

DURING January of this year I was involved in a serious operational incident whilst carrying out a shunt move within depot limits.

Despite working under the authority of a shunter, and working to his instructions, it was deemed appropriate that I be charged using the discipline procedure for my part in the incident.

At the hearing it was decided that I should receive a ‘severe reprimand’. Obviously this decision would affect my operational integrity and compromise my safety-related profile.

I was represented at my appeal by ASLEF company councillor Nigel Cummins. The very compelling case presented by Nigel resulted in the charge being withdrawn. While Nigel’s humble opinion was that he was ‘merely doing his job’, I would like to use the pages so the Journal to publicly thank him for his meticulous preparation, painstaking attention to detail and extremely thorough approach - all of which resulted in a favourable outcome for myself.

Russell Eaton, Bournemouth driver

Rebranding!

I READ the interesting article in the June Journal about modern Trade Union names. I think that this union needs to update its name to keep in step with the current trade unionism. I suggest ASLEFIA.

Arno Brooks, Chairman, Knottingley branch

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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

BRIGHTON ASLEF DRIVERS BADGE. Limited Edition of 300. All profits to fund branch reunions. Available for £10 including p&p (cheques made payable to ‘ASLEF Brighton Branch No 35’) from Mark Johnstone, 51 Drove Road, Portsme, Brighton BN41 2PA or phone 07783 847228.

WORLD CUP 2010 BADGE SET Limited edition (200) badge set, 8 badges in each box set, one per group, individually numbered, beautifully presented. £20 plus £2 DELIVERY POST to ASLEF members. Cheques payable to M. Scott at 1 Tamerton Square, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7SZ. Paypal and email enquiries to scottfootball@hotmail.com Mobile 07718 131622

NXEA 2009 STRIKE BADGE commemorating solidarity of ASLEF members. Purchase (£3 plus p&p) from Nxea Branch Secretary or District Council 5 Secretary, Contact M Steele on. 07788 153954. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.

ASLEF TRAIN DRIVER collects ASLEF/railway badges, signs, shed plates, signalling items, etc. Phone Mark on 01562 746537 or (mobile) 07789301551

DIESEL HYDRAULIC ITEMS wanted by collector. Anything considered, especially speedos, power handles etc. Rob 01822 833921

CITY OF LONDON BADGES, one 10-year and one depot badge. Depot badges are numbered 1-150. There are only 150 of each. Price £5 plus £1 p&p. All profits to City of London branch funds to acquire a branch banner. Further information or orders to Colin Dawson 01689 849 543 or 22 Hutchison Road, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0BD.

LONDSIGHT 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 Brockfield Avenue, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 1JE. Please make cheques payable to F. Clarke.

FIRST EDITION of the only recognised Tram/Light Rail ASLEF Branch. CROYDON TRAM/LIGHT RAIL No1 (270)Badges cost £5 each with £1 P&Ps. Cheques payable to: “CTLR No1” and sent to David Brinkworth, 6 Peregrine Court, 47 Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HL or via Paypal david@brinkworth.me.uk

KENT AREA NUM-MARYLEBONE ASLEF 25TH ANNIVERSARY (1984-2009) BADGES £5 each plus £1 p&p. Last ten available. All proceeds to Justice for Miners. Contact L. French at 55 Mill Road, Gillingham, Dent, ME7 1HW or phone 01634 576058 for details.

DRIVER COLLECTS BR33056 SERIES TRAINCREW / DRIVER MANUALS. Contact Lee on 07919127972 or e-mail lippydavies@blueyonder.co.uk
HERE do you go to find out about a town’s history? A museum, of course. Or the Town Hall record office. Or you could go to its railway station. There is so much in these buildings as long as you know what you’re looking for – and so much we miss or fail to see as we walk through them. They contain vast amounts of information about the social and economic history of the last 150 years of our cities.

I’d never really thought of Brighton station as a place of history and wonder until I was led through it by local historian Jackie Marsh-Hobbs. She insists that the way the station evolved mirrors many of the concerns and activities of the city. It seems inconceivable, for example, that when it was built in the 1840s it was remote from the town, perched up on a plateau on the Sussex Downs.

Its planners saw the need for an open space to accommodate not only a station but also a goods yard and engineering works. Central to it was a three-storey passenger station designed by David Mocattain an Italianate style. It’s still there – but you have to look carefully behind the various expansions to see it. You can just about make out the colonnade on the first floor of the building facing you as you come from the train. These were the days when rail travel was as glamorous and futuristic as moon probes today. To the right was a splendid and ornate dining room. Appropriately it is now home to Southern driver’s messing facilities!

EXCITEMENT OF THE NEW

When the first line was opened – to Shoreham Harbour, in May 1840 - half the town turned out to see the marvel that was the train. They’d never seen one before. Dignitaries lined up, bands played and banquets were served to the notables. The following year the first London train arrived to the strains of the National Anthem and celebrations continued through a night of fireworks and music that heralded the dawn of rail travel. Another five years passed before the third, Lewes, line arrived across the astonishing London Road Viaduct. By this time the town had seen it, done it and got the tee shirt (well it would have if tee shirts had been invented). Reports said a couple of spectators leaned out of their windrows to watch. By then it was just another train.

Travel had also changed for passengers. At the start the upper classes, led by the Duke of Wellington, were very suspicious of the lower orders being permitted to move easily around the country. So to buy a train ticket you had to fill an application form stating name, address, occupation and reason for travel. This didn’t last long, but it gives a clear indication of the strict social classes of the time.

ENGINEERING TO TOURISM

It’s also where there are reminders of other parts of the town’s history. We think of Brighton today as a place of recreation, a tourist trap, where merrymakers were ferried by the Brighton Belle. But once it was a major centre of industry. From 1842 until 1957 locomotives and carriages were built - 1,211 locos in all. In 1891 no less then 2,651 men and women were employed here. Now only a few street names remind us of these times, where the engineering tradition declined to the extent that the final means of transport made here was the Isetta bubble car!

HORSES IN THE ASCENDANT

The central role of the horse in those early days is evident all over the station if you look carefully. Because the station was at the top of the hill, horse-drawn carriages and wagons drew goods and people from the town. It was so steep that a ramp was needed, with a U-bend to make the ascent less strenuous. Its entrance, a tall doorway with a curved top, can be seen at the lower level. It emerged on a platform in an area where M&S now store their cartons and disposable cases. Outside to the east you can still make out the old stables and the horse hospital.

Here too you can plainly see the girders that support the entire station. You realise that it is perched high above street level as it expanded out of the side of the plateau where the station originated. This engineering marvel is visible to those content to wander through puddles and the ever-present pigeon deposits. Along an old corridor down here is the home of the railway Rifle Club.

The spectacular turn in the roof of the station was substantially renovated in 1999 and 2000

Every railway station tells a story
Thanks for all your responses to the 50th ASLEF crossword in the June 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.

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

Solution to Crossword No 50 which appeared in the June edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to Norman Musgrave from Hayes in Middlesex

ACROSS 1 Steam Power 6 Snag 10 Unburnt 11 Iranian
12 Apartment 13 Lasso 14 Prism 15 Stewardess
17 Argentina 20 Super 21 Frost 23 Force meat 25
Rancour 26 Appointment 27 Shed 28 Jolly Roger
DOWN 1 Sauna 2 Embracing 3 Maritime Nation
4 Outlets 5 Epistle 7 Nails 8 Gunpowder 9 Railway
Sleeper 14 Platforms 16 Depleting 18 Inferno
19 Air Mail 22 Ounce 24 Tutor

More than just a union

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. During 2009 ASLEF recovered £1,946,190.45 in damages for all types of cases. 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

Name...........................................................................................
Address..........................................................................................

Changed your Address?
Name...........................................................................................
Address..........................................................................................
Postcode.......................................................................................'

Tel: 0161 832 3344
Fax: 0161 832 3345
Email: info@thompsons.co.uk

More than just a union
Haven have.
A holiday with Haven means great locations, fabulous facilities, amazing water fun, first class Self-Catering accommodation and top rate entertainment.

New for 2010, £40m invested in...
* Space Bowl Water Complexes
* Restaurants
* Model Caravans - the kids will love them
* Entertainment

Plus, everything you expect from a great family holiday...
* 35 award-winning Parks nationwide
* Loads of free activities & facilities and entertainment included in the price
* Heated indoor & outdoor pools
* Kids’ Clubs for all ages
* All-Weather Multi-Sports Courts
* Daytime & evening entertainment

Share the Privilege with all your friends & family as they can take advantage of these fantastic offers too!

Call: 0871 230 1912
Quote: PHC ASLEF
Click: haven.com/phc