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Preparing our defences

The union’s 2011 annual conference took place last month and the executive committee has set fresh objectives for the coming year. I have noticed a welcome change in the AAD over the years. Not long ago this event was full of conflict, speechifying and posturing. It was all very dramatic and theatrical, but not necessarily fruitful. Now it has a more thoughtful and professional atmosphere. Delegates apply themselves to solving problems and finding policies we can support together. It is an exercise in unifying rather than scoring points.

ASLEF has changed in the recent past. For too long we operated our finances on ‘a wing and a prayer’, deciding what we wanted to do and hoping the money would somehow turn up. The section of the Annual Report on our finances was something of a side issue at conference. Not any more: delegates went over the accounts with a fine tooth comb. I was delighted to tell them the union had made an operating profit of over £380,000 - not because I’ve become an amateur accountant, but because I am a train driver and a trade unionist. In the most basic terms, especially now, we need a sound financial base in order to improve our conditions and our union.

Over the coming year we will have many serious industrial issues to face. The government will seize on the McNulty Report to attack our conditions and cut back our industry. The companies will hide behind the government as it eagerly attacks our pensions. As well as organising ourselves tightly, we will need to win passengers, politicians, sections of the media and transport opinion-formers to our cause. This all costs money. Thanks to careful management of our accounts over recent years, we can afford to take on this challenge with confidence. That is why we will win.

Keith Norman
General Secretary
Annual Conference sets targets for the coming year

ASLEF’s Annual Assembly of Delegates (AAD) met in Swansea last month and applied itself to setting policies and aims to pursue over the coming year.

The objectives and policies the union will pursue include:
- an extension of the last government’s Key Worker housing scheme to include all transport workers. This was introduced to assist employees to purchase or rent affordable property in areas near where they work that otherwise would have been beyond their price levels.
- resistance to suggestions that London’s tube system could become ‘driverless’ – a proposal put forward by London Mayor Boris Johnson at a business dinner where he demonstrated considerable ignorance in saying driver training is possible ‘in a couple of weeks’. Delegates insisted that ‘only people who believed computers cannot go wrong would welcome driverless trains’; insisting they remain a vital part of the safety measures for passengers in the capital. ‘There will always be a need for a driver to deal with emergencies.’
- agitation within the Labour Party for progressive and egalitarian policies and ‘fighting for change within rather than shouting from the sidelines’.
- continued opposition to the government cuts programme.
- support for the Freight Grants Scheme.
- backing for the the Hands off The People of Iran (HOPI) campaign and support for imprisoned Iranian trade unionists.
- total opposition to reduced benefits for railway pensions, insisting on a scheme which includes keeping the final salary provision and retains the Retail Price Index (rather than the less-favourable Consumer Price Index) to calculate increases.
- campaigning to ensure that all our members enjoy reasonable free travel facilities. While arguing that all members should be entitled to the same as former BR drivers, it was also recognised that we are increasingly seeing erosions and restrictions – for example on High Speed routes and Southeastern services to and from St Pancras. There are also question marks over entitlements when train services transfer to tram or light rail.
- arguing with employers that physical needs breaks (PNBs) (or meal breaks on London Underground) should be available after a maximum of five and a half hours work before a break and no PNB should be diagrammed within two hours of the beginning of a duty.
- insisting that Rest Day working should not be a part of the core conditions of any company.
- calling for employers to ensure there is suitable accommodation for the immediate family of any ASLEF member who needs in-patient hospital treatment while on duty and away from the home depot for as long as the driver is hospitalised.
- insisting that if a driver has to leave the grade because of a fatality while driving and is redeployed into another grade, he or she should retain the drivers’ rate of pay.
- claiming that all newly qualified drivers should be on the full rate of pay from the day they do their first driving turn.
- arguing for a minimum of quadruple time plus time worked plus a day in lieu for attendance on Boxing Day for members working for London Underground. It is also to put to management that any agreements struck over the delivery of services for next year’s Olympics should become permanent conditions, with a priority given to claims for a four-day working week and improved annual leave.
- insisting that where toilets are provided on a train at least one should be working properly before starting a journey of half an hour or more; that there should be free sanitary wear whenever there is refurbishment; and that members be provided with modern lightweight lamps rather than the old bardic ones.
- calling for regular services by railhead treatment trains (RTTs) during the leaf fall season.
- arguing that drivers should be provided with speeds relating to the TPWS over speed trips that are placed at permanent speed restrictions. With the assistance of the membership it may be possible to post information on the union’s web site, but there were concerns that if we went down this path all information must be both accurate and updated.
- insisting that any driver who develop diabetes and are forced to leave the job because of medical grounds must be offered suitable alternative employment.

‘It is a daunting set of demands, but I am sure the Executive Committee will do all in its power to ensure that our members have conditions of service that match their professionalism, talent and dedication,’ said general secretary Keith Norman.
President spells out union priorities

EC President Alan Donnelly used his address to the AAD (Annual Assembly of Delegates) to look back at what the union has achieved over the past year and to identify some of the challenges lying ahead …

LAN said the union would soon be transferring its headquarters to modern offices with the potential to let space – which would offer the union stability for the future of the union as well as benefitting our staff.

He said we now had ‘a new government which was no different from the last Tory government’. Labour had a new leader and all the candidates had been to the union seeking support ‘not for our numbers, but for our reputation’. The EC had backed Diane Abbot as the only candidate supporting a nationalised rail system, with Ed Miliband the second choice. Both Labour and the union had seen successes in local elections, with one new councillor, Collette Gibson, in the hall as a branch delegate.

SUCCESSES IN EDUCATION, EQUALITIES AND FINANCES

The year had also seen a rise in the number and quality of the union’s education courses, and advances in our equalities agenda both within and outside ASLEF. We have representatives on all the major TUC equalities committees as well as a thriving – and self-supporting - retired members’ section.

But, Alan stressed, the key is financial stability – and this year’s financial report revealed an operating surplus for the year of over £380,000. ‘When you have a surplus, you can do things you can otherwise only think of’.

Alan regretted that there had been no national forum this year, although the freight forum had taken place with some success. The union is planning a national forum again later in the year.

CRISIS IN FREIGHT AVERTED

Alan then turned to ‘one of the biggest issues we faced when we left Conference last year’ live redundancies in the freight industry. ‘How fickle that sector is!’ he said. ‘Now we have rest day working in every company. Yet only 12 months ago our members got no rise at all in DB Shenker’. And even that wasn’t enough for the employer. In 2010, ‘riding on the back of a recession and a downturn’ the employer wanted us to give up conditions we had ‘fought for for years’.

‘We told the company council we wanted a straightforward pay deal with no productivity terms – and to their credit, that is what they came back with. We are not averse to productivity, but it has to be a separate issue.’

Alan also referred to the two disputes in London Underground, one short-lived about an IR issue and the other about working on Boxing Day. ‘If the industry needs an additional service we will argue it properly – and not as something tagged onto the end of a pay deal’.

He also spoke about the dispute in Arriva Trains Wales which got to the point of management saying they would only offer an improved deal if the negotiators accepted it over the table. This, Alan said, offended the basic ASLEF principle that changes in terms and conditions have to be accepted by the people it affected.

DARK FORCES BEHIND THE TALKS

But Alan also pointed to a darker side of the dispute. ‘I believe the company’s MD was not in charge,’ he declared.

‘After the talks I went with the General Secretary to meet Conservative transport minister Theresa Villiers. Her first words were not, ‘Welcome’ , but ‘It was 12%!’ She did not mention productivity but just ‘12%!’ In the contemptuous way she said it, it told us straightaway of political involvement. There are outside agencies.’

Better news was the legal victory over London Midland where the union overturned a judgement that made industrial action illegal even when ballot irregularities were trivial. ‘We won that point – not just for ourselves, but for the whole union movement.’

THREE FOR THE FUTURE

Alan concluded by highlighting three major challenges for the future – pensions, travel facilities and the McNulty Report.

 The President felt a priority must be to extend the recovery period. ‘We cannot go down the line of increasing contributions’; he said as he insisted there must be no cuts in benefits. ‘It took many years for former ASLEF members to make these advances. We are not in the business of giving them away.’

 Secondly the travel facilities campaign is vastly important to our industry – and we are only seeking what we used to have.

 Finally we have the challenge of the McNulty Report, which Alan called ‘management’s wish list’. He said many companies did not want a fight with ASLEF over conditions and wanted the government to do it for them. ‘These are politicians who attack our pensions and preserve their own, and who attack our travel facilities while they protect their own. How fair is that?’

Alan concluded his address with the stark warning that, ‘We choose not to go to war - but if they want to pick a fight with us we will not run away.’
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ATW ‘hones in on the insignificant’

Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) has demonstrated its priorities in excellent style with news that it intends to ban its train drivers from wearing trade union ties. Into the background go issues such as track delays, lack of electrification and a row over one of their managers telling the BBC that ASLEF members drive ‘milk floats’.

Keith Norman, ASLEF’s general secretary, says it is a tribute to the company that they can manage to discover and hone in on the most insignificant issues at a time of potential crisis for rail in Wales.

‘The government’s consultant Roy McNulty is talking about ‘downgrading’ rural lines and threatening the whole operation of rail in Wales,’ Keith says. ‘And what is bothering ATW management? Ties!’

Keith says, ‘I’m sure our passengers are more concerned with getting a reliable service than having a driver dressed as a company clone.

ATW has decided to spend money issuing drivers with a new style uniform – and in a bid to win over staff are also issuing a warning letter to drivers that they will be disciplined if they wear an ASLEF tie.

‘The words ‘small’ and ‘minded’ spring to mind,’ says Keith.

It’s a sure sign of how seriously Roy McNulty’s Report to the government on the rail industry will treat the trade unions.

In the Glossary there is a reference to our union. ASLEF it says, the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.

Er, that’s Associated, Roy …!!

Driving enthusiasm for The Railway Children

ASLEF members, along with other East Midlands Trains staff ranging from managing director Tim Shoveller to conductor Yvonne Burton, gave up their time last month to operate a special excursion to the Mid-Norfolk railway in support of the Railway Children – and raised over £25,000 in the process.

The ‘Mid-Norfolk Marauder’ as it was named for the day, was staffed by drivers, train managers and conductors who either gave wages to the charity or took a day’s leave to help out. The Intercity 125 ran from St Pancras International to Dereham in

The EDL in Weymouth – ‘A peaceful day of hatred’

Ed D’Bell and fellow ASLEF member Carl Wainwright took to the streets on 30 April to join a 350-strong protest against a gathering of the English Defence League (EDL) in the quiet seaside town of Weymouth.

‘The EDL said the date - the anniversary of Hitler's death - was coincidental. They also failed to explain why they were in Weymouth, a town with a 0.3% ethnic population.’

Weymouth mayor Paul Kimber asked Ed to speak and ‘I was pleased to say that our union backs these counter demonstrations.’

Ed found Unite Against Fascism leader Weyman Bennett very impressive. He spoke of the need to resist far right groups and touched backs these counter demonstrations.

‘A peaceful day of hatred’

Ed says the message of union members to groups like the EDL must be ‘Everywhere you go - we will follow’.

‘The more ordinary members who make the effort, the sooner we will build a tolerant and egalitarian society,’ he adds.

Ed D’Bell is District 1’s Black & Ethnic Minority Representative Committee Member

ESSEX DEATHS LEAD TO CROSSING CLOSURES

Network Rail is to remove 25 level crossings and introduce extra safety measures at a further 329 following a campaign inspired by the deaths of two teenage girls at Elsenham, Essex, in 2005.

HELP PUT TOGETHER ASLEF’S RESPONSE TO NETWORK RAIL’S (RUS)

Branches will soon be receiving a summary of the Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) dealing with Rolling Stock. The Union would welcome any ideas, thoughts or issues that members would like to raise in relation to this strategy. Any contributions should be sent to dgould@aslef.org.uk or by post to Head Office by Friday 22 July. A full copy of the Strategy can be found at http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp.aspx/4449.aspx and then selecting Network RUS: Passenger Rolling Stock – Draft for Consultation.

Retired ASLEF member Derek Hughes with his wife Eva Hughes, the new Civic Mayor of Doncaster. ‘I’ve moved off the footplate into the Town Hall!’ he says.
FOR more than a decade, the IRO has aimed to help operators develop their skills and careers. One way it does this is through its PDP courses, leading to nationally recognised qualifications, which it delivers in conjunction with Glasgow Caledonian University. They involve distance learning and direct tutorials from leading professionals – and drivers are now among those signing up.

Chris Owen, a driver with First ScotRail for nine years and a Driver Instructor for five, is one member working towards an Operational Standards role. He told me, ‘I was conscious that my career had become stagnant and I wanted to reinvigorate it and expand my knowledge of railway operational management. ’

‘I passed the IRO diploma and moved onto a degree course. I’ve learned a lot about new areas and being successful in the courses has been a great boost to my confidence.’

Hopefully the qualifications will help him develop his career in the industry. And he’s not the only one.

First Great Western’s Kerry Kelly, a qualified driver for two years, recently experienced some health problems – from which she’s happily recovered – but the experience made her think about what would happen if she were unable to drive. She says she’s seen drivers leaving the footplate and moving to alternative jobs.

Chris Owen has moved up a degree thanks to his IRO courses! within the industry that haven’t matched their abilities. ‘The IRO course gave me a better understanding of the jobs out there so if I was ever unable to drive because of health reasons, I’d know what was available. Until now I had no idea about the infrastructure, engineering or economic sides of the railway.

Most of Kerry’s study time is done at home, but on tutorial days she mixes with people in different roles from other companies.

Southeastern makes a platform for the learning message

A report from Richard Daniels, the union’s Lead Learning rep at Ashford

ADULT Learners’ Week is the UK’s largest and longest running learning campaign. Held each May, it encourages thousands of adults, whatever their age, and background, to give learning a go.

The ASLEF Union Learning reps on Southeastern Trains made it the focus for an active week of publicising education opportunities. Here are a few of the things we did around our area ...

RAMSGATE
Learning rep Andy Bull, with help from Andy Cooke and myself, arranged an event at Ramsgate Railway Station foyer. This was useful as we spoke not only to staff but also to many members of the public. One lady said, ‘It’s good to see the unions encouraging Adult Learning’ - so we did some good public relations as well!

Staff from Kent Adult Education provided information on courses and a local pub owner offered the free use of a room with 10 PC’s once a week for training.

During the morning we visited the traincrew depot and afterwards we went to the Maintenance Depot at Ramsgate where we spoke to members, distributed questionnaires and answered queries.

DOVER
Michael Burdess went to the Dover Traincrew Depot at four in the morning to hand out questionnaires and meet the early staff. Andy Bishop and I met him later!

We spoke to most grades during the day, while the Dover Skills Plus Centre ran Literacy and Numeracy Tasters and spoke about courses available at Kent Adult Education centres.

ORPINGTON
The following day Michael held a ‘family history’ event in Dover before we moved on to the Orpington Depot for an Environmental Awareness Day which included an Environmental Awareness Quiz. Shunt Driver Martin Lawford was most helpful in persuading people along to the event.

ASHFORD
At an event at Ashford Traincrew Depot, staff took part in Computer Literacy and Numeracy Tasters, filled out questionnaires and took part in our re-run Environmental Quiz.

At the event Shirley Handsley (Project Coordinator) signed a Learning Partnership Agreement between Kent Adult Education and ASLEF Education.

She says it gives her the peace of mind that she will be able to step into another role in the future and says, ‘I feel that my job in the industry is more secure as a result of studying with the IRO.’

‘Our website - www.railwayoperators.org - has full details of how to join and all of our courses and events. It’s easy to enrol and, if your employer is a corporate member, the annual subscription is, in most cases, already paid.’
Government attitudes to unions are based on boardroom gossip and dodgy dossiers

says our legal advisor Victoria Phillips of Thompsons Solicitors ...

The coalition’s shameless attacks on working people’s rights, including specifically those on rail industry workers, in order to please their Tory friends in the City and the business lobby must be challenged with hard facts. Ministers are relying on anecdote, gossip, dodgy statistics and even dodgier dossiers from train companies when they claim that businesses are being shackled by onerous regulations. The recent consultation by the department for Business, Innovation and Skills about changing the employment tribunal system in order to reduce claims used some very questionable ‘evidence’ as justification, including that there had been a ‘dramatic’ increase of 56% in claims from 2008 to 2010.

Yet the Ministry of Justice’s own figures for the end of last year showed that ET claims fell by 51% compared to the same period in 2009! Either government departments don’t talk to each other, or it’s the old adage about not letting the truth get in the way of a good story.

SHADY PRACTICE
Transport secretary Philip Hammond says he wants the railways to be more efficient and points to a list of complaints by employers which supposedly demonstrate a lack of ‘21st century practices’.

These are said to include overtime agreements, pay for the time needed to prepare trains, time to read notices and walk to trains, shift patterns and strict observance of health and safety regulations.

All hard fought for rights that are very much 21st century practices. To undermine them would be to take drivers back decades.

And now George Osborne has announced a ‘wholesale review’ of employment law, after speaking to the bosses’ union the Institute of Directors.

MYTH MONGERS
An audience like that was bound to lap up the myths he peddled about the impact on growth that the so-called unlimited compensation for discrimination victims, the right of workers to be consulted 90 days ahead of collective redundancies and the laws that protect employee pay and conditions when a business is transferred to a new owner are having.

The reality, as the TUC pointed out, is that making it easier to make people redundant and giving the workforce less time to come up with alternatives and save jobs will simply worsen unemployment.

As for ‘unlimited compensation’ for discrimination, it’s hard enough for people to win these claims in the first place, and the amount they get will not make them rich – especially given that most will have lost their jobs. In the period from April 2009 to April 2010 the median award for sex discrimination was £6,275, for race £5,392 and for disability £8,553, according to the government’s own statistics.

THEY COULD TRY BEING FAIR!
If employers really are too scared to employ people because of the prospect of having to pay that sort of money to them, shouldn’t they just ensure that they treat their workers fairly? Tribunals don’t award compensation to employees who can’t prove that they’ve suffered an injustice.

Osborne may talk a good talk to his mates at the IoD, but the reality is that there’s not much he can actually do about employment laws that come from Europe. It was the European Court which lifted the cap on discrimination compensation because it was contrary to the Treaty of Rome and did not provide an adequate remedy for a discrimination victim’s losses.

And the rules about consultation on collective redundancies and transfers of business are also governed by EU directives which are binding on the UK.

Osborne called on the business community to get stuck into the argument and make the case for growth, against what he anticipates will be opposition from the unions.

They should start by acknowledging that little grows in constantly shifting sands and an insecure workforce which can be sacked at the drop of a hat isn’t going to be spending the country out of its economic doldrums.

‘Spanish practices’ in rail? Yes please! says GS

The transport minister Philip Hammond banged on last month about ‘Spanish practices’ in our industry, accusing us of a host of unearned benefits.

‘If only!’ said general secretary Keith Norman, but then he added, ‘On the other hand, we’re certainly in favour of the way the Spanish railways practice. With positive government support (rather than carping) it is expanding, improving and updating, benefiting passengers, business and regional development. In fact, rail in Spain puts the UK to shame.’

Keith pointed out that the Spanish are in the process of linking all the provincial capitals with high speed rail. Of the total of 9,500 miles of track, over half – 5,500 miles – is already electrified and there is such faith in the Spanish AVE high speed trains that if they are more than five minutes late, passengers are entitled to a full refund.

And the UK has the most expensive fares in Europe, something it combines with having the least amount of electrified track.

‘Spanish practices? Yes please!’
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The 500 Club is open to individuals, branches and district councils.

If you would like to take part please contact Lee James at Head Office at ljames@aslef.org.uk or on 020 7317 8600 by 6th June 2011.
The anti-cuts campaign isn’t over – it’s just begun!

Says Gregor Gall, Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Hertfordshire

B

Y ANY measure, the TUC organised march against the cuts on Saturday 26 March was a spectacular success. Estimates of the turnout vary from 500,000 to 750,000. Those attending were pretty much from all walks of life and parts of society.

Of course, union members mobilised by their national unions constituted the bulk of the marchers. Of the 1,000-odd banners on the demonstration, some two-thirds were union banners of national unions, regions and branches (with another 69 being from constituency Labour Parties).

Amongst the biggest turnouts by banner were Unison, the National Union of Teachers, the Public and Commercial Services Union, and the University and College Union. ASLEF did very well – given its tiny size compared to these unions - with its turnout and having 21 of its banners on the demo.

If the attendance had been anything less than the 100,000 the TUC conservatively predicted, the campaign against the cuts would have received a massive knock back. Indeed, it may have effectively been over.

WHICH WAY NOW FOR THE MARCHERS?

But now that we’re on the other side of the 26 March, such a turnout must beg the $64m question: what now? Surely, the march was the beginning of the campaign and not its end?

Well, the next obvious staging post in the campaign would seem to be the 30 June when the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union along with the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and several other teaching unions are planning to hold a one-day strike over the Hutton attacks on public sector pensions.

But as it’s unlikely that the two biggest unions in the country, Unite and Unison, will be on board for this co-ordinated action, it will not quite be the ‘general strike’ across the public sector that some activists were hoping for. Even if Unite and Unison were on board, the underlying issue is that the strike is against pension reform. There’s nothing wrong with that in itself. Unions should be taking action to stop an attack on what are essentially deferred wages for workers.

ONLY UNITED ON PENSIONS SO FAR

But, at this point in time, if this is the only example of joint union action against the cuts, then we do have a problem. This is because the cuts in public services are happening and will continue to happen under this Con-Dem coalition government. Joint action on pensions is a boost to the morale of those fighting the cuts but it’s not a fight against those self-same cuts.

For example, the GMB union has calculated that in councils across England by early May 171,709 jobs are either under threat or have already gone. Yet there have so far been no strikes against these threats and losses.

What is needed is coordinated industrial action against job losses in the public sector running in tandem with the creation of alliances between those that provide these services and those that use them in order to jointly defend them. The mantra must be cuts in jobs leads to cuts in services.

EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED

Then, there is another problem to deal with. The massive turnout on the 26 March gives the unions a big headache – that of greatly enhanced expectations. Both ‘demo virgins’ and veterans will now be asking after 26 March ‘If we can pull off this, what else can we pull off?’ and ‘How can we build on the momentum we’ve just created?’

Calling more demonstrations just does not come up to scratch if that’s all that is done. More demonstrations when there is little of an actual fight going on usually lead to declining turnouts, and disillusionment and demoralisation amongst those who had hoped for so much more. But if the next demonstrations that are called are to allow the expression of active and widespread resistance and opposition on the ground, then the situation is altogether different.

LOOKING FOR A LEAD

So the ball is firmly back in the court of the TUC and its General Council which is comprised of the general secretaries and the like of its affiliated unions. We cannot wait until the next TUC congress in September to revisit the issue of ‘what next?’ That would mean actual action – if that was the decision – it would not happen until the end of this year or the beginning of next.

In between now and the end of the summer many unions will have their annual conferences. It has to be hoped that the raised mood amongst union members and workers will lead to some firm plans for effective, hard hitting action to be taken as soon as the holiday season ends.
CARWYN JONES: COOPERATION, NOT COMPETITION, IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Carwyn Jones, who, as Wales’ First Minister is the only national Labour leader in the UK, told ASLEF delegates in Swansea that his party ‘believes in cooperation in public services - not in competition’. Despite Labour’s successes in Wales, he stressed that the UK government’s budget would inevitably have effects on the principality. ‘We will do all we can to minimise the effects of these cuts but we have had to defer some important plans. The Welsh capital budget has been slashed by 40%; he declared.

Carwyn said it was impossible to overestimate the importance of integrated transport. ‘We need a seamless system - which is why we will put money into state-of-the-art rail and coach interchanges.’

There have been genuine improvements in rail in Wales with increased passenger numbers and punctuality levels higher than the UK. ‘We’ve also opened two railways lines, improved other services, funded additional rolling stock, invested in Newport station and modernised lines up the valleys.’

He stressed the need to take electrification past Cardiff and on to Swansea, something he said was of importance not just to the city, but to the entire region. He also wanted to develop the Cambrian line, improve services in the Cardiff valleys and introduce electrification onto the north coast line.

‘I look at decisions from the past and think how ludicrous they were. Swansea once had four railway stations,’ Carwyn said.

‘Wales wants a railway we can be proud of. We want to invest in rail because it is the right thing to do. We need to address things like half of our stations not being accessible to wheelchair users.’

Carwyn finished by saying Labour in Wales is working on a new model for delivering rail services. ‘We have a not-for-profit model for our water supply and I think we can look at a similar model for rail.’

Andrew Gwynne ‘Working people did not cause the deficit – and shouldn’t have to pay for it.’

ANDREW GWYNNE: RAIL ENRICHES THE COUNTRY, NOT JUST THE PASSENGER

Andrew Gwynne, who became Shadow Minister for Transport in October last year, is the MP for Denton where he grew up and became a local councillor. This potted history alone was enough to make conference warm to him - even before he began an honest and encouraging speech which began accepting that the Labour government ‘didn’t do enough in rail to reverse the effects of privatisation’.

Andrew said it was a lie that public transport cuts were the result of excessive public spending by the Labour government. ‘The deficit is the result of the irresponsibility of bankers and the need to bail them out by the public purse,’ he declared.

The present transport minister has signed...
Ivan Wilson – part of our union's history

Ivan Wilson from Brighton was chosen by delegates at Swansea to chair this year’s conference – and it was, he says, ‘a great privilege’.

‘The two proudest days of my life have been the one when I got my key, having passed out as a driver: and the other is the first day of this conference when such trust was placed in me. Although I’ve been our branch chair for ten years this was very different. I know all the drivers at Brighton, for one thing. But strangely, and I don’t know why, it wasn’t alarming. It was rewarding and enriching. It’s a fulfilling role.’

‘Perhaps it was because I had to concentrate completely for a week, something I suppose every train drivers learns to do. And I felt more involved in the debates, maybe because, facing them, I could see all the faces, reflecting how they were feeling.

‘Peter Dodgson chaired my first conference and I never forgot the example of his calm and precise manner.’

Ivan, who joined BR at Waterloo in 1984, transferred to Brighton six years later and became an ASLEF rep the year he passed as a driver.

‘I’ve always had a great interest in the union’s history,’ he says. ‘Now, in a small way, I have become part of it.’

ANDY KEEPS IT IN THE FAMILY!

The youngest conference delegate was Andy Bull from Ramsgate – where his dad, Dave, is branch secretary.

‘I always wanted to be a driver,’ Andy says, ‘even when my mum and dad thought I should stay in education to get ‘something better’ – whatever that is! But after a year at university in Portsmouth I became a trainee driver. I think at 24 I was the youngest at the time. I’m driving High Speed trains now, which are brilliant.

‘I was brought up with principles about people being treated fairly and soon realised how union ideals fitted in with my philosophy. The CS said this week he wanted to leave the world a better place than he found it. That sums it up nicely for me.

‘I’m lucky to have had such a supportive dad and to have older work colleagues who have accepted me and delegates here who’ve been so friendly.

‘I’ve enjoyed this week. I’ve always thought you should get involved. There’s no point sitting on the side lines sulking.’

WE’RE ALL TRAIN DRIVERS HERE!

Alex McCallum says the best part of the union’s conference was finding himself among friends. ‘We all have the common bond of being train drivers,’ says the delegate from Ayr. ‘We all do the same job in ASLEF. It’s difficult not to feel involved.

‘When I set off here I had little idea of what to expect. I thought there might be a series of little groups, with the Scots being one of them. I can only say I was pleasantly surprised.

‘It’s been encouraging to find a whole room of people pulling together, and to find that wherever you come from across the UK, drivers sing from the same hymn sheet. I feel more enthusiasm than I have for years.

‘It’s been both worthwhile and a pleasure for me. I’d recommend anyone who gets the chance to come to an ASLEF AAD.

‘And the social side hasn’t been bad either ... !’

WE’RE NOT HERE FOR A SHOW

Daniel Masrani, who represented the Cardiff branch, says this year’s was a quieter conference than usual, but adds, ‘On the other hand, we’re not here for a show, are we? We’re here to set a union agenda, and we did that.

‘We also had some good speakers. I was particularly impressed by Carwyn Jones. It was good to hear a Labour leader not being afraid to express unequivocal support for rail as a public service.

‘Every time you go to an AAD you feel more confident speaking at the podium. It’s never easy, but you don’t have to worry about heckling or being put down. It’s a great atmosphere – just how union meetings should be.’

JULY 2011

ASPORT MINISTER –
SECRETARY ...

ASLEF’S ANNUAL CONFERENCE (AAD) 2011

I will feel it is time to hand over the leadership of ASLEF to a sound financial and secure organisation which will ensure that the union is properly equipped to continue to work for the members of ASLEF.

I believe that we are in a new era and I think the last five years have been a great time for ASLEF. I will miss the comradeship, the friendship and the company of so many trade unionists and train drivers who make up our union family. Being your general secretary has given me great pleasure and immense pride.

I will spend more time with her, and I think I set myself when you elected me as your General Secretary to turn ASLEF to a sound financial organisation.

I have asked the executive to consider a change of leadership. I have asked for the results of both the regional and the national elections and I will announce my decision at the next meeting.

Meanwhile, I hope you will be as interested as delegates were to hear what our two key-note speakers at our AAD in Swansea – Mr Andrew Gwynne and Mr Carwyn Jones – had to say.
ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN
SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

Under the provisions of Section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ASLEF is obliged to provide members with a statement summarising its financial affairs.

### Income and expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>11,964,319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>5,151,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>£4,587,583 of total income comprised payments in respect of membership.</td>
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### Political Income and Expenditure

The figures above include £128,820 income and £205,639 expenditure in respect of the political fund.

#### Salaries and Benefits

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<th>Pension contributions</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>32,257</td>
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<td>15,646</td>
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<td>T Wilkinson</td>
<td>19,526</td>
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<td>19,863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>11,964,319</td>
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<tr>
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### INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

We have audited the financial statements of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen for the year ended 31 December 2010 which comprise the consolidated income and expenditure account, balance sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of freehold property and the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the union’s members, as a body, in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the union’s members those matters we are required to state in an auditors’ report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the union and the union’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

#### RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AUDITORS

The executive committee’s responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and relevant United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the statement of the executive committee’s responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. We also report to you, if in our opinion, the financial review contained in the annual report is consistent with the financial statements, if the union has not kept proper accounting records or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

#### BASIS OF AUDIT OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes an examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the executive committee in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the union’s circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

#### INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the union’s affairs as at 31 December 2010 and of its results for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the information given in the financial review contained in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Hard Dowdy
a trading style of:
Chantrey Vellacott DFK LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor
LONDON
14 March 2011

#### IRREGULARITY STATEMENT

Under Section 32A(6)(a) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 we are obliged to publish the following statement. A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring or has occurred in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and if necessary securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with; the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.
Rail will follow banks back to the public sector

S AN ASLEF member who by no means endorses everything the union stands for, I must say there have been times when I’ve seriously questioned the validity of my membership. However, the article on the McNulty Report in the June Journal provided a timely reassurance that my subscription is not ‘money down the drain’.

ASLEF’s finely honed instincts for smelling a rat cannot be faulted in this matter. To re-admit the private sector via the back door of ‘vertical integration’ into the world of safety-critical railway maintenance would indeed be ‘Son of Railtrack’ – and prove categorically that both the industry and the government have learned absolutely nothing from the horrendous mistakes and catastrophic failures of its recent past.

The pernicious mantra that ‘the private sector is King’ (which remains obstinately espoused by government despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary) gives anyone the impression that our parliamentary ministers are congenital idiots.

THE ROAD TO TRACK AND RUIN

Railways aside, are their memories so pitifully short-term that they are already suffering amnesia attacks with regard to the recent banking debacle? In the day of plenty, the financial sector strutted like a peacock, crowing about being the life-blood of the private buccaneer and entrepreneur. When times got hard, however, it promptly ran home crying to ‘Nanny State’, snivelling in its apron skirt, pathetically whimpering for exorbitant hand-outs that have rendered this country effectively bankrupt.

In this we have a perfect example of what will inevitably happen if ‘vertical integration’ of the railway is adopted. In fact, as this is nothing more than a highly expensive, circuitous ‘two-stage’ process on the road back into public ownership, why doesn’t the government do the decent thing for a change?

That is, cut the greedy money-gobbling middle-men out of the frame once and for all and re-nationalise and re-unite the whole railway, both track and trains, here and now.

TAKING EXACTLY THE WRONG PATH

It’s going to happen anyway - sooner or later. Surely it would be far better to do that through efficient control of spending rather than through a railway re-run of ‘Fred the Shred’ scandals!

As ASLEF also very rightly pointed out in the article, making freight an even bigger ‘Cinderella’ than it is now, together with the downgrading of rural lines, would be just about the most perfect mis-direction in which to take the railway. In years to come there will be an increasing societal reliance on both, as road transport becomes progressively more unviable through fuel scarcity and environmental concerns. If government wasn’t to avoid massive social fallout in the near future, then it had better drastically revise its attitude to the railway – and in double quick time.

Well done, ASLEF, for highlighting that need.
JOHN CROWSTON
BELOVED BACKBENCHER
IT IS with sadness that I report the untimely death of retired Immingham and former Frodingham driver John Crowston. He was a very popular and dry-witted character who had a great sense of humour. He was affectionately known as ‘Crowie’, an improvement on the nickname ‘Raggy Tash’ bestowed on him by old drivers at Frodingham!

Having served several years in the army, John, at 25, was a late starter on the railway in the 1970s. He would often have me in stitches telling me of his army escapades, scrapes and near misses when he was on manoeuvres in Germany.

We started at about the same time so that I was three months senior but he was three years older. He was Assistant Branch Secretary for a short while at Frodingham where I first knew him, but persuaded me to take over from him, saying he preferred to be a ‘backbencher’. I became Branch Secretary of Immingham and it is partially thanks to John that I stood for election to the local Town Council.

We both retired at the same time, although I was 61 and John was 64. It just doesn’t seem fair that he had only two years retirement time with his wife.

John lived in the family home for most of his life, even after his parents passed away and he was married to Margaret. He brought up his step-children until his long illness began.

Everyone at Immingham and former Frodingham drivers send their heartfelt condolences to Margaret’s family, grandchildren and John’s sister. He will be sadly missed.

David Doherty, retired members, Immingham

KAREN HARRISON
A TRAILBLAZER
I AM very sorry to have to inform you of the death of former train driver Karen Harrison. She passed away very suddenly in May at Harris Manchester College, in Oxford where, for the last three years, she had been reading Law to become a barrister, specialising in human rights and employment law.

Karen began her footplate career in 1979 at Old Oak Common depot, quickly establishing herself active, outspoken and often controversial character, always forthright on issues of equal opportunities and social justice. She made many friends, and upset plenty of others, to her constant amusement. After a short stint on the ‘Southern’, Karen transferred to Marylebone depot in 1988, where her advanced sense of humour and fun found its true spiritual home. She became the first female LDC rep, the first female branch secretary, was the first woman delegate to the AAD and was selected to chair the AAD in 1995, something she regarded as an honour and a privilege. Though her bid to be elected to the union’s EC was unsuccessful, she was delighted and astonished to poll around 200 votes!

Karen became seriously ill with meningitis and was off the footplate for around 18 months. She recovered, and was able to return to driving but eventually left the industry in 1997 for personal reasons. She then became a regional rep for Unison where she won several landmark tribunals on behalf of union members. This experience prompted her to finally apply for a place at university to read law. She was accepted at Oxford to the delight of family and friends and took the first steps towards a new and exciting career.

Unfortunately, she developed some serious health issues and did not live to achieve her goal. I will remember her as a loyal friend and colleague, committed socialist and trade union activist. All the present day women drivers owe Karen an immense debt of gratitude for her fight against prejudice in the workplace and her practical legacy of female activism which continues in ASLEF to the present day.

Her funeral service took place in the College Chapel on 6 May, and was overflowing with family, friends, former railway colleagues, fellow students, tutors and college staff. Everyone, including the Chaplain, had wonderful, often ‘risque’, stories featuring Karen. The eulogy given by her Tutor at Law Mrs Louise Gullifer on speaking not only of Karen’s intelligence, kindness and work ethic but left us all in no doubt what a breath of fresh air she had brought to her tutorials and college life with her constant attempts to inform and educate them about the ‘real world’.

On behalf of all her former colleagues and friends, particularly those from Marylebone depot, we send our heartfelt condolences to Karen’s mum Margaret, her sister Marie and all her lovely family who are devastated at their sudden loss.

Tricia Roche, retired driver - Kings Cross, Marylebone and Chingford
JO GALIBARDY  
OLYMPIAN DRIVER  

We are sorry to report that Jo Galibardy, the former Olympian gold medal hockey player we featured in an article in January, died suddenly on 17 May. Jo was 97 but was still able to look after himself, making his daily trip to the betting shop until the day he died.

We offer our sincere regrets to all Jo’s family.

SANDRA GALLACHER  
JUST 52  

It is with deep regret that I have to report the sad loss of Sandra Gallacher at 52 years old.

Sandra became a Driver in 1999 and during her time at Fratton she was both popular and well respected Driver. As well as Driving she acted as the Branch Education Representative and was a dedicated wife and mother.

Sandra battled bravely with cancer remained, not only holding down a job but also caring for a sick husband and running a family home. But I never heard her complain.

Through sheer grit and determination she took every knock-back in life on the chin while strove to combat any obstacle that befell her. She fought her illness every step of the way and remained in good heart.

Sandra, you will be sorely missed by all at Fratton.

John Glazebrook, Secretary, Portsmouth & IOW Branch

HERBIE LIVEMORE  

It is with great regret that I have to inform the membership of the passing of retired Swindon driver Herbie Livemore.

Herbie was a man who ‘did his bit’ for the Swindon Depot and the men who worked there. He served as branch chairman for many years, and also as an LDC rep and MAS committee man.

Herbie was cremated on 3 May. Our thoughts are with his wife Bet, family and friends at this sad time.

D.J. Manners, former chairman, Swindon branch

DESMOND OWENS  
LOSS OF A MARATHON MAN  

It is with great sadness that I announce the untimely death of Desmond Owens - known as ‘Des’ to everyone. He passed away peacefully at the age of 47 at the Sue Ryder Hospice in Peterborough on the 21 April after fighting a long battle with a brain tumour. He had recently remarried and Peterborough Branch would like to pass on its condolences to Christine, his two sons and other family members.

He started his railway career as a trainee driver in October 2004 and passed out to become a driver at Kings Cross in January 2006, eventually transferring to Peterborough.

Des was simply one of nature’s nice guys. I have never heard a bad word said about him and he never spoke ill of anyone. Even during his last days of work when carrying out light duties, all at Peterborough could see that he was not a well man but he dealt with his struggles with class.

His many interests included gardening and his love of sport. He coached at rugby and completed four full marathons, two at Edinburgh, one in Dublin and the London Marathon.

As I finish this letter, I cannot help wondering that life can be very unkind at times. RIP Des.

G Kerwin, Reporter, Peterborough branch

HIL FORD AND LES HENDERSON – KING’S CROSS LOSES TWO RETIRED MEMBERS  

It is with deep regret and sadness that I inform you of the death of our Retired colleague Phil Ford. He was aged 79.

After leaving school, Phil started work as an electrician for his local council but then left to start a long career on the railway at King’s Cross. Phil was on the footplate all the rest of his working life except for two years when he left to do his national service in the army.

He was a devoted family man, who loved Crystal Palace and snooker. He was also a brilliant handyman. In fact, if Phil couldn’t fix it – you needed a new one! Phil, who stayed youthful, passed away on 5 April. It was a tribute to him that many of his friends and former work colleagues attended a packed service of thanksgiving for this true and good friend.

We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Pam, daughters Lynne and Jill and grandchildren Georgie, Lauren, Christopher and Joe.

Only a few weeks later – on 25 May – another retired branch member, Les Henderson, passed away in hospital at the age of 82.

Les had a moment of glory when the BBC were filming the ‘Roundabout’ series of films. Les was always smart and clean and when the film crew wanted to film someone getting oil from the oil stores and carrying them to a locomotive, the foreman turned to Les. He came into the mess room and said to him, ‘You’ll have to do it – you are the only presentable one here!’

Les obliged.

May they both RIP

Les Muir, Secretary, King’s Cross Branch
A treasury of rail in the valleys of Wales

A private house in Garnant in the Amman Valley is home to one of the biggest collections of rare railway artifacts in the UK. As it is not far from Swansea where the union held its annual conference this year, Chris Proctor went to investigate ...

It’s a surprise to see Don Lawrence at the doorway of his home - because he is dressed in the full uniform of a 1940s GWR station master, right down to his cotton socks which sport the company logo. From the outside his house looks like any other, but inside the vast ground floor is an Aladdin’s cave to anyone with enthusiasm for, or memories of, the railway.

It was Don’s workplace when he first came to South Wales 22 years ago, when he was 55. He set up shop as a watch repairer, having decided to leave the rat-race and ‘live a rich life rather than building up a bank account.’

His accent quickly establishes that he is not a local, and sounds Canadian. ‘I picked it up when I lived there, and it stuck because of my Canadian wife,’ he says. Originally from Weymouth, Don moved to Garnant from Hemel Hempstead where he worked as an instrument engineer for the Dickinson Robinson Group (DRG).

Every object in his collection, he says, has a story. And so does his move to Garnant. ‘I got so bored during a wet week in our caravan in Kent that I started reading Exchange and Mart and saw this house for sale for about a tenth of the cost of properties where we lived, so we drove here to see what it was like. We fell in love with the place and bought it as a holiday home. Six months later we moved here permanently. It was the best thing we did.’

He smiles broadly as he recalls, ‘Whenever we turned up the neighbours at each side rushed round to give us freshly baked cakes. It got to the stage that before we came my wife spent a week baking Canadian-style so we’d have something to give them in return! ’

‘I opened a clock and watch repair shop in the front of the house. I didn’t know how long I could earn a living out of it, because I thought I’d have repaired all the local clocks in a year or so and then business would dry up. But it didn’t happen like that. People heard of me and started sending clocks from all over the world. Fixing clocks, it seems was a dying art.

‘In fact, fixing anything is a dying art.’

A HOBBY TAKES OVER A HOME

But then eleven years ago Don decided to retire. ‘Then I thought, ‘So what do I do now?’’

He tinkered with radio-controlled boats before turning to railway memorabilia. What started as an interest has now emerged into perhaps the best private collection in the country, which he occasionally opens on request to enthusiasts for free as the Garnant Railway Museum. It stretches through his garage, includes three large rooms and even has model track (he prefers the sturdier ‘O’ gauge) meandering out into the garden.

He found a lot of his treasures in car boot sales and eBay - but much has been donated. Half a dozen local retired drivers take an active interest in his museum. One of them was Tyssul Evans, a former driver at Fishguard and Didcot, to whom the museum is dedicated and whose obituary Don wrote for the March Journal.

‘People throw things out, not knowing that they will be interesting, even valuable, to others in years to come;’ Don laments. ‘When the mines closed around here they threw everything down the pit and filled it in. A terrible waste.’

A FEW FAVOURITE THINGS

Does Don have favourite pieces?

‘A few, yes. I really like this glass box with three tickets from Garnant station. One of them isn’t cancelled. And the 1888 GWR boundary marker. Brunel replaced the entire broad-gauge rail with standard gauge in 1892 – so this is a real relic from before what was a land-mark change.

‘But it’s always amazing what attracts people. I’ve seen drivers savouring things that have seemed unremarkable, but touch a chord or a memory. Everyone finds some object they find fascinating and strangely touching.’

Don’s Garnant Railway Museum isn’t open to the public (‘My wife won’t let me!’ he says) – but if you get in touch with him through the Journal, he says he’ll be only too happy to show you around this wonderful hall of memories.
John silenced at Glasgow Branch!

The May branch meeting of Glasgow branch became a presentation event for members to receive their ASLEF service badges. Following the usual branch business of reports from the various reps and the usual circulars and correspondence, Company Council secretary Ian Smith, who was deputising for District Organiser Kevin Lindsay, awarded badges as follows:
- Roddy McDonald – 5-years badge
- Scott Mungall – 5-year badge
- George Mitchell – 30 year badge

Ian himself was presented with his 20-year badge by branch chairman Jim Walsh before he made the final presentation of a 40-year medallion to John Strachan. John is a long-time activist and who regularly attends branch meetings. For once, he was quiet as Ian made the presentation - but he was soon back to his usual self!

Afterwards, many of the members at the meeting enjoyed ‘a small social gathering’!

Gordon Harrington, Assistant Secretary, Glasgow branch

Some of the mustered Glasgow clan (left to right) Scot Mungall, Roddy McDonald, John Strachan, Ian Smith, George Mitchell and Glasgow branch chair Jim Walsh

Good night at the Grove

At our April branch meeting our EC member, Terry Wilkinson, gave us an update on the latest developments in pay talks before we had reports from the Trains Council and the local Health and Safety and Industrial reps. To end the night, Terry presented long service badges to Chris Copping, Danny Johns and Steve Condon. All in all, it was an enjoyable evening.

Graham Dean, Secretary, Arnos Grove branch

Farnham un-ruffell-Ed

Doug Ruffell of our Farnham branch has retired from the railway after almost 40 years’ service. He was presented with an ‘O’ Gauge Scale model of a Class 47 at a special evening organised by our local staff reps Barry Foster and Martin Wanick in The Lamb public house. Many of Doug’s workmates from Farnham, Woking and Basingstoke were in attendance.

Doug started his railway career as a Secondman at Basingstoke in 1971. Five years later he took promotion to Driver at Effingham Junction, a small and quiet country depot in Surrey.

After a short while of pootling and moving depot to Wimbledon for main line work and fast trains to Portsmouth.

He enjoyed this until it was time to move nearer to his home, so in 1982 Doug moved to Farnham where he stayed for the rest of his career quickly becoming one of the many celebrated characters of the depot.

Steve West, Reporter, Farnham branch

Upcoming events

- GARSTON DEPOT REUNION
  - is holding its next reunion at the LMS club in Bursnall Street, Garston on 24 September. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased from either Steve Maloney at Lime Street, Steve Foster at Kirkdale, Mick Maloney at Birkenhead, Steve Glover Lime Street or Chris Todd at Lime Street. Chris can also be contacted on 07927996529 or email todd390@hotmail.com

- TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS’ FESTIVAL
  - The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Festival is being held from Friday 15 July to Sunday 17 July. All are invited to this gathering which combines music and entertainment with a campaign to save public services and promote an economy that promotes a fair and sustainable future for all. Further details are available at http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk

- Portsmouth wishes hasta la vista to ‘Wingnut’
  - At the Portsmouth & IOW Branch May’s meeting, Tom Chapman (aka ‘Wingnut’) finally bowed out with 45 years dedicated service to ASLEF and the railway. He was presented with an ASLEF coal train and a retirement certificate by the Chair, Ruth Vincent, in honour of his dedicated service to the union.

Wingnut heads south!

Tom will now be breaking down barriers in Spain where he will finally rest his ears!

John Glazebrook, Secretary, Portsmouth & IOW

MARTYRS’ FESTIVAL

The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Festival is being held from Friday 15 July to Sunday 17 July. All are invited to this gathering which combines music and entertainment with a campaign to save public services and promote an economy that promotes a fair and sustainable future for all. Further details are available at http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk

-todd390@hotmail.com

Can also be contacted on 07927996529 or email todd390@hotmail.com
Thanks to No 7 from Brian

I WOULD like to thank all the branches that nominated me for the position of EC member for District No 7, and all the members in the district for their support during the election.

I believe that to have been nominated unopposed was a vindication in the way ASLEF has unified within the district. I would also like to place on record my appreciation of the professionalism of our Branch Officers and Company Council members that has enhanced this position.

On a more personal note, a big thanks to our District Officer Stan Moran for his advice and friendship whilst I have been the EC member.

Brian Corbett, EC member, District No 7

Working after 65

After I wrote last month about the age of retirement I can tell you that South West Trains has embraced the law change and granted a Mainline Driver the right to continue working past 65. It’s a first for our company and an example to operators nationwide.

For those who argue this is wrong, I must point out that none of the regulatory bodies – such as HSE, RSSB, ORR or the DfT – have offered any reason why a driver cannot continue past 65 if they meet all the required standards.

I agree to some extent that it denies an opportunity for a younger person to enter our grade, but a new entrant can be of any age above the minimum. So someone retiring can be replaced by someone almost as old - or even older! It’s our job to look after our existing members, so we shouldn’t call on them to retire so they can be replaced by someone we are yet to meet - and who may not even embrace union membership!

And just as a footnote – I’m aged 45.

John Taylor, Drivers LLC - Guildford.

The vital helping hand of Union

I’VE been off work since November 2009 waiting for an operation on my upper spine/neck.

In October we received a cheque from the union’s hardship fund. Without it we would have been well and truly stumped. Life is hard living off benefits and you can’t believe how much your generosity has helped over the past months. I’ve seen many appeals and collections in my 21 years on the railway – but until now I never realised how important they could be.

The day I went into hospital I phoned home to my wife and my youngest boy Darren were okay – to be told that union reps had dropped a cheque for almost £800 through our letterbox. You can’t imagine how the worry lifted from my shoulders.

The week before Christmas you gave me another cheque which was followed by more, for varying amounts, over the following months. My wife couldn’t believe it, and I varied from being dumbfounded to being embarrassed. Until then I thought I might have to go bankrupt because of red letters that kept arriving.

I’m not very good at putting things like this down on paper. I’m probably a grumpy old man who finds it difficult to say thank you. How do I say it to the hundreds of branches and thousands of members who threw me a life-belt when I thought I was drowning? All I can say is that without you, we would have given up long ago.

On behalf of my wife, sons and myself, from the bottom of our hearts: thank you very much.

Sadly, the side effects of the operation have led me to ask to be considered for redundancy on ill health grounds.

Don’t ever let anyone tell you that union membership is just an expensive diary. Many of you will never experience that fully unless you go through something like this. It’s friendship and brotherhood, being strong together, being generous to each other, having sympathy with those less fortunate and most of all looking after each other.

I will also never forget any of you. It takes a special person to be a train driver. You are all special. Don’t let anyone tell you you’re not.

Andy Boyce, Driver - Colchester

ALL EQUAL IN UNION

In reply to Phil Garner’s letter in the June issue of the Journal, I would like to say I agree about the PN B’s and the abuse of the diagramming - but I would suggest Phil to task on the ‘downsizing’ of our union.

There are government departments for a lot of things that affect us apart from equalities - such as health and safety and pensions – but would he suggest the union stops doing work on these issues too? And as for the union’s international work, I’m sure he would feel differently if he listened to some of the union reps from the countries that outlaw unions including harassing them for holding what we would regard as ordinary branch meetings.

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A union is just what it says: it means that together we are stronger – and I’d argue that includes international members. The more constructive minds we have at our disposal, the more ideas we receive to help our members.

Downsizing a union only benefits the management. ASLEF does concentrate on its own members – and that includes ones from ethnic minorities, LGBT and women. Would Phil really advocate ignoring these members’ needs simply to save a few pence?

Floyd Doyle, Cambridge branch

Harmonisation harmony!

Just a word of thanks to our DFC reps and District Organiser Mick Whelan for securing an agreement that is acceptable to nearly all the drivers in London Midland, following procrastinated harmonisation talks.

Our negotiators continually behaved in a
professional manner when it would have been easier to succumb to the tactics being employed by others at the negotiating table.

It would be remiss of me not to state how proud I am of all our drivers at Birmingham New Street Branch who conducted themselves with dignity and solidarity throughout.

Our thanks also to all the other depots and drivers on London Midland who, with the exception of a couple of ‘stocking tops’, gave their support to our ASLEF reps.

Angie Butler, Secretary, Birmingham New Street branch

Good memories of you all

I AM writing this letter to say a big thank you to all who contributed to a collection which I gratefully accepted after I was dismissed from employment as a train driver at Millerhill depot in Edinburgh.

I have enjoyed my career on the railway over the last 24 years and have some good memories of working at South Dock, Sunderland and Tyne Yard, Gateshead, not to mention two spells at Millerhill.

I have been grateful over the years to have met and worked with some real characters and having the chance to work in an environment which suited me.

I have invested the very generous collection you raised for me and when I have decided what to do next I will use the money to retrain or seek an educational qualification which will assist me with my future employment. I end by wishing all who knew me and worked with me over the years all the very best for the future. Thank you again.

Kevin Baird, Driver, Millerhill

Thanks for badge support

You kindly included an advert for an ‘ASLEF 130th anniversary’ badge in the previous two issues of the Journal. As I said, £1 from each sale went to the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign – and we’ve sold them all.

Rick Sumner, the convener of the NJMC, wrote to thank me for the £107 we raised. He also said that they are still helping, as best they can, 20 men who have never worked since March 1984. One, he told me, was beaten unconscious by police at his own doorstep and this left him with slight permanent brain damage.

He is just one of the victims. It is only thanks to fellow trades unionists that they are still able to offer the ‘sacked lads’ some limited financial assistance.

Les French, Marylebone branch

Alan bows out

I would like to thank members of Banbury, Aylesbury and Marylebone branches for their generosity and good wishes following my recent retirement from the railway after 40 short years.

Although I have already expressed this to Banbury branch personally, I felt a few lines in the Journal would be appropriate.

In closing I’d like to add my best wishes to friends and colleagues on freight and passenger companies who I met from my BR days to the present. Thanks to you all. The railway was, and hopefully will remain, an industry full of fine people.

Alan Jones, Retired Members Section

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FIRST EDITION of the only recognised Tram/Light Rail ASLEF Branch. CROYDON TRAM/LIGHT RAIL No1 (270)Badge cost £5 each with £1 P&P. Cheques payable to: “CTRLRNo1” and sent to David Brinkworth, 6 Peregrine Court, 47 Albermarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HL or via Paypal david@brinkworth.me.uk

FAVERSHAM BRANCH (077) has finally launched its 25th Anniversary ASLEF/NUM badge. They cost £10 each including P&P. A few Faversham Branch Centenary badges remain available at £5 each including P&P. To order please contact the Branch Secretary, Steve Gurdler, 18 Hunters Way West, Chatham, Kent ME5 7HL, steve.gurdler@aslefonline.co.uk or 07941 110473

FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES and FOOTBALL BADGES bought by collector. Please call or email with any pre-1965 programmes or other early football memorabilia. Martin Scott 07718 131622 Email: scottfootball@hotmail.com

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A VERY LIMITED NUMBER (25) OF THE KING’S LYNN ASLEF BRANCH CENTENARY BADGE (2006) have been reproduced and are available at £10 inc. P & P from M Steele, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton King’s Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX or Telephone 07788 153954.

130 YEAR ASLEF ANNIVERSARY BADGE One of 100. £6 each including postage and packing. £1 for each sale goes to Justice for Mineworkers. Contact Les French, 9 Milton Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 5LP or 01634 576 058

INTERCITY DRIVER BASEBALL CAPS, navy blue embroidered, only 50 made, adjustable velcro strap on reverse. £8.50 each plus £1.50 p&p. Email intercityexpress125@hotmail.co.uk or call 07930-419850 for payment details.

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.

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, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.
History repeats itself at Derby’s Silk Mill

177 years ago the owners of Derby’s Silk Mill locked out its workers for joining a union. This year workers in the building were turfed out because of cuts …  

Chris Nutty, ASLEF Derby Area Trades Council delegate, reports …

N 1833 Derby’s Silk Mill owners locked out their workers simply because they were in a trade union.

By November that year a large proportion of Derby’s workers had joined a trade union and the Silk Mill masters took fright demanding that their workers abandon this ‘great power of darkness’, as the events were described in the Times newspaper of the period. The workers refused and the Mill owners’ denied some 1,800 workers employment for five months in the bitter dispute over the right to be a trade union member.

Some socialist historians consider the Silk Mill Lockout to be as significant an event as Tolpuddle in the history of the British trade union movement. Every year – on the Saturday of the May Bank Holiday - the sacrifices that the mill workers made for the right to be a union member are remembered in a march organised by the Derby Area Trades Council (DATC).

Traditionally the march starts at Derby’s Market Place and finishes at the Silk Mill. This year was different.

LOCKED OUT AGAIN

The march halted at the Silk Mill while Steve Hardy, one of the current Silk Mill’s workers, laid a wreath at the memorial to the workers. Then it was back to the Market Place to hear the main speakers – including Cheryl Pidgeon (TUC), Alex Gordon (RMT), Paul Bayliss (Derby Labour Group) and Labour MP Chris Williams – and enjoy some suitable entertainment from the Banner Theatre Group.

In 2011 history repeated itself when the Con-Dem Council, which now runs the mill as a museum of Derby’s industrial heritage, locked out their workers. Because of the ‘current economic situation’, the museum is to be mothballed for two years – with no firm re-opening date. All the Council say is that it is ‘mothballed for a period of time after Sunday 3rd April 2011’. It adds that it will ‘do everything it can to ensure that the building re-opens as soon as possible, as it plays a big role in realising a positive future for the city’.

At the risk of stating the obvious, if they care so much, why on earth have they shut it!

A LOSS TO US ALL

The closure of the Silk Mill Museum is a loss to both the city and the nation. The bulk of its exhibits are rail and aviation related, reflecting the city’s strong links to these industries. Among other interesting items it included an apparatus from the Chief Mechanical Engineer’s Office in Nelson Street that was used to work out valve setting for steam locos and a Class 91 cab. It also featured Rolls Royce aero engines from radial through to modern jet engines as well as other displays covering local industries like mining, pottery and foundry work.

It was a brilliant educational facility and it will be a shame if the next generation of Derby’s children will not have the opportunity to learn from this museum how and why their city developed as it did.

EXANDING EVENT

ASLEF’s Derby branch, as usual, supported this year’s event which drew over 200 supporters. The event continues to grow, although on the march long-time DATC stalwart and former EC member Ted Cartwright recalled that in the late 60s/early 70s only five or six people continued the wreath laying tradition. As interest grew again GS Ray Buckton and various ASLEF EC members bolstered the numbers.

There are now plans to engage more with the general public by organising stalls and entertainment in the market place after the marches.

It is important that we remember the events of the past and the sacrifices that our forbears endured to fashion the living conditions we have now; just as it is essential that we continue to fight for a fairer society - although in the current economic climate we may have to fight just to keep what we have.

The Silk Mill strikers of the 19th century have shown us the way.
Prize Crossword No. 63 set by TLC

ACROSS
1 Sparkling drink (12)
7 Dutch cheese (5)
8 Ornamental hair decorations (7)
11 Blind attachment to a particular creed (7)
12 Deformity (7)
13 Tree (5)
14 Guilt of breaking the marriage vow (9)
16 Quarrelled (9)
19 Vision (5)
21 CSE Grades (1-6)
23 Defensive barricade (7)
24 Give an account (7)
25 King of Libya (1950-69) (5)
26 Substances used in the operating theatre (12)

DOWN
1 Betrothed (7)
2 Nervous excitement (7)
3 Off the peg (5-4)
4 Fox-hole (5)
5 Evening entertainment (7)
6 Old married couple (5,3,4)
9 One who lubricates (5)
10 Unfounded general belief (12)
15 Stress mark (9)
17 Dangerous weapon (5)
18 Hand held explosive (7)
19 Japanese officer (7)
20 Aids defective vision (7)
22 Newspaper, colloquially (5)

Solution to Crossword No 62 which appeared in the June 2011 edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Mike Harding** from **Dagenham**

ACROSS 1 Osteopath 8 Mile after Mile 11 Olga 12 Dream 13 Spur 16 Montage 17 Disdain 18 Talkies 20 Magical 21 Ruin 22 Agent 23 Omen 26 General Pardon 27 Old Street DOWN 2 Seed 3 Enforce 4 Prepaid 5 Tamp 6 Diagonal Lines 7 Clapham Common 9 Dormitory 10 Crinoline 14 Habit 15 Usage 19 Signals 20 Manipur 24 Bell 25 Brae

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

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Thanks for all your responses to the 60th 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.

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