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Cancer in our industry of zero hours contracts

I have touched before in this column on those zero hours contracts that are a cancer in our industry and our concerns for safety, conditions, and pensions – and the undermining of legitimate operators. Now the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union is taking on Hovis in the north-west over the replacement of what are really full-time jobs with zero hours contracts, and we have sent them our fraternal greetings and support.

The Labour Party says it will look at the problem where those contracted to full-time roles can be left at home on a whim and, although they have no right to work, are barred from taking other work! What sort of nonsense is that?

Look at the Rail Accident Investigation Branch investigation into a Devon & Cornwall Railways SPAD at Stafford. We are demanding a public inquiry into DCR and its total negligence in relation to competence and operational safety.

We are concerned that this incident would not have been investigated but for repeated requests, from an individual, and about the Office of Rail Regulation’s role in supervision of new operators’ safety management systems.

Everyone should read the RAIB report – there is a summary on our website – because it is quite clear the person operating the Class 47, a senior manager at Amtrain, working on a zero hours contract with DCR, was not conversant with the traction, his only experience was on a low speed heritage operation, and he apparently developed a massive route card which he had never been tested on, in line with current industry standards, and, therefore, cannot be deemed conversant with the route.

So experienced was this operator that he apparently did not realise he was doing 100mph on a light engine with a defective speedo? What crap! Our members have lost their livelihoods for less. Will someone explain to me how these people are still in operation and when are the industry bodies going to look at themselves?

Mick Whelan, General Secretary
HS2 will get Britain back on track

It’s been open season on High Speed 2, with leaks from the Treasury suggesting the cost has gone up, and outright hostility to the project from Peter Mandelson, Alistair Darling, and the right-wing Institute of Economic Affairs.

‘These latter-day doom and gloom merchants share two characteristics,’ says ASLEF general secretary Mick Whelan. ‘They are all pessimistic. And they are all wrong.’

Mick believes that Britain’s rail network needs to be expanded to cope with demand, both now and in the future; that investment in the infrastructure of this country is the only way to get Britain out of recession; and that if HS2 is abandoned, the money will disappear.

‘People say if HS2 was stopped, the money could be spent on the existing network. That is not going to happen. The critics share a naïve belief that there is a wedge of money sitting in the Treasury marked for the railways.’

Mick has written to Ed Miliband to urge the Labour Party to maintain its support for high speed rail. ‘We believe Britain needs not only a new high speed rail line – but a high speed rail network.’

He reminded the Labour leader that the number of rail passengers has doubled since 1995 and that, in the same period, freight traffic has risen by 65%. ‘The existing rail network is operating at near full capacity,’ Mick warns. ‘Neither new motorways nor domestic air travel are sustainable options to meet the mobility requirements of a British population expected to grow by 10 million by 2033.’

Lessons from Tube fire incidents

Two incidents on London Underground have demonstrated the irresponsibility of reducing platform staff and cutting back on London fire stations.

A fire on the track caused a packed District line tube to stop for an hour between Southfields and Wimbledon Park. Fire fighters attending the fire distributed water to worried passengers stuck on the train.

A week later, a Central line train almost in Holland Park station filled with smoke, probably as a result of a brake fault. Terrified passengers frantically tried to escape by forcing open doors.

‘Had there been sufficient platform staff at Holland Park passenger fears could have been allayed, and the position explained to prevent panic,’ said Mick Whelan. ‘The first incident shows clearly that any cuts to London’s fire service would border on the criminal.’

Boris Johnson, the Conservative Mayor of London, overruled the governing body of the London Fire Brigade and gave the go-ahead to close ten fire stations and cut 552 fire fighters’ jobs.

EVERYBODY WANTS A PIECE OF THE ACTION

ASLEF activists are invited to join members of the RMT, TSSA, and Unite in three days of action organised by Action for Rail, which is funded by the TUC and Britain’s rail unions. The European Transport Workers’ Federation is co-ordinating demonstrations against the European Union’s fourth railway package on 9 October. A London Day of Action will be held at London Underground and over ground stations against the closure of booking offices on 23 October. And another day of action on 5 November will mark the 20th anniversary of the act to privatisate British Rail. More information from Katy Proctor at proctork@aslef.org.uk

500 CLUB: The winning number in September was 8 and Iain Black scooped the prize of £318.

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Union welcomes electric train prototype

Mick Whelan, ASLEF’s general secretary, has welcomed a research project intended to develop trains powered by electric batteries.

‘If the technology can be proved to work, it will be a further step in making rail the unrivalled ecological transport alternative,’ he said. ‘Replacing diesels with electric trains would hugely boost the UK’s attempts to reach its pollution reduction targets.’

Funding for a prototype is being provided by Network Rail, the Rail Safety and Standards Board, and the Department for Transport. Bombardier is charged with developing a train fitted with lithium phosphate and hot sodium nickel salt batteries in conjunction with Greater Anglia. The trains could run over non-electrified lines and charge at stations along the route. Initially the Class 379 is being examined for the project. If all proceeds to plan, a prototype will run on an electrified branch line on the Anglia route with its pantograph down, so the driver has the fallback of raising it to restore power in case of failure.

The programme is expected to be complete by the end of next year.

Heritage rail now £250m industry

A new report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Heritage Rail estimates the value of heritage railways to the UK economy as some £250 million. It says there are now more than 100 heritage railways and tramways in Britain which attract tourists and provide employment as well as valuable skills, training, and apprenticeships.

The group concludes that heritage railways provide employment for 3,700 staff nationally and attract another 18,500 loyal volunteers. It recommends encouraging running public transport services on some heritage lines and recommends simplified planning processes to help them expand and, particularly, to connect with Network Rail.

And 45 years after the end of steam on British Rail, more than 750 steam locomotives are still in service on heritage railways, and more than one a day ran on the national rail network last year, in addition to heritage lines.

NEW STUDY BACKS AIR-RAIL LINK

An independent report has backed building a direct rail link between Glasgow airport and the city centre – four years after the Scottish government scrapped plans to build one. The study, commissioned from infrastructure specialists Aecom by Glasgow airport, Transport Scotland, and Glasgow and Renfrewshire councils, has come down with a firm recommendation for an airport-city rail link. Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF’s officer in Scotland, said: ‘An efficient and reliable rail link from the airport would be a benefit for the whole area, and a major boost for Scottish business development.’
Maria promises a fresh look at the way we run our railway

ARIA EAGLE, the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, has described rail privatisation as a disaster and promised that the next Labour government will restructure the railway network in Britain.

Speaking at a packed Question Time-style Action for Rail fringe meeting at the TUC in Bournemouth, Maria said: ‘Rail privatisation has been a disaster. The Rebuilding Rail report calculates that £1.2 billion a year is being wasted and our railway is 30% less efficient than any other railway in Europe. The numbers are difficult because the industry is opaque – I struggle to get numbers because of “commercial confidentiality” – but we know passengers are paying 1% a year above inflation, and we know it’s the economics of the mad house.’

She promised that a Labour government would take a fresh look at the way we run the railway in Britain – but admitted that she has to persuade a few of her colleagues in the Shadow Cabinet to get behind her plan.

‘The next government has some real opportunities to make some serious decisions about the future of the rail industry. We have to win the next election – and persuade a few people in the Labour Party – but we have a really strong case.

‘It’s right to consider the structure of the railways in Britain and whether there is a better way of doing things. I am convinced of that but I have to convince others in the party. I hope we can go to the country next time with an offer that is different from the past and is distinct from this government.’

Simon Weller, ASLEF’s national organiser, tackled the myths of privatisation peddled by the Conservative Party and their friends in the privatised train companies.

‘There’s the myth of more investment; the myth of innovation; the myth of a better run railway; and the myth – laughable, now – that it was going to be cheaper.

‘It’s obviously not cheaper, because fares have gone up, and gone up much faster than wages; our rolling stock is older; and the most innovative thing since privatisation is the Oyster card, smart ticketing, provided by TfL, which is effectively state-owned. Investment is always state investment; none of it comes from the private operators who only ever invest in their brand.’

Simon added: ‘We need root and branch reform of the way public services are delivered in this country because it’s clearly not working at the moment. The public are being short changed by the politicians. We need a strategic vision for the railways and for our economy.’

Sukhdev Johal, Reader in the School of Management at Royal Holloway, University of London, and co-author of The Great Train Robbery: The Economic and Political Consequences of Rail Privatisation report for the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change at Manchester University, said: ‘No train operating company is profitable if you include direct and indirect subsidies. Can anyone give me a reason why a train operating company should exist? No one can ever answer that! Yet we give these TOCs so much scope to influence the shape of our industry. They are like a mining company; they extract money from the system and put nothing back. Let’s be clear – it’s a giant scam.’

He added: ‘We have a democratic deficit here. There is no business case for a privatised rail system, and the people in this country don’t want a privatised rail system. But the politicians aren’t listening. And then they wonder why people are losing faith in the political system!’

Manuel Cortes, general secretary of the TSSA, said: ‘No one thinks privatisation has worked. Bus and train operators have been ripping off passengers and ripping off the taxpayer. It’s obscene that anyone should make a profit out of how we get to work. Obscene! It’s morally indefensible to run public services so someone, somewhere, can make a private profit. It won’t cost a penny to bring the railway back into public ownership.’

Diana Holland, assistant general secretary of Unite, said: ‘Railways bust the old myth that public is worst and private is best. The East Coast main line shows that is wrong. We need a properly and fully integrated rail system and you can’t have that in a fractured, fragmented, privatised, and franchised system.’

Andy Botham, company council, East Midlands Trains, speaking from the floor, said: ‘In a recent poll 70% of the population said they want renationalise the railways. It’s a popular public policy! We don’t have to convince the public; we have to convince the politicians.’

When Maria Eagle admitted: ‘I have travelled first class, in the past, but I don’t any more, because it looks bad’ Bob Crow smiled: ‘Everyone should travel first class!’

PARLIAMENT OF THE PEOPLE

The Trades Union Congress met, for the first time in 24 years, at Bournemouth. Delegates from all unions gathered for the parliament of the trade union movement and the debate, ahead of the party political conferences, on jobs, growth, and fair pay set the agenda, and the tone, for the political debate in the country this autumn.

FRANCES ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Frances O’Grady used her first speech as general secretary of the TUC to call for the return to public ownership of Britain’s railway network. In her keynote address, Frances told delegates: ‘We oppose the creeping privatisation of our education system. We want our railways returned to public ownership. And let’s send a strong message from this Congress – we will fight this latest, senseless, sell-off of the family silver. Hands off our Royal Mail!’
Public transport does not work in the private sector

Congress backed a composite motion on rail privatisation and the fourth railway package, moved by the TSSA, seconded by ASLEF, and supported by the RMT, during the transport debate on Tuesday morning, immediately after Ed Miliband’s address.

It called on the general council to continue to campaign for a publicly owned rail network which works in the public interest; to lobby to prevent the fourth railway package passing into law; to work with the ETUC to prevent the mistakes of privatisation in Britain being rolled out across Europe and made irreversible here; and to mobilise for days of action against the fourth railway package on 9 October and for the 20th anniversary of rail privatisation on 5 November.

Andy Botham, speaking from the platform, told delegates: ‘The fourth railway package is an innocent name for a vile piece of legislation which opens the way for Europe-wide privatisation of the railways.

‘This is part of the European Commission’s obsession with free markets. But privatisation of the railway doesn’t work here and it won’t work in the rest of Europe. Since privatisation £11 billion has been pumped into the pockets of the privateers. We have the highest rail fares in Europe.

‘Public transport doesn’t work in the private sector. The privateers will run the profitable routes and the non-profitable routes will be closed or have to be funded by the state. ‘HS1 cost the taxpayer £6 billion and was sold for £2 billion. HS2 is set to cost more than £80 billion and will probably be sold off for a fraction of that price.

‘We need to resist this legislation and push for the renationalisation of our railways, not support this scam to be spread throughout Europe.

‘My members are tired of being touted off to the highest bidder every five or seven years, treated like cattle at an auction.

‘We need a commitment from the Labour Party that not only will they oppose this legislation but they will commit to the renationalisation of our railways.’

This government doesn’t give a damn

In the debate about welfare and social affairs on Tuesday afternoon, a composite motion defending the welfare state, social security and universal credit, moved by the PCS, and supported by ASLEF and the GMB, was overwhelmingly passed. Andy Botham, speaking from the platform, told delegates: ‘This is yet another coalition attack on young, vulnerable people who are being punished by this uncaring Con Dem government.

‘The coalition is pushing people online, yet many can’t afford internet access. The coalition says use internet access in our libraries, but this is the government that is closing our libraries!

‘This government is forcing people to go to pay day loan companies, the very companies that support this coalition government. Their proposals will cause misery in our communities, misery we have to alleviate with food banks, but this coalition government doesn’t give a damn.’

ED COMMITS ON EAST COAST

Ed Miliband repeated his commitment to keeping the East Coast main line in public ownership. During a Q&A the Labour Party leader said: ‘The reality about the East Coast is that it’s been successful in public ownership. We’re not going to be hidebound by the dogma of the past which says that private is always good and public is always bad.’

Half the population

ASLEF underlined its commitment to equality on the opening day of the TUC in Bournemouth by backing a motion to open up every part of the British economy to women as well as men.

It is, we argued, time for the government to address the problem of the under-representation of women in key parts of our economy. Trade unions are playing their part by raising awareness of the issue but employers, we said, have been slow to do their bit and the Conservative-led coalition does not appear to be bothered, either.

In a wide-ranging debate on Sunday afternoon about how unions are helping to change attitudes in male-dominated industries, such as transport, construction, and farming, ASLEF seconded a motion proposed by Prospect calling on the coalition to play its part.

Nigel Roebuck, speaking from the platform, told delegates that while women make up 50% of the population, they only make up 4.2% of train drivers.

‘ASLEF has 833 women members and we want many more. But we can only recruit, as members, the women who are taken on and trained by the privatised train operating companies,’ said Nigel. ‘And the train companies have proved very reluctant to take on women drivers.

Nigel explained to Congress what our union is doing, and called on the coalition, and the TOCs, to do more. ‘Much more.’
Why Labour is right to fight Royal Mail sell off

The Labour Party last month launched ‘Save the Daily Delivery’ – a campaign to oppose government plans to sell off the Royal Mail. Here MICK WHELAN explains why ASLEF supports this drive against the sell-off, and encourages our members to fight to defend an essential service that can’t be trusted in the hands of private investors ...

welcomed last month’s Labour Party launch of a campaign opposing the sell-off of Royal Mail.

I do so instinctively, because this privatisation contains the core problems we are struggling with in our own industry. Essentially it means profits that could be reinvested into rail leave the industry to line the pockets of investors. The industry loses huge amounts of money that could be used to improve the service. This will happen to the post if the sell-off goes ahead.

Bankers are rubbing their hands as they hover around another potential honey-pot. The government intends a Stock Market launch of Royal Mail shares.

ASLEF has opposed Royal Mail privatisation since the ‘70s when it was proposed by Margaret Thatcher and Michael Heseltine. We opposed a similar initiative that was backed by Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair. It was wrong then. It is wrong now.

I also instinctively react against any proposal that is based on the theory that ‘public is bad and private is good’. It is a political parrot cry without any supporting evidence, and a danger to all the public services that mark us out as a civilized society. And I want to end the unquestioning acceptance that we need to endure a regular diet of out-sourcing and privatisation. We are trapped into this defeatist pattern. Royal Mail is a good place to break out of it.

MANAGERS ARE WRONG

In every other industrial situation, the Tory view is unbendable. ‘Management is right. Managers know best. Managers are special people who make correct decisions.’

But Royal Mail managers have declared that they think the sell-off policy is wrong! And a survey of the staff reveals that two-thirds have no confidence in their industry’s direction.

So, you ask the people in the industry – the experts – and when they come up with the wrong answer, you ignore them. It’s not an encouraging start for the Tories, is it?

On the other hand, I am heartened that Labour is organising this campaign because it is a sign that the leadership is beginning to pay attention to it conference delegates who, in 2009, voted for a ‘wholly publicly-owned Royal Mail Group’. It’s good to see we are, even if belatedly, campaigning for that policy.

THE SUMS ARE WRONG

Cutting back postal services, the inevitable outcome of privatisation, is a serious blow to the development of businesses outside cities. A daily delivery at the office could soon be a thing of the past, and all small businesses that use the Royal Mail to will have real cause for concern. In all six mail services in the European Union which are fully or partly privatized, it costs more to post a letter than in the UK.

And why do they want to sell it, anyway? Last year the Royal Mail made a £400 million profit, boosted by the growth area of home deliveries of goods ordered on line. City analysts estimate Royal Mail would sell for around £3 billion. It doesn’t take a financial genius to see that retaining it in public hands is a sensible economic option.

SOCIAL CONCERNS DON’T EXIST

For many people living in places where it’s complicated or expensive to deliver mail, like blocks of flats or remote areas, the sell-off is a disaster. And it’s not just letters.

Labour also fears that home deliveries could become increasingly limited, so people would need to travel miles to pick up large parcels. A privatised Royal Mail would inevitably be under pressure to sell off its assets – such as local delivery offices.

And two other points. Many pensioners find it reassuring to have a regular visit by a postman. It has been, quite literally, a life-saver for many in the past. And if Royal Mail is sold, local post offices, often a focal point for communities, are also under threat. Even the government acknowledges that Royal Mail and post offices are ‘natural partners’. Ministers say they will guarantee long-term commercial agreements between the two – but it is obvious that once you sell something, you lose control of it. It is folly to suggest otherwise – or why would anyone buy it?

I hope you will oppose this further sale of our – your – services. The government might be selling it, but they don’t own Royal Mail – any more than they owned the railways. We all own public services, and it sickens me to see them flogged off for someone else’s benefit.

Mick urges all ASLEF members to sign the petition at the bottom of the article headed Labour says Save our Daily Postal Delivery on the front of the union’s website at www.aslef.org.uk
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Justice under threat from the coalition

**VICTORIA PHILLIPS**, head of employment rights at Thompsons solicitors, says the coalition government’s criminal legal aid reforms will mean the end of specialist representation for wrongly accused union members.

HEN Mick Ward was wrongly convicted of common assault on a young male passenger (see the June edition of Journal) the job and the reputation of an honest and hardworking ASLEF member was put on the line.

ASLEF instructed Thompsons to appeal the conviction. The firm’s criminal law unit, whose lawyers have extensive experience of representing union members accused of work-related crime, understand well the impact that false criminal allegations and convictions can have on someone’s career.

**SUCCESSFULLY APPEALED**

We successfully appealed the conviction by exposing serious flaws in the handling of the case by the Crown Prosecution Service and the British Transport Police, which meant that the magistrates were not told, for example, that the passenger had already been issued with a Youth Reprimand order following unruly behaviour on the day he alleged Mick assaulted him.

As well as lodging an appeal, Thompsons pursued complaints against the British Transport Police and the Crown Prosecution Service which involved a huge amount of correspondence.

The actions and the time spent clearing Mick’s good name would not have been taken by a legally aided firm operating in the environment that the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government has proposed as part of its criminal legal aid reforms.

Justice Secretary Chris Grayling has announced a rethink of the proposals after a high profile campaign by lawyers and civil rights groups. But, as they stand, the coalition’s plans to cut £220m from the criminal legal aid budget and change the way such aid is provided to defendants threatens the very future of ASLEF’s criminal law service.

**TWO-TIER SYSTEM**

If the proposals go through in their current form then many hard-working people – the very people the coalition claims to be on the side of – will be denied the right to choose which lawyer they have to represent them.

Criminal law firms would be forced to tender for national contracts based on the lowest bid. This could mean the end of specialist criminal services such as that provided by Thompsons to trade union members.

The government would be creating a two-tier criminal justice system, with the wealthy on the one hand able to instruct a lawyer of their choice while, on the other, ordinary workers would have no choice but be allocated a solicitor, at random, by a call centre.

The union members we represent are typically teachers, nurses, fire fighters, ambulance drivers, prison officers, rail workers and paramedics – professional people of good character without experience of the criminal justice system. They have been suspended from employment on full pay and the majority are determined to clear their name and return to work as soon as possible.

**SPECIFIC EXPERTISE**

Their situation, like that of the member described, almost always means that there are employment issues in their cases which call for specific expertise. Few general crime solicitors have the experience or the knowledge of the inter-relationship between a criminal investigation and future employability.

The reality is that those who hold positions of trust run a higher risk of being falsely accused. Just being arrested at a police station, rather than attending voluntarily, could have significant implications for someone’s ability to return to work.

The overwhelming majority of people represented by Thompsons through their union’s legal service are dealt with as ‘no further action’ or are acquitted. It is inconceivable, given the scale of the work being proposed, that general crime law firms, or the large corporate providers expected to enter the market by undercutting other bidders, will have the time, the opportunity or the inclination to specialise in work-related allegations such as Mick Ward’s.

**FUNDAMENTAL FLAW**

Without the ability to choose a lawyer with such expertise, miscarriages of justices will be inevitable.

The proposed fee structure alone offers an incentive to criminal lawyers who win the national contracts to proceed on a ‘guilty plea’ basis. This will discourage the sort of work currently done to ensure a fair trial process for wrongly accused ASLEF members.

The fundamental flaw in a tendering process based on price alone is that a proper market, governed by the usual rules, cannot, of course, prevail: there is no choice and there is no true competition.

The proposals are an unreasonable, unnecessary, and a dysfunctional way to try and organise and fund legal representation for people suspected – but not proven guilty – of committing a crime. Chris Grayling must be held to his pledge to rethink them.
Got my MoJO working and it will work for you

The executive committee of ASLEF has made a donation to the Mischarrages of Justice Organisation in Glasgow. Here Paul McLaughlin, MoJO’s project manager, explains what they do

The Miscarriages of Justice Organisation is a unique human rights organisation. MoJO is dedicated to assisting innocent people in prison, and on their release. Our objective is to offer advice and support to people in prisons throughout the UK fighting to establish their innocence.

The organisation was founded by John McManus and Paddy Hill, one of six innocent men wrongfully convicted in 1975 for the Birmingham pub bombing. The convictions of the Birmingham Six were finally quashed, and they were released in 1991.

Paddy made a pledge to campaign for those he had left behind, inside, and to help bring a voice to the voiceless. He thought he might have had to take a year out campaigning on their behalf before trying to build a life outside prison, but has now been campaigning for more than twenty years. MoJO’s aim is to carry on his work.

‘You have more chance of becoming a victim of a miscarriage of justice than winning the national lottery’

We deal with hundreds of inquiries each year. Many people thought that the problem of miscarriages of justice in the British judicial system had been resolved after the high profile cases in the 1980s and ’90s. This is, sadly, not the case. There have been over 6,000 miscarriages of justice in the UK since the release of the Birmingham Six. But miscarriages of justice have faded from the political agenda. Our aim is to ensure this is not allowed to happen.

Our work falls into two categories. Supporting those in prison fighting to clear their names, and supporting those who have had their convictions quashed and are trying to put the pieces of their lives back together.

We offer those who have successfully fought to have their convictions overturned practical support on their release from prison. Assisting in their reintegration back into their communities. We run an after care project which provides practical support with legal issues, benefits advice, housing needs, daily support needs; as well as support with addressing their medical needs which is funded by the Scottish government.

‘In England and Wales bed and board charges are deducted from compensation for victims of miscarriages of justice’

Those who use our service have been diagnosed as suffering from chronic post-traumatic stress disorder. We have found the mainstream mental health services on offer don’t meet the needs of miscarriages of justice victims. It is our belief that to effectively help our clients, treatment for PTSD should be offered at an early stage after release.

We have campaigned for years to ensure the government supports up to its duty of care to those whose lives have been destroyed because of the inadequacies of the judicial system. Successive governments have accepted they have a duty of care to victims of miscarriages of justice but have failed to provide the services or the resources required to meet the needs of miscarriage of justice victims. The British government is failing in its duty of care to innocent people who have had their convictions quashed.

‘Judge Pickles said it would have been better if the Birmingham Six had been hanged than bring the judicial system into disrepute’

We currently support more than 25 individuals in prison and in the community, along with their family members, and we deal with more than 100 new inquiries a year. Our work falls into four areas: legal, educational, medical, and practical support on their release from prison.

We have set up a legal team of trained solicitors providing their time on a voluntary basis to allow us to assess and investigate claims of innocence. Our aim is to employ our own solicitor.

We provide educational services which allow our clients to develop skills that will allow them to achieve success in the future. Currently we offer participation in music, outdoor activities and literacy skills.

One of the UK’s top clinical psychologists provides pro bono support to our clients. We would like to be able to raise adequate funds to formalise this arrangement.

And we aim to support family support groups, campaigns and organisations supporting the wrongfully convicted. We campaign to reform the judicial system to ensure that those who suffer a miscarriage of justice are not brushed off and brushed aside. We try to ensure that the issue of miscarriages of justice remains on the political agenda.

Unfortunately we only receive partial funding from the Scottish government to carry out our work so we require your support to ensure we can provide the best service possible to the victims of miscarriages of justice, and also to allow us to continue the fight to ensure miscarriages don’t occur and that the voices of the victims are not silenced.

Please get your branch or your district to affiliate to Mischarrages of Justice. Motherwell already has. Thank you!

For more information call 0141 418 0152 or visit www.mischarragesofjustice.org
PAUL ROUTLEDGE finally gets a chance to stand on the footplate and, caught between the romance and the reality of the steam locomotive, reflects on a lifetime of kinship with the railway in God’s Own County…

KNOW always took a long time to get into the top link on the footplate, but this is ridiculous. It’s taken more than half a century since I envied train drivers down our street to get my turn on the regulator of Sir Nigel Gresley, thundering up a 1:49 on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

THE FIRE LIKE A GAPING MOUTH OF HELL, ROASTING AND BLINDING

There’s an adrenalin rush on the bucking, heaving footplate, the fire like a gaping mouth of Hell, roasting and blinding. So this is what it’s all about! No wonder there was such great comradeship in ASLEF’s steam days.

Thankfully, for the safety of the travelling public, I’m not allowed more than a touch on the magical lever of power. Puffer Nutter I may be. Qualified I’m not.

Today’s driver of this magnificent thoroughbred, the 100th Pacific built at ‘the Plant’ in Doncaster, is a 28-year-old accountant from Filey, Rob Green, who doesn’t look old enough to clean this A4, much less take her out on the road.

He’s one of a new breed of newly-trained footplatem en on the heritage system – there are more than a hundred such lines around the country – and his fireman is veteran Gary Stainburn, 45, an IT manager from Castleford. Most of the shovelling on this 11-mile run is done by Jack Prince, a 17-year-old cleaner on his first firing turn with 60007.

Gary has a wealth of experience, having driven all three surviving steamable A4s (the others being 60019 Bittern and 60009 Union of South Africa), including stretches of the East Coast. ‘She sounds like a sewing machine on the main line,’ he sighs. ‘She was built to do 100mph for seven hours at a stretch, rather than 25mph.’

That’s all we’re allowed to do on this line. Our seven coach train is overpowered, and the effect is overpowering. Crowds come out to see 60007 blasting up the incline in Newton Dale to the 532ft summit at Fen Bog, where the line’s constructor Robert Stephenson ‘floated’ the permanent way on wattle fences over heather-stuffed fleeces.

Driver Green, introduced to steam railways in a carry cot by his rail enthusiast father, has only to tug the regulator for us to feel the full force of Gresley’s masterpiece. ‘I came here on family holidays,’ he tells me, ‘now I sit here and do it and I have to pinch myself that I’ve actually achieved it.’

WEEKEND FOOTPLATEMEN

There is no top link on this railway, but there is a Whitby link of drivers passed to take trains on to Network Rail, to the premier resort on Yorkshire’s Riviera Coast. Next year, the NYMR will have its own platform at Whitby, increasing through running.

Some scoff at these ‘weekend footplatem en’, but the NYMR is a thriving business, carrying 350,000 passengers a year, infinitely more than in the days of British Rail. 2013 marks its fortieth
Our street of 17 houses, on the short hill up from the station, was for railway people only. I grew up among drivers, shunters, guards, firemen, porters, clerks, signalmen, and even the odd BR policeman. And, inevitably, railway widows and retired railway couples.

**DRIVERS WERE THE ARISTOCRACY OF THE WORKING CLASS**

Socially, we were regarded as a cut above the miners who lived in the Forge nearby. They came home in their pit muck, while railwaymen had uniforms. Drivers were the aristocracy of the working-class.

It was a pretty close-knit community, almost a family affair. When my mother needed help in the middle of the night with the birth of my kid sister, it came from Mrs Bromby in number 1. Her husband Jack was a driver at Normanton motive power depot, coded 20D, in the old days, 55E in BR north eastern region notation. His lad Trevor went on to become a craftsman in the sheds.

Alf Ripley, an ASLEF fireman living with his family at (if memory is right) number 12, became a Labour member of Normanton Urban District Council, where the Tories never had a look in. There’s even a street named after Alf in the town. He talked a good shovel.

**THE CREWE OF THE COALFIELDS**

Normanton in the 1950s was still a major railway centre. There were passenger trains to Manchester, Leeds, York and many other places. The Thames Clyde Express from St Pancras to Glasgow, usually hauled by a Jubilee, still stopped at England’s third-longest platform.

But freight was the big customer. Normanton was known as the Crewe of the coalfields, handling the huge output of dozens of collieries in the area. By night, I could hear the clanking of coal trains being despatched from the marshalling yards. It was a veritable metropolis of commerce.

Now you can take the boy out of Railway Terrace, but you can never take the Railway Terrace out of the boy. Fast forward from my Normanton days to 1969, when I joined The Times in London as a labour correspondent, after stints on the Manchester Evening News and the Morning Telegraph, Sheffield.

**ASLEF WAS BOX OFFICE**

On the newspaper industrial beat, ASLEF was box office. Everything the union did was newsworthy. I immediately hit it off with the general secretary, Ray Buckton, a big, bluff Yorkshireman with a Tyke’s cunning. He knew how to play the media in his battles with British Rail – and they knew it.

Whenever there was any prospect of trouble, Ray would summon us industrial reporters to his office at ASLEF HQ in Arkwright Road, Hampstead. ‘Tell us what it’s like!’ we’d say, before chorusing with him: ‘I’ve never known the lads so angry! Telegrams are flooding in from every depot!’

Then we’d get down to the serious business of talking through the big story, whether it was a local dispute or the national strike over flexible rostering. ‘Flexible rostering,’ we called it in the pub afterwards.

But the boys on the beat got to know and understand the ways of the railway. Some – like me – even sported ASLEF lapel badges during disputes, much to the dislike of fellow commuters, in my case on the Berkmastted to Euston run. I’ve still got mine – and the ASLEF sweatshirts I inherited from my late brother-in-law John Richards, who edited the ASLEF Journal under Mick Rix.

Paul in the driving seat of the world record-breaking steam locomotive Mallard at the National Railway Museum in York

The Sir Nigel Gresley is one of six surviving A4 class locomotives built in Doncaster

year in heritage ownership. It employs just over 100 full- and part-time staff, has a turnover of £6 million a year and contributes £25 million to the local economy.

Behind my ride on the heritage line from Pickering to Grosmont lies a lifetime of kinship with the railway. I was quite literally born into it, I love it, and I’m a fan of the people who make it work. It was always, by the way, ‘the railway’. Your dad worked on the railway, not the railways.

I first saw the light of day in wartime, in 1943, in the front room of 15 Railway Terrace, Normanton, West Yorkshire. In that town, your father was either on the railway or down the pit.

Mine was a clerk on the LMS, but on what you might call compulsory extended leave with the RAF in the Middle East.
Veteran karate kid is going for gold

JOHN MARCHADIER, a driver with South West Trains, is going for glory at the European karate championships in Sheffield this month. Here he tells KEITH RICHMOND why, at 35, he’s considered a veteran in the sport...

JOHN MARCHADIER doesn’t look like a veteran. He is, at 35, in the prime of his life. But at karate, his chosen sport, he’s classed as a veteran. Which brings a wry smile to his lips as he tries to add to the bronze medal he won in Romania earlier this year with a gold at the European championships on home turf here in Britain. Because veteran, when used to describe a car or a star, is a very loaded word. It suggests something that has seen better days while John looks like a lean, mean, martial arts machine. ‘I’m 35 and I’m a veteran,’ he smiles. ‘Those are the rules.’

SUBURBS OF PARIS

John was born and brought up in Paris and started doing karate, shotokan style, as a kid. ‘Living in the suburbs of Paris in the 1970s and ’80s you had to learn how to stand up for yourself, against the bullies, and karate was a way of doing that. It also helped me work off and channel my energy. His parents moved to Pont-à-Mousson, between Nancy and Metz in north-eastern France, near the border with Germany, and in his teens he represented his school, town, and country, France, culminating in becoming European junior champion in 1994.

After studying business management at the University of Toulouse, in south-west France, he came to Britain in 1998 to do an MBA at Kingston University.

UPPER CRUST

‘It was difficult on the finance, and I was self-funding, so I was working at Upper Crust on Waterloo station. Eurostar was still here then and one day I saw they were recruiting. I applied and for two years I was cabin crew on Eurostar from Waterloo to Paris, Brussels, and Disneyland. But one day I went into the driver’s cab, during a tunnel transit, and I thought, this is what I really want to do.’

He started training as a driver – ‘I didn’t realise there was so much to learn!’ – and since 2003 has been with South West Trains, mostly on the Waterloo to Poole main line, as well as the suburbs. ‘The 458 is my favourite, it’s got good brakes, and that’s what we need…’

John had kept fit by running, but with a new wife, Martine, and a young family, as well as a new job, he had given up karate. But when he took his son Wilfred, who is now 11, swimming he saw a poster advertising a karate class and, after a six year gap, went along. He quickly got back into the swing – and Wilfred took to the sport like a duck to water, too, winning gold at the national junior championships at Loughborough last year – but didn’t think of competing again.

He was doing it to keep fit, and because he enjoyed it, and he qualified as a referee to put something back. But then, when he was refereeing, he began to think, ‘I’m as good as some of these fellas,’ so started being seriously coached by Sensei Mohammed Sharif, a former world champion, at the England Shotokan Karate-Do club, affiliated to the WUKF, which meets at the Wavelengths leisure centre in Deptford where he lives.

3RD DAN BLACK BELT

John, who’s now a 3rd dan black belt, won the British Open and then went with the England team – ‘I’m British, this is my home now’ – to the world karate championships at Bucharest in June and brought home a bronze medal. ‘I was gutted at losing to an Italian in the semi-finals. If you’re beaten by someone who is better than you, you accept it, but I know I didn’t really train as hard as I could have done.’

In October, in Sheffield, he hopes to go one better. ‘I’m going for gold…’

Karate, he says, helps him stay alert and focus on the task in hand. And curiously, despite the violent nature of this martial art, his colleagues describe him as ‘Gentleman John’ and ‘very quiet’. ‘John is a popular driver and a loyal member of ASLEF,’ says Steve Richardson, secretary of Waterloo Nine Elms branch. ‘It was a real surprise when he won bronze in Bucharest because he keeps these things so quiet!’

YOUTHS MUGGING

The skills he’s acquired in the karate hall have, though, come in handy a couple of times on the backstreets of the capital as they did in the suburbs of Paris. He was going home after a late shift when he saw two youths mugging a Chinese gentleman, and ‘helped out’. And on another occasion, in Deptford, when a lady had her bag snatched by a man on a bike he followed on foot, caught him, and managed to bring the man – and the bag – back to the woman.

John wins bronze for England in Bucharest

John is going for glory in Sheffield this month

John with his five-year-old daughter Kadiska at Waterloo
Suicide isn’t painless

ASLEF education project worker IAN BECKETT reveals how trauma support can make a real difference when someone jumps in front of your train

At Luton, in December 2008, a person jumped in front of an East Midlands train. Paul Trigwell, an ASLEF member, was the train driver and, as is often the case with those who experience such incidents, this fatality had a profound effect upon him.

Official figures show that there are now, on average, 200 suicides a year on Britain’s railways. Each one has an enormous impact on a wide range of people directly and indirectly involved in the rail industry. Although much work has been put into preventing such incidents, it is acknowledged by the experts that it is equally important to ensure that the trauma experienced after the event is also effectively managed.

The effect on those involved in rail fatalities varies enormously. Some, occasionally, feel extremely guilty, as though they were somehow responsible for what happened, or could have done something to prevent it. Although such feelings are misplaced, they can prolong the trauma experienced if not understood and managed effectively. Similarly, the type of support needed will vary from one person to the next.

ADVERTS ON PLATFORMS

Following the fatality five years ago Paul Trigwell began a course of counselling. It was at these sessions that Paul decided he wanted to do something to help those who felt suicide was the only answer and, at the same time, help his work colleagues who witnessed these incidents.

In February 2009 Paul contacted the Samaritans to ask them if they had considered putting prevention adverts on railway platforms or other similar initiatives. This was timely as a National Suicide Prevention Group had just been set up to tackle the issue of railway suicide, comprising the Samaritans, Network Rail, the British Transport Police, the train operating companies, their umbrella organisation the Association of Train Operating Companies, the Rail Safety & Standards Board, and the rail unions.

Through discussions with Darren Ward, head of operations, strategy and implementation, at East Midlands Trains, Paul discovered that plans were in hand to develop a trauma support training course for the rail industry.

REDUCE THE TRAUMA

Andy Botham, ASLEF’s company council rep at East Midlands Trains, was instrumental in ensuring the course – tailored specifically to the needs of supporting train drivers, their managers, and others, following a suicide – met the needs of ASLEF members and would help give them the techniques to support each other after a traumatic event. Andy explains: ‘After my involvement in after care work following a fatality, I was invited to join the group. I’d get involved in anything that can reduce the trauma of a fatality for our members, quite irrespective of any sympathy we have for the dead person.’

Shirley Handsley, ASLEF’s education project co-ordinator, worked with the pilot group and helped get the course accredited by the National Open Credit Network. Each delegate who completes the course receives a Level 2 certificate in Trauma Support Training.

On 23 June 2011, the first Trauma Support Training course, delivered in partnership with Network Rail and ASLEF, was piloted at East Midlands Trains in Derby.

Since then, in the last two years, 56 courses have been delivered to 17 different train and freight companies to more than 650 delegates, eight out of ten of whom have been rail employees. The demand for Trauma Support Training courses continues to grow and it needs not stop there.

DRIVER TRAINING

Andy says: ‘In the future I would like to see an industry standard for dealing with staff after a fatality; a high standard of counselling for staff following an incident; and the inclusion of railway suicide within the initial driver training programme.’ These are aspirations for ASLEF to work towards with its partners.

Paul Trigwell has become a great ambassador for the Samaritans, and a Rail Safety Champion, winning a number of awards.

Paul says: ‘My drive to help those who feel suicide is the only answer comes from the loss of a friend, through suicide, 17 years ago. I have come a long way since December 2008 when I witnessed an act of suicide. I have made many friends and learnt a lot about suicide and how it affects all those involved.

‘I have been amazed by the interest the rail industry has had in my views and I have done my best to use the skills I have gained to help others. If I can continue to help other people as others have helped me I feel some good will have come out of my experience.’
Gripes of wrath

Our branch meeting at Birmingham New Street, including Birmingham Snow Hill and Coventry, was attended by the GS, EC member Dave Calfe, and full company council. After branch business the floor was given over to the GS who spoke about current affairs concerning ASLEF and reaffirmed to members that if there are gripes to air then the branch is the proper place to air them! Long service awards, totalling 370 years of union membership, were presented to Clive Matthews, Andy Gardener, Gerry Mandell, Pete Dudley (35 years); Andy Collins (30); Rob Lowry, Alan Dickens (25); Barbara Holland, Martin Wilkins, Dutch Holland, Rhys Toney (15); Roberta Wallace, Ramish Damji, Nick Marland, Ian Townsend, Wayne Harris, Mark Dixon, Mark Perryman, Mark O’Neill, Ron Allison (10). Retirement presentations were made to Paul Sharp, Bill Sanders, Rhys Toney, Denis Wootten, Ray Harris, Bob Grey and Mick Coates (Worcester branch). Then we enjoyed a drink (or two) and Bob Lowry gave a very amusing railway version of the Wild Rover on his guitar!

Martin Bromage-Griffiths, branch reporter

So long, farewell

On 24 August Stratford branch bid a fond farewell to Alan Williamson who decided to call it a day after 49 years loyal service to the railway industry and ASLEF. With friends and colleagues, past and present, and his family, we raised a glass to wish him well. We presented him with a few gifts, including a book about East End and Stratford with a few gifts, including a book (including p+p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

On 18 July we had the great honour of welcoming the general secretary, Mick Whelan, and EC president Alan Donnelly; the first time in the history of Holyhead that a serving GS has attended a branch meeting. A big turn-out (90%) heard Mick give an hour-long speech in which he highlighted his vision for the future, including re-engaging with our sister unions and the TUC. Politically, he went into detail on pensions, and the government’s attempts to push new legislation through Parliament, and the money leaking out of the industry because of the disastrous privatisation of Britain’s railways. Alan talked about the McNulty report and the union’s attempt to get free staff travel for all. Then Mick handed long service awards to Bob Higgins (40 years, recently retired with ill health); John Watt (35); John Davies (20); Sylvia Jones (10).

Kev Ederle, branch secretary, Holyhead
Thanks for a send-off that won't be forgotten

Through the Journal I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to Mick Whelan, District 1 organiser Graham Morris, functional council reps Shaun Seymour and Nigel Cummins, and all my friends from Feltham Electric who attended my retirement party on 6 July. It was amazing the number of workmates who attended, and the presentation of a really unexpected and astonishing retirement gift (a TAG Heuer watch). It was a night I will treasure for the rest of my life. Nigel represented me when I experienced difficulties with South West Trains management and without his support and expertise I would probably have been disposed of under ill health many years ago. Thanks also to Shaun Seymour, Gary Weller, Mick Ball, Gary Channing and Mark Bratt for their friendship and support during many years battling with management for my rights as a restricted driver. It was only with the unwavering support of the ASLEF reps and Graham Morris that we managed to keep my job and allow me to complete 50 years as a driver. My case, and my treatment by management over the years, demonstrates the need for all drivers to belong to our union as only ASLEF has the expertise to properly represent drivers. I have been proud to be a member of a great union for my entire railway career, and wish all the membership the best for the future and offer my full support in any way possible.

Fred Green, restricted driver

Bruce is the last man out of the Barrow!

Bruce Parkin retired at the end of August, ending a 52-year association with the railway. Bruce began his career as an engine cleaner at 82E Bristol Barrow Road on 28 August 1961. His retirement makes him the final Barrow Road man to leave the industry. His remarkable service was recognised by both the company and the union last month. Driver Manager Daniel Davis presented Bruce with a clock (although why he’ll need that in retirement, I’ve no idea) while EC member Brian Corbett (pictured with Bruce left) marked his long and valued support for the union.

Mel Thorley, Stockport

Derek Sheppard (centre) celebrates half a century on the line with 35-year Donny drivers Dave Jackson and Steve Gee, general secretary Mick Whelan, and vice-president Tosh McDonald, at the union’s head office last month. Derek started work at Doncaster on 27 August 1962 as an engine cleaner. He moved to Knottingley, West Yorkshire, to get his driving job in 1986 and stayed at the depot until retirement last year. He ended up working for DBS. ‘Most of my work was moving coal. Our motto used to be from pit to power in the hour.’

Mick Holder looks back through the pages of The Locomotive Journal to October 1913 and a piece on pay day loans

PAY DAY LOAN SHARKS
Pay day loan sharks are not a new evil. One hundred years ago Nota Bene noted in the Journal: ‘When ill-fortune forces a man into a money-lender’s grip, there is no knowing when he will be free.

A London clergyman, who interests himself in the protection of borrowers, recently recorded the case of a man who, having borrowed £57, had paid back £74, yet had still to face a bill of sale on his belongings for £54!

‘This is, of course, only one of many similar cases, but it is bad enough, in all conscience, and should serve as a warning to anyone who contemplates getting into the said grip.’

GOING LOCO DOWN UNDER
A report from Australia revealed: ‘The first [award] in New South Wales dealing with locomotive engine drivers, firemen and cleaners in the employ of the railway department.

‘The maximum hours of work per day for men on engines have been reduced from 12 to 10, and no one is to work more than 55 hours per week. The interval between shifts has been made ten hours instead of eight, as at present. Payment for overtime has been introduced, time and a quarter being allowed.

‘The effect of the award will be that the pay of 2,400 drivers and firemen will go up by 1s per day, and 1,000 cleaners and others (including boys) by 6d.’

CORONERS’ COURTS
The right to attend coroners’ inquests was raised following a fatal incident at Aisgill:

‘One opinion, however, we will express, ie, the attendance of trade union representatives at such inquiries should be conceded as a right, and not subject to the goodwill or otherwise of any person, as is the case at present.’

The Manchester Banner Fund Committee reported: ‘It was found that the collection had met with but a tardy response, only about £10 being realised, although £35 to £50 is required to purchase a banner worthy of the Society.’
Vacancy reference: GCDSEPT 13

TRAIN DRIVERS - Sunderland and Bradford

Salary £45,824 (Pay review pending Jan 2014)

Vacancies for experienced train driver have arisen at both of our Grand Central traincrew depots in Bradford and Sunderland. We need team-orientated, passionate individuals with a professional approach to safety, customers and industry partners. If you are a successful candidate you will become part of a team who operate our Class 180 and HST high-speed Inter-city services to and from London Kings Cross. You will work in a roster based on a 35 hour working week with varying shift lengths and some lodging away from home for Sunderland based drivers.

The role offers 33 days paid annual leave, membership of the Arriva Trains UK Pension Scheme (operated by Standard Life), and a death in service benefit. You will also receive free rail travel on Grand Central services and concessionary free travel on train services operated by companies within the Arriva Trains UK group. We also offer other optional company benefits including Health Care, Health Insurance and Childcare Vouchers.

Important Information

Grand Central is an equal opportunities employer and wishes to employ the most suitable candidates for the work to be undertaken.

Full route and traction training will be provided to successful applicants. Roles are based on a 35 hour working week over 7 days, averaged out over the roster cycle period.

If you would like to take your career in a new and challenging direction please complete one of our application forms (available on our website or request a paper copy from recruitment) and email to Recruitment at recruitment@grandcentralrail.com or print and post to Grand Central Railway Company Limited Recruitment, River House, 17 Museum Street, YORK, YO1 7DJ/Fax 01904 466 066. Closing date – 25th October 2013
NORMAN WRIGHT CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE

Norman Wright, who died on July 24, having just turned 93, spent his life championing the cause of his fellow workers and trying to improve the lot of his fellow citizens. He was a man of great principle, never afraid to stick up – and speak up – for what he believed to be right and to rail against injustice.

He was born in Aberdeen on July 23 1920 and went to the granite city’s Kittybrewster and Sunnybank schools before leaving, at 14, to begin his working life at A&R Milne, a bookseller on Union Street, where he earned the princely sum of eight shillings a week. He moved – for a 50% hike in wages – to Taylor & Henderson, a printing company where, despite being employed as a messenger, he was trained on, and frequently found himself working, the lithograph machines.

Consequently, he considered himself worth more than the 12 shillings he was being paid but, when he asked for an additional shilling, in recognition of the extra responsibility, his boss turned him down flat. Demonstrating his determination to make a decision and to stick by it, he gave the firm a week’s notice and quit.

Those principles stayed with him throughout his long career, on the railways and in the local community, as he took up cudgels on behalf of ASLEF, the Labour Party, and health and trades councils in Aberdeen.

Norman, an accomplished footballer, played for North End FC in Dundee for a couple of seasons, and Banks O’Dee FC in Aberdeen, and then, in 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, he joined London and North Eastern Railway as an engine cleaner in Aberdeen. He was posted briefly to York to work as a loco fireman, returning to Aberdeen, and then Fraserburgh.

He joined the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and developed a passionate interest in conditions of service. In 1947 he became a driver and branch chairman at Kittybrewster depot. When it closed, with the transfer of most staff to Ferryhill, he became chairman of the two amalgamated branches, a position he held until retiring in 1984.

Norman was excited about nationalisation, and the creation of British Rail, although the brutality of the Beeching cuts led, later, to disenchantment. Dr Beeching, he believed, had ‘destroyed the railway for many years.’

During the 1970s, as the oil industry developed in the north-east of Scotland, and new homes sprang up in the hinterland, he was among the first to identify a need for new commuter services between the city and the surrounding communities of Inverurie, Stonehaven, Ellen, and Dyce. He drafted a plan including timetables, traction to be used, and staff required, and submitted it to British Rail and Grampian council but, despite many meetings, nothing happened. Eventually he succeeded in introducing a link from Aberdeen to Dyce but, as he noted, ‘Congestion on the roads around Aberdeen gets worse and worse.’

TERRY WATERHOUSE GOD TO HIS FRIENDS

Terry Waterhouse passed away on 29 July at the age of 73 after suffering a heart attack at his home in north Manchester.

Terry started on the railway as an engine cleaner at Newton Heath MPD in 1957, passing out to drive steam locos before they finished in 1968. He was a boiler instructor on main line diesels and then became a major figure in preservation. Terry volunteered at Liverpool Road in Manchester and became the first traction inspector at the East Lancashire Railway in Bury, where he passed out their initial link of drivers. He was the T in T and N Rail Tours and the driving force behind the Trainours Travel Club. For these enterprises, he utilised a former public building – a toilet block! – on the concourse of Victoria station in Manchester. This became known, informally, as Cigar Alley, the headquarters of Bogtours! Terry was a hero to scores of young Class 40 enthusiasts. He took the first of these into Cornwall on a charity tour to Penzance, as a result of which he acquired the nickname ‘God’ because he used to make the impossible possible! He’d organize fantastic journeys. He loved it! We used to say that if you opened Terry up you’d find a train in there instead of a heart. He never did it for the money – he was never a rich man – he did it for the love of the railway.

Terry was buried on 14 August in Moston, not far from the Rochdale line over which he worked for many years.

Mel Thorley, Newton Heath branch

ARThUR MAWDSLEY FOLLOWING THE PORT

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the sad loss on 4 August of ex-Southport driver Arthur Mawdsley at the age of 88. Arthur left school at 14 and worked in a grocer’s shop in Haig Avenue, Southport, for a year and then, at midnight on his 15th birthday, started work at Southport shed where his father was a driver.

Arthur spent all his career at Southport, working his way up through the ranks and, eventually, becoming a driver of all the traction, steam, diesels, and electrics and received a 50-year membership medallion from ASLEF.

He married Dot in 1946, when he was earning just £4 a week, and they lived a very happy life together. Arthur’s hobby was faithfully following the Port (Southport FC) for 60 years.

I knew Arthur for a few years when I started at Southport and he was always very helpful and pleasant and a good union member. Once I got into a spot of bother and Arthur backed me up, all the way, and informed the manager that what I did was correct and I was thankful to him for speaking up for me.

Our thoughts go out to his beloved Dot at this sad time and his family. Rest in peace, Arthur, from all past and present drivers at Southport.

Bill Baxter, company council, Southport
I take it nigh on £50k is not enough?

I write in response to the letter in September’s Journal by Earls Court driver John Hardesty. Bro Hardesty claims it is unfair that drivers are the only grade on London Underground not permitted to do voluntary overtime. I take it the nigh on (just over for IO and SSTO grades) £50k salary is not enough for some people?

LU would love us to do rest day working and voluntary overtime. Why would they need so many drivers if they could wave a pound note in someone’s face to cover a full or part turn? They’d be trigger happy with the attempted sacking of drivers for trivial issues.

The reason we don’t do it is so more people can have a driver’s job. You (not I) would probably not be in the grade now if everyone took this attitude. ASLEF reps and members on LU fought long and hard to gain the pay and conditions we have today. People need to start thinking of the repercussions of trying to get shot of certain policies for their own benefit.

Aside from this, are we not already under enough pressure with performance targets? To do overtime and rest day working would dramatically increase your chances of having a safety-related incident and losing your job due to fatigue. So I ask you this: are you prepared to risk your £50k (and rising) a year job for a few quid (most of which will be going to the tax man anyway)?

This is entirely the sort of attitude that will spell disaster for our grade on LU. It’s bad enough that they are trying to oust us with technology without trying to reduce the grade from within our own ranks.

Dean Forsyth, health & safety rep, North Greenwich

Don’t jeopardize the job

Having read Chris Proctor’s article (September Journal) headlined ‘Technology has made the job more, not less, demanding’ I wholeheartedly agree and hope he gets through to some of my colleagues. The paragraph about Francisco José Garzón being a normal working man in the morning, turned into a monster by the press in the evening, is a poignant one. That could be any one of us. Yet I’m still amazed by some individuals who seem to think that using their mobile phone or other equipment while driving is perfectly alright. We’ve all seen them, or the tops of their heads, more likely. I cannot understand how they can jeopardize the public – and their own careers – for the sake of a text.

Roger Tomkins, Bedford

Court meant closure for me

I agree with TransPennine Express driver Dan Clarke (August Journal). Each driver should have the option to attend the coroner’s court – or not. While I fully support the union’s campaign to remove the requirement to attend, the decision should be left to the driver concerned.

I had to attend three coroner’s courts during my time at Southend Victoria. Two were suicide fatalities under my train; the other was as a witness to a fatality on another train. I have to say I found the process a closure to the events.

At the first I received an apology from the brother of the deceased saying he regretted any distress his brother had caused me. This alone made me feel more in control of the situation. If I had not attended I wonder how long this tragedy would have been with me?

But I understand some fatalities are more shocking than others and maybe the driver concerned would prefer to stay away from the coroner’s court, not wishing to see the family or hear the graphic details read out. This should be his choice.

Mick Miller, retired driver, Southend Victoria

Distressing for drivers

Dan Clarke’s suggestion of coroners allowing drivers involved in fatalities to choose whether they wish to attend inquests or not makes sense. However, the problem is that currently coroners can, and generally do, require drivers to attend and give evidence whether they want to or not.

DEDICATED AND RESOLUTE – STAN’S THE MAN

I wish to record my sincere appreciation at the manner in which ASLEF resolved a recent dismissal appeal on my behalf.

In an incredibly unpleasant and extremely stressful situation, union representative Stan Moran remained dedicated and utterly resolute in getting me reinstated. I am certain that the amount of time and manpower ASLEF committed to my cause, along with Stan’s negotiating skills, are the reasons I was reinstated.

There is no doubt in my mind that without Stan’s intervention I would now be unemployed.

It is impossible to overstate how grateful I am, and I will certainly make sure all of my work colleagues are aware of the enormous efforts made on the day and of the huge benefits of

Joanne with EC member Brian Corbett and DO Stan Moran after the hearing. ‘Relief is etched on all our faces!’

ASLEF membership. Many, many thanks!

Joanne Foy, driver, Chiltern Railways
selection, being compromised by online purchased exercises and word of mouth? Practice makes perfect, as they say! Surely, when taken cold, they give a true picture of the candidate. I guess that is why they must wait six months before a retest following a failure, and why they are only allowed two attempts.

My real point, though, is whatever happened to physics, kinematics, the study of moving objects, time, speed, and distance, inertia, brake force, and energy. Pertinent underpinning knowledge, not to mention a real science. Should kinematics be part of the driver training syllabus; alternatively, should candidates have GCSE Physics?

Basil Faulty said: ‘There is a psychiatrist in the hotel disguised as a guest’ but I say: ‘There is a psychologist on the train disguised as a passenger.’

Nigel ‘Bomber’ Harris, Exeter branch

Happy to help
I was in a rather worrying predicament last year with my wife and mother being in need of care. I was trying to look after them both and do my job as a train driver as well. As a result my own health was deteriorating fast. Thanks to Guildford LDC John Taylor I was given good advice as to which path to take and Nigel Cummins, DFC member, agreed to represent me. This was a very difficult time for me and Nigel and John were always on hand to give me good advice. Nigel talked to me at length on the phone, even when he was on holiday (sorry Nigel) A huge amount of worry was taken off my shoulders and, eventually, I was able to take early retirement. I have seen the hard work ASLEF does first hand and cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have ASLEF membership. I am pleased to say the health of my wife has improved remarkably. I intend to remain a member of ASLEF for as long as I can.

A Iddenden, retired member, Guildford

Scales of injustice
The article on Palestine (September Journal) was very informative and a real eye-opener. I fully support ASLEF’s support for the Palestinians. A lot of people need to be informed on this issue as they have no knowledge of the scale of injustice which is happening in Palestine. I look forward to more articles like that in the future. I would also like to tell you guys that you are doing a fantastic job. Keep up the good work!

Shahab Abbasi, St Pancras branch

And many, if not most, find this prospect extremely distressing.

So much so that at ASLEF head office we regularly get resolutions from branches pushing for the union to campaign to remove that compulsion – which is why we are seeking a meeting with the Chief Coroner.

While Dan’s experience was, happily, very positive in such tragic circumstances, other drivers’ experiences haven’t been, with some facing a very negative reaction from the family of the deceased. Some of our drivers also find it very distressing to see their name associated with an incident in the local press and wider media when reports of inquests appear.

Inquests are public hearings so anyone can attend, anyway, and I certainly would encourage union reps to attend an inquest into a workplace fatality or industrial disease death as part of your union education.

However, the issue for ASLEF is the power of coroners to compel drivers to attend and give evidence when they feel this makes them a victim twice over, especially when their contribution could be made equally well by a written statement.

Mick Holder, Health & Safety Department, ASLEF

A problem like Maria
More pointless waffle from New Labour, this time in Committee Room 11 at the House of Commons. I’m referring to ‘The Eagle has landed’ in the August Journal in which Maria Eagle supposedly gave a ‘forthright pledge’ on the future of Britain’s railways. I note that Ms Eagle’s ‘forthright pledge’ didn’t include any assurances that the railway would be taken back into public ownership if Labour wins the general election in 2015. They made no move to do so during 13 years in power under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown and I’ve no intention of holding my breath that any future Labour government will do so, either.

RA Sargeant, retired member, Derby branch

Bomber on the Basil test
Several years ago I read an article in an aviation periodical concerning psychometric testing. It reported that many trainee pilots failed in the later stages of training at considerable cost to the US defence budget. The jump from piston engine aircraft to high performance jets after World War 2 was a large one. But following the introduction of psychometric tests, the failure and accident rate was reduced. Although some of this success can be attributed to advances in technology you can appreciate why industry embraced the concept.

But is the system, regarding train driver
Under the wild sycamore tree

An exciting new touring production turns working-class history into brilliant live theatre. KEITH RICHMOND gets another taste of the Tolpuddle Martyrs…

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were sentenced at Dorchester Assizes on 24 February 1834, George Loveless, a Methodist lay preacher and farm labourer, kissed his wife Betsy and their three children goodbye and set off to work. He didn’t see them again for three years. Because as George left his cottage in the village of Tolpuddle he was served with a warrant for his arrest.

George was one of six agricultural labourers – the others included his brother James Loveless; James Hammett; James Brine; Thomas Standfield and his son John Standfield – charged by the authorities with making an illegal oath. But their real crime was forming a trade union to protest about their pay of six shillings a week.

A

I was sold like a slave for £1. The convicts’ names were written on slips of paper, the agent drew lots, each man at £1 per head. – James Hammett

It opened, appropriately, with a performance at the Tolpuddle Festival in July, played at the Edinburgh Festival in August and then at the TUC in September before going out on tour around the country.

This dynamic, and engaging, two-hander, written by Neil Gore, directed by Louise Townsend and Richard Stone, with graphics by Andy Vine, and music by John Kirkpatrick (the folk singer and squeezebox player who was, at one time or another, part of Richard Thompson’s band, Ashley Hutchings’ Albion Band, and Steeleye Span) shows how you don’t need to throw millions of pounds at a production to make it come alive on stage.

The set is simple, but effective, and the lighting and projected visuals are dramatic. Best of all, though, are the enormously energetic, and thoroughly intelligent, performances of Neil Gore (as George Loveless, among others) and Elizabeth Eves (as Betsy and, in one brilliant ten second on-stage change, an evil Dorset landowner) who are on stage throughout the 90 minutes’ traffic of this particular stage.

We raise the watchword, Liberty. We will, we will, we will be free! – George Loveless

They strut, they proclaim, they argue, they fight, they sing, they dance, they beg, they weep, they kiss and make up. They run through most of the human emotions, as one character or another, engaging those of the audience as they do it. It is, at times, didactic and reductive. Of course. But it is also a textbook exercise in how to bring history alive. To take a story from the page to the stage and make it relevant today.

History Matters, as the teachers’ campaign has it. Because, as the Spanish philosopher George Santayana famously said, ‘Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat their mistakes.’ We need strong trade unions today as much as we did in 1834. As George Loveless said when he was sentenced: ‘We raise the watchword, Liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!’

We Will Be Free! is on tour around Britain throughout October and November and then again, post pantomime in February, March and April. Visit www.townsendproductions.org.uk for details. Tickets, typically, are £10.
Prize Crossword No. 90 set by Zebedee

Across
1 Stated explicitly or in detail (8)
5 Wooden garden building (4)
7 Country, capital Havana (4)
8 When Granny catches Rod with old gold coin (8)
9 The cardinal number that is the product of ten and eight (6)
12 Judge rarebit after chewing (7)
15 Trigonometric function (7)
19 Large sea mammal (6)
21 Impartial (8)
22 Marked by sound judgement (4)
23 Beer flavouring (4)
24 Not a winner! (6-2)

Down
1 Dismissed (6)
2 Economic collapse (5)
3 Streisand film, _____ Girl (5)
4 A message written in a secret code (6)
5 I am, sadly, returning sausages (6)
6 Jeopardy (6)
10 Profit (4)
11 Pitchfork prong (4)
12 A small river island (3)
13 A narrow lake in Gwynedd (4)
14 One making an attempt right to leave the rank (4)
15 Common songbird (6)
16 Virtuoso (6)
17 Egyptian president in 1956 (6)
18 Slumbering - as the huntsman returns, d’ye ken (6)
19 Enlarge (5)
20 Cotton yarn (5)

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

Name....................................................................................................................................
Address.................................................................................................................................
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........................................................................................Postcode......................................

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

Congratulations to Bill Jones of Birkenhead, who was last month’s winner

Thanks for all your responses to the 89th ASLEF crossword in the September edition. If you successfully complete this month’s crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 October

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

FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. In the last year, ASLEF has recovered £6,769,848 in damages for all types of cases.

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 7324 2400) or email info@aslef.org.uk

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There has never been a more exciting time to join First Great Western. With the announcement of electrification, the Intercity Express Programme (IEP) and other network developments, our Driver Team will be at the forefront of exciting changes across the Great Western network.

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If you're a Qualified Mainline Train Driver with an excellent safety record who is committed to delivering excellent customer service we'd like to hear from you. Successful candidates will receive a competitive salary, additional pay for working Sunday hours, as well as benefiting from a final salary pension scheme, generous holiday allowance and free travel for you and your family.

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£47,300

As a Driver Trainer, you will be responsible for developing and delivering operational learning and development. Focusing primarily on driver competency, this position will also deliver learning and development to other colleagues within the business. The ability to develop innovative training solutions to deliver business goals and drive through cultural change will be key to this role.

You will also be expected to work closely with other training and line management colleagues to ensure pre-programmed, deliverable training plans are in place to develop the operational competence of their Drivers to meet business objectives and to provide feedback regarding individual training performance. This role will also take the lead in coordinating and, where appropriate, delivering management development.

To apply please visit [www.firstgroupcareers.com](http://www.firstgroupcareers.com)

Closing date for completed application for Driver Trainer is 11th October 2013, and recruitment is on-going for Qualified Drivers.

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