Brighton rocks at AAD
railway enginemen’s tax free saver plans

you can save for your future for the cost of your TV sports package
tax free policies from £5 per week

products
- saver plan
- children’s saver plan
- saver and disability plan

for further information call us on freephone 0800 328 9140
visit our website at www.enginemens.co.uk
or write to us at Railway Enginemen’s Assurance Society Limited,
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE
Degree of hope for a brighter future

We return from conference having affirmed and developed our industrial and political strategy and I am heartened that all the debate was forward looking. The changes that will happen to our industry prior to, or post, the national and London Mayoral elections have to be prepared for and options considered. On the political side, our commitment to a future Labour government, to prevent further damage to our society and its structures, and hope of genuine change that benefits all, remains a guiding principle.

The world moves on while conference takes place and AAD was rightly moved by the plight of the miners in Turkey and sent the appropriate messages of support. The judicial review of the rushed sale of the East Coast sought by the joint trade unions was refused; so much for transparency of process. We shall now consider our position.

The Rail Delivery Group has taken up the role of boasting about growth and investment from ATOC but still fails to mention that they do not actually provide the investment; it comes centrally from the massive subsidy they get!

Apparently, one of the cash cows of privatisation, a RoSCo, is up for sale by the venture capitalists. Wouldn’t it be great if the government bought it? A question that needs to be asked is who will own future new rolling stock, IEP etc? The Prime Minister said the government would fund the electrification of all the Great Western and Wales lines; those lines will remain neglected. We shall lobby with interest.

Recent comments by Ed Miliband and Shadow Transport Secretary Mary Creagh about the need for change on the structure for the rail industry give a degree of hope for a brighter, planned and more integrated future.

This was the first AAD for a decade without the EC president, through illness, and we wish him well in his recovery. Bro Ian Neeve’s funeral took place on the last day of conference. A long time representative, conference delegate, former candidate for GS and friend; our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

Mick Whelan, general secretary
Making sure it happens

MICK HOLDER, of ASLEF’s health and safety department, reports on the ORR’s new occupational health plan

ASLEF reps have been handed a golden opportunity by the Office of Rail Regulation and Rail Safety and Standards Board to insist employers put occupational health further up their health and safety agenda. But they will have to make sure real occupational health issues – such as stress, RSI, back pain, etc – are prioritised rather than individual lifestyle issues such as diet and exercise.

The ORR has updated its web pages and published a new programme called The ORR Occupational Health Programme 2014-19: Making it Happen. And the important thing here for ASLEF reps and members is the use of the phrase ‘Making it happen’ because, in the document, the ORR is clear it wants employers to act.

This is phase two of the ORR’s project to get rail employers to improve occupational health problems. To illustrate the extent of the problem the ORR says: ‘Between April 2009 and March 2010, our research showed that at least 3.5 million working hours were lost to work-related ill health in the rail industry, while only 15% of companies reported publicly against ill-health targets.’

So there is clearly a massive problem out there that needs to be addressed and some employers’ current commitment appears to be very limited.

But there is a complication because government and employers have been mixing the occupational health agenda with their own wellbeing agenda, thereby dodging workers’ concerns and focusing on diet, weight loss and exercise. While ASLEF is not going to argue that diet, obesity and exercise are not important – they clearly are helpful in securing a healthier and longer life – they must not be allowed to dominate, and replace the true occupational health agenda which our members have been trying to get the rail employers to address for years – preventing stress, RSI, and back pain, etc.

These new moves by the ORR and RSSB give reps the opportunity to further raise occupational health issues at their workplace with our members and, through the negotiating machinery, to ensure employers ‘make it happen’ as the ORR insist. Don’t get distracted by the diet and exercise wellbeing agenda. You can get more details by going to Orr.gov.uk or rssb.co.uk

Stopping mega trucks in their tracks

PHILIPPA EDMUNDS of Freight on Rail urges lobbying after Brussels vote

Persuading an overwhelming majority of MEPs to block cross-border 82ft mega trucks, pending detailed research, was a key victory to celebrate. We now have to convince the Transport Ministers in the Council of Ministers, in the second part of the European co-decision process, to back that vote in the European Parliament, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green MEPs all supported the Parliament’s decision but Conservative MEPs voted, unsuccessfully, to re-insert the mega trucks clause. So please ask your MP to lobby the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, to back the overwhelming and democratic decision of the European Parliament in negotiations at the Council of Ministers.

The current British government position is not clear, with a difference of opinion between the coalition partners. While the government says it won’t allow mega trucks on British roads, it is under enormous pressure from the well-funded road haulage industry to allow these super lorries, despite all the adverse safety, congestion and environmental consequences.

Our fear is that this government will buckle, probably on ‘competition grounds’, and let mega trucks in by the back door.

The European Commission says mega trucks are much more dangerous than existing HGVs, which are already involved in 52% of fatalities on motorways even though they make up only 11% of the traffic. Allowing mega trucks on Britain’s roads will lead to more accidents, more deaths, more congestion, more pollution, and more road damage. And it will be disastrous for the rail freight industry.

Porterbrook blue

New light is about to be thrown on one of the darkest, and most scandalous, aspects of rail privatisation with the news that Porterbrook, one of the three main rolling stock companies that own most of Britain’s trains, is to be put up for sale in a move that could raise more than £2 billion.

The company has announced that its shareholders are ‘exploring options’ that could include a sale of their interests. Porterbrook was bought out by senior managers for a song when British Rail was privatised by the Conservative government in the 1990s. The cosy deals done by Porterbrook and its two RoSc co rivals, Angel Trains and Eversholt, which lease rolling stock to TOCs and FOCs, were likened to critics to the squalid deals struck in Russia after the collapse of communism, when state-owned utilities fell into private hands – and made a few people exceedingly rich – overnight.

The sector was heavily criticised by a Competition Commission report in 2009 which concluded that TOCs had little incentive to negotiate with RoSCos which, in turn, had little incentive to compete with each other.

QUOTE… ‘Passengers and UK engineering are crying out for a long-term government strategy for rolling stock across the network.’ – Stephen Joseph, chief executive, Campaign for Better Transport

…UNQUOTE

Our smart new 18mm diameter enamel crescent stud button hole badges are just £4 (including p+p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Mega trucks will mean more deaths on British roads
Marching on May Day

ASLEF activists from every district joined general secretary Mick Whelan on the traditional May Day march and rally in London. Members met at midday on Clerkenwell Green, an area with strong radical roots – Wat Tyler camped here during the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 and George Loveless, first of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to return to Britain after

Freedom train

RAY JACKSON, RMS chair, joins the freedom riders in South Yorkshire

RMS colleague Dave Court and I attended the latest demonstration at Barnsley railway station, joining the pensioners and disabled who have been protesting each Monday since South Yorkshire PTE decided, without consultation,

CONFERENCES: The 130th Durham Miners’ Gala is on Saturday 12 July. The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival and rally is at Tolpuddle, near Dorchester, in Dorset from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 July. The Burston strike school rally is at Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk on Sunday 7 September. The Trades Union Congress is at the BT Convention Centre, King’s Dock, Liverpool, from Sunday 7 to Wednesday 10 September.

Holding the ASLEF banners high transportation to Australia, was welcomed home with a mass meeting on the green in 1838 – and moved off at 1pm, behind an RMT brass band, with activists from many other trade unions as well as workers from other countries, pensioners, students, and anti-globalisation campaigners, through central London to a rally in Trafalgar Square. This year the march was dedicated to the memory of Tony Benn and Bob Crow, two men who did so much for the labour movement in Britain. Speakers included Frances O’Grady, general secretary of the TUC, Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite, and Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North.

Off the rails

NIK DOUGLAS is the last train driver to receive a payment after the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government changed the rules of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Nik, 37, gave a thoughtful interview to The Independent explaining how his life changed forever after a man in his 60s threw himself in front of the train he was driving through Northallerton station to Newcastle. ‘I remember screaming just before the impact,’ said Nik. ‘I was going at 125mph because the station wasn’t one we stopped at. I slammed on the emergency brake but there was nothing I could do. Nik was off work for six months with post-traumatic stress and received a payment of £4,400 from the CICA. Now drivers will get nothing. A spokesman for the Ministry of Justice said: ‘We sympathise with anyone who becomes a victim of crime. But our reforms mean taxpayers’ money is focused on supporting victims of the most violent offences.’

NETWORK RAIL has seen which way the wind is blowing and cut bonuses to executive directors from 160% of salary to a maximum of 20% each year. NR chairman Richard Parry-Jones said: ‘The potential to earn large bonuses is no longer sustainable in the environment in which this company operates. The executive directors and board both recognize this and have responded by putting forward this radical new bonus proposal that sees bonuses massively reduced.’

MEDIA WATCH: It was interesting to see the way different newspapers covered recent figures from the Office of Rail Regulation revealing just how much the government – that is, passengers and taxpayers – fork out to subsidise the privatised train operating companies and contribute to their profits which, instead of being reinvested in our industry, are diverted to shareholders. A total of more than £4 billion last year. For the Daily Mirror, it was publicly owned franchise (the East Coast main line) performs best. For The Guardian, private companies cream off profit after receiving public subsidy. And, for the Daily Telegraph, the English get shafted by the Welsh and Scots!

USDAW, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, at its conference came out in favour of bringing the railways back into public ownership. Ian Dalton, a delegate from Leeds, told the union’s annual delegate meeting in Blackpool: ‘80% of the population favour renationalisation. The case is no clearer than in the case of the East Coast main line. Privately owned lines have received seven times the subsidy of the East Coast.’

A NEW poll by Populus for the BBC’s Daily Politics and World at One programmes reveals that trade unions – once described by Margaret Thatcher as ‘the enemy within’ – are now regarded by most people in Britain as less of a threat than big business. 49% said big business is a ‘greater threat’ to the public than unions, with just 13% taking the opposite view.
Then raise the scarlet standard high

JOHN McCUE of Glasgow branch reports from the Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth

I attended this year’s Scottish Labour Party conference as a first time delegate and would like to thank the ASLEF delegation – general secretary Mick Whelan, district organiser Kevin Lindsay, political adviser James McGowan and my fellow delegate Alan Moir – for their help over the four days.

Together we can, and together we will: Kevin Lindsay addresses conference

It was a pleasure to listen to the speakers, in particular Jim Murphy, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, and Johann Lamont, leader of the Scottish Labour Party, who gave a real insight into the problems that affect not only Britain but other countries around the world.

After a debate, in which Kevin spoke, conference unanimously backed the devolution commission report on how the SNP has failed to re-nationalise our railways and allowed the privatised profiteers to keep our money.

I also attended the ASLEF fringe meeting, chaired by Karin Christiansen, general secretary of the Co-operative Party, with James Kelly, MSP for Rutherglen, Richard McCready, political officer of the Co-op, and Mick, who spoke about the links ASLEF has secured with the Co-op to try to re-nationalise Scotland’s railways.

Within its shade we’ll live and die

JIM WALSH of Glasgow branch reports from the STUC in Dundee

I was elected to attend the 117th Scottish Trades Union Congress along with Rab Donnelly, Polmadie branch, and we are both grateful to the Scottish branches for giving us the opportunity to go to such a fantastic conference. We were joined by Mick Whelan, general secretary; Kevin Lindsay, district organiser; Hugh Bradley EC member; Chris Barrie, Edinburgh No2; and Colin McAteer, Dundee branch; who visited and gave us moral support. Congress was very busy and we attended fringe meetings and participated in three debates.

I moved a motion urging the general council to support the Greek Solidarity Campaign due to the unbelievable austerity measures which have left hundreds of thousands of Greeks starving and having to rely on soup kitchens.

Kevin spoke passionately, as usual, about railway franchises and criticised Scotland’s First Minister after Alex Salmond called for the East Coast franchise to remain in public hands while at the same time splitting up and selling off Scotland’s railway.

Rab moved ASLEF’s motion on state pensions and safety critical jobs and condemned the work ‘till you drop culture advocated by the coalition government. As first time delegates Rab and I both enjoyed addressing congress, even if it is a little nerve-racking!

Kevin also spoke at the United with Labour fringe meeting. It was a lively and enlightening debate as Kevin, Neil Findlay, MSP for Lothian, and Agnes Tolmie of Unite spoke about the socialist case for Scotland remaining part of the UK. I went to Dundee as a socialist Yes vote but, after speaking with our G5 and Kevin and Neil, I left Dundee rejuvenated and ready to vote No on independence, and rejoin the Labour Party. The best quote I heard all week was ‘Voting No isn’t a vote for the status quo, it’s a vote for change; change within the Labour Party and change within the United Kingdom’.

I was delighted to attend the ASLEF/NUM dinner; it was great to meet and chat with Nicky Wilson, NUM President, Willie ‘Barney’ McKenzie and councillor Bobby McGill. The strike may have been 30 years ago but the solidarity and comradeship between our two unions remains as strong today as it was then.

QUOTE…

‘The pressures for change will eventually prove overwhelming. Either ever richer capitalists will tear one another apart in the race for diminishing returns, or the rest of society will rise up and impose a fairer framework.’ – Jacob Hacker, Professor of Political Science at Yale University

…UNQUOTE

Union men are wise

VICTORIA PHILLIPS of Thompsons solicitors explains why ASLEF members with a personal injury claim are better off with the union

ASLEF's personal injury legal service has never been better value – or more important for members.

Because members get 100% of their compensation – other law firms take up to 25% of the member’s damages – and members don’t pay anything as the case goes along while other law firms ask for money up front for things like medical reports.

The free union 100% cover is for any accident for members and any non-work accident for members’ families. Other law firms charge. The lawyers used by the union are specialists while most high street law firms, and law firms associated with claims companies, only dabble in personal injury.

ASLEF ensures that members receive a high quality service. Other law firms have no one monitoring the service they provide or the level of damages they recover.

Law firms used by the union only act for injured people, never for insurers. Because they are independent they can fight harder. Members ‘captured’ by insurance companies after an accident will be dealt with by firms who get work from, and sue, insurance companies. Will they bite the hand that feeds them?

Union lawyers can access union knowledge about the accident and the workplace, as well as potential witnesses. Not knowing the workplace, and how to get information about it, means the injured person has to do far more work and winning is more difficult. Having the case with the union means ASLEF can make sure what caused the accident is sorted. Other law firms deal with the case and move on.

Thompson’s helpline numbers are 0808 100 8009 in England and Wales and 0800 081 0075 in Scotland.
Stay on track with ASLEF membership

As an ASLEF member you are entitled to FREE personal injury advice and representation provided by Thompsons Solicitors.

You can claim for any accident – at work, on the road, or on holiday.

Government changes mean that the high street law firms and claims companies you see advertised on TV can now take up to 25% of any compensation from injured people.

Using your ASLEF Legal Service provided by Thompsons Solicitors means you will get advice from experts and keep 100% of your compensation.

Make the most of your membership.

Contact the ASLEF Legal Service today on 0808 100 8009
Brighton rocks

TEVE BELL, the savagely funny political cartoonist of The Guardian, and other publications, showed first thing Monday morning that he is just as funny in person, and on a platform, as he is on paper, and in print. Conference is usually opened – and a welcome to the town offered – by the local mayor. But the mayor of Brighton is a Conservative. So ASLEF invited Steve, who isn’t a Tory, and is an awful lot funnier, to open conference instead. The invitation might also have something to do with the fact that national organiser Simon Weller treasures a cartoon Steve drew many years ago, of Brighton station, because this is where he has lived for 30 years.

‘It’s unusual for me to be asked to open a conference,’ he said. ‘Because I normally take the piss out of them. But I like conferences. Especially when they’re packed with psychotic, swivel-eyed, well-presented Tories. They’re very funny. I remember one, loving his three minutes in the spotlight, and when the traffic lights came on to tell him he was running out of time, he reached into a very large Tesco bag, picked out a rare leg of lamb, and began whirling it around his head, yelling “Stop the madness, stop the madness.” That’s why conferences are so fascinating…’

‘The Tories used to come to Brighton. What stopped them was not the bombing at the Grand Hotel, they came after that, but after that terrible defeat of ’92, when Labour was thrashed by John Major, it was a Labour authority here in Brighton, and Gill Sweeting, the mayor, was invited to welcome them to the town. Use the facilities, get pissed, you know the sort of thing. Except Gill lectured them about unemployment and they didn’t like it one bit and they haven’t been back since. It was politically brilliant, but not, commercially, such a good move. Welcome to Brighton…’

Keeping ASLEF on track

Mick Whelan told AAD: ‘Every day of every week our executive committee members, district organisers, company council members and local reps are working, often below the radar, on behalf of our members. Dealing with the day to day stuff – the meat and drink of the job – is vital. It’s what we do.

‘The aims and objectives of this trade union are simple – to secure the best terms and conditions for train drivers, to negotiate with employers, to promote a pride in our craft, to champion equality, to provide education services, and to work for a fairer, socialist, society. It’s what we do.

‘We are working closely with the Labour Party – a party formed by the trade unions more than a century ago – to help shape the party’s policies and put Labour in pole position to win the general election next year. It’s what we do.

‘And this year we have a ballot on our political fund which some people think is about giving money to the Labour Party. It isn’t. Our political fund is vital for all the campaigning we do to get more freight on rail, to keep the Fourth Railway Package off the statute books, and our campaigns to Keep the East Coast on Track, Drive Down Hours, Action for Rail and Mail on Rail. It’s what we need because it’s what we do.’
That was then, and this is now

TOSH MCDONALD, vice-president of the executive committee, stepped in to make the president’s address as Alan Donnelly was ill and unable to attend AAD.

‘I have been on the EC for 10 years and I think this is an appropriate time to look back to where we were then. Ten years ago, we were in turmoil as a union. New Labour was in government, and New Labour looked on the trade union movement as an embarrassing uncle to be locked away in a cupboard and brought out when they needed our support.

‘And, as far as the trade union movement and TUC were concerned, ASLEF was the unions’ embarrassing uncle. We were pariahs. Financially, we were in a mess, months away from having to fold or, maybe, merge with another union. That situation has been put right. You people stood up, gave us your support and we moved back from the brink. Branches, company councils and local reps all stood up when they were needed.

‘We have re-engaged and brought people back into ASLEF. This general secretary has led the way. For the first time in a generation ASLEF has a general secretary who has been elected because the majority of members wanted him, not to get rid of somebody else. A blind man could see the change and, on behalf of the EC, I want to thank Mick for the leadership he has shown.

‘Ten years ago we put ourselves on the brink. Today we are on the brink by a government that is attacking working people. All the achievements we made in the past were made through being political. That does not necessarily mean being party political, but it means having the politics to understand when people are attacking you, why they are attacking you, and how to deal with it. We need to get politicised again because over the past two, maybe three, decades we have been de-politicised as a union, and we need to move forward.

‘In the 1980s, if we are honest, we lost the argument against privatisation. Now it’s turned full circle. We are winning the argument on public ownership. Up to 70% are in favour of public ownership. What would be more popular than for Ed Miliband to say that a Labour government is going to take the railway back into public ownership?’
Pensions – the picture is brighter

Dave Tyson, train driver, former president of the executive committee, and for 17 years a trustee director of the Railway Pension Scheme, gave conference a rather more upbeat report on Thursday afternoon than he has been able to do in recent years.

‘Over the past few years I have painted a rather bleak picture of the future, especially on the back of the last recession and the worldwide banking crisis, which painted a rather bleak picture of the future, especially on the back of the last recession and the worldwide banking crisis, which

quote...

‘As a small trade union we are punching well above our weight.’ – Bernard Kennedy, Bristol branch

...UNQUOTE

Dave gave delegates good news about the RPS

included massive falls in the value of pension schemes, closure of final salary pension schemes, shrinking pension scheme membership, large deficits, attacks from the European Parliament, attacks from the UK government, and strains on the scheme due to pensioner longevity – although, clearly, longevity is something we should celebrate!

‘This year the picture is much brighter. Markets are rallying, with the FTSE 100 climbing to the 6,800 mark and it may make 7,000 later this year (or even this week)! The tri-annual valuation measures assets against liabilities and, once the results are known, contribution rates are set for the following three years. If assets are higher than liabilities – pensions to be paid in the future – the scheme is in surplus; if liabilities are higher than assets then the scheme is in deficit. For the first time in maybe 15 years several sections are in surplus or the deficits are static or shrinking.

‘Clearly this is good news. I guess there will be little appetite to reduce contributions as the recovery is still rather fragile. I also guess we need to take a very responsible view on surpluses and should seek to learn from the past when maybe we went too far in keeping contribution rates low for too long. We must be vigilant and responsible in our handling of the forthcoming valuation, and learn the lessons of the not too distant past.

‘While the overall number of members of the scheme is down from 338,208 in 2012 to 337,440 in 2013 the number of active members has increased by 2,200 in the same period. In 2013 £879 million was paid out in benefits including pensions, lump sums and death benefits. Joint contributions amounted to £659 million.

‘The net assets of the scheme were just over £20 billion. This compares to the drop from £19 billion to £14 billion at the height of the banking crisis in 2008-2009.’

The game of life is hard to play

N A thoughtful talk on Tuesday morning Ian Stevens, programme manager for suicide prevention at Network Rail, revealed that 4% of suicides in Britain take place on the railway, resulting in ‘trauma for drivers, who are in the frontline, as well as depot crew, when a train comes in with blood or body parts on’. Four in five are white males, aged 30-55, usually suffering mental health problems, and four in 10 occur or start at stations.

‘We try to identify hot spots. There are 27 primary locations in the UK where people are taking their own lives.’ Posters, blue lighting, yellow cross-hatching, and fences between

quote...

‘Conference, you support a great group of Labour MPs in Parliament – Rosie Winterton, Kelvin Hopkins, David Hamilton, Lindsay Roy, Cathie Jamieson, John Cryer, Dave Anderson, Ian Lavery. I want to add to their number in 2015 with candidates like Tom Corbin, Labour’s parliamentary candidate for Salisbury. He’s a train driver and a proud member of ASLEF!’ – Mary Creagh, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

‘The Gagging Law takes away my right to speak on your behalf this year. The Gagging Law means we can’t talk politics, that I can only talk in a personal capacity. The Gagging Law has to go!’ – Mick Whelan, general secretary

‘ASLEF first voted to affiliate to Labour in 1903, three years after the Labour Representation Committee was set up. I’m proud that we continue to work together more than 100 years later.’ – Mary Creagh, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

‘Agency means zero hours.’ – Pat O’Rourke, Edinburgh No 2

...UNQUOTE

CONFERENCE SAYS NO TO ‘BIG BROTHER’ IN CABS

While welcoming tech developments to make the railway safer, conference said no to moves by some TOCs for a Big Brother spy in the cab to be used against our drivers. ‘CCTV should not be used to attack our drivers,’ said Pauline Roebuck of Sheffield No 1. And general secretary Mick Whelan promised: ‘We will not have drivers spied on.’
Tories planned to smash the miners

Davy Hopper, general secretary of the Durham Miners’ Association, which runs the Big Meeting, the Durham Miners’ Gala, came to conference on Wednesday to reflect on the start of the miners’ strike of 1984-85.

‘Why are we still discussing a strike 30 years old? Because of the values we stood for. It wasn’t just an industrial dispute – it was a civil war in the coalfields. And if we’d had the same support from every trade union in this country that we had from ASLEF we would have had a different result. And we would still have a coal industry in Britain today!’

‘Thatcher was planning, as a military operation, to smash the miners, the vanguard of the trade union movement. We had a history of disputes because we had a history of struggle, and a history of showing solidarity with other workers. But Thatcher didn’t just want to break the NUM, she wanted to destroy trade unionism in this country.

‘The strike was inevitable. Because it was about maintaining a job in a community which depended on the mines. Our communities have been totally destroyed. In Keller, which once had a pit with 1,200 jobs, the biggest employer now employs seven people. All these men were doing was trying to protect their jobs and the jobs of their sons in the future.

‘We need to get a Labour Party back in government but we need to make it a proper socialist party again. I don’t understand why we can’t get a commitment by Ed Miliband to bring the rail industry back into public ownership. We have a world to win but, by Christ, we have a hell of a fight to win it.’

QUOTE...

‘The Tories are talking about a “proper threshold” – at least 50% of the membership – voting for a strike. This from a party that won’t get 50% of the electorate voting for it at the next general election.’

– Dave Vaughan,
Newton Heath branch

…UNQUOTE

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ZERO HOURS

Jim Walsh, of Glasgow, said the explosion in zero hours contracts is leading to a race to the bottom on pay, with a perverse incentive for employers to recruit from abroad. ‘The railway should be run by not for profit companies as a public service for passengers; people want their tax money to be used properly, not to subsidise private profits. And we are clear on Scottish independence. We think we’re better together.’

QUOTE...

‘We don’t want a living wage, we want a proper wage. We don’t want zero hours contracts, we want proper contracts.’

– Mick Whelan, general secretary

…UNQUOTE

Off the rails

DANIEL MASRANI, the delegate from Cardiff, sporting a beard, but not a dress, at the start of conference on Monday morning, brought the house down when he referred to ‘my victory at the Eurovision Song Contest’ on Saturday night. Dan also created a stir when, speaking as chair of the arrangements committee, he looked back at AAD in Edinburgh last year, when we didn’t manage to get everything done, because of ‘a bit of confusion, a bit of collusion,’ and urged delegates, this year, ‘to try and get through the agenda.’

TOSH MCDONALD opened the batting for the top table by looking around the room where, under a balcony, a small brass plaque announces this was where Niccolò Paganini, the Italian violin virtuoso and composer, played on 9 December 1831, and said: ‘What a shame it is we can’t get the podium up on that balcony and every one of us could make our contribution to conference in the style of Fidel Castro; although delegates might want three hours each and conference might well overrun…’

MARZ COLOMBINI got everyone in the hall laughing when he began, speaking from the podium for the executive committee, ‘Thank you, Stratford, you’re absolutely right. Well, you’re half right…’ and then waited for the voice, half way down the hall, to inevitably cry out, ‘And half wrong!’

SAMUEL ROGERS, a minor poet, popular in his lifetime, but best known now for his accounts of his friendships with better known and more talented authors and politicians such as William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, wrote after a trip to the south coast in 1829: ‘Brighton is still very gay and full of balls.’

WHEN IAN STEVENS of Network Rail was told he would be taking three questions at a time, at the end of his talk, he wondered aloud if he should make notes because, he told conference, ‘I’m a very simple man.’ To which Sean Seymour, from the chair, dryly observed, as delegates queued at the microphone, ‘You’re not going to be outdone.’

WHEN THE GS and his team – John Ashton, Brian Corbett, Daniel Masrani and Graham Morris – won the Brighton branch quiz at the Railway Club on Tuesday evening there were cries of “Fix!” Mick merely smiled like the Cheshire Cat in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and said, ‘I think the best team won on the night…’

IAN LAVERY, who addressed AAD on Tuesday, was introduced by Sean Seymour with the immortal line: ‘It’s a real pleasure to introduce a Labour MP who is proud, and not embarrassed, to be described as a socialist.’

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, in Vanity Fair, observed: ‘A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a sponging-house in Chancery Lane.’
N A barnstorming speech which ended with a standing ovation from delegates, Ian Lavery, Labour MP for Wansbeck, and a former president of the National Union of Mineworkers, reflected on the 30th anniversary of the start of the bitter miners’ strike of 1984-85, which changed the face of the country in which we live, and set out a manifesto on which the Labour Party can get elected and build a better Britain.

He said: ‘I was very proud, as a young man, to be on strike. This was a class war – the people in government, those who have, attacking those who have not. My father was a miner, my brothers were miners, and I was a miner. In our house there were four of us on strike and what gets me is people who should know better, and who actually know nothing, telling us where it went wrong.

Labour doesn’t have to demand loyalty

Nigel Roebuck gets ready to drop some ammo on the action

THE VIEW FROM SHEFFIELD
Nigel Roebuck, 45, who’s been on the railway for 27 years, and is chair of DB Schenker company council, was attending his tenth AAD. ‘Annual conference is really important for ASLEF, because it’s an opportunity for the rank and file of this trade union to play a part in the policy-making of the union. I’ve really enjoyed this one. It’s been effective. There’s been a real willingness to get on and do the business.’ Some delegates heard Nigel, hoisting up his jeans as he strode, like the gunslinger in Shane, towards the podium, mutter under his breath that he was about to ‘drop some ammo’ on the motion, and he has always enjoyed a knock ‘em down, drag ‘em out sort of fight. ‘I went as a delegate to the TUC in Bournemouth last year, and it’s a shame that the TUC, like the Labour Party conference, is really a rally, not a proper conference. But here in Brighton we have had some proper, passionate, political and industrial debates. That’s what it’s all about.’ And his conference highlight? ‘The fall of one member, one vote.’ He paused, hesitated, and said with a smile: ‘I mean, sticking by the union’s time-honoured traditions…’

THE VIEW FROM BIRMINGHAM
A chance remark by Angie Geddes-Smith, 53, from Birmingham New Street, who drives for London Midland, led to a running gag all week about the GS being, variously, God, Jesus, or the New Messiah. ‘We were talking about managing the expectations of our members and I said that members think the union walks on water, and that I think the general secretary does! This is my sixth AAD. We’ve had some good debates, considering it appeared to be a light agenda. The chair has been very good at keeping the conference flowing in a light-hearted manner. High points for me were not having the bun fights we feared and expected over equalities going to four days and the last item on harassment and bullying.’

Angie Geddes-Smith thinks the GS walks on water

If we had 500 MPs like Ian Lavery we could change the world. ‘ASLEF is a proud union, an effective union, and Mick Whelan is seen, in the wider movement, as one of the most effective trade union leaders.’ – Ian Lavery, Labour MP for Wansbeck

‘They say there should have been a ballot. Bollocks! The men in Nottinghamshire would not have come out; if there had been a national ballot they would have found another reason not to come out. They say it was the wrong time. But we didn’t pick the time. The government picked the time. Michael Heseltine has admitted they planned it – and waited for us to react.

‘We gave everything we had during that dispute. I don’t believe in speaking ill of the dead, but I’ll make an exception today. There wasn’t one tear shed in mining communities up and down this country when Margaret Thatcher died, because of what she did against the miners, and our communities, and the working community being, variously, God, Jesus, or the New Messiah. ‘We were talking about managing the expectations of our members and I said that members think the union walks on water, and that I think the general secretary does! This is my sixth AAD. We’ve had some good debates, considering it appeared to be a light agenda. The chair has been very good at keeping the conference flowing in a light-hearted manner. High points for me were not having the bun fights we feared and expected over equalities going to four days and the last item on harassment and bullying.’

‘ASLEF is a proud union, an effective union, and Mick Whelan is seen, in the wider movement, as one of the most effective trade union leaders.’ – Ian Lavery, Labour MP for Wansbeck

‘They say there should have been a ballot. Bollocks! The men in Nottinghamshire would not have come out; if there had been a national ballot they would have found another reason not to come out. They say it was the wrong time. But we didn’t pick the time. The government picked the time. Michael Heseltine has admitted they planned it – and waited for us to react.

‘We gave everything we had during that dispute. I don’t believe in speaking ill of the dead, but I’ll make an exception today. There wasn’t one tear shed in mining communities up and down this country when Margaret Thatcher died, because of what she did against the miners, and our communities, and the working
good enough any more!"

The trade unions in Britain, a little over a century ago, set up the Labour Party when they realised that the Liberals were never going to do very much for the ordinary working man, and woman, in this country. The Conservatives, then as now, represented the vested interests of the boss class. But Labour has grown away from its working-class roots and struggles, these days, to properly represent our aspirations for a better life.

Ian said: ‘We need more train drivers in parliament. We need more miners in parliament. We need more working-class people in parliament. We need more disabled people in parliament. We need more women who have been unemployed in parliament. We need more women in parliament and we need more ethnic minorities in parliament. We don’t need any more special advisers in parliament!"

‘Being working-class isn’t a means test. I get £67,000 as an MP and I’m working-class. I know where I come from and I’m proud of where I come from.

‘We need the renationalisation of the privatised state utilities. It’s not a Marxist philosophy. It’s common sense. You can’t control what you don’t own. ASLEF is fighting a great campaign, with the other unions on the railways, for a publicly owned and publicly accountable railway. It’s a huge cost of living issue here in Brighton where we need to get seats at the next election. It’s a vote winner! And it will show people the Labour Party means business.

‘We need to introduce a charter of workers’ rights. We cannot allow people to work on zero hours contracts. We can’t allow people to work without proper health and safety provision. We shouldn’t regulate pay day loan companies, we should abolish pay day loan companies.

‘The only party that can change things for people is the Labour Party. And if there is a coalition with the Liberal Democrats I will be devastated. Because I think they are yellow belly bastards!’

The joke doing the rounds was that the vice-chair would spend a lot of time in charge as the chair headed for the podium to speak. But Shaun did ‘a brilliant job’ which earned plaudits from everyone in the Paganini room. ‘I stood because I liked what Rab Wicksted said last year – it’s good when the chair comes from the district in which AAD is being held’ and I think you need to have a thick skin and a bit of arrogance to take control of 70-odd delegates. It’s hard work, and I’m tired, but I think we’ve had a good week. It’s gone OK. We’ve kept the debate moving at a decent pace and, while trying to give everyone an opportunity to speak, there’s no point in hearing 15 or 20 people all making the same point’ Shaun loves AAD, but ‘I’m taking two years off now because we take turns with Woking.’

Liz Cocks: ‘I was shaking inside’ as she got ready to speak

THE VIEW FROM ST PANCRAS

Liz Cocks, 36, who drives for LOROL, and has been on the railway for 14 years, was a first time delegate from St Pancras. ‘I was shaking, inside, as I made my way to the podium for the first time. The round of applause I got after speaking for the first time was the highlight of my week! It gave me the confidence to go again, even if I wasn’t following the mood of the room. I would encourage anyone to come, even for the first time. The only way to learn is to come and do it. You don’t have to be a rep, you can just be a member, and you can come and do it. You’re never on your own for long.’
MARY CREAGH, the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, outlined her plans for Britain's railways under a future Labour government when she addressed conference on Monday afternoon.

‘My vision is to connect our cities, drive jobs, and deliver railways fit for the 21st century. As Ed Miliband says, “Britain can do better than this.” Only a Labour government in 2015 can deliver the best deal for passengers, taxpayers, and workers. A railway that’s affordable, accessible, and drives economic growth.

‘You can’t trust the Tories with the railways. The Tory privatisation of British Rail was a rushed, botched job. Railtrack was a disaster which endangered the lives of passengers and workers. A private, profit-making company was always going to be incapable of managing our complex rail network. The terrible crashes we saw at Southall in 1997, Ladbroke Grove in 1999 and Potters Bar in 2002 must never happen again.

‘I’m proud of Labour’s record on the railways. We took the decision to abolish Railtrack and set up Network Rail as a not for profit public company in 2003. We have the safest railway in Europe, apart from Luxembourg. We invested more in rail in real terms than any previous government. We stopped the Tories’ planned privatisation of London Underground. And, under Labour, the number of rail passengers almost doubled. We had a massive programme of investing in rolling stock, replacing most of the aging fleet we inherited and allowing passenger services to expand. Our rolling stock strategy supported British jobs, British apprenticeships, and British engineering.

‘But we’re not here to talk about the past, but about the present and the future of our railways. The question I am asked more than any other is whether Labour will renationalise the railways. As Ed Miliband says, we are looking at all the options on the railways. We won’t be going back to old style British Rail. But the system as it stands isn’t working.

‘This government’s franchising fiasco on the West Coast main line cost taxpayers over £50 million. It halted the franchising process, with extensions on 12 franchises. Ministers continue to quietly announce sweetheart deals with operators for direct awards during franchise extensions. Rail company profit margins are set to rise over the next two or three years. Good news for them. Bad news for the taxpayer.

‘I want our rail system to deliver better value for passengers and for taxpayers. If we were in government now, we would keep East Coast in public ownership as a public sector comparator. This government is obsessing about handing East Coast back to the private sector. But East Coast is working well and will have returned around £1 billion to the taxpayer by March 2015.

‘Labour would keep a Directly Operated Railway. We think it’s ludicrous that state railways from France, Germany and the Netherlands are running British rail franchises, but the law prevents our own British state operator from bidding. We will change that.’

NOT A SOPRANO IN SIGHT IN THE PAGANINI ROOM

Jeff Farmer, director of organising at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, brought fraternal greetings from across the Atlantic on Thursday morning after giving First Group a hard time for their union-busting activities in North America.

‘There are 1.4 million teamsters in the United States and Canada and, ten years ago, the 37,000 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the oldest labour organisation in the US, founded in 1863, affiliated with us. We think rail represents the future but, like most unions, we face enormous challenges. We would love to have the 96% density you have.

‘Organising for power. That’s our slogan. We’re trying to organise because there’s strength in numbers. Because it’s the right thing to do – workers not in a union have no dignity, no respect, and no voice on the job – and because it’s a smart thing to do. We face tremendous hurdles in the United States, we are in a fight, but we will stay in the fight until we win.’

Asked about the ‘Hollywood image of the Teamsters’ – a polite euphemism for long-standing rumours of links with the Mob – Jeff smiled: ‘I think that reputation helps us. Because people know we’re fighters and they want the biggest, baddest person in their corner in a fight.’

He concluded by saying: ‘We wish we had more allies in the Democratic Party, just as I understand there are some of you who would like more allies in the Labour Party, but we are looking at new tactics, and new structures, and we believe we are on the road to success.’
Your fight is our fight

O STEVENS, of Thompsons solicitors, the Labour Party candidate for Cardiff Central in 2015, addressed conference first thing Thursday morning.

She said: ‘Thompsons we are immensely proud to act for ASLEF and its members. You’re a strong, progressive union that punches way above its weight. Your fight is our fight and we look forward to working with you long into the future.

‘I’ve come to Brighton fresh from a bit of a bollocking from the Labour Party for signing a letter to The Observer, along with over 40 other parliamentary candidates, calling on our party to commit to bringing rail franchises back into public ownership on expiry.

‘It was pretty rubbish as far it went because, let me tell you, it won’t stop me doing it again! Because I have spent the last 25 years working with the trade union and labour movement standing up for what I believe is right. And I’ve had plenty of time to think about the issue while sitting on First Great Western trains!

‘I believe there is an unanswerable case for returning rail to public ownership. So I was really pleased to hear that Mary Creagh had, here at conference on Monday, supported a change to the current system. And Mary confirmed that had Labour been in government now, we would have kept East Coast in public ownership.

‘There is so much we in the Labour Party could do in government to support rail and everyone who works in the industry. Rail is relevant to every single constituency in the UK and to tens of millions of people across the country. A progressive and bold policy for rail can bring together trade unions, passengers, environmentalists, government and business to achieve a 21st century rail network that works for everyone.

‘We want a rail industry with decent pay today. When workers lose the struggle, the ruling class is able to try its ideas elsewhere and spread their mantra across the globe.

‘Look at what has happened in the Great Recession. They’re not paying the price on Bankers’ Street. It’s ordinary working people who are paying the price for the bankers’ greed. Where did the crazy idea to privatise our railways come from? From the experiment drenched in the blood of Salvador Allende and the workers in Chile.

Jo Stevens: delegates hoped they were listening to the next MP for Cardiff Central and conditions, reasonable fares for passengers, high quality infrastructure and rolling stock which keeps profit made for reinvestment. An industry that brings benefits far beyond the confines of track, trains and stations. Who could possibly object to that?

‘We know there is widespread public support. We know that even a majority of Tory voters support returning franchises to public ownership. The current model is completely broken and Labour has the opportunity to fix it. I hope and I want Labour’s election manifesto next year to take up that opportunity.

‘Because the general election is an opportunity to get rid of a coalition government that has had, at its core, a mission to create the most unequal society we have had for a century or more and the first generation since World War Two who will be worse off than their parents.’

Phil Talbot, south-east England organiser of the Transport Benevolent Fund, told delegates on Wednesday about the TBF: ‘We’re a registered charity, with 45,000 members, and we’ve been going 90 years. Mick Whelan is a patron, as is Len McCluskey, and Manuel Cortes. It’s just £1 a week. This year we will pay out £2 million in benefits to help people who work in transport, and their families. The more members we get, the more we can do for you.’

Fares are the soft underbelly of the privatised railway network

Manuel Cortes, general secretary of the TSSA, gave delegates a quick history lesson on Thursday afternoon.

He said: ‘The military coup in Chile in 1973, “a faraway land, about which we knew little,” was an opportunity for the Chicago School of Milton Friedman to use the people as laboratory rats for the policies we all understand now – privatisation, the breaking of trade unions – if there hadn’t been a coup we wouldn’t be where we are today. When workers lose the struggle, the ruling class is able to try its ideas elsewhere and spread their mantra across the globe.

‘Look at what has happened in the Great Recession. They’re not paying the price on Bankers’ Street. It’s ordinary working people who are paying the price for the bankers’ greed. Where did the crazy idea to privatise our railways come from? From the experiment drenched in the blood of Salvador Allende and the workers in Chile.

‘Privatisation must come to a halt. The work we have done with ASLEF, to change the policies, are starting to bear fruit. Fares have become the soft belly of the rail network.

‘Politics isn’t what happens in parliament. It’s not about what politicians do. It’s about building a movement to persuade politicians to act upon our wishes and I look forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with you to build this movement.’
Cards the coalition deals

ASLEF showed why it is at the forefront of trade union education and provides the best for its members when District 3 brought months of planning to fruition by delivering an excellent day of training on 10 April.

Our events planner, Colin Smith opened the proceedings and set the benchmark for the day. Our friends and comrades from Thompsons solicitors then delivered the training.

Francine O’Gorman gave us all an exercise to do in groups after delivering her presentation, about how we deal with our members, achieve our goals and what best practices we can adopt; a recurring theme was communication, which is absolutely essential. Francine recently retired from Thompsons, her participation a testament to her loyalty to the movement.

Jo Seery briefed us on tribunals, discrimination, discipline and grievances, and changes to the law. This education is essential as it provides our reps with the correct tools to ensure our members receive the best representation. While some of the changes to employment law are of benefit to employees the majority favour employers; these are the cards the coalition government is dealing to working-class people.

There were 25 reps from all the TOCs and FOCs in the district and each took a wealth of information away. The whole day was structured with participation in mind and everyone had the opportunity to interact, network, seek clarification, and pose questions. Any representative who thinks they no longer need training or educating no longer has their members as their priority because education and keeping abreast of changes is absolutely paramount.

Thank you Jo and Francine for your invaluable contribution, thanks to our DO for the organisation, but most importantly thank you to every representative who attended; without your contribution the day would not have happened.

**Alan Moss, proud to be educated by ASLEF, Longsight branch**

Branch secretaries from all around the country attended a three day conference at Stoke Rochford Hall in Lincolnshire. National organiser Simon Weller, District 5 Organiser Nigel Gibson and Marz Colombini, EC member for District 1, led intensive sessions which were also addressed by finance manager Nigel Gooch and Brian Corbett, newly-elected DO for District 7.

**Please send your branch news to journal@aslef.org.uk**

**Upcoming events**

- **OLD OAK COMMON – TUESDAY 10 JUNE**
  The retired members’ section’s annual reunion is from 13.00 to 16.00 at the AGV Club, Alwyn Gardens, Acton, W3 0JH. Anyone with any OOC history is welcome.

- **LEICESTER – SATURDAY 14 JUNE**
  Our 26th annual reunion is at the Barley Mow in Granby Street, Leicester, from 12.00. All welcome.

- **CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 27 JUNE**
  Meeting at Kidderminster for a 12.20 departure to Bridgnorth for the next Cricklewood reunion. Details from Grahame Nash at gwnash.nibs@blueyonder.co.uk

- **TONBRIDGE – THURSDAY 3 JULY**
  Southeastern retired members’ reunion from 11.00 at the Royal British Legion, 26 Priory Road, Tonbridge, Kent.

- **RAINHAM – THURSDAY 2 OCTOBER**
  Southeastern retired members’ reunion from 11.00 at Rainham Social Club, 86 Station Rd, Rainham, Kent, ME8 7PJ.

**Changing trains**

Cambridge branch was pleased to welcome Alan Edwards from the Greater Anglia company council in April. Alan gave an update on the TFL takeover of some current Greater Anglia services later this year, TUPE agreements, the fatality agreement in place with Greater Anglia and the future proposed extension of the franchise. We also had reports from FCC, XC and GA local reps. We were sad to learn of the passing of retired drivers Reg Howe, Peter Barber and Bryan Clark. Our condolences go to their families. Our next branch meeting is Monday 2 June from 18.30 at the Fountain Inn. Guests will include District 5 Organiser Nigel Gibson and CrossCountry company council.

**Martin Haylett, branch secretary**

ASLEF service badges were presented on 14 April to Rob Winn (FCC) 5 years; Steve James (East Coast) and Richard Sullivan (FCC) 10 years; and Kevin Moir (FCC) and Howard Kaye (East Coast) 35 years.

**Peter Smith, King’s Cross**

Andrew Watson, LLC ScotRail, and Edinburgh No 2, flew the flag at a march in Edinburgh to mark 30 years since the start of the bitter miners’ strike of 1984-85.
Turn of the screw

Along with a number of other reps and company council officers from District 5, I recently spent an eye-opening day in Chelmsford. This is meant as no disrespect to Britain’s newest city, but is a compliment to Thompsons solicitors for a superb insight into employment law. The day was organised by Nigel Gibson, our full time officer, with Howard Kaye, EC member for District 5, also contributing.

As our current government keeps turning the screw on workers’ rights, these training days are important to keep us up to date and in touch with a constant changing horizon. Using actual case studies put a real perspective on the issues, illustrating how employers work and what we can do to challenge them. We covered many subjects such as contracts of employment, unfair dismissal and unlawful deductions from wages.

Jo Seery gave a very enjoyable and upbeat presentation, including a short quiz on the subjects we talked about. Many thanks to Jo and her colleagues at Thompsons for putting all this together.

Les Bennett, Bishop’s Stortford LLR

750 years on the railway

Ipswich branch had a special presentation meeting on 16 March with GS Mick Whelan and DO Nigel Gibson presenting badges to members who, in total, had 750 years’ service. Mick gave a report on numerous subjects, including HS2, pensions, and health and safety, and thanked LDC rep Andy Derrett for producing a badge to mark anniversary of the miners’ strike. Kelvin Higgins recalled how the branch adopted Sherwood colliery in Nottingham and helped them 30 years ago.

The GS then presented a 50 year medallion to Dave Thompson, who joined the railway in the winter of 1963 as a telegraph boy in Hitchin South signal box, and his wife Pauline with a bunch of flowers. He also presented 40 year badges to Mick Scarfe, Trevor Southgate, Richard Wood, and Alan Tricker; a 35 year badge to Mark Davies; 30 year badges to Tim Mallion, Alan Dewhurst, and Darren Clarke; a 20 year badge to Matt Leone; 15 year badges to Dave Weddle, Tonbridge RMS.

Knights of the iron road

to Tim Howlett and Steve Wigfield; and a 10 year badge to B Aikenhead.

Long service awards to members not present include Dave Harlott and Clive Chippington (40 years); John Orris, Mark Ross, Joe Morris (35); Andy Harlott (30); Chris Beales, NJ Stinton, MP Johnson, Stuart Pearson, SE Rogers, S Sheeran, M Smith (15); IC Watling, B Damant, Miss J Middleton, Kelvin Moody (10); and R Stannard, DJ Amner, D Barnes, Pat Grant, Matt Waddington and Mark Ford (5).

Lee Barber, branch secretary

Mick Holder looks at the Journal in June 1914 on the eve of the Great War

LUBRICATING THE LOCOMOTIVE

FW Brewer on lubricating the locomotive: ‘One of the chief incidents in connection with the unfortunate Aisgill disaster on September 2nd last, was the fact that Driver Cundle (jailed for manslaughter following the accident) found it necessary to oil his engine whilst it was in motion. The lubricators of the axle-boxes had to be replenished and, in order to refill them, Cundle had to go out on the running board, and to pass from one side of the engine to the other. On the face of it, the practice is a dangerous one. Signals may be passed unnoticed (though this very rarely happens) or the driver may fall from, or be knocked off, his engine. The men do not run these risks from choice. They are, in fact, forbidden to run them by the companies’ regulations. But there are some things for which the regulations do not provide a remedy, and amongst those things are overheated axle-boxes.

EFFECTIVE AND ECONOMICAL

‘Rather than abandon his train, a driver will naturally have recourse to any expedient which will enable him to reach his journey’s end. But axle-boxes are not the only parts which require to be adequately and efficiently lubricated. It is imperative that the practice of oiling any parts in motion should not only be prohibited by rule, but that it should be rendered absolutely unnecessary by practical means. Those means have long been available in the form of mechanical, or forced, lubrication. As we said more than nine years ago, such lubrication is the only really effective and economical method for reducing friction to a minimum.’

WORKMEN’S COMPENSATION

A court case taken under the Workmen’s Compensation Act considered ‘average weekly earnings’ to half of which a workman is entitled if he sustains an injury arising out of and in the course of his employment. Railway companies tended to take total earnings for the previous year and divide by 52. But this failed to recognise promotion or time off and resulted in lower payments. In a complex judgement that found in the drivers’ favour ‘his honour also ordered the company should pay the costs of the proceedings.’

Care and the community

Tosh McDonald, EC member for District 4, showed solidarity with striking workers at Care UK – ‘and Peppa Pig’ – at a demo in Doncaster organised by the People’s Assembly. ‘All nurses who worked for the NHS caring for people with learning difficulties who have been contracted out to Care UK have had their earnings cut by half and their sick pay slashed;’ said Tosh. ‘This service was contracted out by the former English Democrat mayor and his cabinet of Tories, Liberal Democrats and so-called independents. Care UK make large donations to the Conservative Party – and cut workers’ pay to finance it.’

It was good to see so many new faces at our retired drivers’ do in Ramsgate. There was a good crowd, much reminiscing, and an excellent buffet provided by the ladies at the Golden Arrow club. Sorry to say the photos I took did not come out; the film did not wind on. My fault!

Dave Weddle, Tonbridge RMS
Working for railway people

Run for Transport people by railway people, REPTA helps bring the industry closer together.

REPTA members benefit from: 2014 MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE NOW!!

- Over 120 years’ experience
- Protected travel
- Network support
- New for 2014 Alnwick Gardens & discounted Taste Card
- Major discounts from leading high street names
- Free Yearbook packed with special deals

Join today for just £3.00 and protect yourself from travel card loss charges, enjoy free insurance save money with wide-ranging members’ discounts and benefits from being in a major Transport network. Join online at www.repta.co.uk or just send details of your name, address, date of birth and email together with your cheque or postal order made payable to REPTA.

For one membership card and yearbook inc. P&P send £4.50. Extra cards for family members £3.00. Family membership two adults and all children up to ages 18 for £9.00 inc P&P.

Please send to: REPTA, 4 Brackmills Close, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts NG19 0PB. Tel: 01623 646789

You can also see us on Facebook:

Balfour Beatty Rail

Train Drivers – Full & Part Time Balfour Beatty Rail

Location – Various within the UK

Balfour Beatty Rail is an international leader in the design, construction, maintenance, management & renewal of rail assets and systems. We operate and maintain a diverse fleet of On Track Machines and we currently have a range of interesting opportunities for experienced train drivers to help deliver our expanding business portfolio.

The roles primarily involve train driving and route conducting duties in the following key areas: London and the south east, south west England, Wales & east & west coast main lines.

Candidates will need to possess the following key skills and experiences:

- A qualified train driver with a good safety record.
- Able to carry out minor maintenance and repairs.
- Have a good awareness of railway health and safety requirements, particularly as they relate to train operations.
- Be able to make a positive contribution to a small dedicated team working on high profile contracts.
- A flexible approach to work, being prepared to work around a roster that includes night, weekends, bank holidays and respond to short notice changes of plan.

- An appreciation of the importance of good customer relations.
- Able to communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing.
- Hold a current UK driving licence with no more that 6 penalty points.

In return we offer a competitive salary and benefits package with a salary of between £33-40k p.a. dependent on role. (pro rata for part time positions)

To find out more call our recruitment team on 0115 9210471 or apply in writing to: Dave Brewin, HR Advisor, Balfour Beatty Rail Plant, Old Station Yard, Sandiacre, Nottingham NG10 5AG.

Email enquiries to: david.brewin@bbrail.com donna.mckone@bbrail.com

Working for railway people

Run for Transport people by railway people, REPTA helps bring the industry closer together.

REPTA members benefit from: 2014 MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE NOW!!

- Over 120 years’ experience
- Protected travel
- Network support
- New for 2014 Alnwick Gardens & discounted Taste Card
- Major discounts from leading high street names
- Free Yearbook packed with special deals

Join today for just £3.00 and protect yourself from travel card loss charges, enjoy free insurance save money with wide-ranging members’ discounts and benefits from being in a major Transport network. Join online at www.repta.co.uk or just send details of your name, address, date of birth and email together with your cheque or postal order made payable to REPTA.

For one membership card and yearbook inc. P&P send £4.50. Extra cards for family members £3.00. Family membership two adults and all children up to ages 18 for £9.00 inc P&P.

Please send to: REPTA, 4 Brackmills Close, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts NG19 0PB. Tel: 01623 646789

You can also see us on Facebook:

Balfour Beatty Rail

Train Drivers – Full & Part Time Balfour Beatty Rail

Location – Various within the UK

Balfour Beatty Rail is an international leader in the design, construction, maintenance, management & renewal of rail assets and systems. We operate and maintain a diverse fleet of On Track Machines and we currently have a range of interesting opportunities for experienced train drivers to help deliver our expanding business portfolio.

The roles primarily involve train driving and route conducting duties in the following key areas: London and the south east, south west England, Wales & east & west coast main lines.

Candidates will need to possess the following key skills and experiences:

- A qualified train driver with a good safety record.
- Able to carry out minor maintenance and repairs.
- Have a good awareness of railway health and safety requirements, particularly as they relate to train operations.
- Be able to make a positive contribution to a small dedicated team working on high profile contracts.
- A flexible approach to work, being prepared to work around a roster that includes night, weekends, bank holidays and respond to short notice changes of plan.

- An appreciation of the importance of good customer relations.
- Able to communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing.
- Hold a current UK driving licence with no more that 6 penalty points.

In return we offer a competitive salary and benefits package with a salary of between £33-40k p.a. dependent on role. (pro rata for part time positions)

To find out more call our recruitment team on 0115 9210471 or apply in writing to: Dave Brewin, HR Advisor, Balfour Beatty Rail Plant, Old Station Yard, Sandiacre, Nottingham NG10 5AG.

Email enquiries to: david.brewin@bbrail.com donna.mckone@bbrail.com
**LES PURDEY FIRST CLASS**

Brother Purdey was a popular man who always had a smile on his face and enjoyed the mess room banter as much as everyone did in those days. One of my favourite stories involving Les was when, in the late 1980s, he was caught by a ticket inspector travelling first class on his way home after finishing a night shift on the paper train. The inspector told him to move so Les, being Les, told the inspector where to go in no uncertain terms! Les received a form 1 for his colourful language and unauthorised use of first class. At his form 1 hearing Les was suspended for a day without pay. When the day came for Les to stay at home the whole of Waterloo depot stayed at home as well, bringing the service to a grinding halt. How I miss those days! God bless you, Les.

Martin Dye, Waterloo Nine Elms

---

**ROY CROSS KNIGHT OF THE IRON WAY**

Roy Cross, a retired driver with Nottingham Midland, was a 50 year man. He was presented with his gold lapel pin in 1997 by Central Trains shortly before he retired. Roy began on the footplate at Annesley, on the old Great Central Railway, one of the last two men to be passed out to drive steam locos there in 1962 (fireman Roy Bainbridge was the other). He was a great colleague, good for a swap to accommodate, good for a lift home in his car, or on the back of his motorbike in the early days, ready to assist, mentor, and give the benefit of his experience when my time came to see the inspector. A true knight of the iron way.

Denis Parker, RMS

---

**KEN NICHOLSON STEAM SPECIALS**

Retired York driver Ken Nicholson died on 25 February at the age of 70 after a long battle against cancer. He started at York shed as an engine cleaner in 1960, becoming fireman and, eventually, driver in 1986. Throughout his railway career Ken was a loyal ASLEF member and a popular character who loved the mess room banter with his workmates. He loved steam locos and was frequently seen firing on steam specials.

There are not many true characters left on the railway, so it’s very sad when someone like Ken leaves us. Our thoughts are with Ken’s widow Frances, their daughters Lisa and Sarah, and their grandchildren. RIP Nic.

Tony Penn, York

---

**ROY YOUNG MR FIDDLER**

Roy Young, who was 81, and had suffered with diabetes for many years, started at Tonbridge as a cleaner, became a fireman and was then called up to do national service with the West Kents in Malaya. He returned to Tonbridge, passed as driver, and went to Orpington where he was known as Mr Fiddle as he could make better diagrams than the roster clerks. Later he became a ticket inspector, and then a publican.

Dave Weddle, Tonbridge RMS

---

**CLIFFORD CLARIDGE GREAT CHARACTER**

Sadly, I have to report the death of a great character, Clifford Cyril Claridge, on 31 March. He was 74. Cliff began at Willesden Stonebridge Park, then went to Wimbledon and Victoria. He always had a joke or story to tell, and was good at cooking Sunday breakfast for the drivers on duty. Cliff had to come off the front with hearing loss and went into the offices, and retired in 2003. Our thoughts are with his wife Linda and family at this sad time.

Ken Heydon, Battersea

---

**BOB GOODWINS ALWAYS VOLUNTEERING**

Bob Goodwins, of Lillie Bridge branch, a driver at Transplant Tubelines (the engineers’ train unit on London Underground) passed away on 26 February at the age of 57. Bob joined LU in the mid-1970s and moved between various depots. He was one of the loveable characters liked by everyone, hardworking, and always volunteering. He was medically retired three years ago but stayed in touch with his mates. He is survived by his wife Sharon and son Leo.

Colin Bright, RMS

---

**FINAL DEPARTURES**

Two more Stratford men have departed on their final journeys. Ron Race was at Stratford when I started in 1964, but transferred to Southend Victoria in the 1970s. One of my first drivers, a very nice guy, who looked after his fireman. Terry Bowyer was a guy liked by all, a regular attendee of our monthly old boys’ meetings. He was a very good darts player, in the London League, one of the best in the country.

Dave Pizzie, Stratford RMS

---

**PETER PHELAN POWERFUL ADVOCATE**

With great sadness we report the passing of Brother Peter Phelan on 25 March. Peter was an exceptional man who truly believed if you were a member of an organisation, such as ASLEF, by your own free will, then you were obligated to follow the society’s policy. Peter was a loyal ASLEF member and activist who served the membership with distinction as a local level rep at Edgeley and Longsight. He was also always present at Stockport and, later, Longsight branches giving substantial reports to members. Peter’s views were sought and, more importantly, listened to, as they were based on knowledge, experience and his sense of fair play. He was a powerful advocate of society policy and one of the best and most loyal reps we have had. RIP.

E Rowbotham, Terry Clarke and Peter Gunn

---

**KENWORTHY THOMAS**

Kenworthy Thomas of Woonsocket, R.I., died on September 2, 2014, at the age of 85. He was a veteran of World War II and a retired machine operator. He is survived by his sister, Rose Baker of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the RhodyCare nursing home in North Smithfield and the Home Instead Care Services’ staff.

---

**LUCAS GEORGE**

Lucas George, who was born in 1923 and died on November 1, 2014, at the age of 91, was a retired accountant. He is survived by his daughter, Mary George of Westport, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.

---

**HORST J. KOCH**

Horst J. Koch, who was born in Germany in 1930 and died on December 1, 2014, at the age of 84, was a retired engineer. He is survived by his wife, Ingrid Koch of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.

---

**LEWIS H. SMITH**

Lewis H. Smith, who was born in New Hampshire in 1925 and died on December 2, 2014, at the age of 89, was a retired teacher. He is survived by his daughter, Susan Smith of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.

---

**TOMASZ W. LITWIAK**

Tomasz W. Litwia of Woonsocket, R.I., died on December 3, 2014, at the age of 80. He was a retired machinist. He is survived by his wife, Anna Litwia of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.

---

**RICHARD M. BARTLETT**

Richard M. Bartlett, who was born in New Hampshire in 1928 and died on December 4, 2014, at the age of 86, was a retired engineer. He is survived by his wife, Jean Bartlett of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.

---

**HERBERT E. COX**

Herbert E. Cox, who was born in New Hampshire in 1930 and died on December 5, 2014, at the age of 84, was a retired teacher. He is survived by his wife, Alice Cox of Woonsocket, and several nieces and nephews. The family is grateful for the loving care and support of his caregivers at the Woonsocket Community Center and the RhodeCare nursing home in North Smithfield.
**Letters**

We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN. Each month the writer of our star letter wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

---

**Unions aren’t our enemy!**

Much to my dismay, I have recently heard a lot of criticism of other trade unions and their members by a few drivers from this union. This has included criticising teachers in the NUT for taking action to defend education, criticising the FBU for defending their pensions and, more recently, the RMT for their action on the London Underground to defend safety and jobs. Members of other trade unions aren’t our enemy! Their industrial action is just as important to them as any ASLEF action is to us. There are more than six million trade union members in the UK and we should be looking, as individuals and branches, to build good relations with other unions and their members where possible. There is nobody who is prouder to be an ASLEF member than me, but we need to recognise that other unions also have dedicated and passionate members who are capable of the same solidarity as I know I could rely on from my ASLEF colleagues, so let’s celebrate their actions, not berate them!

*Matt Fowkes, Leicester branch*

**Principles, not borders**

In response to Brother Tansey’s letter in the February Journal I must write to correct him in his accusations against the democracy of our union. I attended AAD in Edinburgh last year and spoke in favour of the motion keeping Scotland within the UK. The debate was lively and there were contributions from delegates from across the UK. As a British trade union I don’t think it is an unreasonable position for the union to take. If we followed Brother Tansey’s view that only those who are eligible to vote in the referendum should have a say in setting ASLEF policy then we will no longer be a national trade union. I’m delighted that Bro Tansey sees himself as a trade unionist and socialist but, for me, these qualities don’t stop at borders. As a trade unionist in Scotland I support workers and fellow trade unionists across the world. My principles are not defined by nationalities or by borders.

*Alex McCallum, Ayr branch*

**Remember Stirling Bridge**

Our union’s sudden and almost secretive dive into the Scottish independence debate on the side of the union has saddened me. I look enviously at other unions holding political meetings with guest speakers and debates for members to get to the truth and form a view on how to vote. ASLEF has chosen to jump into bed with the ToryDems and Labour rather than allowing debate and discussion. To me it looks a patronising move by a union, mainly English based, choosing to stifle debate on what is the biggest decision on the future of Scotland since William Wallace said ‘I think I will let them get on the bridge first.’ There is no doubt, looking at the news today, how different the countries and peoples of Scotland and England are. Scotland is a left-wing country, as Jimmy Reid famously said, ‘Where people get their socialism with their mother’s milk’ and where the Tories aren’t

---

**TRANS-ATLANTIC TRADE DEAL IS ASSAULT ON BRITISH DEMOCRACY**

I write to express my concern and disgust for the proposed Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership currently being debated at the European Parliament, specifically the section regarding Investor State Dispute Settlement, because I believe it is the most serious threat to British democracy, and trade union power, we have ever seen.

These rules will make it perfectly legal for an un-elected foreign corporation to sue the British government if they believe a decision by the government (elected by the democratic will of British citizens) causes them to lose ‘perceived future profits.’

The TTIP will allow powerful US health companies to sue if the NHS is not opened up to competition or privatisation before ‘courts’ held in secret, as ‘private arbitration commissions’, which makes this treaty even more contemptible.

Such legislation could lead to the British government facing long and costly lawsuits if, in addition to Ed Miliband’s suggestion of bringing rail franchises back into the public sector, a future Labour government follows a traditional socialist path with other public utilities.

I am not aware that any of the franchises are currently held by US corporations but at one point freight operator EWS was owned by the Wisconsin Central Transportation Corporation. The cost of such law suits, and associated compensation, would be borne by the taxpayer. Investor State Dispute Settlements have led to vast sums of public money being paid in compensation to private companies in the US and Canada.

George Monbiot has exposed ‘this trans-Atlantic trade deal’ as ‘a full frontal assault on democracy’ in his column in The Guardian and the European Trade Union Confederation, and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, are united in fighting against workers’ rights being drastically curtailed by the TTIP. Naturally, as an ASLEF member, I believe this is a serious issue to our hard won democratic working rights, not only for my union, but for the millions of unionised workers in Great Britain, and the many who are unfortunate enough to not be unionised.

I believe the TTIP and its sister treaty, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the European Union and Canada, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which does not affect Britain, are disgraceful and undemocratic deals which will allow un-elected corporations to bypass British law, undermine British sovereignty, and undo workers’ rights and health and safety legislation.

The TTIP is a dreadful attack on democracy and will undermine everything ASLEF has ever fought for. It should be something that all our members are aware of, and I ask the union to put pressure on the Labour Party to oppose it.

*Paul Williamson, Coventry*
A Tory smokescreen

Benjamin Disraeli and Sybil

We do not need welfare reform in this country, what we need is the return of an industrial and manufacturing base, with a universal council house building programme at low rents, plus a decent minimum wage, then the welfare bill will drop overnight. The reality of welfare in this country is that the Tories are using the deficit as a cover to dismantle the welfare state, and the role of the state, but none of this is being picked up by Labour shadow ministers or the BBC.

The very fabric of the state, and its vital role at the heart of our society in providing welfare, services and pensions, is being whittled away, under cover of reducing the deficit, and there is no opposition to it.

The Tories claim they are making painful cuts to reduce the deficit but that is just a smokescreen; to hide what is really a determination to implement their right-wing ideology of permanently reducing the size of the state, driving down wages, and cutting benefits. It is easy for well off Tories to rid their econ onomy of a welfare state, but none of this is being picked up by Labour shadow ministers or the BBC.

Since Margaret Thatcher became leader, and rejected the One Nation Conservatism of Benjamin Disraeli, and the post-war consensus of Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath, the Tories have been ultra right-wing, hard nosed, and with no compassion for the poor. They are happy to condemn everyone else to a life of misery so long as they can live in luxury. The Tories love it when the economy is bad, so they can blame the masses; it is as insidious as it is malicious.

Ernie Whitfield, St Blazey

even the official opposition. In England we have Nigel Farage (famously chased out of Edinburgh) espousing his right-wing diatribes on the BBC, trying to out right-wing the ToryDems and Labour. We are as different on a social level as we were in 1707.

Scottish independence is a chance for Scotland to move forward with progressive left of centre social policies that are not overridden with the making of billions for big business and millionaire shareholders. It is a chance for the people of Scotland to make decisions that are correct for Scotland.

The progress in Scotland under Labour and SNP governments through the Scottish Parliament has been staggering and, coupled with the voting record of Scots MPs on the Royal Mail, bedroom tax and many other Westminster imposed laws, clearly shows that Westminster isn’t working for Scotland.

Hugh S Cumming, Edinburgh No 2

Done and seen to be done

The letter in the February Journal from Brother Tansey, and the response from Brother Whelan, raise some interesting points.

Whilst it is clear that the democratic processes of the union have been followed in coming to a political decision on the independence referendum, it is perhaps more the case that democracy has not been seen to be done! To my knowledge (I accept I may be wrong) the issue of the referendum wasn’t advertised as being on the agenda at any branch meeting of Edinburgh No 2; further, there was no concerted effort by the union leadership to engage in the subject by organising debates on the issue prior to last year’s AAD.

My question to Bro Whelan is how many branches discussed this issue and how many actively set out support for a No vote? The answer to this will validate, or invalidate, the claim that no branch supports a Yes vote (and, by inference, all support No).

Perhaps we could also hear from the union leadership and/or AAD delegates the reasons they believe a No vote would be beneficial for our members and how they see the future of Scotland in the event of a No vote.

I believe there is a need and a desire for open discussion and debate on the issue and would like to see a series of debates set up, at least, in the major cities over the next few months allowing members to fully discuss the merits of a Yes or No vote. Of course the pages of the Journal are also a good forum for this discussion and I hope we can continue to have a fraternal discourse here.

Steven Nimmo, Edinburgh No 2

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise please phone 020 7324 2400 or send an email to journal@aslef.org.uk

BLAND ENCOUNTER: Take the slapstick farce of a 1950s Ealing comedy and update it with a generous portion of risqué humour. This is the brand new laugh out loud comedy novel by Donald Wightman. A donation from the sale of each book will be made to both the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Paperback £7.99 ebook £3.95 from www.amazon.co.uk

THAMESLINK 25 YEAR SPECIAL EDITION MUGS: Double sided with 319 one side and route branding the other. £5 plus £3 p+p payable to Network Southeast Railway Society. Orders to NSERS, 100 Whitley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 8ND. For further information visit www.networksoutheast.net

THREE BRIDGES branch commemorative centenary badges, limited numbers available, in red and gold or black and gold for £5, cheques payable to ASLEF Three Bridges Branch 213. Further info from Paul Eden (07952 482443) paul@homerdaz.com or Dave Mansfield (07816 960331) david.mansfield14@btinternet.com

COMMEMORATIVE badge to mark the 25th anniversary of the Clapham rail disaster. Each badge is individually numbered. £5 including p+p, cheques payable to ASLEF Bournemouth branch, from J Martin, Flat 1 Blenheim Court, 26 Marlborough Road, Bournemouth, BH4 5DH.

ENGRAVING: ASLEF driver based in Sunderland branch offers professional engraving at reasonable prices. I can engrave anything you wish, such as the ASLEF logo on a pint tankard which is pictured. For further details contact Paul Potts by email at ppotts1969@hotmail.co.uk or from Andy Cooke at andycooke69@btinternet.com

SOUTHAMPTON NORTHAM 160 branch has a limited number of 10 year badges available, £5 including p+p, please contact Andy White on 07964 818943 or email andywheatwhite@btinternet.com

FAVERSHAM branch is selling mugs and tee-shirts ‘devoted’ to Mrs Thatcher! Both are £10 and illustrate the branch view of her vicious right-wing policies. They can be obtained from the branch website www.aslef-favershambranch.co.uk or from Andy Cooke at andycocookie69@hotmail.co.uk or (mobile) 07771 923831.
Obesity has become a national epidemic in Britain. ASLEF education project worker Chris Nutty reveals what we are trying to do to make sure our members are fit for action

The ASLEF education department keeps getting asked to run some form of exercise course. With obesity, and a bad lifestyle, becoming a national problem, it would appear that we all need to do more to look after our health.

So as part of our efforts we have been trialling a distant learning exercise course, with online provider Tribal, to get our members fit for work. Here two of our union learning reps, Paul Harrett and Barry Taylor, reveal how they got on with the course.

Paul Harrett of Virgin Trains: I decided to do the tribal exercise studies course because I was interested in learning more about exercise, fitness, diet, stress reduction, and developing a healthier lifestyle. The course contained three units: principles of exercise and fitness; safe and effective exercise; and developing your own exercise programme.

I wanted to gain more knowledge about these subjects because exercise, and a healthy lifestyle, are integral parts of my life. The course involves working through a booklet for each unit and answering a series of questions to show an understanding of the subjects. The third unit contains an exercise diary, which involves planning and completing a three week exercise programme.

There is quite a lot of writing and you do have to create, and follow, an exercise programme, but there is a tutor available to assist with any difficulties, and to advise. A certificate is awarded on completion.

The course was very interesting and I did learn a lot about the different aspects of exercise, particularly nutrition and the dietary requirements for the body. There was also an interesting section concerning anatomy and physiology. I have been able to put into practice the knowledge I gained from this course and I’m hoping to be able to improve my fitness level because of it.

Barry Taylor of Greater Anglia: I signed up for the Tribal exercise studies course, and the process was quick, straightforward and completely painless, taking only 30 minutes or so to go through the necessary enrolment paperwork. All the Tribal courses come in packs that are laid out in the same format, making them easy to use and navigate. They come with information for contacting Tribal, work books that contain the learning information, assessment sheets for each unit and envelopes to return completed assessments which are freepost.

Courses are broken down into units. Exercise studies was a three unit course and, for each unit, you get three weeks to complete and send off each unit. I read through the workbooks as and when I had spare time at home or when travelling to work on the train, or travelling about jobs. If you have the time each work book can be read in a couple of hours.

They are set out clearly, concisely and contain all the information needed to answer the assessment questions. There is never any need to guess or do extra internet searches to find the answer, it’s all in the workbooks.

Once the workbook has been read you answer the questions on the relevant assessment sheet, then send the assessment sheet in the pre-paid envelope before the submission date deadline. The assessment sheet gets passed to a tutor dedicated to marking your work.

You will receive a confirmation text or email so you know your work has been received. As a safeguard, in case any work is lost, and you have to do it again, it is a good idea to scan or copy the assessment sheets before you send them.

Once the assessment is marked you will be sent a feedback sheet. This will have your marked assessment, telling you if you have passed, or failed, and will offer advice on completing future assessments. When you have worked your way through all the units, had them marked and moderated, you receive your National Certificate of Further Education in your chosen subject.

I found the whole process straightforward, clearly understandable and, above all, manageable between work and family commitments and I would consider taking up another course in the future.

○ These courses are free providing you complete the course; failure to do so will result in a £68 charge being levied. Courses are also open to your family as well. Tribal offers a diverse range of online courses, from mental health awareness, and care and management of diabetes, to team leading. For more information contact your ULR or ASLEF education project worker.

The third unit contains an exercise diary, which involves planning and completing a three week exercise programme.

Once the work book has been read you answer the questions on the relevant assessment sheet, then send the assessment sheet in a pre-paid envelope before the submission date deadline.

The assessment sheet gets passed to a tutor dedicated to marking your work.

You will receive a confirmation text or email so you know your work has been received. As a safeguard, in case any work is lost, and you have to do it again, it is a good idea to scan or copy the assessment sheets before you send them.

Once the assessment is marked you will be sent a feedback sheet. This will have your marked assessment, telling you if you have passed, or failed, and will offer advice on completing future assessments.

When you have worked your way through all the units, had them marked and moderated, you receive your National Certificate of Further Education in your chosen subject.
The winner of this month’s crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Solution to prize crossword number 97 which appeared in the May edition of the ASLEF Journal

Across: 7 Solenm 8 Employ 9 Wadi 10 Approach
11 Cavemen 13 Stand 15 Sperm 16 Connect
18 Pounding 19 Tide 21 Damage 22 Events

Down: 1 Sofa 2 Mediterranean 3 Engaged 4 Peeps
5 Opportunities 6 Volcanic 12 Approval 14 Coughed
17 Hides 20 Duty

Congratulations to Mrs M Alesbury of Whitehill Bordon, Hampshire who was last month’s winner.

Thanks for all your responses to the 97th ASLEF crossword in the May 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 June

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

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.

More than just a union
Here’s another benefit of working for ASLEF

- Save as much as 34% off AA Breakdown Cover on our online prices at enrolment and 20% at renewal every year*
- More dedicated Patrols than any other UK breakdown service†
- We repair 8 out of 10 vehicles at the roadside‡
- Members are rewarded with enhanced breakdown benefits at renewal

To join, call
0800 048 0075
Quoting reference F075!

1. Applies to Family Roadside & Relays cover at first year only. Other levels of cover are available and varying discounts apply. Offer only available to ASLEF employees by calling the number given, quoting the stated reference and paying annually by direct debit under a recurring transaction arrangement. Enrolment offer available to new Members for their first 12 months of membership only. Offer not available in conjunction with any other offer/discount or on any other AA product/service. Details correct at time of issue. 2. Renewal offer available to ASLEF employees who are existing AA Members, or who join under the enrolment offer and will be available at each renewal date until they cease to be ASLEF employees or the withdrawal of this scheme. 3. AA data – UK. Vehicle recovery report, September 2013. 4. Based on AA Case Repair Rate October 2013 – September 2013.

Automobile Association Insurance Services Limited is an insurance intermediary authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered office: Farum House, Basing View, Basingstoke RG21 4EA.

Registered in England & Wales, number 2414213.

---

Your company is serious about health and safety.
They subscribe to CIRAS because it is part of their safety strategy.
They want your health and safety concern raised and resolved. Your best first action is to report it internally. Use all available channels. However if you need to speak with someone independent confidentially, call CIRAS.

**...AT THE END OF THE LINE**

Freephone 0800 4 101 101
Freepost CIRAS Text 07507 285887