Jeremy’s pledge to bring rail back into public ownership

SIMON WELLER: Paying for the Witchfinder General
GREGOR GALL: Will police enforce new regulations?
WHAAM! Pop art plays politics at Tate Modern

Cliff Holloway takes Thurrock
Kate Hudson goes nuclear on Trident
The train drivers’ union since 1880
invest in your child’s future **for the same cost as a magazine**
tax free policies from £5 per week

for further information call us on **freephone 0800 328 9140**
visit our website at [www.enginemens.co.uk](http://www.enginemens.co.uk)
or write to us at Railway Enginemen’s Assurance Society Limited,
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE
HEN evidence was taken in Parliament on the Trade Union Bill it was clear from the questions asked by certain members of the panel, and the responses from employers’ groups like the CBI, that the driving forces behind this nasty piece of legislation are dogma and corporate self-interest, which is why the Tories are trying to destroy our freedom of speech and association. We must prepare to fight, challenge or ignore bad law if it is introduced as ordinary workers have had to do to achieve the minimal rights we enjoy today; it is a fact that productivity is greater where there are recognised trade unions.

Looking ahead and, given the disgraceful actions of the government over the PCS and check off, we have to consider the impact of the Bill on the removal of check off and our ability to campaign. In the coming months we shall, via our branch secretaries, be trying to get all members onto direct debit. I shall write to you, stating clearly why we believe it is necessary to do this, along with briefings at district and company councils, other forums and articles in the Journal.

We welcome the announcement from TfL that the Night Tube is to be deferred until 2016 and see this as an opportunity to discuss and negotiate a reasonable way forward for all parties. But if, as has been suggested, the company is going to operate in bad faith by going directly to staff, that could only be interpreted as their wish to incite industrial strife and I do not believe they will be disappointed by our reaction.

Freight has real issues we are working through; our thoughts are with those taking early retirement to create jobs for others, and those forced to move for work, as highlighted by the closure of Worksop branch, and hopes of a brighter secure future.

Yours fraternally
Mick Whelan, general secretary
Get on your feet out on the street

MORE than 75,000 people turned out to demonstrate against the Tories’ Trade Union Bill and to protest about George Osborne’s brutal austerity cuts outside the Conservative Party conference in Manchester.

ASLEF activists – including GS Mick Whelan, EC president Tosh McDonald, EC1 Marz Colombini and DO4 Nick Whitehead – joined the protest, organised by the TUC, which began with a rally in Castlefield before a long and winding march through the city to the Midland hotel and Manchester Central, protected by a ‘ring of steel’ erected by police.

‘This protest shows the depth of feeling felt not just by people here in the north-west, but right across the country,’ said Mick ‘Austerity is not the answer’, said Tosh. ‘It’s the problem.’

And Marz, wearing the new ASLEF Kes tee-shirt, showing Billy Casper giving the V-sign ‘to strike ballot thresholds,’ said, ‘We won’t be gagged by this Tory government.’

Singer Charlotte Church slammed the Tories for ‘waging class war’ and Billy Bragg performed a powerful set, altering the lyrics to some of his best known songs to add topical references such as ‘take the money from Trident and spend it on the NHS.’

ORE than 75,000 people turned out to demonstrate against the Tories’ Trade Union Bill and to protest about George Osborne’s brutal austerity cuts outside the Conservative Party conference in Manchester.

Talks with London Underground have broken down without agreement. All-night services in the capital will not be introduced this year and it is not clear when – or even if – the service will begin. DO8 Finn Brennan said: ‘We want to keep talking and develop a solution that delivers Night Tube while protecting and improving the work-life balance for our members. We have put forward a number of proposals to resolve this dispute in a way that is fair and benefits both sides. LU has rejected them all. Most disappointingly of all, they have decided to blackmail their employees by refusing to make a pay offer unless staff agree to worsen their working conditions. That is not something we are prepared to accept. LU management has completely mishandled negotiations. They have wasted every opportunity for a settlement and appear determined to provoke confrontation rather than resolution.’

Lobby of Parliament

The Trade Union Bill is the biggest attack on trade unions in decades. Simon Weller, our national organiser, explains what it means on page 10; and Gregor Gall, Professor of Industrial Relations at Bradford University, suggests some ways round it on page 14. But to show the strength of feeling against this cynical attack on our rights, the TUC is organising a lobby of Parliament from 1pm at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, on Monday 2 November. ‘Please come and join us,’ said Simon. ‘It would be great to see you!’

No Night Tube in sight

French drivers of Channel tunnel shuttle trains have threatened industrial action unless the authorities improve conditions around the tunnel entrance. The CGT union says its members have been traumatised by the deaths of migrants on and around the rail tracks in northern France.

RAIL BOSSES: ‘TRAINS TOO PRICEY’

Network Rail bosses say staff should use cars for business as trains don’t offer value for money. NR spent £19 million on railway tickets and £15 million on mileage for cars as well as £1.1 million on air fares and £400,000 on cabs. ‘No wonder passengers think they’re getting ripped off,’ said Shadow Transport Secretary Lilian Greenwood, ‘when even rail bosses say the trains are too expensive.’

GREAT WESTERN FIASCO FEARS

Fears have been expressed that delays to the Network Rail flagship project to electrify the Great Western main line are so severe the government is going to have to go cap in hand to Hitachi and beg the company to modify the first batch of IEP trains to run on diesel as well as electricity.

STRIKE THREAT OVER MIGRANTS

Singer Charlotte Church slammed the Tories for ‘waging class war’ and Billy Bragg performed a powerful set, altering the lyrics to some of his best known songs to add topical references such as ‘take the money from Trident and spend it on the NHS.’

CHECK OUT DIRECT DEBIT

The executive committee has launched a campaign to encourage ASLEF members to move from check off to direct debit ahead of the Tories’ Trade Union Bill which is designed to make it hard – if not impossible – for unions to organise properly and represent our members. ‘The labour movement is under attack from a government determined to destroy trade unions,’ said EC president Tosh McDonald. ‘Moving from check off to direct debit will help ASLEF defend itself against this threat and remain a strong and independent voice to represent train drivers.’

QUOTE…

‘Until Corbyn came along, Labour was like a rabbit in the headlights on the subject of austerity.’ – William Keegan in The Observer

…”UNQUOTE
I can smile at the old days

ALLAN HUITSON, a fireman who worked out of Stockton and Thornaby motive power depots in the 1950s, took a trip down memory lane at the National Railway Museum in York.

‘That’s me holding a medal that was given to all schoolchildren to mark the 100th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington railway, by the then Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Ropner,’ said Allan, who made the trip north from his home in Kent to celebrate the 190th anniversary of the S&D which opened in 1825.

‘As an NRM volunteer who gives talks inside the cabs of steam engines, relating my experience, I was disappointed that the NRM did not give merit to such an occasion.’

Mick remembers Hatfield rail crash

Mick Whelan has paid tribute to those who died and were injured in the Hatfield train crash on 17 October 2000. The GS said: ‘We should never forget those who died, and all those whose lives were changed, because of Hatfield. And, as an industry, we should never forget the lessons that we learned in what is, and always will be, a safety-critical industry.’

The accident, in which four people died, and more than 70 were injured, happened when a GNER InterCity 225 travelling from London to Leeds was derailed just south of Hatfield station.

Mick said: ‘Hatfield exposed the serious shortcomings of the privatised infrastructure company Railtrack. The subsequent inquiry revealed that the company – which put profit before safety – had failed in its duty of care to passengers and workers. As some people talk about privatising Network Rail we should reflect on what that means and where it goes.

Private companies put profit – and dividends to shareholders – before safety and take short cuts which result in accidents, injuries and deaths.

‘In a safety critical industry there is no room for a company, or chief executive, who wants his managers to take short cuts at the expense of fare-paying passengers, and those of us who work in the industry, and put safety, delivery, and public service first.’

QUOTE...

‘I love this country.’ – Jeremy Corbyn

...UNQUOTE

Off the rails

JEREMY HUNT is as much a figure of fun on the right as he is on the left these days. No one, except David Cameron, treats him seriously. Certainly not Deborah Orr who let rip in her column in The Guardian: ‘Hunt declared that the UK’s workforce needs to start valuing work not for the money it pays us but for the dignity, purpose and self-reliance it generously gives us for free. Well, not all of us. Just those among us who work for wages too low to meet the bills. At the top of the pay scale, people are welcome to carry on insisting they must have remuneration packages that reflect their market worth.’

THE Jeremy4Leader campaign – shades of Barack across the water when ‘Obama for America’ became ‘Organising for Action’ – has rebranded itself as ‘Momentum’ or, in full, ‘The People’s Momentum’. ‘In the coming weeks,’ said Jon Lansman, on behalf of the campaign, ‘We shall be setting up supporters’ meetings in towns and cities around Britain, organising both inside the Labour Party, at a local and regional level, and a broader social movement to campaign in our communities and workplaces.’ The right-wing website Guido Fawkes had a different take. ‘Will it be the enduring umbrella for the mixed bag of Trots, tankies, cranks, hipsters and hard lefties who won the leadership for Corbyn?’

‘AND I say unto you, that joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over 99 just persons, which need no repentance.’ Boris take heed. New Transport for London posters on London Underground say ‘TfL doesn’t make a profit because we reinvest all our income to run and improve your services’ which, of course is how it should be done. And how ASLEF has, for years, been arguing it should be done. Good to see the Mayor has, belatedly, got the message. Bless.

‘POLITICAL SATIRE’ said Tom Lehrer wapsishly, ‘became obsolete when Henry Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.’ Niall Ferguson’s new biography of the man responsible for dropping six million tons of bombs on Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians, and still losing the war in what was, for the United States, a humiliating defeat, reminds us of one of his dry asides at the Paris peace conference in 1973: ‘We bombed them into letting us accept their terms.’

THE TORIES have always been big on promise, short on delivery, but those working to deliver HS2 fear the idea floated by junior transport minister Robert Goodwill that the high speed service from Birmingham will terminate not at Euston but at Old Oak Common, near Harlesden, could hole the project beneath the waterline. ‘The promise to passengers has always been city centre to city centre,’ said one. ‘But this new plan doesn’t deliver on that.’

CONFERENCEs 2016: The Scottish TUC is at the Caird Hall in Dundee from Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 April. ASLEF’s annual assembly of delegates is at the Macdonald Highlands hotel, Aviemore, from Monday 9 to Friday 13 May. The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival, near Dorchester, is from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 July. The Trades Union Congress is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 11 to Wednesday 14 September. The Labour Party conference is at the BT convention centre in Liverpool from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 September.

No Pasarán! Our new badge celebrates the valour of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. £4 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

500 CLUB: W Jones, with number 6, won the November draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £350.
Lifeline – in the event of something happening to me

ALAN MOSS of Longsight branch reports from the Hazards conference at Keele

AN ASLEf delegation – consisting of Chris Mullings, Croydon Tramlink; Steve Gurdlie, Faversham; Dave ‘Max’ Boyce, Cardiff; and me – attended the 26th annual Hazards conference at Keele University in Staffordshire. Delegates with a wealth of experience, seniority and diversity showed a burning desire to engage, network and organise. We all had the same trade union principles, work ethos, political views and commitment to health & safety; the weekend flew by and, as well as renewing our vigour, we also had a jolly good laugh.

At the opening plenary on Friday evening our host, friend and comrade Hilda Palmer said we have to fight these ‘bastard Tories’ and our host, friend and comrade Hilda Palmer also had a jolly good laugh.

Delegates with a wealth of experience, seniority and diversity showed a burning desire to engage, network and organise. We all had the same trade union principles, work ethos, political views and commitment to health & safety; the weekend flew by and, as well as renewing our vigour, we also had a jolly good laugh.

At the opening plenary on Friday evening our host, friend and comrade Hilda Palmer said we have to fight these ‘bastard Tories’ and their Trade Union Bill, an attempt to stifle, gag and undermine everything we do to protect our members. We heard from two speakers from Families Against Corporate Killers – Louise Taggart of Scottish Hazards and Joanne Hill, the mother of Cameron Minshull. He was the 16-year-old who died when his oversized overalls became entangled in a lathe on a government-funded apprenticeship at Huntley Mount engineering in Bury. Cameron was untrained and unsupervised and the company had no h&s risk assessments. The company was fined £150,000 and its boss jailed for eight months; the recruitment firm fined £75,000 with £25,000 costs. But, for Joanne, life will never be the same again. Her heartfelt speech received a standing ovation and made us more determined to fight this government’s attacks on the health & safety of workers.

Everyone was encouraged to play an active part in the workshops on Saturday, and we all came away better equipped to carry out our role. One message I tried to hammer home was about making firm agreements with employers on facilities, training and consultation; the SPSC brown book is the constitution and enshrines those rights. A fulfilling weekend and I would encourage any active safety rep to attend; I would also urge all branches to support the Hazards campaign as it is a lifeline for us all.

QUOTE...

‘In Labour’s good old, bad old days, the party went to the seaside each autumn to commit suicide in public’ – Andrew Rawnsley in The Observer

...UNQUOTE

ASLEf in action

John Metcalfe, Northern Rail company council, joined just-reformed Carlisle Trades Council to make a collection for local food banks outside the office of local Tory MP John Stevenson. ‘The great scandal of this government’s austerity programme is that in a country as wealthy as ours we need to collect food to enable the most vulnerable to eat,’ said John Metcalfe. ‘It is a direct consequence of Conservative MPs like ours, in Carlisle, that the need for food banks is rising.’
Trespassers will be caught on camera

New cameras should improve safety on level crossings says MICK HOLDER of ASLEF’s health & safety department

OU might have noticed a new bit of kit on the left as you approach a level crossing by road. Tall, thin, yellow on approach and black as you pass, these new traffic enforcement cameras should provide better data and help improve safety at Britain’s level crossings.

They are being used to catch drivers who ignore the wigwag signals or cross the safety line marked on the road. And, with automatic number plate recognition, to identify vehicles so offenders can either be issued with a fine or offered a retraining day to make them more aware. Vysionics’ Vector LX is also designed to monitor the behaviour of cyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders at rail crossings.

However, at a Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety meeting, where we were being given the low-down on these new cameras, it became clear that the manufacturers of the monitors are not passing on their data. I suggested they share their information with Network Rail, who have responsibility to risk assess level crossings; the British Transport Police, who are responsible for trespass; the RSSB; and the ORR.

It turns out the stats they gather from 17 sites are far more accurate than the ones Network Rail gather and are catching 50 prosecutable offences every week. So NR should be revisiting the risk assessments of those 17 and seeing if they are ‘suitable and sufficient’ in protecting life and limb, as required by law.

The cameras use radar and video as well as ANPR to produce high quality images. We saw examples of misuse; especially worrying (although not surprising) was that by kids from a nearby school. The manufacturers were worried that while enforcing the law on road traffic users there wasn’t any law for misuse by the general public – until I pointed out that this is probably trespass and the BTP should be told of incidents.

The cameras, which cost £100,000 per crossing to install – are operational at Asfordby; Borth Capel Soar; Dingwall No 2; Fairbourne; Ffairfach; Furze Platt; Hykeham; Leominster; Llangadog; Melton; Milford; Nutbourne; Queen Adelaide (Kings Lynn); Queen Adelaide (Peterborough); Snaith & Pontefract Highway; Swineshead; and Todddington.

### Return of the Black Prince

Nigel, Howard, Mick, Mike and Lew at HO

Lew Adams, general secretary of ASLEF from 1994 to 1998, returned to head office last month with EC5 Howard Kaye, DOS Nigel Gibson and Mike Scott. They handed GS Mick Whelan rare photographs and documents for the ASLEF archive.

**LEST WE FORGET**

A blue plaque has been put up at the signing on point in Colchester to remember Driver Barnard and Fireman Keeble of Ipswich and Guard Burdett of Norwich who were killed in the Cromer express rail crash in 1913. ‘This accident was unique in that those killed were all rail staff,’ says Oliver Fosker. ‘The men were given hero’s funerals in their respective towns of Ipswich, Bramford and Norwich. They have now been rightly recognized with this blue plaque in their memory.’

**QUOTE...**

‘There is no doubt many people are turned off by politics when they sense that its practitioners are automatons robotically reading out lines and pretending to agree when they don’t.’

– Andrew Rawnsley in The Observer

**...UNQUOTE**

### New cameras should improve safety on level crossings

Stay dry and warm this winter with our smart new black waterproof jacket. Price £30 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

**QUOTE...**

‘There is no doubt many people are turned off by politics when they sense that its practitioners are automatons robotically reading out lines and pretending to agree when they don’t.’

– Andrew Rawnsley in The Observer

**...UNQUOTE**

**All about people, people in the public transport industry, people like you...**

A wide range of financial, health and welfare benefits available to all those working in the public transport industry. Just £1 a week covers you, your partner and dependent children.

**0300 333 2000**

www.tbf.org.uk help@tbf.org.uk

Transport Benevolent Fund CIO, known as TBF, is a registered charity in England and Wales, 1160901
It’s not so much what you do, as what you mean

JAMES McGOWAN took his children to see the stage version of The Railway Children and enjoyed it just as much as they did

THE area around King’s Cross and St Pancras stations in central London has seen a remarkable railway-led rejuvenation in recent years and is, perhaps, the ideal location for the latest adaptation of E Nesbit’s timeless tale of railway adventure written by Mike Kenny and directed by Damian Cruden.

This production is being performed in London for the third time, on an extended run until January, having originally been conceived, in conjunction with the Theatre Royal, York, at the National Railway Museum in York in 2008.

Now nestled off King’s Boulevard, a mere peep-peep from the platforms of King’s Cross station, this pop up theatre boasts a wonderfully designed set with the audience on either side of the railway track and platform. The narrative deftly glides through a sequence of constantly moving stage parts, including an ingenious tunnel scene with vast transparent curtains, all of which heightens the levels of atmosphere and intimacy.

There are some fine performances including Andrew Dunn as Mr Perks and Caroline Harker as Mother while none of the children’s characters are overplayed.

But the real star of the show is the 60 tonnes of the William Adams Express Passenger Engine No 563 which puffs on to the stage just before the interval amid a fog of smoke and the screeching sound of wheel meeting steel, a sparkling and sleek sight, resplendent green paint with polished brass and chrome. The collective audience breath was held. The locomotive itself was built at the London & South Western Railway’s Nine Elms works in south London in 1893, and retired only in 1948.

More broadly, the production supports the Railway Children charity which aims to help homeless and runaway children throughout the world, with £1 per ticket donated to the charity. To date, £335,000 has been raised by the theatre production since it opened in London in 2010.

QUOTE…

‘Some critics argue that devolving transport powers to English local authorities is just another method to deliver cuts without taking the flak. Others feel it’s a route to more privatisation of services.’ – Anna Isaacs in The Guardian

...UNQUOTE

Britain travels second class

Britain’s railways are in a second tier behind other European networks because of high fares, poor punctuality, and a lack of high-speed rail, according to a survey by the Boston Consulting Group. It found that rail services in France, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands – in public, rather than private, hands – provide better value for the taxpayers’ cash they receive. BCG analysed 25 nations and put France, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark in the top tier, with Britain, Norway, Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic in the second division; and Portugal, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria in danger of relegation from the third.

LIME STREET GETS LONGER

New platforms at Liverpool Lime Street station will be able to accommodate longer trains. The DfT announced: ‘The platforms at Liverpool Lime Street will be lengthened, remodelled, and the signalling will be modernised in order to allow for more and longer trains from London and across the region.’

NORTHERN RAIL LOSES OUT

Three key commuter routes out of Manchester Piccadilly – to Crewe via Handsworth and Manchester airport; to Stoke via Macclesfield; and to Hattersley via Glossop and Hadfield – are to lose 17 three carriage Class 323 electric trains next April after Porterbrook decided to move them to the West Midlands.

MEGA MEETS IN BRUSSELS

Philippa Edmunds, manager of Freight on Rail, had meetings with Labour MEP Lucy Anderson; UKIP MEP Jill Seymour; and Green Party MEP Keith Taylor to lobby to keep mega trucks off UK roads and freight on rail, not road.
Comprehensive legal cover to keep you and your family on track

Contact the ASLEF legal service first for free, specialist legal advice and representation on:

- Personal injury - at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury - including brain and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness
- Reduced rates for conveyancing, probate and lasting Powers of Attorney
- Criminal law support for workplace issues (24hr helpline: 0800 587 7530)
- Employment law (accessed via your ASLEF district organiser)

ASLEF members’ families are also covered for personal injury claims away from work.

Using your ASLEF legal service, provided by Thompsons Solicitors, means you will keep 100% of your compensation within the union scheme.

Call the ASLEF legal service today on 0808 100 8009

www.thompsons.law.co.uk/aslef.htm
Dubious privilege of paying for our own Witchfinder General

The draconian new Trade Union Bill reveals the hypocrisy at the heart of this Tory government. While they bang on about freeing business from red tape and regulation, says ASLEF’s national organiser SIMON WELLER, it’s another story for free trade unions in this country.

The Conservative government’s attacks on free trade unions and workers continues apace with the proposed Trade Union Bill picking up where last year’s Trade Union Lobbying Act left off. The headline grabbers of thresholds for ballots, even tougher requirements for ‘important’ services (ie us) and nonsense criminalising restrictions on pickets hide the real attacks contained within the bill.

Like a rubbish magician using misdirection to distract the audience from his sleight of hand, David Cameron’s bill contains crippling changes to the regulation and running of trade unions.

The required 40% thresholds are anti-democratic and confusing. For example, if 2,000 members in an ‘important’ sector are balloted and 800 vote ‘yes’ and 400 vote ‘no’ that would not clear the 40%+1 hurdle despite having a clear mandate and a turnout of 60%. It introduces the perverse distortion that an abstention carries more weight than a no vote.

PERVERSE DISTINCTION

However, the thresholds are not the damaging element – they are just another challenge for unions to mobilise and organise our members – the significant changes to the role of the independent certification officer is where the real intent is shown.

Currently David Cockburn, a former chair of the Industrial Law Society, holds the post of certification officer; whose main role is to ensure that unions maintain independence from employers and deal with complaints from union members about elections and certain types of rule breaches. An independent, impartial arbiter.

That all changes with the TU Bill as it gives new powers and responsibilities to the officer – he now has to investigate complaints about unions from any person, who would no longer have to be a member of the union being complained about. So we would get complaints coming in from members of the public (who do not always like what we do), from a hostile media, from politicians, and even from our own employers who can complain, and would have a great deal to gain by doing so.

The certification officer also gains new powers to enter union offices, both national and branch level, to seize documents and data to further their investigations. The certification officer will also have powers to impose large financial penalties on unions. He or she is a government appointment and will be acting under government remits. So much for independence.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL

Not only will unions have to deal with damaging, disruptive and vexatious complaints but we will also have the privilege of paying for our own Witchfinder General! What is not clear is whether the fees for this are pro rata to the size of union or the workload that union generates – which, for a small union like ours, with an unpopular and high public profile, could prove disastrously expensive.

The hypocrisy of this government is plain to see in this bill. While they bang on about freeing business from red tape and over-regulation – what they call red tape we call employment rights – for the trade unions it’s another story. These are almost pantomime levels of inconsistency. The government encourages online use to make things easier for the consumer yet specifically refuse that option for trade union ballots, elections and political fund opt-ins. Everything, the Tories insist, must be done in writing, and by post, which is utterly hilarious in the 21st century.

Specific points are designed to create legal traps for unions to fall into and allow employers to challenge ballots and frustrate our members’ efforts to take action. The bill includes a wonderfully vague requirement for ‘a reasonably detailed indication of the dispute’ to be included on the ballot paper. It will be for a member of the British judiciary – traditionally no great friend of the British worker – who will decide on what constitutes ‘reasonably detailed’. The establishment, in wigs and gowns, providing another opportunity for the employers to scurry off to court to block a strike rather than sitting down to negotiate a resolution with their employee’s representatives.

Anybody who receives public money (pretty much all the railway, including the fully private freight operators who have Network Rail contracts) will be bound by the blanket ending of release for reps, including health & safety reps (facility time), the cessation of check-off (union subs deducted from wages) and employer provided assistance to reps (office space, etc.).

TSUNAMI OF REGULATION

This Bill is not a single attack but a tsunami of regulation and interference designed to stifle the bodies that give workers a voice as the Conservatives continue to dismantle our public services and institutions at even greater speed.

Be in no doubt, this bill is coming in. The Tories will split on foxhunting or Europe but bashing the trade unions is milk and honey to them. David Davis, MP for Haltemprice & Howden, and a serial troublemaker for David Cameron, may compare the civil liberty elements of this bill to General Franco’s regime in Spain, but he’s supporting the rest.

The tough question is how we approach it – in my view, there is only one answer: to fight it and defy it.
Jeremy Corbyn vows to deliver a fully integrated and publicly owned railway

Jeremy Corbyn has made an unequivocal pledge to bring Britain’s railways back into public ownership. Addressing conference in his keynote leader’s speech on Tuesday afternoon, he said: ‘I want to thank Lilian Greenwood, our Shadow Transport Secretary, for the speed and skill with which she has moved policy on the future of our railways forward. It was wonderful to see conference this morning agree our new plan to bring private franchises into public ownership as they expire. Labour’s policy now is to deliver the fully integrated, publicly owned, railway the British people want and need. That’s the Labour policy, that’s the one we’ll deliver on.’

Tosh McDonald spoke from the podium during the transport plenary session on Tuesday morning to which Jeremy referred. Tosh said the ‘perverse situation’ facing Britain’s railways ‘is summed up by the fact that the three preferred bidders for the next Northern Rail franchise are state-run rail firms from Germany, the Netherlands and France. I don’t blame them for that. The Germans boast to our members that their interest in Britain’s railways subsidises the German taxpayer. It’s a no-brainer! The railway should be run by the state, for the people and by the people, and any profits that are made should go to helping with housing and the NHS.’

QUOTe...
‘Another world is possible.’ – John McDonnell, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

Jeremy makes the promise passengers, as well as workers, have been waiting to hear

Graham Ibbetson of Wigan branch; and Alan Moir of Polmadie – to conference. Simon Weller, national organiser; Dave Calfe, EC vice-president; executive committee members Marz Colombini and Howard Kaye; district organisers Dicky Fisher and Colin Smith, and Debbie Reay of Northern Line North and Karen Tilley of West London Electric, attended as visitors. Collette Gibson, of Paddington branch, went as a delegate for Braintree Constituency Labour Party.

It was a whirlwind week as they seized every opportunity to attend and speak at fringe meetings, to lobby MPs, and engage with party officials, political advisers, CLP delegates and policy wonks as well as sitting in on plenary sessions in the main conference hall.

Constituency Labour Party.

QUOTe...
‘The sick and the disabled are not to blame for a financial crisis caused by reckless bankers.’ – Sioux Blair-Jordan, Colchester CLP

…UNQUOTE

Winning the argument

Tosh rousing the rabble in Brighton

Mick Whelan spoke at a Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting on Sunday afternoon on a panel with Cat Smith, MP for Lancaster & Fleetwood; Grahame Morris, MP for Easington; Richard Howitt MEP; Manuel Cortes of the TSSA; Karma Nabulsi, a fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford; and PSC chair Hugh Lanning. Mick made the point that the United States, as the principal sponsor of Israel, is the key player in the future of that part of the Middle East.

FREE PALESTINE

Mick Whelan spoke at a Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting on Sunday afternoon on a panel with Cat Smith, MP for Lancaster & Fleetwood; Grahame Morris, MP for Easington; Richard Howitt MEP; Manuel Cortes of the TSSA; Karma Nabulsi, a fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford; and PSC chair Hugh Lanning. Mick made the point that the United States, as the principal sponsor of Israel, is the key player in the future of that part of the Middle East.
Snake oil salesmen of the train operating companies


Mick said: ‘I’m delighted that two of the great strands of our labour movement come together tonight. The trade unions and the co-operative movement have much in common, as organisations founded in the 19th century to improve the lives of working people based on the principle that we achieve more together than we do as individuals. Collectivism and co-operation. Both movements have a renewed relevance amid the social and economic wreckage of 21st century capitalism.

‘I’m proud of the work ASLEF and the Co-operative Party have done over the last few years in looking at how we can bring our principles into the provision of public services, particularly rail. That’s why we welcome Jeremy’s pledge to renationalise the railways. We can’t control what we don’t own.

‘We will find legal routes to take back rail operations from the snake oil salesmen of the train operating companies. We will secure Network Rail in the public sector and give it gradual responsibility for operations, as they come back in, to ensure track and trains are re-integrated. We will establish a public sector rolling stock company which will own our trains. And how about a public sector freight operator? Passengers and employees must be at the heart of these changes. Just as we had a new industrial democracy in 1945 during the great swathes of nationalisation so we must have a new industrial democracy for the 21st century.

‘This new political era will require bold thinking in terms of the policy platform on which Labour fights the next election. We pledge to work with Jeremy and others in the labour movement to make our vision of a publicly-owned railway a reality.’

QUOTE...

‘Jeremy Corbyn’s victory was one of integrity of opposition against Westminster spin. He has less sheen than a dog-eared copy of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists.’ – Mark Borkowski, founder of Borkowski PR, in The Observer

UNQUOTE

Run our railways in public interest

Delegates voted to bring Britain’s railways back into public ownership – a key plank of Jeremy Corbyn’s successful campaign for the Labour leadership. Members overwhelmingly backed a policy statement, drawn up by the National Executive Committee, calling for existing franchises to be nationalised when they come to an end and for a new public sector operator to reinvest profits – which currently disappear into the private pockets of the TOCs and FOCS – in cutting fares and improving our infrastructure.

Lilian Greenwood, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, told conference on Tuesday morning: ‘The government has stumbled from one fiasco to another. From the West Coast scandal, that cost taxpayers over £50 million, to the loss of highly skilled engineering jobs in our world class supply chain, and the Northern rolling stock crisis, which cost taxpayers another £20 million. ‘Our railways are fragmented, and the franchise system is broken. Twenty years ago we were told that privatisation would deliver cheaper tickets and lower subsidies. But we have been left with some of the most expensive fares in Europe, and an efficiency gap of 40%. The Conservatives will tell you that the railways cannot change. That the fact of privatisation is somehow proof of the public sector’s failure. Or that because things are the way they are, that is the way they must always be.

No right turn for Labour now

Tosh McDonald spoke from the podium on Sunday morning during the opening plenary session on rebuilding the Labour Party after the general election defeat in May. ‘The rot set in back in 1997,’ said Tosh. ‘People left the party, and stopped voting Labour, because they were disillusioned with Tony Blair. They didn’t vote Labour in May not because we were too left-wing, but because we weren’t left-wing enough.’

Public investment in private profits

The importance of rail – and the popularity of the policy of public ownership – was underlined at packed Action for Rail fringe meeting in Old Ship Hotel on Sunday lunchtime. Every seat was taken and more than 50 people were standing at the back of the Tudor Room for a meeting chaired by Paul Nowack of the TUC and addressed by Mick Whelan; Lilian Greenwood; Lucy Anderson, MEP; Manu Cortes of the TSSA; Mick Lynch of the RMT and Diana Holland of Unite.

Mick said: ‘Privatisation is a policy that utterly failed. John Major said privatisation would drive competition which, in turn, would drive cheaper fares. But fares have soared and are now the highest in Europe. They said it would drive investment. But major investment has come from the government. All that taxpayers’ investment is now about to be wasted by the government by privatising Network Rail – and there are serious safety implications in that – which I think we must not give away what we already have.”
MEDIA MATTERS
It's not just what you say, it's where, how (and to whom) you say it. To get our message across, Mick Whelan wrote a centre-spread article in the Morning Star ahead of the transport debate on Tuesday, and a front page piece about Building a Better Railway for the CLPD's Yellow Pages bulletin. Becky Kaye, delegate for South West Surrey CLP, and who is married to ECS Howard Kaye, was interviewed by Channel 4 News.

HOPE NOT HATE
Mick, Simon, Marz, Howard, Colin, Debbie, and Collette attended a Hope Not Hate meeting on Sunday evening where Kevin Maguire of the Daily Mirror praised ASLEF for our help in fighting fascists, and racists, in Britain and for offering hope, not hate, to everyone in this country.

BALANCING THE BOOKS
Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell told conference on Monday: 'Labour’s plan to balance the books will be aggressive. We will force people like Starbucks, Vodafone, Amazon, and Google, and all the others, to pay their fair share of taxes.'

QUOTE...
'Corbyn, like Obama, has reached disillusioned voters through grassroots appeal, despite the scepticism of the press.' – Danny Rogers, editor-in-chief of Campaign, Marketing and PR Week, in The Independent

THE PEOPLE'S FLAG
The Red Flag was sung with greater gusto than usual this year; delegates said it was good to have a leader, at last, who isn't embarrassed to know the words...

THE JUDGE
people not just by the company they keep but by where they eat and drink. Tony Blair always seeks out the grandest places, far from the madding crowd, to wine and dine. In contrast, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and his aide Seb Corbyn had supper at the Regency on Brighton seafront – ‘it’s not expensive,’ says Rick Stein in his Seafood Lovers’ Guide ‘and there’s a great atmosphere’ – on Tuesday night. Film fans, Mods and musos will recognise the Regency as the restaurant which gets trashed in Quadrophenia. Cool for cats...

THE NAME
now ‘free every Friday’ and a shadow of the weekly it was in its glory days under Nick Logan, nonetheless ran an interesting feature on Jeremy Corbyn, pointing out, ‘with over 60% of the British public supporting renationalising the railways, it’s his most popular policy’ and that, at the time of the expenses scandal, ‘he had the lowest claim in all the Commons, which was a grand total of £8.95, for a printer cartridge’.

LIAM KIRKALDY
a journalist on the Scottish current affairs magazine Holyrood, dryly observed: ‘David Cameron took to Twitter – generally a risky strategy for a Tory, unless they like being called a lizard – to warn, “The Labour Party is now a threat to our national security, our economic security and your family’s security.” Bold stuff from a man who once abandoned his daughter in a pub.’

SULKING
in the corner of the carriage: Tristram Hunt, Chuka Umunna and Mary Creagh were spotted rushing for a fast train out of Brighton at lunchtime on Tuesday so they didn’t have to sit through the new leader’s speech that afternoon. And Matthew Norman noted in The Independent: ‘When Jeremy gave generous shout-outs to defeated leadership rivals Liz Kendal and Yvette Cooper, the absence of cutaways shots to their falsely grinning faces confirmed that they, along with most other members of BABIE (Blairites and Brownites in Exile) lacked the minimal good manners required to turn up.’

HENRY McLEISH
former footballer (with East Fife), MP, MSP, and First Minister of Scotland (between Donald Dewar and Jack McConnell) was waspish. ‘MPs who do not wish to serve in a Corbyn cabinet are consumed by a selfish arrogance. Party members are angry that our embrace of one person, one vote democracy is OK, but not if MPs don’t like the result…’

ARRANGEMENTS
for exhibitors left something to be desired. Someone, whose knowledge of the politics of the Middle East has gaps the depths of the Red Sea, thought it a wizard idea to place Labour Friends of Israel cheek by jowl with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Cue scowls across the peace line all week…

OVERHEARD
at the Progress rally – the party within a party known as the Friends of Tony for all the unreconstructed Blairites in its ranks – at the Odeon on Sunday night: ‘Last year they [the Corbynistas] were handing out leaflets; now they’re running the party!’

LAST
of the late night revellers were returning to their hotel rooms just as the first of the early morning joggers went out, dodging the city council street sweeping machines, to run along the seafront.
You can’t always get what you want

Men and women have marched, and fought, for the right to strike for more than 200 years. As the Tories try to smash the labour movement GREGOR GALL suggests that the government’s new Trade Union Bill might be subject to the law of unintended consequences

The Trade Union Bill has, rightly, been heavily castigated from all sections within the trade union movement as well as by many outside it. However, there is a danger that predictions of how bad things will be made by this bill will run away with themselves, leading to a sense of doom and gloom and making resistance harder to achieve in some quarters.

This is because even when the bill becomes an Act of Parliament, which according to the timetable will be on 3 November, a law is only as good as it is enforced – or can be enforced – and laws do sometimes have unintended outcomes. So we should separate intention from outcome for, as parents often say to their kids, ‘Want does not get!’

Prime amongst the considerations here are whether employers will use the new powers and whether the police will enforce the new regulations. Many employers’ groups have not welcomed the bill, believing it to be irrelevant and potentially harmful to their interests. This shows the Tories’ political interests do not necessarily align with employers’ economic interests. The police have routinely not enforced existing limits on picketing numbers and may view the new picketing regulations as generating unnecessary conflict and, thus, seek to avoid enforcing them.

There are five areas where the Tories will not be best pleased:

**STRIKES**

The bill’s clear intention is to limit the extent of industrial action but it may well have the opposite effect where ballots meet the new thresholds. So, a higher percentage of mandates will be implemented than at present because there will be pressure to take more action and to do so more quickly given the increased notice period to employers (two weeks) and the limited length of the ballot mandate (four months). The latitude for long periods between strikes, leading to membership de-mobilisation, will be drastically cut.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

If the requirement for unions to give detailed plans to police on how they will use social media, websites and blogs to co-ordinate strikes becomes too onerous, or makes the action less effective, social media, websites and blogs not authorised by unions will emerge as a substitutes. These will be created by individual union members and supporters from outside the ranks of members.

**PICKETING**

Picketing which seeks to stop the movement of goods and labour is almost unheard nowadays. Pickets to publicise strikes (to strike breakers, management and the public) and involve strikers are, however, quite common. They routinely involve more than six pickets, which is the lawful limit, yet as they do not seek to stop the movement of goods and labour, the police do not enforce the law. There is no reason to think this would change if such token picketing continues (even though picketing offences will be criminal, rather than civil, matters).

**AGENCY WORKERS**

At present, short strikes are predominant. In 2014, 46% of all strikes were one day strikes and 33% of strikes lasted for two to three days. Only 6% lasted four days, 12% five to ten days and 3% more than 11 days. While employers may threaten to bring in agency workers to break strikes, they are highly unlikely to do so when most strikes are short strikes. If the majority of strikes continue to be of short duration, then it is hard to see employers undertaking the expense and effort of replacing an experienced and possibly skilled workforce for one or two days. Employers would baulk at trying to keep operations running by bringing in inexperienced and untrained workers. Only in long, drawn out strikes would agency workers be of use to employers.

**CHECK OFF**

There is no doubt that the abolition of check off will cause unions financial and organisational problems in the short-term. But moving to direct debit has its benefits – such as independence from the employer, and can be an opportunity to renew and revitalise local organisation, as the recent experience of the Public & Commercial Services union has indicated. The argument here is not one of complacency or that the Trade Union Bill is not a severe threat. Rather, it is saying that ‘want does not get’ and the Tories are not quite as clever as they think.

Recall the introduction of the balloting requirements in the 1980s was skilfully used by unions to boost their bargaining leverage and the ability to select sack unofficial strikers (as a result of the Employment Act 1990) has hardly ever been used because it would inflame an already difficult situation.

These forms of subversion outlined above will be critical until May 2020 when, hopefully, a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government will not only abolish it but bring in a raft of positive rights for unions. John McDonnell’s Trade Union Freedom Bills of 2006 and 2008 would be ideal starting points for this.
If the button is pushed there’s no running away there’ll be no one to save with the world in a grave

A decision on the future of Britain’s nuclear arsenal is imminent. Here KATE HUDSON, a leading anti-nuclear and anti-war campaigner, makes the case against the renewal of Trident

The last few months have been a political rollercoaster. Jeremy Corbyn getting his name on the Labour leadership ballot paper was a victory for a large body of people who felt their views have had little political representation. It unleashed thousands who turned out for his rallies, and the momentum that grew out of these rallies led to a momentous landslide victory. Some have been alarmed but for those of us who have been campaigning against the replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons system it has been glorious.

**QUESTION OF STATUS**

Jeremy’s longstanding opposition to nuclear weapons has meant that the question of Trident is now high on the political agenda. Crucially, it must remain so, not only because nuclear weapons are just plain wrong, but because the decision on replacing Britain’s nuclear arsenal is only months away.

This ideologically-driven government, with its overarching aim of shrivelling the state by savage cuts and a fire sale of the UK’s assets – including the NHS – plans to replace Trident at a cost of more than £100 billion. It makes no sense, militarily or economically, and, in their terms, its appeal is to hark back to days of more than £100 billion. it makes no sense, militarily or economically, and, in their terms, its appeal is to hark back to days of the British Empire. for our political elite, it’s a question of status in the world.

Even the military, when it comes to a nuclear deterrent, are not as gung-ho as one might imagine. Many senior military figures would prefer to have more troops, or better equipment. It’s pretty obvious that nuclear weapons are not something they can train with or ever expect to use.

Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership campaign has allowed for a free flow of ideas and real, thoughtful, alternatives in Labour Party policy. This struck me when I heard John Prescott, in an interview with Jon Snow, arguing that for too long the Labour hierarchy has been silent on the big policy issues such as Trident. The door is now open to real debate within the party.

**PEACE AND PROSPERITY**

For too long the Labour leadership has used the jobs argument as a reason for its pro-nuclear position. Driving a wedge between the peace movement and the labour movement on this fundamental issue is now a dead end. The labour and trade union movement should back up Jeremy’s plans for a Defence Diversification Agency. Labour has so far failed to provide a just transition away from the production of weapons of mass destruction to socially productive industries with high skilled jobs. Now this can change.

Trident replacement has wider significance for industry as a whole. What is needed is an industrial strategy, not only for the defence sector, but for Britain’s economy as a whole. Without appropriate planning we will fail to meet the needs of our communities, whatever economic sector they rely on. And we will fail to meet the needs of those without work. It is not just a question of defending the jobs of those in work – it is about structuring a more equitable division of wealth into our society. This cannot be done without growing our economy and creating sustainable jobs.

For this to really work there has to be genuine workforce involvement. And this is at the heart of Jeremy’s commitment to a DDA which will be established ‘jointly between workers, industry and government’. This will enable a real transition – a change in the narrative which the old Labour leadership imposed, away from ‘weapons are good for jobs’ to ‘jobs with peace and prosperity’.

There is a powerful history to this which needs to be reclaimed and drawn upon as the DDA initiative moves forward. Some will remember the plans produced by the workforce at Lucas Aerospace in the 1970s, as they faced massive job cuts, to provide alternative ways to retain jobs and move to socially useful production. Lucas was no small affair. It was one of Europe’s biggest designers and manufacturers of aircraft systems and equipment, employing 18,000 staff across 15 factories with around half its work in the military sector. Management planned to lay off 20% of the workforce in an efficiency-driven rationalisation programme.

**HEATING AND EATING**

The response in 1976 from the Lucas shop stewards’ combine committee was to propose an alternative corporate plan that put investment into health, transport and alternative energy resources at its heart.

We are one of the world’s largest economies, we have sophisticated technological skills, we have terrific design expertise. Let’s invest the money wasted on Trident to ensure that we also have a society where people don’t have to choose between heating and eating.

*KATE HUDSON* is general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; a visiting research fellow at London South Bank University, where she was head of Social and Policy Studies from 2000-2010; national secretary of Left Unity; and an activist in the Stop the War Coalition.
Cambrian welcomes back one of its own

Machynlleth branch recently had the pleasure of welcoming ex-Cambrian man and ASLEF national organiser Simon Weller. At one point it looked like the visit might not go ahead after an especially confusing announcement at Shrewsbury station saw Brother Weller heading back towards Birmingham from where he had just come. But a Cambrian man always gets to his destination (eventually) and, following a white knuckle taxi ride across the undulating Welsh terrain, the delayed branch meeting got underway. During the meeting Simon offered an insightful analysis of issues facing ASLEF members including the future of pension provision, developments in European train driver licensing and the Tories’ dangerous Trade Union Bill – something all members will need to work hard to oppose in the coming months. The visit was also an opportunity to present several Machynlleth members with long service awards including 30 year badges for Gwynfor Roberts and Steve Bradbury; 25 years for Kenny MacKenzie; 15 for Aled Jones; and 10 for Andy Hodson, Gareth Price and Ian Bluck. There was a certificate for recently retired driver Andy Tack. In thanks for attending, Machynlleth presented Brother Weller with a limited edition badge celebrating 150 years of the Cambrian Railway. That done, it was downstairs to the bar for refreshments and a chance for Simon to reminisce about his time on the Vale of Rheidol, Aberystwyth.

Jeremy Murfin, Machynlleth

Southport depot reunion was well attended to see DO3 Colin Smith make a presentation to Terry Underhill on his retirement due to ill health. Terry was a loyal member of ASLEF and did many roles, including company council and branch chair; we’d like to thank him and wish him a long and happy retirement.

Bill Baxter, company council, Southport

PLACE WHERE IT MATTERS

There was much to report and discuss at September’s meeting of Newton Heath branch, with important issues being raised locally by members and critical industrial relations being discussed at company level. But it is good to set aside time to respect those who have come before us, who fought for the pay and terms and conditions we now enjoy. With this in mind EC3 Andy spoke of the honour in presenting Sammy Black with a badge commemorating 50 years of loyal and active membership of ASLEF. Sammy preceded Andy on company council, dealt with the battles of privatisation and still brings his wit and wisdom to the branch as a regular attendee. He is also valued by the membership for remembering, in turn, those who came before him, being a regular writer of obituaries for the Journal. Sammy replied with a speech acknowledging how important it was to him to receive this recognition in the place where it matters – the branch room – a place where he will always be welcome.

David Vaughan, branch chair

GATESHEAD – THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER

Annual Gateshead & Newcastle ASLEF/NERSWA reunion from 13.00 at the Gateshead Railway Club, 15 Wellington Street. Buffet. All members, past and present, welcome.

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

Dave Lucas retired on 28 August after 49 years’ loyal service to the railway. He began his career as a booking boy at Guildford signal box in 1966. He went on to Waterloo in 1968 as a second man, got his driver’s job at Charing Cross in 1972 and, not long after, went to Effingham Junction. In 1992 he moved to Guildford where he stayed until 2002 when he had his final move to the newly opened depot at Northam just outside of Southampton. Dave was respected by all drivers and Nigel Cummins, functional council, came down to present him with an ASLEF certificate and vouchers from the branch.

Ian Jolly, Southampton Northam

EC member Andy Hourigan presents London Midland driver Bob Fletcher with his 50 year medallion. The branch was well attended and a good time was had by all.

Peter Bendall, Crewe

Finn Brennan presents Robert Lawrence, right, with his 50 year medallion at a well attended branch meeting on 30 September. Well done, Bob – an active member, based at Acton Town London Underground, many thanks for all your support for this trade union.

Greg Tasker, West Brompton branch secretary

Shake on it, says Nigel
Loyalty is key to ASLEF’s success

I’d like to say a big thank you to our EC member Marz Colombini for attending the Wimbledon branch meeting. He gave an in-depth report on the Trade Union Bill, the scandalous anti-union legislation currently being pushed through parliament by the Tories. During the election they claimed they’re now the party of working people but, said Marz, this shows they’re anything but. Marz also talked about some of the fights we are going to have in the future, in particular how we need to campaign to make sure ASLEF’s nominated candidate Sadq Khan becomes London Mayor in 2016. Marz presented several long service badges and explained that the loyalty and support of our members is the key to ASLEF’s success and the branch structure is the backbone of the union and how we need to get that message out into the mess rooms. Marz’s report gave us much to think about and I feel we need to unite in our mess rooms and branch rooms and start organising because that’s what trade unions do best and that’s what the government fears most. The Labour Party is our party. We need to help Jeremy Corbyn make sure workers’ rights are protected and provide genuine opposition to this anti-worker Conservative government.

Chris Sneddon, branch secretary

GS Mick Whelan presented Roy Luxford, Southern company council, with honorary membership of ASLEF – one of a very select band – at the EC meeting on 22 September. Mick praised Roy’s ‘outstanding’ work for this union while Roy talked dryly of ‘having been around so long, in the same place, with so many companies coming and going, I am now their corporate memory of this industry.’

Kevin Moir was presented with a model of the Deltic locomotive Nimbus and Les Muir a steam loco named after previous general secretary WP Allen as a thank you for services rendered as branch officers. At a branch meeting prior to the reunion Mark Coffin and Darryl Redmond received their 5 year badges; Steve Butler (15); and John Ashby, Steve Jacob and Dave Larrington (35). Business done the trough was opened and the serious business of socialising began.

PJ Smith, branch reporter

Branch reps go loco in Hatfield

DO6 Dicky Fisher, ECS Howard Kaye, and Tony West, Ray Jackson, Alan Taylor, John Robson and Brian Tagg of the RMS for attending. Before those present were fed and watered we celebrated achievements and bereavements for the last year. Richard Sullivan requested a minute’s silence to remember absent friends, RIP Reg Feetham, Di Tomkinson, Jim Wilson, Harvey McNab, Jack Crake, Freddy Farrell, Andy Bruce and Jack Law. Then Mick made presentations to Keith Grimes and Dominic Ireland (30 years); Jim Bull, Felix Gomes and Melvyn Lake (40); and John Goulding, Roy Green, John Rimington, Jean Harlow, Brian Aldrich, Les Bellaris, Brian Perry, Mick Roads and George Savage (50). Jim Markham received his ASLEF retirement certificate and a branch presentation.

Mick Holder turns back time to November 1915

WAR BONUS FINAL SETTLEMENT

The editor writes: ‘War bonus negotiations have now reached a final settlement. It is hoped our members will support the executive committee in maintaining peace for the period of the war, for such a guarantee has been given on their behalf, and must be honourably carried out. The guarantee that no new demands be put forward must be kept, but it does not mean that representatives may not take up questions of the non-observance of existing terms of service, or that grievances may not be discussed. Such matters may still be dealt with in the ordinary way, but there must be no suggestion from either side of alterations of conditions of service, and no strikes. Railwaymen should now settle down to the successful prosecution of the war, and must remember that they can give quite as much assistance in that direction by remaining at work as by enlisting.’

ZEPPELIN RAID SHORTENS TALKS

The editor adds: ‘During the bonus negotiations the executive committee was in London when the recent air raid by Zeppelins took place, and there is no doubt whatever that that particular session was adjourned more quickly and informally than any ever before.’

YOU CAN’T JOIN A TRADE UNION

‘A curious sidelight is thrown on employment in the Prussian State Railway by a regulation, in force for years, requiring all men to sign a declaration that they would not become a member of a trade union or socialist society, nor attend meetings nor read newspapers advocating the views of such organisations. On the outbreak of war these restrictions were not relaxed, so far as concerned men already employed, but new employees engaged to fill the places of men on active service have not been compelled to sign the declaration due to a desire to placate members of the German Socialist Party whose views, on the whole, are much the same as our Labour Party. About 100,000 railwaymen in Germany have gone to the front.’

AT POINT OF GERMAN BAYONETS

‘The railwaymen of France are suffering keenly as a result of the war, and some 12,000 railway trade unionists are working at the point of German bayonets in the captured territories.’
OBITUARIES

BOB CARLYON

GENTLEMAN BOB WAS DRIVERS’ MENTOR AND ALWAYS THE JOKER

It is with great sadness I report the passing of former colleague and good friend Bob Carlyon. He was just 68 and retired in April 2014. Bob started his BR railway career at Southend Victoria GER in the 1960s as a guard. I seem to remember him telling me he had been with London Underground for a short while before deciding he wanted to work for British Rail. He was not with BR long before he left to do other things but he rejoined the railway as a guard at Stratford in 1974.

In 1989 he was selected for driver training at Ilford (with a vacancy back at Southend Victoria) passing out for driving duties in 1990. I had the pleasure of joining him on that course. Always the perfect gentleman and a great comedian, we enjoyed his laid back attitude and funny antics, much to the annoyance of some of the instructors!

Bob stayed at Southend until retirement, a great character liked by all. This was his Twitter profile: ‘Clapped out train driver loves Beatles/Stone music and Southend United/Manchester United. Fan of good football!’ Always the joker.

One retired driver said: ‘He was a father figure to so many blokes who had just started their railway careers.’ Another said: ‘My fondest memories are of Bob as a guard on the Stratford low level to North Woolwich line in the early ‘80s when we still had DMUs running on that service. He was always professional and polite, but a real clown, too. Taken from us far too soon.’ And an ex-train crew manager said: ‘Bob was the depot drivers’ mentor in later life, when he was confined to shed duties, due to medical reasons. He had such a calm, lovely, personality, many of the young drivers in the shed gang learned the depot driver’s role at Southend from him. He had many talents and was often asked to cover the supervisor’s role at Southend Victoria when we were short.’

Mick Miller,
RMS Southend

KEITH PERCIVAL

PERCY PLUG

Keith Percival (1936-2015) got his nickname of Percy Plug as a result of a misunderstanding with a Stanier 3P 2-6-2 tank engine. He managed to get the fire so hot that he melted a fusible plug in the boiler! The irony is that these locos were notoriously bad steamers, so it was even more outrageous. I first met him in the summer of 1984 when he was rostered to work a Macclesfield to Largs Merrymaker and he let me fit an unofficial headboard to the Class 40 and gave me a cab ride to Cheadle Hulme. I was beside myself. Five years later I was on BR and found myself as his guard on a 304 EMU to Crewe. I told him I was a freelance journalist, and had joined the railway to get some stories, and asked if he remembered me. He said yes, he did, he thought I was off my head back in ‘84, and now I had just confirmed it.

Keith started as a cleaner at the shed behind Manchester United’s Stretford End, 9E Trafford Park. These gentlemen of the road – Stanier 5XS, Britannias, and Metrovick Co-Bo pairs – worked to St Pancras from Manchester Central. The decline of the old Midland main line resulted in a super new Cornbrook diesel depot never being built, so the lads moved from the closed Trafford to Manchester’s Oxford Road, Piccadilly, and Longsight, with Keith moving to the latter.

Euston and Birmingham were his new destinations.

When the chance came to join the Altrincham line Keith opted for EMUs and a reduced route card, his last move. Nobody could have seen Metrolink taking over rail lines, but they did, and Keith’s depot closed in December 1991, with the line from Deansgate junction to Cornbrook donated to trams.

Keith opted not to look for another locker, but retired at 55, and sought employment outside the railway.

Along with many others, Keith’s was a career beset with closures and ‘progress’. But a career he enjoyed, and we shall miss him at our annual reunion.

Mel Thorley, Longsight

PETER CASTLETON

STRATFORD LEGEND

It is with a great deal of regret that I have to inform you of the passing of a true Stratford Legend, Peter Castleton. Known affectionately as Casso he was loved by all who knew him, and his quick quips and humour will last long in everyone’s memories.

Peter, along with Ron Tuff and Ray Staff, looked after and supported all the guys on the Stratford loco football team.

Always there to represent the guys of Stratford depot and, later, as an LDC representative. A true Cockney wit, always the life and soul of the party, he will be sadly missed.

Dave Pizzie RMS

WITH BANNERS HELD HIGH 2016

A DAY-LONG EVENT REMEMBERING THE 1984-85 MINERS’ STRIKE

MUSIC AND THE MINERS’ STRIKE

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

MUSIC, DRAMA

DEBATES

POETRY & FILM

SATURDAY 5 MARCH 2016

UNITY WORKS WAKEFIELD

11.00AM–11.00PM

Keith tanked the tank engine

© Martin Salter

Peter Castleton

© Martin Salter
**RON WARD TURNED DOWN CHANCE TO PLAY FOR CHARLTON**

It is with much regret that I report the passing of Ron Ward (30 September 1933-31 August 2015) of Gillingham branch. He will be missed by many, if the turnout at the Garden of Kent crematorium is to go by: with more than 400 people in attendance some had to stand outside the open doors to hear the service; luckily the weather was fine and sunny. Ron was a devoted husband to Jean; father to Ann, Jill, Robert, Gail, Joanne, Gary, Mark and Martin; grandfather to 17; friend to all who met him and, as a workmate, an outstanding member of ASLEF.

Ron was born in Tunbridge Wells to Seth and Elsie Ward. He attended Rainham boys’ school, where he became head boy, and attended Rainham boys’ school, Wells to seth and Elsie Ward. He was an outstanding member of AsLEf. 63 years.

Ron left school at 14 to work on a pig farm but, when he turned 16, he joined the railway as an apprentice – working on the railways was a job he loved. In his late teens he was called up to do national service in the catering corps and, after his two years, he was very happy to return to the railway. He progressed from engine cleaner to fireman and then became a driver, where he completed 49 years. He wasn’t only an employee but a union representative and health & safety officer, held in high regard by colleagues and senior management. He was a fair-minded and constructive union man who always saw both sides. His family were touched by the many messages of condolence they received from everyone on the railway, including senior managers. May he RIP.

Peter Smith, RMS

---

**DENNIS KELLY LIFE ON STEAM**

Dennis George Kelly, who was born on 1 January 1926 at Great Torrington in Devon, started his working life on steam and finished his working life on steam. And then, at the age of 89, my dad finally ran out of steam. He passed away on 25 August.

In the summer of 1941 he was offered a job in the railway industry as a vacancies had arisen for a junior cleaner at Laira sheds. Normally he should have been 16 to be considered for such a position but, such were the demands on war-torn Plymouth, that he got the job. Dennis worked very hard cleaning many well-known engines and, by the age of 17, was head cleaner. He was posted his Great Western serial number 29420.

On 3 January 1943 he caught an early morning departure from the heavily bombed city for the comparatively rural delights of Swindon and at 19 he became a fireman. Dennis loved his job on steam, especially when he progressed to engine driver, and hated it when diesels came in, in 1964.

Den was privileged to be part of the working of steam during the GWR 150 celebrations in 1985 and his swan song with British Rail was when he drove the lead engine in a steam double header on the Red Dragon Express on 14 June 1986. RIP dad.

Pat Ayres, Kemble, Gloucestershire

---

**LAST JOURNEYS**

John (second from left) and Bill (far right)

Victoria South Eastern has lost two retired drivers. John Lewis started at Hither Green in January 1950. After two years’ national service he returned to the depot as a fireman. In 1958 he was promoted to motorman at Addiscombe. In 1960 he transferred to Swaleym and stayed there until the depot closed in 1982, when he moved to Victoria until his retirement in 1997. John is survived by his wife Anne and sons Gavin and Adrian. Bill Atkins started at Stewarts Lane and retired at Victoria.

Jeff Veale, Battersea RMS

---

**FINAL DEPARTURES**

It would seem there was a large vacancy list in the top gang and the following King’s Cross men were chosen to fill them: Jack Law, 86; Harvey McNab, 86; Charlie Baugh, 84; George Hollingsworth, 80; and Aubin McKenzie, 79. All fine men, and a pleasure to work with. Gone but not forgotten. May they RIP.

PJ Smith, King’s Cross

---

**DOUG BALLARD RED BERET**

Dennis Albert Ballard, known as Doug throughout his railway career, was born at Edmonton, north London, in 1927. He volunteered for the Parachute Regiment and was one of the men parachuted into Arnhem – *A Bridge Too Far* – and later into Germany. Doug, who was demobbed in 1949, was very modest about his bravery during these operations.

He loved dancing and met his wife Margaret at a dance at Brunswick House, Vauxhall. They married in 1952 and had 63 years and two daughters together. Doug was already very ill when his daughter Lisa died, which affected him badly. Doug died on 6 September at the age of 88. It was a privilege to know him, and our thoughts are with his wife Margaret and daughter Claire.

Ken Heydon, Battersea

---

**DAVID LAVENDER**

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of David Lavender (1951-2015) after a short retirement. He started his railway career in the motive power department at March in Norfolk in July 1967. He moved to Tilbury in 1968 for promotion to second man. After a short return to March he moved to Peterborough and got a promotional move to driver at King’s Cross in 1979. He moved on to Norwich in 1995. David leaves a wife, two children, and two grandchildren.

Paul Green, Norwich
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.

Scroll on by on Facebook
I thought I would drop a quick note to the Journal to outline my reasons for leaving the ASLEF Facebook group. Some of the posts are now verging on hate crime which, as a dedicated trade unionist, and loyal member of ASLEF, I find abhorrent. A trade union is there to look after and support its membership, as well as other unions, where possible, and to improve things in the world for people.

I have never in my adult life tried to stifle debate; if a well-reasoned argument cannot change my point of view I will agree to differ and leave the subject there. There was one particular post recently concerning a delegation to Palestine, by invite from Palestinian unions, supporting other unions. This then morphed on to the Syrian refugee situation (which I believe should be discussed as we could be helping those less fortunate than ourselves) and this in turn lead to a discussion on ISL which then degraded into anti-Islamic posts.

On various occasions it was pointed out that we have brothers in this union of this faith but they were always ignored. Then a member of our union posted, ‘It’s nice to know what I’m like.’ Heartbreaking. At this point I still felt some of my fellow union members would try to resolve what had happened, but after two days the hate-filled thread was still going, so I left.

I am the WRC rep for District 5, so have been on the receiving end of this kind of tirade many times. My question, to you all, is where does it stop? Will we be asking people’s religious beliefs, race, sexual preference or marital status before we represent them? Back up your hate-filled comments with researched and reasoned arguments, then maybe people will listen. Otherwise please scroll on by.

Wendy Hurst, Hitchin

Open letter to Mick Whelan
You have the support and backing of the Arriva Trains Wales company council 100%. CC and our pay sub-group met several months ago and agreed that this year’s pay submission was all or nothing. We did not want item(s) included as part of our pay submission that we were not prepared to fight for. If we are prepared to fight then they get submitted.

If we cannot achieve by negotiation our aspirations then we take to the cobbles. This was very clear and CC is still of that opinion today. We all remember this meeting as being very constructive. We had a strategy prepared. We discussed likely outcomes and possible benefits and improvements. But it comes as no surprise to this council that we find ourselves in this situation of having to take industrial action! Not only do you have the backing of this CC but the support of the membership.

A great ballot result in the true tradition
of ASLEF has given us the strength and confidence we need and will achieve. The EC, on 13 October, honoured that commitment given to this CC. We feel, like the EC, that we have no other alternative in our struggle. We have to recall that ATW gave a signed commitment to ASLEF three years ago to deliver all our driver members improvements to our terms and conditions. Three years is a long time! ATW company council

Amnesty, abortion, AAD and union membership

Matt Stanley (Journal, October) stated he is resigning from ASLEF as a result of its affiliation to Amnesty International and its stance on abortion. I appreciate this is a sensitive subject, but few women have abortions on a whim, for most it is an incredibly painful decision that they have thought long and hard about. Although I feel very strongly that a woman should have control over her body, that doesn’t mean I think abortion should be used as a contraceptive, nor that the father should be excluded from having a say in the decision, but, ultimately, it is her choice.

The affiliation to Amnesty and the support of their campaign LAS17 came about because of a motion passed at AAD regarding miscarriage being treated as aggravated homicide in El Salvador. These women weren’t seeking abortions; indeed, they would have been treated less severely if they had been. These women suffered miscarriages; they were then arrested, and given prison sentences of 30 to 40 years. In El Salvador, ‘the right to life from the moment of conception’ is law and in an ideal moment of conception is law and in an ideal world this would be wonderful. However, when a girl of 10 is raped by a relative and forced to give birth when her body isn’t ready for intercourse, never mind having a baby, or when a woman with a life threatening illness, brought on by pregnancy, is made to carry a foetus to term which doesn’t have a brain, perhaps I’m being too sensitive or maybe you feel we need a drip-fed warning from history but, politically, we should look forward rather than hark back. She wasn’t even the one with the lethal mixture of misguided dogma and blind stupidity that threw our industry into the private sector anyway.

Chris Martin, Watford

God save the Queen

I would like to comment on recent letters regarding the royal family (Journal, October). By accident of birth we have a head of state who receives £300 million a year, and has just had a £7 million top up, even though the royal family are minted. Our democracy is to vote for a political party and, after the election, the leader can change. In the 21st century we need a republican system where a president is voted in for a set period of time, and will stand up for British values. The primary object of the royals is to bring in tourists, yet more visit Alton Towers each year.

Terry Baxter, LUL

Down came a jumbuck

Just a quick thank you to the office staff whose persistent efforts bore fruit when several back issues of the Journal finally arrived at my new address. Australia’s post isn’t the best but I finally received March onwards and, after reading, passed them on to a fellow expat to read; then he dully left them in the crib for the Aussies to peruse. A lot of them have heard of ASLEF and what a great union you are. I’d like to think the RTBU will one day reach the same standards, but we’ve a long way to go.

Nick Clarke, RTBU branch secretary, Picton, Western Australia
A new exhibition conjures up the summers of love at the end of the Swinging Sixties. KEITH RICHMOND looks back in anger to the year the haze of dope and glory turned red with blood on the streets of London, Washington, Paris and Prague.

OP ART was always about more than Andy Warhol’s Coca-Cola bottles and cans of Campbell’s soup, Richard Hamilton’s high camp collages, Peter Blake’s cover for Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band and Allen Jones’s borderline misogynist Hatstand, Table and Chair.

Underneath the glossy cleverness and kitsch, pop art – which engaged ‘with mass-produced imagery borrowed from popular culture’ according to Jessica Morgan – was as much a subversive attack on capitalism, from the heart of the art establishment, as a wry examination of consumerism. Which is made clear by a series of remarkably powerful paintings, sculptures and installations in a sparkling exhibition curated by Morgan, director of the Dia Art Foundation in New York, with Flavia Frigeri and Elsa Coustou of the Tate. ‘Pop art’s flourishing coincided with the Vietnam War and artists across the world responded to it in their work, often focusing critically on America’s role in the conflict,’ she adds.

‘Topics and imagery derived from the idea of revolutionary utopia, moral and sexual freedom, concern for working people and their relationships with the intellectual world.’ – Henri Cuene

After the summer of love – strictly 1967, when Scott McKenzie had a hit with San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair) and hippies from around the world made their way to Haight-Ashbury for free love and free drugs, although Woodstock was in 1969 – the mood turned ugly with violent demonstrations in London and Washington against US involvement in Indochina and riots, revolution and Molotov cocktails on the streets of Paris and Prague.

Gérard Fromanger’s Album le Rouge reflects les événements in May ’68; Joe Tilson’s He, She & It and Snow White & The Black Dwarf pay tribute to two influential underground papers; Eulàlia Grau’s wickedly waspish Nixon deals with the corruption at the heart of the US political system; while Sergio Lombardo’s diptych of Kennedy and Krushchev and Joan Rabascall’s Atomic Kiss deal explicitly with the threat of nuclear war which hung, like a mushroom cloud, over the world.

Many of the images are about a specific person, time and place; but have universal appeal. Rafael Canogar’s The Punishment is, specifically, a protest about police beatings in General Franco’s Spain; but it could apply to any of the many right-wing regimes backed by the United States. Claudio Tozzi’s Multitude was a protest against the military dictatorship in Brazil but could be about any totalitarian system anywhere in the world; a sentiment reflected in Equipo Crónica’s Concentration or Quantity Becomes Quality which is a lousy title but a wonderful picture about the growth of popular protest in the face of repression.

Some pieces are, at first glance, less overtly political. But Cornel Brudașcu’s Guitarist is a counter-cultural image, of a generic long-haired West Coast rock star, crawling under the Iron Curtain to Ceauşescu’s Romania at the height of the Cold War. Evelyne Axell’s triptych The Pretty Month of May is not a vacuous study of a group of semi-naked dippy hippies dropping out at Woodstock but a feminist assault on the way men see women and a passionate call for Women’s Liberation, too. And Boris Bućan’s Art series is not a tribute to, but a direct assault on, all those awful, ubiquitous, corporate logos.

‘My work was vehemently opposed to the Vietnam War, American imperialism, sexual repression, oppression of women, deaths and torture of political prisoners.’ – Teresinha Soares

A few of the pieces now seem a little lightweight, even trite, but most, nearly fifty years on, are still extremely powerful. So go if you can. Because these images, initially so easy on the eye, provide a lot of cultural food for political thought.
ASLEF’S legal services – your rights for their wrongs!

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

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

SACKINGS OR OTHER PROBLEMS AT WORK Harassment, discrimination or bullying? If your local, branch or district representative is unavailable, call the Industrial Relations department at union headquarters (020 7324 2400) or email info@aslef.org.uk

More than just a union

Crossword

Prize Crossword number 115 by Zebedee

Solution to Prize Crossword number 114 which appeared in the October edition of the ASLEF Journal


Congratulations to Simon Brown of Mistley, Manningtree, Essex, who was last month’s winner.

Thanks for all your responses to the 114th ASLEF crossword in the October 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 November

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

Across:
1 Highly flavoured (5)
4 Slap (5)
10 Fragrance of our new espresso coffee (5)
11 Mistake in the garden? (7)
12 Not brilliantly lit, but clean (8)
13 One to get upset over a trifle (4)
15 Unsuitable person (6)
17 Pointed beard (6)
19 Citrus fruit (4)
20 A loud, confused noise from many sources (8)
23 Patent (7)
24 Pinny (5)
25 Underground vault (5)
26 Royal (5)

Down:
2 Snapshot (5)
3 Man of the cloth (8)
5 Satellite (4)
6 Fertiliser (7)
7 Type of sweet (11)
8 Maltreat (5)
9 Theatrical make-up (11)
14 Live in (8)
16 Tea urn (7)
18 Twelve dozen (5)
21 Main distributor of material vital to everyone (5)
22 Ceremonial splendour (4)
Here's another benefit of being a member of ASLEF

- Save as much as £34% off1 AA Breakdown Cover on our online prices at enrolment and 20% at renewal every year2
- More dedicated Patrols than any other UK breakdown service3
- We repair 8 out of 10 vehicles at the roadside4
- Members are rewarded with enhanced breakdown benefits at renewal

To join, call
0800 048 0075
Quoting reference F0751

1. Applies to Family Roadside & Relay cover at first year only. Other levels of cover are available and varying discounts apply. Offer only available to ASLEF members 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 or discount or on any other AA product/service. Details correct at time of issue. 2. Renewal offer available to ASLEF members 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 members or the withdrawal of the scheme. 3. Mitre – UK Vehicle recovery report, September, 2014. 4. Based on AA Case Repair Rate March 2014–February 2015.

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

Registered in England & Wales, number 2414212.

0800 4 101 101

...alternative reporting for your health and safety concerns.