Y Viva el Tube - the new D train on test

CONRAD LANDIN lifts the lid on undercover cops
MICK HOLLAND remembers Barrow Hill in 1984
LES BENNETT on life as a Hi-De-Hi yellowcoat

Andrew Hourigan: courage at Jarama
Gregor Gall: 7 ways to make workplace better
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Union debates were dignified and data-based

**Tactics demeaned our democracy**

The EU referendum – and the long campaign to 23 June – is finally over but, having been at the eye of the storm, as one of the few unions which declared for out – of the EU, not Europe, there is a difference – I have to say I was disappointed by the tactics employed by politicians. Every debate, discussion, rally or forum I attended that was organised by trade unions or civil society was dignified, data-based, and often conducted with great humour. But the fear tactics and misinformation propagated by the right-wing press, and both sides of the Tory Party, as well as that horrendous UKIP poster, demeaned our democracy.

The disenfranchising of 1 million young people by the government in an attempt to keep the Tories in power is a farce while £9 million of taxpayers’ money to place a leaflet putting one side of the EU debate through every household is, apparently, not a sign of bias. The referendum should have been about where a better future lies for Britain. Shame, then, it cannot be measured that way.

The dirty tactics employed by GTR Southern, which are a matter of public record, taking away colleagues’ terms and conditions, and encouraging them to go against their union, has resulted in a letter from the RMT general secretary thanking our members for allowing them to park at their homes and giving them lifts when the company removes staff travel and car parking from them. The government has not removed the contract from GTR despite it being in default, and its ever-increasing failures. David Brown, the boss, has had his pay packet increased to £2 million which is more than the company pays in performance penalties and Claire Perry, the Rail Minister, has taken to quoting our members’ comments, from conference, as DfT officials declare war on us. They created this problem: it’s not really about DOO, it’s about dwell times; when will they ever tell the truth?

There are politicians of all parties I respect, and get on with, regardless of our differences, and access to constituency MPs is the cornerstone of our democracy and must be maintained. Abuse, threats and violence to any elected official cannot be condoned. We send our condolences to the family and friends of Jo Cox who enriched our Parliament and touched many lives locally, nationally and internationally.

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary
Ps grilled Southern Rail bosses at Westminster amid mounting anger over delays and cancellations. They laid into Southern’s ‘hapless’ management and the company’s ‘unacceptable’ performance.

Tim Loughton, Conservative MP for East Worthing & Shoreham, said: ‘They are doing a rubbish job, and need to get their act together. We had loads of excuses but very little about the effect on passengers. Train companies get a franchise to deliver passengers from A to B, and clearly Southern are not doing it. I think they are taking passengers for a ride, unfortunately not literally.’

Southern, a brand name used by Gobvia Thamelink Railway, runs train services from Sussex and Kent into London, as well as regional services in the south of England. They have come under fire for severe delays, cancellations and trains skipping stations. Only half its services arrived on time in April, significantly lower than the national average of 91.3%. Passengers have called on the DfT to strip GTR of its franchise before it expires in 2021.

Maria Caulfield, Conservative MP for Lewes, said: ‘We need immediate action. This was made very clear to GTR and I will continue to pressure Rail Minister Claire Perry to sort this out.’

Caroline Ansell, Conservative MP for Eastbourne & Willingdon, called on GTR to halt planned changes changes to staff in a bid to spare rail passengers more misery.

Fierce the beacon light is flaming

DAVID GOULD reports from the Welsh TUC held in Llandudno

ASLEF had a successful Welsh TUC with Ian Thompson, Treherbert, and DO7 Brian Corbett making up ASLEF’s delegation. We submitted two motions. One on the steel crisis and the effect it will have on rail freight, composites into a general council statement ‘that a significant reduction in the amount of steel carried on rail will lead to the loss of many rail industry jobs, a loss of rail freight capacity, and an irrevocable decline in rail freight traffic in Wales.’ The second was on infrastructure and was moved by Bro Thompson. Ian explained the need for greater infrastructure to boost the Welsh economy and create jobs. Outside the conference room, Brian took part in a lively fringe on the EU referendum, explaining the left-wing case for leaving alongside BFAWU GS Rronnie Draper. ASLEF has a significant voice at the Welsh TUC, helped by the re-election of Ian to the general council.

WE TAKE THE LOADS FROM OFF THE ROADS

ASLEF is now very well represented on the TUC’s equality committees. Debbie Reay (D8) has a general seat and Jackie Hart (D5) an LGBT seat on the women’s committee; Darran Brown (D3) a general seat and James Sutherland (D3) a young members’ seat on the LGBT committee; Floyd Doyle (D5) a seat on the TUC black workers’ committee; and Paul Patmore (D2) a seat on the STUC black workers’ committee. ‘For a small union, ASLEF is extremely well represented within the TUC equality structures,’ said Lee James, ASLEF’s equalities adviser.

EU WON’T STOP LABOUR

Shadow Foreign Secretary Hilary Benn has rejected claims that staying in the EU prevents a future Labour government from bringing Britain’s railways back into public ownership. ‘I have looked carefully at this,’ he said. ‘It doesn’t stop us doing what we want to do. It does allow for the direct awarding of contracts which we seek to do if we win the election in 2020.’

KING OF SCOTLAND

Kevin Lindsay has been re-elected as District 2 Organiser. He tweeted: ‘Delighted I have been re-elected unopposed as ASLEF District Organiser in Scotland again. Thanks to all the members for their support. #proud.’

PUNCHING ABOVE OUR WEIGHT

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**Big Brother is watching you**

**ABOUIR has secured a “historic” commitment from the government to protect trade unions from new spying powers and prevent a repeat of the blacklisting scandal. Robert Buckland, the Solicitor General, says the government has accepted four Labour amendments to add privacy safeguards to the Investigatory Powers Bill including a pledge that trade union activities will never again be considered a sufficient reason to sanction the use of snooping powers.**

**QUOTE...**

‘An old world is dying and the new one is taking a long time to appear.’

Antonio Gramsci

...UNQUOTE

**Born in the USA**

Muhammad Ali, the Louisville Lip, famously called himself ‘the greatest’ and delivered. He wasn’t just the most dazzling heavyweight boxer anyone had ever seen, but one of the most irresistible personalities of the post-war period. In 1966 he sent back his call-up papers, saying: ‘Man, I ain’t got no quarrel with the Vietcong. Why should they ask me to go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs?’

**TFL TOP BRASS** are under fire after splashing out on a lavish black tie dinner at the RAF club in Piccadilly to celebrate closing ticket offices and making Underground staff redundant. Bosses boasted: ‘All 289 ticket offices were closed, within budget, in an immense team effort. Well done, team!’

**CONFERENCES**

The Matchwomen’s festival is at Nambucca, north London, on Saturday 2 July. The Durham Miners’ Gala is on Saturday 9 July. 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.

**TFL eventually – two months after ASLEF revealed the starting date – announced on 23 May that the Night Tube will begin running on Friday 19 August. Initially, as Mystic Meg (DOB Finn Brennan) predicted, on the Central and Victoria lines; with the Piccadilly, Jubilee and Northern to follow.**

**Off the rails**

**TONY GARNETT**, the producer behind such film and television classics as *Up the Junction, Cathy Come Home, Kes, The Enemy Within* and *The Price of Coal*, was kind enough to allow us to use the iconic image from *Kes* of Billy Casper (played by David Bradley) giving a V-sign to the world for our popular anti-Trade Union Bill tee-shirt. The picture, used on the poster to promote the film, and on the paperback tie-in of Barry Hines’s novel *A Kestrel for a Knave*, was one of the most striking of the 1960s. EC president Tosh McDonald was wearing the tee-shirt at With Banners Held High, a day-long event in Wakefield to mark the 1984-85 miners’ strike, when he bumped into Tony, who told him that ads for the film still were banned by London Underground as ‘too provocative’. Tosh cheered him up by telling Tony that lots of ASLEF members now take the Tube wearing the Kes tee-shirt.

**IF YOU HAVE TEARS**, prepare to shed them now. The Federation of Professional Railway Staff – or, as ECS Howard Kaye refers to them, the Federation of Professional Railway Scabs – is no more. ‘But how can you tell?’ asks one wag. The breakaway union, set up in 1983, was never a serious player in the rail industry, quickly pushed to the periphery, even by the bosses, and has long been as dormant as a dodo. The vast majority of railway workers could see that the FPRS position – begging for scraps at the feet of the iron masters – was risible. Now, though, Lester Fuller, its last national secretary, has packed up his tent. The FPRS was officially wound up on 8 April. Wags suggested it should have been a week earlier and Howard dryly tweeted: ‘I know you will all shed a tear at the demise of the scabs...’

**ELLIOTT JOHNSON**, a Conservative Party activist who said he was badly bullied by ‘Tatler Tory’ Mark Clarke, committed suicide on a railway line at Sandy in Bedfordshire in September, the coroner Tom Osborne has ruled. Elliott was later fired from his job with Conservative Way Forward. Elliott’s father Ray Johnson, speaking at the inquest, blamed Clarke; and CWF chief executive Paul Abbott admitted that Clarke had ‘bullied and intimidated several activists, including Elliott.’ Prime Minister David Cameron has ordered an inquiry into what is said to be a culture of bullying at the heart of the Conservative Party.

**ALISON MOYET** took to Twitter to back ASLEF and the RMT in the bitter DOO dispute with GTR. ‘I see no benefit to customers and indeed real hazard removing conductors from Govia Thameslink Railway services. Safety before profit. Support the unions.’

**500 CLUB**: R Cooper, with number 141, won the June draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £374.
Laser louts

MICK HOLDER of ASLEF’s health and safety department reveals the scale of laser attacks on trains and drivers – and what you can do about it

Laser attacks on airline – and helicopter – pilots have hit the headlines in recent months, and concerns have been raised about the vulnerability of train drivers to similar attacks. While the odd case of a driver has made the news, the extent of the problem wasn’t fully understood – until now.

British Transport Police have told ASLEF there were 68 laser attacks on trains and drivers reported in 2014 and 50 in 2015. So far, in 2016, there have been 12. While we are unaware of any personal injury claims being taken by drivers following a laser attack we suspect that some of these incidents led to injury.

A BTP spokesperson said: ‘Deliberately shining a laser pen, or pointer, at a train, particularly if a driver is targeted, is extremely dangerous. People shining lasers at trains may not think their actions are serious, but they are endangering the safety of train drivers and passengers with their actions. We take all reports of this reckless behaviour very seriously and will do all we can to trace those responsible.’

Builders cough up for blacklist

Britain’s biggest building firms – including Balfour Beatty and McAlpine – have formally apologised to hundreds of trade union activists for putting them on an illegal blacklist and preventing them from earning a living. The firms offered an ‘unreserved and sincere’ apology and agreed to pay £75m to 771 blacklisted workers they persecuted in out of court settlements agreed just before the construction companies were due to put £75m to 771 blacklisted workers they persecuted in out of court settlements agreed just before the construction companies were due to

The British Airline Pilots’ Association has been campaigning against laser pens – 1,439 incidents of laser attacks on aircraft were reported to the Civil Aviation Authority last year – and GS Mick Whelan said: ‘We have given our support to BALPA’s campaign for high-powered laser pens to be designated offensive weapons and for their possession to be an offence in law.’

Art of the matter

SNCF, the French state-owned rail operator, has decked out new trains with recreations of the Palace of Versailles and masterpieces of Impressionist art from the Musée d’Orsay.

MIND THE GAP

New S-stock Tube trains – level with the platform for wheelchair access, but which widen the gap at stations with curved platforms – have been blamed for a dramatic increase in the number of passengers falling into the platform gap at London Underground stations. Figures reveal 307 incidents last year, three times the number before the £1.5 billion walk-through fleet was brought in on the Metropolitan, Circle, District, and Hammersmith & City lines. The problem is worst at Baker Street where 52 people fell last year. ‘These figures demonstrate the pressure that train drivers and station staff are under as overcrowding increases,’ said DO8 Finn Brennan. ‘Without the professionalism of staff many more people would have been injured, or killed.’

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Florence Eshalomi, who was elected to the London Assembly for Lambeth & Southwark in May, and who now sits on the GLA’s transport committee, came to ASLEF’s head office on 6 June. GS Mick Whelan and AGS Simon Weller briefed her on transport issues in the capital.

Workers celebrate outside the High Court Photos: Mick Holder

Marz Colombini models ASLEF’s Ker tee-shirt – with a Harvey Smith for the Tories’ anti-Trade Union Act – based on the iconic image from the famous Ken Loach film. £10 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Freight on rail falls 22%

Freight carried on the national rail network is at its lowest since the miners’ strike of 1984-85. New figures from the Office of Rail and Road reveal that total freight hauled fell from 110.5m tonnes in 2014-15 to 86m tonnes in 2015-16. Freight on rail reached its peak in 1988-89 when 149.5m tonnes were carried.
Keeping the railway safe

ICK WHELAN has welcomed news that Britain’s railways are safer today than at any time since the Stockton & Darlington Railway ushered in the railway age nearly 200 years ago.

Figures released by the Office of Rail and Road reveal that, for the first time in history, the railways recorded no industry-caused fatalities for the 12 months to April 2016.

‘This is fantastic news,’ said Mick. ‘And has been achieved with the active participation of trades unions following historic disasters on the railways. ASLEF has 277 health and safety reps looking out for our 20,000 members, other rail workers, and the travelling public, and their work has played a big part in achieving the safer railway we have today. This flies in the face of the negativity coming from the government about the role of trades unions, especially the vicious anti-Trade Union Act. We’ve shown how trade unions help save lives – and it’s time that this was recognised.

‘If the government really wants to avoid a return to the bad old days of major rail disasters they must keep up investment in rail and maintenance and ensure a good working relationship with trades unions and our members.’

Ian Prosser, chief inspector of railways, said: ‘Our aim of continuing to strive for excellence in health and safety management is about doing the right things right first time and having a safety culture built on collective trust to deliver that goal. We want to make Britain’s railway among the very safest in the world.’

Tunnel of love

The world’s longest, and deepest, railway tunnel opened on 1 June. The 35 mile twin-bore Gotthard tunnel, which took 17 years to build, and cost £8 billion, offers a high speed rail link between northern and southern Europe under the Swiss Alps between Erstfeld and Bodio. Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann said the tunnel, through which 260 freight trains and 65 passenger trains will travel each day, will transform freight transport on the continent – moving goods ‘more quickly, more cheaply and more safely’ – and creates a main line connection from Rotterdam in the Netherlands to Genoa in Italy.

Class act

GS Mick Whelan shared a platform with Faiza Shaheen, director of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies, Dawn Foster of The Guardian and Olivier Sykes of Liverpool University at the CLASS debate Does the European Union Work for Working-Class People? at Unite’s head office in central London. Mick explained ASLEF’s position that the EU has failed to protect workers from the ravages of privatisation, deindustrialisation and the rest of the failed neoliberal agenda.

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QUOTE...

‘We are to this government what the miners were to Thatcher.’

EC president Tosh McDonald

...UNQUOTE
Euro vision for women at work

NICKY SAPEY reports from the ETF women’s conference in Bucharest

IGEL GIBSON, the District 5 Organiser, and I had the pleasure of attending the European Transport Federation’s women conference in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, on 12 and 13 April. Conference opened with a minute’s silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Brussels and a day of mourning was characterised by a display of sadness, defiance and anxiety from the 60 delegates of affiliated unions.

Christina Tilling, the ETF’s political secretary, spoke about achievements in gender equality and offered examples of how different working conditions are throughout the European transport industry. In the afternoon we had a session on training in the workplace, including subjects such as empowering women, bargaining machinery and negotiating. We discussed violence in the workplace against women, bullying and harassment. The ETF plans to step up campaigning on this issue, including drafting a template policy and developing a training module because it is important to turn plans into action.

There was a presentation about the Fair Transport Europe campaign which raises a set of demands to advance public transport and workers’ rights throughout the continent. This is a European citizens’ initiative and, if it gets 1 million signatures by September, will be considered for EU action. There was a workshop where I had the opportunity to explain the work taking place in the UK with Women in Rail and Inspiring Women. We also discussed how we could engage more women and improve the demographic in the workplace. The president of the ATU, the Romanian transport union, funded a lovely evening dinner which we thoroughly enjoyed. Next morning, with somewhat fragile heads, we had the feedback session on the workshops before travelling home!

It’s the economy, stupid

John McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor, Labour MP for Hayes & Harlington, and a long-standing friend of the trade union movement, has been to head office to talk informally to ASLEF’s executive committee about Labour’s economic policy.

It was the American political strategist James Carville who coined the phrase ‘It’s the economy, stupid’ when he was running Bill Clinton’s successful presidential campaign against the incumbent, George Bush, in the US election of 1992. It was voters’ reluctance to trust Labour – under Eds Miliband and Balls – on the economy that largely led to the general election defeat in May last year and John was at pains to point out that he is determined to rebuild the electorate’s trust in the party before the next election in 2020.

The EC was hugely impressed by John, who talked eloquently, authoritatively, and without notes, for an hour and a half. ‘He has the ability to make complex issues understandable,’ said EC1 Marz Colombini, who chaired the meeting as EC president Tosh McDonald and vice-president Dave Calfe were both away on ASLEF business. ‘John knows what he wants to do, where he wants to go, and what he has to do to get there,’ said ECS Howard Kaye.

‘If we don’t have a project that glimpses the future, and captures the ambitions and hopes of a generation, it doesn’t much matter who is leading the party because we’re not going to win.’ – Keir Starmer in The Guardian

Val aims to get London Transport back on track

GS Mick Whelan has welcomed the appointment of Val Shawcross as Deputy Mayor for Transport in London. Val, a former London Assembly Member, joins Sadiq Khan’s team at City Hall to try and get the capital’s public transport system back on track.

‘We know Val well and we know just what a good job she is going to do,’ said Mick. ‘It’s a great appointment by Sadiq and shows he is determined to deliver on his campaign promises to do something about transport and housing in London. At last London has a mayor, and now a deputy mayor for transport, who will work with us, rather than against us, to deliver for passengers and give Londoners the transport system a world-class capital city deserves.’

Val lives and breathes the capital. She was first elected to the London Assembly at the inaugural elections in 2000 and represented Lambe & Southwark for 16 years. Before that she served on Croydon council from 1994 to 2000.

AU REVOIR À LA COUCHETTE

France is saying ‘au revoir’ to la couchette after the government, which owns the national rail operator SNCF, decided most of the sleeper train services out of Paris are too expensive to run. The only remaining intercités de nuit will be to Briançon, Rodez, and Latour-de-Caro, deemed to be ‘socially necessary’.

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Undercover
of the night

CONRAD LANDIN, industrial reporter of the Morning Star, lifts the lid on the sordid – and illegal – activities of Britain’s undercover cops

HERE was nothing immediately suspicious about the letter sent to union branches and campaign groups by Mark Cassidy in March 1997. Writing on behalf of the Building Worker Group, from an address in Northampton, Cassidy asked for information about deaths on construction sites so the group could start ‘picketing the site and asking the workers to stop work. Only by hitting production can we hope to stop the killings on building sites.’

All very admirable. Except Cassidy wasn’t quite what he seemed. Thirteen years later Mark Cassidy was exposed as undercover police officer Mark Jenner. After training with the Metropolitan Police’s elite Special Demonstration Squad, Cassidy/Jenner was deployed to infiltrate the Colin Roach Centre at the heart of social justice campaigns in east London.Posing as a joiner, Jenner joined the construction union UCATT. When he disappeared in 2000, he left a diary packed with the dates of union meetings at the flat of his partner Alison – a woman he had deceived into a five-year relationship.

SEX WAS A PERK OF THE JOB

Jenner was not a rogue agent. The Special Demonstration Squad, shut down in 2008, had ten full-time officers infiltrating protest groups and sex with left-wing activists was regarded at Scotland Yard as ‘a perk of the job for the boys.’ Another undercover unit reported directly to the Association of Chief Police Officers. Agents were given new identities – often stolen from dead children. The Met’s policy is to neither confirm nor deny details of covert ops and officers’ identities because Britain’s top coppers would like you to think that abuse by SDS officers was just a case of a few bad apples. But whistleblowers are adamant the work was sanctioned at the very highest levels; and Met chief Sir Paul Condon personally thanked undercover officers who supplied intelligence ahead of one demonstration.

The SDS’s most shocking tactic – the deception of women into long-term relationships – is now common knowledge thanks to the BBC’s hit drama series Undercover although Jenner’s partner Alison says the series ‘misunderstood the power dynamics and sexual politics’ of the undercover mentality.

But next year these women will take centre stage in a real life drama – a public inquiry.

After the successful campaign against the blacklisting of workers it was revealed that, as in the series Undercover, cops such as John Dines (right), Mark Jenner (top centre) and Mark Kennedy (top right) abused their powers as policemen

And although it won’t get the most attention, the targeting of unions is on the menu, too. Inquiry chairman Christopher Pitchford has granted ‘core participant’ status to blacklisted builders, who say some entries on the Consulting Association’s illegal blacklist (uncovered during a raid on their premises in 2009) clearly came from police files.

TARGETING OF TRADE UNIONS

Campaigners had hoped to see construction bosses from the likes of Sir Robert McAlpine and Carillion forced to take the oath at a separate blacklisting inquiry promised by Labour – but that fell by the wayside with the Tories’ victory in the general election last year. And with High Court cases on blacklisting now settled, the Pitchford inquiry is the last hope to hold conniving bosses to account.

But as the breadth of Jenner’s pursuits show, this is about more than police assistance with one anti-union database. Peter Francis, a whistleblower who worked alongside Jenner in the SDS, told a meeting at the House of Commons last year he had spied on members of Unison, the Fire Brigades Union, the Communication Workers Union and the National Union of Teachers.

And in June new evidence emerged that another copper, Carlo Neri, attended a protest against the sacking of a rail worker in 2004. Mick Whelan, general secretary of ASLEF, says it shows blacklisting was wider than just construction. And that shouldn’t be a surprise – why would they stop at one industry?

Campaigners are concerned about what will be missed. Scotland and Northern Ireland are outside Pitchford’s remit even though there are photos of Met spies on deployment at both. Pitchford’s first preliminary hearing was told that a woman – identified only as CMR – was put under surveillance by Special

Branch after her half-brother bribed an Irish policeman. CMR had just been appointed to the board of her family’s construction company but was also involved in social justice campaigns, and the trade union movement, and rivals in the family resented her promotion. Officers wired details of her movements in London back to Dublin.

But Pitchford said she shouldn’t be given an official role because her surveillance had not been covert, but overt. The same was said for the Green peer Jenny Jones – whose domestic extremism file has been destroyed, according to a whistleblower. And though UCATT, the FBU and the NUM have been given an official role, the National Union of Journalists was barred in spite of evidence of surveillance of members.

THIRST FOR INFORMATION

‘With spies working for private firms there is even less oversight, and the scope for abuse is even greater,’ says Lisa, one of eight women deceived into sexual relationships who won an apology and compensation last year. In February, the food distribution giant Wincanton lost a disability discrimination case brought by one of its workers. The tribunal heard bosses deployed private detectives to tail the worker trying to show she was exaggerating her symptoms.

But even this is an old fashioned tactic in an age when workers’ social media accounts are frequently monitored by firms. The old ways are becoming less useful and more accountable but that won’t stymie the thirst for information from those in authority.
Band of brothers

After reading Paul Routledge’s ‘excellent article’ on the closure of Kellingley colliery in the Journal in February MICK HOLLAND, an ASLEF member for 38 years, ‘and counting’, recalls his time as a second man at Barrow Hill coal depot during the bitter miners’ strike of 1984-85

STILL have my first ASLEF union badge. It is now 38 years old, not nearly as shiny as it used to be, but still functional. Blue, white and gold enamel. On the reverse the raised letters read Brothers in Unity.

I am proud to own this badge. Only British Rail employees in the footplate line of promotion were graced to join this band of brothers. It was Barrow Hill eastern region, 1978, and I had made the grade. I was train crew. I was ASLEF.

Doncaster station, early 1980s, three of us, second men in BR blue, full of it, strutting along the platform. Coming towards us, in a grey anorak and black peak hat, the president of the National Union of Mineworkers, Arthur Scargill, who raises his hand and speaks. ‘Hello, my comrades,’ he says as we pass. I think it’s funny, and laugh, but how very right he was.

BANNERS OFF BRIDGES

1984-85. The miners’ strike. ASLEF commits to standing side by side with the NUM. I am pleased and proud. Both unions have strong working-class roots with a long history of fighting for a just cause. Action by ASLEF ensures no movement of coal by rail from pithead to power station, or any movement of imported coal.

Overhead bridges on colliery branch lines become official picket lines, banners are hung off bridges, with hand painted signs on bridge buttresses. We stand there for hours on a throbbing Class 47 with 30 empty MGR wagons.

The miners love us. I love what we are doing. All my friends and family are miners. Three generations of mining coal is in my family blood, all work down the pit, all except me. I shift the stuff.

Not this year, though. All throughout that bitter strike, no coal, coke, slack, coalite or imports were moved by any Barrow Hill train crew.

No work. We stayed at home. I was out every day with my mates on the NUM picket lines. Shouting, singing, chanting, shouting, swearing, fighting, running, winning, losing. Worst time of our young lives and the best time of all.

I have lots more badges now. NUM, strike badges, area badges, colliery badges and, later, a commemorative Orgreave badge. I remember Orgreave on a hot sunny afternoon when the police came.

We were playing cricket, knockabout team

The Tory government, under Margaret Thatcher, was determined to smash the miners, long seen as the vanguard of the labour movement in Britain

of young men, shorts, trainers, t-shirts, or bare-chested in the hot sun. Then came the shouting, the blind panic and fear, and a call to run. The police were coming hard, looking to fight, and very soon they were.

A line of mounted police on the biggest horses I have ever seen, full riot gear, helmets, visors, body armour, some with shields, all with big, big sticks. We ran, we scattered, we headed for the trees. I didn't know I could run that fast or be that scared.

THE BATTLE OF ORGREAVE

The bloody battle of Orgreave’s coking plant was a turning point for all who were there. We were working-class lads, showing solidarity, out there to defend our jobs, our heritage, our communities, and our way of life.

Then the police came. I saw them later on TV, a long line of bobbies, clapping and cheering the returning mounted charge. They were so ‘kin proud of themselves that day.

My commemorative Orgreave badge is one of a limited edition. It is black and silver, embossed with a police officer in full riot gear and helmet, swinging a large baton over his head.

I think I know him. I know I met him. 8 June 1984.

At the end of the strike, the miners lose. We all lose, it’s the beginning of the end for Old King Coal. It’s the end of an era and the end of a myth that the good guys always win, but I remember that, in that period of time, and for that moment in history, both ASLEF and the NUM truly were Brothers in Unity.
Adrian Shooter, former boss of Chiltern Railways, thinks he has the answer to Britain’s Pacer problem. He’s turning old District line Tube trains into modern rolling stock for short commuter routes, branch lines and tourist hops. AGS Simon Weller and KEITH RICHMOND went to the Vivarail test track in Warwickshire to see if the hope lives up to the hype.

T HE problem is well known, well documented, and well understood. The answer, as it often is in the transport industry, is harder to divine. The problem is what to do about Britain’s ageing fleet of Pacers – the Class 140, 141, 142, 143 and 144 diesel rail buses – built between 1980 and 1987 as a short term solution to a shortage of rolling stock on Britain’s suburban railways.

No one likes these trains – derided by drivers, passengers, and politicians as ‘cattle trucks’ – but the problem is how to replace them. The DTF, low on imagination, thinks that by moving this perennially unpopular rolling stock around the country they solve, rather than shift, the problem. The RoSCOs have been dragging their heels. And the TOCs, as ever, look to blame anyone other than themselves.

Now, though, Adrian Shooter, a rail industry veteran, has plans to solve the Pacer problem with his ‘new’ diesel multiple unit D train; ‘new’ because the D trains are refurbished, reconditioned London Underground D78 stock which saw service on the District line in London.

‘Traffic on Britain’s regional railway routes is growing, and growing very quickly, but suitable rolling stock is in short supply,’ he says. ‘The national diesel multiple unit fleet is fully utilised, and many existing trains do not meet passengers’ needs. Electrification is the long term solution, but that will take time and, in the short term, our D train offers the increased capacity, and the comfort, that passengers want.’

It’s an intriguing idea from a man who knows this industry. Adrian, 67, joined British Rail as a management trainee in the 1970s. When John Major privatised Britain’s railways he headed up the M40 Trains management buy-out consortium which became Chiltern Railways. He served as chair of both Chiltern and DB Regio and, after retiring in 2011, set up Vivarail in a long loop of a test track and what is effectively a field in rural Warwickshire.

Adrian is, by background and training, an engineer. But he’s no mean salesman, either. ‘The D train is a train for everyone,’ he says. ‘Clever use of space and high quality interiors will be appreciated by commuters and recreational users alike. From tourist routes across Cornwall to intra-city lines in Coventry, the D train can be configured to suit every type of passenger.’

It is, he argues, a low cost – and environmentally-friendly – solution. ‘The D train is affordable because of the sensible re-use of excellent parts from old District line stock – the reliable D78s – with nearly-new bogies, only between eight and ten years old and still available in the Bombardier catalogue, combined with a corrosion-free aluminium body shell which has three immediate benefits – low cost, low carbon, and quick build.’

Essentially the old D78s are taken apart and totally rebuilt. What’s left from the old District line Tube train is the body shell, the bogies and the traction motors but pretty much everything else is new, to main line spec. It is, though, a cheap – although they prefer the phrase ‘low cost’ in the way BMW dealers like to use ‘pre-owned’ rather than ‘second hand’ to describe the older vehicles on their forecourt – and attractive alternative which has had many a TOC beating a path to his door.

‘Train companies, when making franchise bids, have been asked to increase services, to reduce crowding, while keeping costs down. The D train ticks all the boxes in the DfT’s invitations to tender.’

When Adrian claims the D train is ‘technologically advanced and built in Britain to provide an unsurpassed passenger experience’ he’s going a tad over the top. He’s closer to the mark when he adds, ‘it’s the perfect solution for train operators seeking to provide extra capacity while keeping costs to a minimum.’

Mick Whelan, ASLEF’s general secretary, went to look at a Vivarail prototype last year and assistant general secretary Simon Weller went to Warwickshire recently to take the D train – it was actually the A train Ella Fitzgerald took to Harlem – after it passed its safety tests.

Vivarail likes to make the most of its position in the heart of England by playing up the engineering infrastructure of the area – saying the D train is ‘designed and manufactured in the West Midlands, an area renowned for engineering expertise but, in recent years, blighted by unemployment’ – but the company operates out of what is effectively a field in rural Warwickshire.

Simon caught a Chiltern Railways service out of Marylebone and was picked up by Adrian at Warwick Parkway, a station he built when he was running Chiltern. Vivarail is based at Quinton rail technology centre, near the village of Long Marston, the other side of Stratford-upon-Avon, between the birthplace of the Bard and Evesham. It’s a long way, metaphorically if not literally, from Longbridge and Birmingham!

Here in the beautiful English countryside a cluster of small specialist firms nestle beside a depot or railyard for old Underground trains waiting to be transformed.

Simon gets on board alongside Adrian and some of the Vivarail team and, when we have completed one lap of the 4 kilometre track, and come to a halt, is invited to get into the driver’s seat himself.

Simon, who joined BR as a traction trainee in 1987, still has his ticket but admits he’s a little rusty – he was executive committee member for District 1 before becoming national organiser, now AGS, in 2009 – but it didn’t show. Form, as they say, is temporary, but class is permanent and Simon showed he hasn’t lost his touch.

So what did he think? ‘Clutch is a bit stiff but it drives fine. I’ve driven a lot worse in my time!’ Yes, but will it be a runner on the rails? ‘Yes! It’s an interesting idea, and an imaginative way of tackling the problems we have. But whether the TOCs will go for it is another matter.’

The D train is available in a number of
formations for branch lines, commuter services and tourist routes. But would, probably, be most useful in those parts of Britain where train operators are running two, three or four car operations for journeys of three-quarters of an hour or less.

There is support for the project from industry experts and politicians. Paul Salveson, Professor of Transport at Huddersfield University, says: ‘We urgently need better quality trains to replace Pacers and also to provide more capacity for passengers, bikes and luggage – with a good view out and accessible toilets. The D Train provides that, at an affordable cost. What is there not to like?’

Anthony Smith of Transport Focus says: ‘The trains look promising: cheaper than new, interiors that can be configured in a number of ways to suit different markets, and are diesel powered, so could fill the gaps while electric wires are put up, and are designed to be cheap and easy to maintain.’

And Huw Merriman, Conservative MP for Bexhill & Battle, says: ‘I applaud the initiative to try and find a solution to overcrowding on the south coast. We had a productive trip to the Midlands to view this novel idea. When politicians, train companies and passenger groups work together, as we are, there is more chance of us finding a solution for passengers.’

Adrian is at pains to point out – and this is the engineer, rather than the salesman, in him coming out – that the aluminium body shell, because it weighs less, means the train uses significantly less fuel; that the stop/start engine technology means fewer emissions; and that the regenerative braking system saves energy, too. He adds – and this is the salesman, rather than the engineer, talking – ‘The low maintenance modular design reduces costs and cuts down on the miles of empty travelling to and from the depot.’

But he might be on to something. Mick Whelan thinks so. ‘I think it’s a really interesting idea. And anything that brings down the cost, without compromising safety, to provide the passengers with a better journey, as well as drivers with a better locomotive, has to be welcomed.’

Adrian Shooter thinks so, too. He didn’t buy 200 30-year-old District line trains on a whim, but because he thinks the D train offers Britain’s railways a pragmatic short term solution to the problem of the worn-out fleet of Pacers.
Do you live to work or work to live?

**GREGOR GALL** examines the state of democracy in the workplace in Britain – and has seven magnificent ideas for making our working lives better.

VEN without the Tories’ Trade Union Act making things worse, the state of workplace democracy in Britain is lamentable. Historical experience tells us that not only do we need stronger unions to protect and advance workers’ rights but we also need these rights – and the means to support them – to be enshrined in law so that they cannot easily be ignored, overturned and abolished. Ultimately, this means not just legislation but being embedded in a constitution.

Let’s start with some well-known, but seldom fully appreciated, facts. Workers rely on the wages from their jobs to support themselves and their families. As a consequence, they will spend more time in their lives working than doing anything else (apart from sleeping). And, at work, there is no election to decide who the manager is and no referendum to decide how the manager runs and controls the organisation.

On this basis having decent, satisfying, work where workers can exercise some influence over their workplaces should be something of a human right. Otherwise, workers’ lives are more about living to work than working to live.

The kind of influence that helps makes jobs decent and satisfying is not just about getting better pay and conditions – although that helps. It’s also about having a say over how work is organised. Out of this job rotation and job enlargement can occur so workers’ jobs are more interesting and fulfilling.

The rub is that decisions about how workplaces are run and organised are not just made in the workplace. Big decisions are made by managers much further up the company or organisation. That is one of the main reasons why workplace or industrial democracy must be supplemented and supported by wider economic democracy.

We do not need a crystal ball to see into the future and divine what rights, processes and institutions are needed to make such desires a reality. Nor do we need to be a rocket scientist, either. Merely by looking at the past in terms of practice and ideas, we can come up with an array of suitable proposals.

1. **The first concerns union recognition and collective bargaining.** All workers in workplaces, regardless of size, have the right to union recognition and collective bargaining where a collective (of two or more) workers demand this, regardless of union density.

2. **The second concerns the right to take industrial action.** It may seem surprising that there is no positive right to strike in Britain. While unions have the legal privilege not to be sued for loss of business for organising industrial action, for workers it is still a (civil) breach of employment contract law.

3. **The third concerns sectoral collective bargaining.** In Germany, employers must bargain with the appropriate union in each sector at a regional level. This means workers in different workplaces of the same company and of different companies can band together in order that they meet the employers on a slightly more equal footing.

4. **The fourth concerns co-determination.** The case for co-determination rests on the limitations of collective bargaining as it has traditionally been best suited to negotiating over terms and conditions of employment. But with worker representatives sitting on the board of directors, workers can help proactively to influence the decision making process at the highest level.

5. **The fifth concerns public ownership.** Public ownership of key, strategic sectors of the economy is vital so not only can the workers there have more control but other workers, as citizens, can exert control over the economy that they are part of.

6. **The sixth concerns worker co-operatives.** Provided they are not used to undermine the public sector, and given adequate financial support, co-operatives can give workers a large degree of control over their experience of work (as longstanding examples in Spain and in Italy show). Worker co-operatives are employing organisations where all those who work within the co-operative are owners of the co-operative and thus able to determine what is produced, how it is produced and under what conditions it is produced.

7. **Finally, there is tripartism, sometimes known as corporatism;** the joint regulation of the economy by labour, capital and the state through an institution like a National Economic Development Council. It not only underpins each proposal but makes them, together, more than the sum of their parts. Without tripartism, the danger is that even if other proposals are integrated, at the highest level capitalists will undermine them because their decisions will erode the ability to protect and advance workers’ interests through the other proposals.

There are pros and cons to all the individual proposals. They should be debated and discussed by workers and their unions with a viewing to working out what are the most effective and applicable ones. That done, thinking must then turn towards how we take steps to achieve their realisation.

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Gregor Gall is Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Bradford, Visiting Lecturer in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College, Oxford, and a visiting lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire.
Les Bennett, a driver with Greater Anglia, tells KEITH RICHMOND about his secret past as a Butlin’s yellowcoat – shades of the hit sitcom about Maplin’s – and talks about life and laughs on London’s stand-up comedy circuit.

TAN-D-UP comedy is a lonely gig. If you’re an actor, dancer, or singer, there are others with whom to share the plaudits and the brickbats. When you’re doing stand-up you’re on your own and, if you die, there’s no place to hide.

‘But when the audience is laughing it’s the greatest feeling in the world,’ says Les Bennett, 52, a driver with Greater Anglia who lives in Harlow, works out of Bishop’s Stortford, and has been doing stand-up for five or six years.

He walks to the mic and says, dryly, ‘It’s killed me, that walk,’ which gets a laugh, ‘because, obviously, I’m big.’ Then adds: ‘I went to the doctor, I’m half way through the door and he says, “You’re overweight,” and I say, “Seven years of medical school and that’s the best you can do. I want a second opinion…”’

TITLE-WINNING TEAM
‘I like observational comedy – things like Seinfeld, Curb Your Enthusiasm, The Office and Jasper Carrott – rather than mother-in-law jokes. I was thinking this stuff, and wondered about doing stand-up but thought, no, I’m too old, I’ve missed my chance. But Samantha, my girlfriend, said “Give it a go” and I did.’

He played his first gig, at the King’s Head in Crouch End, north London, and hasn’t looked back. ‘The art of a joke is surprise – “The wife confessed’ – and when the room laughs, it’s a real high. But if you’re not quick enough, you die.’

Les recalls, with a shudder, going down like a lead zeppelin at a club at Rayleigh in Essex. ‘I was trying new material, but it bombed. I rushed it. I was meant to do five minutes and finished after three and a half. I walked off to nothing. Horrible. But when one person laughs, it’s contagious!’

He likes a club where the audience is close – ‘you don’t want a chasm between you and the people you are trying to entertain’ – and understands that while a big name such as Micky Flanagan can spend five minutes adjusting his belt, ‘When people come to a club, it’s “Come on, make me laugh”.

Les was born at Highgate, north London, in 1954 when he made the move to east London. The art of a joke is surprise – ‘The wife confessed’ – and when the room laughs, it’s a real high. But if you’re not quick enough, you die.’

Les was young and single and having fun – ‘‘It was 1984 and Spurs had just won the UEFA Cup’ – and although there were proper singers and dancers there, it was really about personality, rather than talent. They wanted people with the gift of the gab.’

Les got a phone call – ‘It was 1984 and Spurs had just won the UEFA Cup’ – and although there were proper singers and dancers there, it was really about personality, rather than talent. They wanted people with the gift of the gab.’

Les was at the Comedy Café; and the great-uncle after whose name he was named, Spurs star Les Bennett, joined West Ham. Les played 26 more matches – scoring three times – for the Hammers before finishing his career at Clacton and Romford.

‘He was a terrific footballer – an integral part of the famous push and run side of the early 1950s – and Dad hoped I would follow in his footballing boots but I couldn’t play.’

SUNSHINE HOLIDAY CAMP
He was brought up in Hornsey – ‘before it became trendy’ – and when he left school at 16 joined the Post Office, working out of the sorting office on Upper Street in Islington. But every Wednesday evening he did a show for North Middlesex Hospital radio in Edmonton. ‘I played Frankie, Dexy’s, and the Human League. I could have got away with anything because no one was listening. It clashed with Coronation Street.’

Then, working in a pub, he got chatting to a guy who used to be a redcoat and went to Butlin’s head office in Oxford Street for an interview. ‘I said “I’m a DJ” and although there were proper singers and dancers there, it was really about personality, rather than talent. They wanted people with the gift of the gab.’

Les on hospital radio; on the wheels of steel as a Butlin’s redcoat; as a yellowcoat with swim star Jackie Willmott; doing stand-up at the Comedy Café; and the great-uncle after whom he was named, Spurs star Les Bennett, and joined West Ham. Les played 26 more matches – scoring three times – for the Hammers before finishing his career at Clacton and Romford.

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Les was born at Highgate, north London, in 1954 and named after his great-uncle Leslie, a stylish inside-right with the title-winning Tottenham team of 1950-51. The first Leslie Bennett joined Spurs after the Second World War – he served with the Devonshires in India, Burma and Egypt – and scored 124 league and cup goals in 294 appearances from 1946 to 1954 when he made the move to east London.

I’VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN THE UNION
Five years later, when his marriage broke up, he moved back to London and got a job as a bus driver with Arriva. Then he saw an advert for train drivers – ‘I thought if I can drive a bus, I can drive a train, but what they liked was I’d done shift work’ – joined Wagon and passed out in 2002. ‘I’ve always believed in the union. I was in the T&G when I was on the buses, and I joined ASLEF when I joined the railway. I’m not sure the newer drivers realise they only have a good job because of the union.’

Les is still entertaining people – ‘They encourage us to put a bit more into our announcements these days, though you have to be careful’ – but keeps his best lines for his stand-up routine. Catch him if you can…
So long, farewell

Paddington’s May meeting was a special occasion as members were presented with long service badges and leaving gifts. The branch was lucky enough to have GS Mick Whelan, DO Brian Corbett, DDC rep Andy Castle and LGBT rep Dave Jones in attendance, all of whom gave reports and answered questions. The GS then presented long service badges totalling 425 years! Special mention to Chris Boyce (35 years) and Terry Plaha (25). Two drivers – Murray Bolter, who’s moving to Chiltern at Marylebone, and Collette Gibson, off to Crossrail at Gidea Park – going to pastures new received an ASLEF plate and farewell gifts. Good luck to you both.

Steve Austin, branch secretary

Upcoming events

- **CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 1 JULY**
  Meeting at Kidderminster for a 12.30 departure.

- **ASHFORD – THURSDAY 7 JULY**
  Southeastern retired and working members’ reunion from 11.00 at Ashford Railway Club, Beaver Lane, Ashford.

- **FRATTON – FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER**
  Reunion from 12.00 to 18.00 at Portsmouth Railway Social Club next to Fratton station. Bring photos of railway interest. Free buffet and raffle. Call Gary White on 07798 706204.

- **RAINHAM – THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER**
  Southeastern retired and working members’ reunion from 11.00 at Rainham Social Club, 86 Station Road, Rainham.

- **PETERBOROUGH – FRIDAY 7 OCTOBER**
  Booz’n’Chat meeting at the Parkway club, Maskew Avenue, Peterborough. £5 in advance, £6 on the door. Call Malcolm Bell on 07884 43242 or fletton.brick@btopenworld.com

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

Pompey chimes

Portsmouth & Isle of Wight said farewell at our April meeting to two union stalwarts – Nigel Brant, LDC, and John Glazebrook, ex-branch secretary and LDC – between them racking up 22 years’ service to members. EC1 Marz Colombini presented them with badges and certificates and the branch wishes both a long and happy retirement! Dave Morgan was presented with his 30 year badge by Maurice ‘Dougal’ Hunter, a driver from his old depot, Brighton, and EC7 Andy Hudd talked about GWR harmonisation.

Dave Morgan, branch secretary

Branch chair Chris Barrie and Rab Wicksted presented Willie Fletcher with his 50 year medallion after he was unable to attend the arranged Auld Man’s Do as he was sunning himself in Antigua instead of freezing in Scotland with the rest of us! Willie achieved this membership milestone by continuing his ASLEF membership through the RMS section.

Rab Wicksted, branch secretary

Denis Wright of Leicester branch, who has sat on DC6 for 15 years, gets a gift from Martin Bromage-Griffith of Birmingham New Street after retiring from district council.

Woking branch was pleased to welcome all three members of company council and EC member Marz Colombini to a very well attended May meeting. Marz presented long service awards to Bros Mick Melhuish (10 years), Martin Scott (15), Keith Paish (25) and Ray Oatway (30).

Chris Smith, branch secretary

Reading Racers: Reading train crew social and welfare club, formed in the early ‘60s to provide tea, coffee, sugar and biscuits at work, and raise funds for a dinner dance, held its annual Old Boys’ bash at the Irish Club on 18 May; DO Brian Corbett and EC member Andy Hudd attended. Membership today totals nearly 400 and now includes guards, station staff and managers plus a few associate members from other depots. The Old Boys’ do is for retired members and widows with free food, drink and raffle, and each driver or widow gets £10. Some treat themselves to a taxi home, others save it for a rainy day.

Paul Sedgebeer, branch secretary
No more pencils, no more books
No more teachers’ dirty looks

Sixty union learning reps from England, Scotland and Wales attended ASLEF Education’s annual ULR seminar in the Durham Miners’ Hall, a beautiful Grade II listed building opened in 1915, when the coalfield employed 200,000 men. GABRIELLE OAKLEY reports from Durham

EVIN LINDSAY, District 2 Organiser, opened the seminar by asking delegates to marvel at the history around us, consider the debates here over the last hundred years, and recognise the honour the miners had paid ASLEF by allowing us to use their building. Kevin reflected on changes in levels of education, specifically in the rail industry, with new entrants arriving with degrees but, nonetheless, a thirst for education. The ULR is not a minor role at ASLEF, said Kevin, and the education project has the full support of the GS and the EC.

The project has had an uncertain time in terms of funding but Kevin reported that funds have been secured for the project in Wales, in Scotland, and, finally, in England. Kevin thanked the team for all their hard work and said that as the project is becoming increasingly target driven ULRs ‘will need to embrace targets and deliver outcomes’ for the project to survive.

LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED

GS Mick Whelan spoke of how the industrial, and educational, landscape has changed since he was a ULR. Mick said we need to embrace the current agenda to deliver our union objectives: career mapping needs to apply to all workers; apprenticeships need to be properly structured; and all those working in the rail industry must receive a proper living wage. Diversity needs to reflect local communities and not be shorthand for a flexible workforce that benefits only employers. Finally, Mick presented the Learner of the Year award 2016 to CrossCountry driver David Parr (see Graham Chester’s report in last month’s Journal).

EC president Tosh McDonald said he left school with no qualifications and taught himself to read through ‘political activism and motorcycle manuals’. He added: ‘If you weren’t clever enough to go down the pit you joined the railway.’ Tosh said that with more than a million young people unemployed it was morally wrong for the government to be doing away with the retirement age and wrong for workers to be arguing for it.

The final keynote speaker of the morning was Dave Hopper, GS of the Durham Miners’ Association since 1985. The Miners’ Hall, he said, was built by workers who wanted to show the strength of the unions and the labour movement and it was time for that strength to be demonstrated again. ‘The next Labour government should reflect this through the renationalisation of the railways.’ He recalled the historic links between miners and railworkers who have fought together to protect their communities and he invited ASLEF members to attend the Durham Miners’ Gala on Saturday 9 July, ‘where the solidarity and achievements of the labour movement will be celebrated and a vision for a better society, which puts people before profits, will be set out.’

SIX BOOK CHALLENGE

The day continued with three ULR-led information and guidance sessions. Leon Anthony and Nick Meagher from South West Trains opened with a session called ULRs Working Together which focused on the benefits of reps sharing knowledge, experience, time and other resources to deliver education projects and courses. Aaron Clapp, London Midland, and Michael Clatworthy, CrossCountry, presented a session on Learning Centres: The New Street Experience about the success of the Learning Centre, opened by Mick Whelan in June last year, at Birmingham New Street. Andy Morgan of Merseyrail brought the morning to a close with a session called Pick Up a Book A head.

Kevin Lindsay open the afternoon session with a list of achievements in the last year: 1,850 learners enrolled on courses; 750 engaged in informal adult learning; 300 signed up to IT courses; 270 on further education courses; 150 studying English and Maths; and 80 drivers on vocational courses.

Nick Palmer, from TU Ed, led a session on equality and diversity called It’s Only Banter and Kerry Cassidy, Great Western, did a presentation about the benefits on offer from the Institute of Railway Operators.

It was a very useful, very informative, and very productive day in a hall which means so much to those of us active in the labour movement.

Mick Holder turns back time to July 1916

Side doors, public ownership and children put to work in t’mill were topics in the Journal 100 years ago

BLOWING COAL INTO THE EYES

The editor writes: ‘In giving evidence to the Commission on Railway Accidents, our GS strongly recommended the universal adoption of side doors, between the footplate handrails on all engines, as a safeguard to the driver or fireman who suddenly loses his equilibrium as the engine rounds a curve, and quoted cases of fatal and other accidents which occurred to our members from this cause and lack of protection. We now understand that on several railways this practical suggestion is to be given effect and, in future, as engines go into the shops for repairs, such protective side doors will be fixed, and all new engines when built will be fitted with such protection. Such doors will serve a double purpose, for not only will they be a protection to the life and limb of our members, but also add greatly to their comfort by keeping out that bitter draught to the back when running and preventing the side wind from blowing the small coal into the eyes of the fireman as he is shovelling, and thus prevent much pain and damage to the eyes.’

RAILWAY NATIONALISATION

Organiser W Warwick reports: ‘I attended the fourth annual meeting of the Railway Nationalisation Society. We were also represented by two members of our EC. The discussion went on to prove that railwaymen and the public have everything to gain by the nationalisation of the railways. Let us hope the government control during the war will have the desired effect.’

GREED DESTROYING THE SOUL

Pax writes: ‘Bradford City Council has decided to let woollen manufacturers have children for half-time work at the age of 12, or for full-time work at 13. Is that a sign of industrial evolution? The cotton spinners of Lancashire have asked permission for children of 13 to clean machinery in motion. It has been illegal for a long time, because it is dangerous even for adults: but the greed of profits is destroying what little soul industry has.’
What are your thoughts on in-cab inward-facing cameras?

If you are a train driver working on the GB rail network, we would like to hear your thoughts!

RSSB is carrying out research into the use of inward-facing cameras in train cabs. The aim of the research is to understand the potential benefits and challenges of using inward-facing cameras. As part of this, we would like to hear the opinions of train drivers.

To help us understand your views, please take part in a short online survey. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and all of your information will remain anonymous.

Enter the prize draw at the end of the survey for a chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

Please access the survey by following this link: http://emr-surveys.cameras.agizmo.co.uk

MATCHWOMEN'S FESTIVAL

#matchfest2016

www.facebook.com/matchwomensfestival Twitter: @MatchwomensFB or @menwithastick

Join us on Saturday 2nd July for a celebration of wild and wonderful women, past and present.

Matchfest, now in its fourth year, is the friendly summer knees-up for women, children, trade unionists, lecturers and those who love them!

Venue: Kamboursa, Holloway Road, London N7 6LB

Shami Chakrabati on free beyond Liberty!

Authors Sara Johnson (East London Suffragettes) Sunny Singh (Tired Arcadia), Rachel Holmes (Tearoom Mary).

Nikki Davis on definitions of gender. Staying Mum: Esther Perry on maternal feminism. GMTV's Nadine Houghton on organising women today.

Nina M - on personal experience of surviving domestic violence, and the particular struggles of Asian women.

Who made your shoes? The answer could surprise you. Nesta Holden on homework and women.

Clare Wra's Linn Mackenzie on fighting austerity, and getting nicked for it! Historian Tony McCarthy on the betrayal of women war workers.

Greeting Artist: Rende and Areta

*Swingereilla * My Tights Won’t Stay Up!*Maeve Garcia * The Fireflys * Gapmouth * The Winmin’s Institute

* The Hurriers * Steve White and the Protest Family * Thee Faction*

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JOE MURPHY A FLUTTER ON THE HORSES

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the sad loss on 15 April of ex-Southport driver Joe ‘Spud’ Murphy after a long battle with cancer. Joe was a loveable character who enjoyed life to the full, liked a flutter on the horses and once owned his own bookies by the Blowick pub. Before he came on the railway he worked on Ribble buses, in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, before leaving when they went driver only. Joe joined the railway in the early ‘80s, working on the station, got a guard’s job in 1983 and became a conductor soon after. He got a driver’s job in the early ‘90s but had to come off driving because he suffered from angina. Joe liked a tipple after work and I used to join him, now and again, as did many others because he was a popular member of our fraternity, would always do you a favour and always had a smile on his face. RIP Spud, gone but not forgotten.

Bill Baxter, Southport company council

MIKE JAMES WESTERN MAN

It is with great sadness that I report the loss of ex-Bath Road retired driver Mike James who passed away on 2 January at the age of 79. Mike was a Western man, starting his career and joining ASLEF in 1953. He began as a cleaner at St Philip’s Marsh and was promoted through the links to fireman. When St Philip’s Marsh closed in 1964 he transferred to Bath Road diesel depot, was promoted to driver, progressed to the top links, and retired in the mid-1990s after Bath Road was split into four TOCs. Mike was a popular character and will be much missed by his family, David and Rosemary, friends and work mates.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol branch secretary

STEVE WAND THE IRON MAN OF HITHER GREEN

Steve Wand, who had put in nearly 41 years’ service man and boy at Hither Green, and who was due to retire on his 59th birthday, was tragically killed in a cycling accident on Good Friday. He was working his notice from DB Schenker and was excited about plans for his retirement. Steve was a keen athlete, who had won medals for running, cycling and swimming, and was a very popular character at the depot. The turnout at his funeral was truly amazing, a testimony to Steve’s standing amongst everyone he knew. Steve’s wife and family would like to thank all those who attended this celebration of his life.

Andy Eggleden, Hither Green

MARK EDMUNDS BLUE NOSE BRUMMIE

It is with deep regret that Birmingham New Street branch announces the untimely death of driver Mark Edmunds who took his own life at the age of 56. All he ever wanted to be was a train driver. He started at New Street as a traction trainee in the late 1970s. A second man for a few years, he secured a driver’s job in the early 1980s. Mark was a pleasure to work with and nobody had a bad word to say about him. A Blue Nose – a Birmingham City fan – all his life he enjoyed the football banter that splits emotions in Britain’s second city! RIP Mark…

Martin Bromage-Griffiths, Birmingham New Street

BRUCE CLARK DARK BLUES

Bruce ‘Rambo’ Clark has died at the tragically young age of 47. Bruce started on the railway straight from school, briefly working in the booking office at Dundee, but very quickly transferred to the loco at Perth in 1987. He wasn’t long in ASLEF before he stepped into the role of assistant branch secretary. Unfortunately, he had to come off the main line several years ago due to medical issues and ended up back where he started, in the booking office, although this time at Perth, but chose to remain in ASLEF. Bruce was diagnosed with cancer last spring, but wanted to keep in touch despite his treatment. He attended his last branch meeting in November, was taken to hospital in December, and never got out again. Bruce, whose two great loves were his family and Dundee FC, died on 12 March. Perth branch extends its condolences to Elaine, Jordan and Gavin, and have told them we will do anything we can to support them through their difficult time.

Grant Murchie, Perth

BRIAN ‘BOB’ BULL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Brian – called Bob by friends and colleagues – was born in the East End of London in 1934. He studied technical drawing and art at college and worked with his dad as a painter and decorator. He began his footplate career at King’s Cross top shed but, while working as a loco fireman, was called up for national service in the railway section of the Royal Engineers. He was drafted to Germany where he was passed out as a locomotive driver but, on returning to the top shed, it was back on the shovel; he passed out again as a driver on steam, then on modern traction as it came to the east coast. Bob was involved with the social side of the railway family, arranging outings to Southend for footplate crews, the children’s Christmas party and a yearly dinner and dance so wives and girlfriends could be wined and dined. Bob died on 1 April; our condolences to Audrey, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Peter Smith, King’s Cross

DENNIS FORD

Dennis Ford, one of life’s really nice guys, has died at 83 after finally losing his battle with the Big C. He was a well-loved guy, who always had a cheery smile, and anyone who had him as their driver never had a bad day at work. He was one of a kind and will be sorely missed.

Dave Pizzie, RMS

PETER WILKINSON

Peter Wilkinson joined the railway at Beal Street, Leicester, in 1950 and worked his way up to become a driver, one of the last two at Leicester to pass out on steam. Like many, he was sorry to see it go, but like all true footplate staff adapted to modern traction. He enjoyed his time, especially the camaraderie, the friends he acquired and considered a second family. He spent all his railway career at Leicester. Condolences to Joyce and family.

PJ Smith, RMS
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. The writer of our star letter wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

This driver is a job thief

I applaud the fact that our Journal prints letters from members that express eclectic views, whether or not they support the official ASLEF line. It shows a fearsome openness and transparency. It’s a good thing, I think. So with reference to the letter from Arno Brooks (Journal, May) he has had his say. Now I would have mine. We have been monitoring the struggles of our freight members. Actual job losses, not our normal fodder of gripes, comparisons over conditions, etc. It’s our right. We complain, why wouldn’t we? But his particular diatribe? Personally, I think he’s a job thief. Anyone who has their 40 years in and agrees to take up a position under a zero hours contract is stealing a potential job for one of our brethren. Even if there were no immediate risk to our members it would still be wrong to take a potential job from a new driver. So if you want to go and play with kittens, do so. Enjoy. Little trips on preserved railways carrying puffer nutters? Go on, knock yourself out. Doing actual work? You’re a shameless disgrace to our industry!

As for his boasts of five holidays last summer! Not the paid ones we, as a grade, have fought hard and long for. No! He just ain’t required. So he says ‘Gawd bless ya, guv’nor, fanks for the time off!’ Zero hours are a cancer – not a word I use lightly – to the working-class. It defies belief! How can you work on a train driver grade, and although I don’t like zero hours contracts, they cheapen the benefits of people employed in our industry. Why invest in the future? It would be easy to shoot down Arno Brooks (Journal, May) however he does make some salient points. Firstly, we should not be referring to a company managing director as Farmer Smith. Secondly, Mr Brooks addresses a very serious point about how ASLEF has a major problem with drivers working into later life as retirement profiles change and many people, like me, fear that working into our 70s is a distinct possibility.

Where Mr Brooks fails to see a problem with his zero hours contract is that it’s a great development for someone in receipt of a substantial pension – probably from one or more of the operators he is now helping to undercut. He says West Coast is reliable but seems not to realise the unfair cheap, quick fix. Why invest in the future? It means our members ensure that young people can enter the rail industry, not have their path blocked by people who work beyond retirement age.

You claim to have more freedom than other drivers on the rail network. But, thinking about Wootton Bassett, Doncaster and Bath, I’m not sure that freedom for cowboys to ride the range instils much confidence in the majority of people employed in our industry. Alan Moss, Longsight

Why invest in the future?

Cowboys riding the range

For the first time in 30 years I’ve launched my Loco Journal across the room. As I’ve moved with the times, I was reading it on my iPad and, thankfully, it survived! What incensed me was the letter ‘I love zero hours contracts’ from John Wayne – open access operator driver Arno Brooks (Journal, May) – one of the ranch hands at Cowboy Rail, aka West Coast Railways. The best thing about the Journal is it publishes all views, so I’d like you to publish my letter if you would.

His belief in the benefits of zero hours contracts is not shared by the overwhelming majority of people employed on these ill-conceived terms of employment. Ask one of the thousands of people working for Sports Direct or alongside a clown called Ronald at a notorious fast food outlet. They only benefit the employer, not the poor employees. Employers use zero hours contracts to cut wages, avoid obligations such as holiday pay, and pensions – basically, to exploit working people.

While informing us of his sterling work on infrastructure he neglects to mention that whilst this work is carried out by an open access operator our comrades in freight operating companies, with full-time contracts and properly negotiated terms and conditions, are facing redundancy. This work was, historically, carried out by FOCs but, as infrastructure providers look to drive down costs, you provide them with the tools.

When you say you have more knowledge than freight drivers, you must prove the case on paper; but what checks are in place to ensure competency and training for changes to infrastructure? With your extensive route card, combined with five long holidays a year, and the chance to work zero hours, how do you maintain your competency on all these routes? As for your point about providing conductors for passenger trains, my company council reps would not allow you to conduct our drivers over a diversion route. If a conductor was required, and was from a recognised FOc, they would be most welcome in my cab, but West Coast Railways are not permitted in our cabs for route learning or refreshing purposes.

You talk about working past 60 and the right to earn a living. ASLEF negotiated an employer justified retirement age in my TOC, by means of an employee referendum, the result of which was overwhelmingly in favour, and in doing so our members ensured that young people can enter the rail industry, not have their path blocked by people who work beyond retirement age.

Cowboys riding the range

I have just retired from the railway after 38 years in various footplate grades. I wish to place on record my thanks to this wonderful trade union, especially the help and support when my son was involved in a horrific RTA when an oncoming lorry driver fell asleep at the wheel and collided head on with his vehicle. The assistance from Thompsons was second to none.

I also wish to praise the local LLC and company council at TPE for advice that was always available, when requested, at any time of the day, too! Good luck for the future in your battles against an increasingly hostile management and thank you for everything you have done for me over the past 38 years.

Tim Bott, Sheffield

Why invest in the future?

Cowboys riding the range

It would be easy to shoot down Arno Brooks (Journal, May) however he does make some salient points. Firstly, we should not be referring to a company managing director as Farmer Smith. Secondly, Mr Brooks addresses a very serious point about how ASLEF has a major problem with drivers working into later life as retirement profiles change and many people, like me, fear that working into our 70s is a distinct possibility.

Where Mr Brooks fails to see a problem with his zero hours contract is that it’s a great development for someone in receipt of a substantial pension – probably from one or more of the operators he is now helping to undercut. He says West Coast is reliable but seems not to realise the unfair playing field that experienced casual labour provides in an open access sector. If he were 20 or even 30 years younger (like me) I wonder whether he would wonder if it’s worth paying into a pension fund to support people who are fundamentally damaging operators in a freight sector in crisis. He seems to think it’s better for Network Rail to pay part-time workers at West Coast than help a FOc or TOC expand its own drivers’ route cards. Anything for a cheap, quick fix. Why invest in the future?

Patrick Collum, Euston

Thoughts on the grade

I don’t like zero hours contracts, they cheapen the train driver grade, and although I appreciate that some West Coast Railway drivers are very experienced, the railway is changing rapidly, with new technology and...
Thank you so much for your help

Thank you so much for inviting us to AAD in Aviemore. We had a great time and it was a good experience for our lovely volunteers. You made us feel very at home, even though it was scary at first! And your donations will help us a lot.

Khadija Coll, Saheliya

ever more stringent safety regulations, and I think ASLEF is correct to prefer full-time driving staff with the aspiration of retiring at 60. It would appear that West Coast has changed its reliance on them as, according to Ian Prosser at the ORR, the company has reduced its steam drivers by 61 from 90 to 29, of which 24 will be employed on contracts. He added that West Coast is in the process of moving all other drivers off zero hours contracts. Hopefully, the near miss at Wootton Bassett, and subsequent prohibition notice, has concentrated minds at the company, halted the decline in standards, and prevented a fatal collision in future.

Paul Moore, Ipswich

No place for zero hours

There is no place in the rail industry, or any other industry, for zero hours contracts. They only suit those who wish to flout the terms & conditions that unions, like ASLEF, have fought so hard for. Such contracts only suit people who care nothing for their fellow workers.

Mick Scott, Carlisle

On wrong lines with UKIP

I find it hard to believe that ASLEF (Journal, May) wants to ditch being part of the EU in line with the main policy of UKIP. You mention in our Journal that it’s a rich man’s club but fail to say that the majority of trade union members in the other 27 countries don’t want us to leave. Leaving would leave us with an unfettered Tory government determined to destroy Labour Party funding from trade unions and put social housing in the hands of private landlords with their exorbitant rents. Young people want to be able to live and work and move freely in other EU countries.

John Priseman, RMS

EC saw through rhetoric

It’s reassuring that ASLEF’s executive committee saw through the EU rhetoric and backed the Leave campaign. However, true to our democratic roots, a full page in the Journal was given to Alan Johnson to put the opposite view, but Alan only told half the story. Kelvin Hopkins, who offers A View from the Left, says ‘The EU is not at its core about employment rights, nor is it about human rights. Employment rights have been established to give the illusion it is on the side of workers and trade unions, at least slightly, and to keep trade unions passive and quiescent.’

Ken Hall, Horsham

Lining up with loonies

Re Mick Whelan’s article (Journal, May) about the EC’s decision to back Brexit. Yes, there are many things wrong with the EU, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. We are now in agreement with the likes of lain Duncan Smith, Michael Gove, Boris Johnson, Marine Le Pen of the Front National and other far-right lunatics. If we leave, it will be futile complaining if we end up with a very right-wing government led by Boris Johnson.

Bill Mackenzie, former EC president

Safe European home

Alan Johnson tells us why we should stay in Europe (Journal, May) and I’ve been out on the campaign trail trying to convince voters of Labour’s reasons. But GS Mick Whelan puts the EC’s point of view that we should leave the EU. Is this the sign of a split with the Labour Party?

Kevin Christie

Mick says: ‘There is no split as Jeremy has said we are allowed to disagree. We are proud to have nominated Jeremy and, on 97% of policy, he has our unequivocal support. Just as we offer our members a view but expect them to vote with their conscience.’

Not all Notts folk worked

Re the piece on Harry Harpham (Journal, April) I find the comment about Notts miners – ‘Harry went on strike in 1984 when many Nottinghamshire miners continued to work’ – offensive. As an NUM member at Mansfield colliery, T&G member on London Buses, and currently 20 plus years an ASLEF member, I have yet to cross a picket line as my 63rd year approaches. Please don’t tar all Notts folk with the same brush.

David Strauther, TOP, Hammersmith & City
Look back in anger

ANDREW HOURIGAN, executive committee member for District 3, reports on the front line against fascism in the 1930s and celebrates the courage of the men and women of the International Brigades

I was just checking departure times at Liverpool airport when I heard a shout from the restaurant. ‘Andy – we’re over here!’ It was Colin Smith, north-west regional secretary of ASLEF, having a cup of tea before our flight. But neither of us was heading off for a mid-winter break in the Spanish sun. Colin was sat with comrades from the International Brigade Memorial Trust and activists from other unions. We were on a journey to commemorate the battle against fascism in Spain where, in the 1930s, the democratically-elected left-wing Republican government introduced social and economic reforms to improve the lives of industrial workers and peasant farmers.

TESTING GROUND FOR WW2
Conservatives – the rich, the powerful and the Roman Catholic church – were furious and in July 1936 the army, led by General Francisco Franco, tried to overthrow the government by force. Thousands of Spaniards rallied to the Republican cause, the coup failed and the country was plunged into a bloody civil war. Franco’s Nationalist army was backed by right-wing Falangist irregulars and armaments and soldiers from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini used Spain as a testing ground for the tactics, troops and weapons they would use in the Second World War.

The governments of Britain and France, wedded to an ill-conceived policy of appeasement of the great dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, agreed on a cynical ‘non-intervention’ position on Spain because, cabinet papers subsequently revealed, they feared socialism, and the power of the workers, more than they feared the Nazis and the Fascists and their rich friends in England. But, on the Republican side, volunteers in the International Brigades answered Joan Miró’s call to Aidez L’Espagne, many of them living, fighting and dying under a slogan used by anti-Fascists ever since: ‘No Pasarán!’

I was going to Spain to commemorate the 79th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama where, in 1937, the workers of Madrid fought to save the capital from the brutal onslaught of Franco’s thugs. We went to keep alive the tradition of international solidarity that is part of the lifeblood of the trade union movement. It was in the Jarama Valley that trade unionists from Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany, the United States and many other countries fought and died in a battle that helped keep the Fascists out of the capital until the end of the war.

The visit was fascinating; the tour of the valley was one highlight, the speeches from people who were partisans in the war another. The stories of heroism by the young railwaymen, dockers, bus drivers, engineers, and miners – many from the north-west – who made up the British and Irish battalion of the 15th International Brigade were breathtaking.

PARCHED HILLS OF JARAMA
We sometimes give up our pay when we strike against the bosses. These lads did that aplenty when they were back home, but they went on to give their lives, too, on the parched hills of Jarama. They struck at the enemy with rifles and grenades in a desperate bid to halt the rising Fascist tide and create a world of justice, fairness and equality. To say I was inspired doesn’t do justice to the feelings I had hearing accounts of the battle.

Comrades who keep the proud memory of the selfless solidarity the working-class displayed in Spain are tireless in making connections with today’s trade union movement. I discovered that our union, which has campaigned against Fascism in the workplace, on the street, and in the highest court in the land, had a proud record in the fight to defend the republic.

The British government fiddled while Spain burned. But our trade union was in the forefront of the Aid for Spain campaign while general secretary WJR Squance was a leading supporter of the International Brigades. He was a keynote speaker at a commemoration in Dundee in 1939 for Brigaders and nurses killed in Spain and part of a delegation to the government demanding the right of the Spanish republic to be free to purchase arms from Britain.

My visit to Madrid was a source of inspiration, a source of education and – given the activists I met who work hard to keep the flame of international solidarity burning today – a source of new ideas. It was a pleasant surprise to meet fellow ASLEF train driver, and Motherwell branch secretary, Andy Jones.

MILITANT FIGHTING SPIRIT
The lessons of Spain are relevant for our battles today as the poisonous vapours of Fascism, racism and nationalism grow across Europe and ‘austerity’ becomes a byword, and excuse, for attacking every gain our movement has made. And the lessons are vital for rebuilding a militant fighting spirit in the ranks of today’s movement, helping us forge a new generation of trade unionists who can renew the age-old fight for socialism.

And, for that reason, I think it right that ASLEF is planning our biggest delegation yet to next year’s commemoration in Madrid for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Jarama. Let’s make it another magnificent display of international solidarity. The spirit of resistance that the International Brigades championed is not only alive, but growing, and it will triumph.
Gooey Baked Camembert

Lucy Knox serves up an easy starter to share

Remove the inner packaging from a 250g baking Camembert and pop back in the wooden box. Place in a roasting tin and mark the rind with a cross. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil, scatter with a little plucked and chopped rosemary, and season with salt and pepper. Bake in an oven preheated to 200C/180C fan/Gas 6 for 10 to 15 mins until the cheese is nice and gooey (the exact time will depend on the ripeness of your cheese). Remove from the oven and leave for a minute. Then peel back the rind and serve with warmed chunks of bread for dipping.

Classic Fresh Basil Pesto

Tasty home made version of a true Italian classic

Put 25g fresh basil leaves, 1 large clove of garlic, 50g pine nuts and salt and freshly ground black pepper in a blender and whizz until you have a thick paste. Tip in 25g freshly grated Parmesan, and then, with the motor still running, gradually pour in 75ml olive oil and blend to a smooth purée. Chill until ready to serve.

Top Tip: Use to stir into hot cooked pasta or with a mozzarella and tomato salad.

ASLEF’s legal services

If you are being harassed at work, bullied or discriminated against, and if your local, branch or district rep is unavailable, call the industrial relations department at union headquarters (020 7324 2400) or email info@aslef.org.uk. If you are arrested or interview ed by police and need legal assistance – day or night – call the members’ emergency hotline on 0800 587 7530. ASLEF also provides first class legal advice free for members and dependents.

Prize Crossword

Prize Crossword 123 by Tom Williams

Across
3 Strength and energy
6 A connected row of houses
7 Jail
8 Heroin and morphine
9 Dish of fried beaten eggs
12 Atlantic or Pacific
14 Oily fruit and girl’s name
15 The outside
18 Single file party dance
19 Crescent-shaped fruit
20 How toast is cooked
21 Scandinavian turnip

Solution to Crossword 122

Across: 1 Disinfectant 7 Prior 8 Rats 10 Stout 11 Rifle 13 Straws 15 Martyr 17 Award 18 Motif 19 Trio 21 Frown 22 Steeplechase
Down: 1 Department 2 Spitfire 3 Nursery 4 Errors 5 Tart 6 Net 9 Subsidence 12 Casanova 14 Traffic 16 Retail 18 Mole 20 Rut

Congratulations to Herbie White, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex who was last month’s winner. The winner of this month’s Prize Crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

You can see more of Tom Williams’ crosswords, word games and puzzles at wordgames.co.uk

Thanks for all your responses to the 122nd prize crossword in the June edition of the ASLEF Journal. If you successfully complete this month’s crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 July

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