Time for change – why Britain needs a Labour government

MICK WHELAN: Vote Labour on 8 June
SIMON WELLER: We need a public railway
TOSH McDONALD: Jeremy offers hope

Chris Proctor recalls the revolution that changed the world
Terry Tuite pans a three act pantomime for buses and trains
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Incorporated under the Friendly Societies Act 1892
Mick: The Tory Party is not the workers’ party

We fought hard for everything we have

HIS trade union is affiliated to the Labour Party. The decision by members to affiliate, and enshrine it in our rule book, to which every member signs up on application, was a wise one but is not, for some reason, always understood by some members. The Labour Party was founded in Farringdon, just down the road from head office, by unions who wanted a representative voice in Parliament to fight for rights including universal suffrage.

We need the party now more than ever. Nobody gave us the salaries and conditions we have; it took 137 years of negotiation and struggle, solidarity and unity, building on the foundations of the past. That’s what makes us what we are. Trade unions are about wages and t&cs, and about education, housing, health, and social mobility, for ourselves, our families and future generations, and ASLEF has sought, since 1880, to improve all these things.

So it frightens me when the party that introduced the Trade Union Act 2016 and the Lobbying & Transparency Act 2014 tries to present itself, falsely, as the ‘workers’ party’. The party that seeks to alter long-won conditions by implementing changes through invitations to tender for future franchises is no friend of the train driver. This is a Transport Minister who, when we raise the plight of the freight sector, and our members’ security of employment, tells us ‘the market will assert itself.’

We are more attuned to a party that will not only reinstate workers’ rights, including the right to legal redress for injury, and employment rights, but change the model on the railway and invest in a long-term and integrated public transport system that gives real value to the taxpayer, passengers, and businesses sending freight by rail, as well as securing the future of those skilled men and women employed in this sector.

At the end of May we held our annual assembly of delegates, in Bristol, turning the union over to members to evaluate where we are, what we have done, and to discuss the future, and the evolution of policy, based on items sent in from branches for discussion. We are a democratic organisation. The general election this month will determine the challenges we face going forward but, while we do it together, there is no stronger union in the UK, thanks to you. You are ASLEF.

Yours fraternally
Mick Whelan, general secretary

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Once in a lifetime

OHN MCDONNELL, speaking at the May Day rally in Trafalgar Square, said the general election on 8 June is ‘the biggest chance of a lifetime’ for the left in Britain. The Shadow Chancellor then launched a coruscating attack on seven years of Tory and Conservative-led coalition governments.

‘This is a Tory government that has presided over a country in which our nurses have to rely on food banks. Yes, that’s right, nurses – the heroes of our NHS – abandoned by this government. And all this Tory Prime Minister can say is there are “complex” reasons. It shows how out of touch and how little she and her party really care about the problems facing hardworking people in our country. The reasons people use food banks are not “complex” – they use them because they are hungry and cannot afford to feed themselves!

‘Four million of our children live in poverty. Two-thirds of them are in families who are at work. In the sixth richest country in the world! What do you call that? I call it a bloody disgrace! Don’t you?

‘This is our opportunity, brothers and sisters. Some of us have worked for this for all our lives. So the message is this. Carpe diem. Seize the moment. This is our chance. Take it, brothers and sisters.’

Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the PCS, said: ‘We fight the general election to kick out the Tories. But we also fight the general election to defend the NHS, to kick out the privateers, and to fight for better terms and conditions for all workers. Our future can be bright if we fight together.’

ASLEF GS Mick Whelan spoke on the steps of the Marx Memorial Library at midday, before marchers moved off to Trafalgar Square, and Neil Gore entertained the crowd with songs from Townsend Productions’ touring hit Dare Devil Rides to Jarama (see page 6).

QUOTE...

‘The election on 8 June is a choice between a Conservative government for the few, and a Labour government that will stand up for all of our people.’ – Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn...UNQUOTE

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

A fare dodger on the train was entertaining us with impressions of beans. When the ticket inspector came along he did a runner.
Glenny Rodge

Scandal of 10 million meals given out by food banks as Tory austerity hits.
Mirror Politics

The trade unions are in our DNA; our government would act preferentially towards the unions. #GE2017
The Labour Party

I call my dog Cameron because he leaves someone else to clear up the mess he’s made.
Glenny Rodge

‘I don’t have faith in opinion polls but even they couldn’t mess up this lead.
Sir Eric Pickles

ELEPHANT ON THE LINE

An elephant was killed when it was hit by an Indian Railways intercity passenger train near Siliguri in West Bengal. The tusker was crossing the railway track at 4am when it was hit by a Kathihar-bound express running from Siliguri.

If you’re glad I’ll be frank

RANK JACOBSEN, a retired train driver, has been elected in Pentwyn to serve at County Hall on the City of Cardiff council. He was one of a number of ASLEF activists who enjoyed success at the polls in the local elections last month.

Frank, 63, decided to become a councillor to improve the area where he lives. ‘I’m Labour, I’m from Llanedeyrn, and I walk around the area two or three times a day with my dogs Kain, a Siberian husky, and Kai, a German Shepherd.’ Like Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn he has an allotment and wants more allotments for elderly and disabled members of the community.

Voters went to the polls on 4 May for local and mayoral elections in England, Scotland and Wales. A total of 4,851 seats were up for grabs on 88 councils – all 32 councils (1,227 seats) in Scotland and all 22 councils (1,254 seats) in Wales, plus 34 councils (2,370 seats) in England, including 27 counties and six unitary authorities.

Six new metro mayors were elected in Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City region, the West Midlands, Tees Valley, West of England, and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

Alan Mair was re-elected for Bishopbriggs South to East Dunbartonshire council; Pat O’Rourke was re-elected to North Lanarkshire council; and Tom Corbin was re-elected for Bemerton to Salisbury city council.

Andy Botham, who had been cabinet member for council services on Derbyshire county council, came third behind the Liberal Democrat and Conservative candidates in Matlock.

Collette Gibson, of Gidea Park, came second with 992 votes behind the Conservative in Bocking for Essex county council and Mark Daniels, of Barking main line, came second with 870 votes behind the Conservative in Rochford South.

Richard Solesbury-Timms finished behind the Tory in Middleton Cheney for election to South Northamptonshire council, and Mark Reynolds finished second behind the Tory in the Hykeham Forum division for Lincolnshire county council.

But EC president Tosh McDonald’s wife Nikki was elected in the town centre ward for Doncaster council.

Frank’s on the way to County Hall in Cardiff Bay (top left) but Richard (above left) and Mark (right) weren’t so fortunate

I don’t have faith in opinion polls but even they couldn’t mess up this lead.
Sir Eric Pickles
Imagine there’s no Southern…

A clever parody of John Lennon’s “Imagine”, which poking fun at Southern Rail, is proving to be a massive online hit. Mark Brailsford’s spoof of Lennon’s classic begins, “Imagine there’s no Southern / It’s easy if you try / No GTR or Thameslink / Kiss their franchise goodbye / Imagine all the people / Arriving home on time / You may say I’m a dreamer / But I’m not the only one / I’m fed up with these railways / ‘Cos they belong to everyone’. He goes on, “Imagine no more Grayling / That isn’t hard to do / No more Tories failing / ‘Cos they haven’t got a clue / Imagine all the people / Getting to work on time…” The song has had more than 250,000 hits on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

500 CLUB: K Graham, with number 88, won the May draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £394.

500 CLUB: 20 May

Damon Smith, 20, was found guilty of planting a bomb packed with ball bearings on a Jubilee line Tube train in October. He was due to be sentenced on 26 May.

The Durham Miners’ Rally is on Saturday 8 July. The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival, near Dorchester, is from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 July. The Trades Union Congress is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 10 to Wednesday 13 September. The Labour Party conference is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 24 to Wednesday 27 September.

Val McDermid, the bestselling crime writer, has told how she knocks out the words while travelling on Britain’s railway: ‘I often end up writing on trains,’ she says. ‘I travel a lot for personal and professional reasons so spend a fair amount of time shuttling up and down the country.’

Val was born and brought up in a working-class community in Kirkaldy, in Fife, and is, like Gordon Brown, a fan of Raith Rovers. Her father was a club scout and discovered Jim Baxter, who later played at Stark’s Park before moving to Ibrox. Her father was a club scout and discovered Jim Baxter, who played at Stark’s Park before moving to Ibrox.

On the write lines – bestselling author Val McDermid knocks out the prose on the rails

and former detective Carol Jordan – Val spent a couple of years as a reporter on the Daily Record in Glasgow and a dozen years on the Sunday People in Manchester before becoming an author.

She told Eddie Mair on PM: ‘I settle into my seat, open the laptop, stick in my earbuds, turn on the music and off I go. I once wrote 2,500 words between Bath and Newcastle on a Saturday night but, mostly, I write about 1,000 to 1,500 words between Edinburgh and London. There’s something about the rhythm of the train that helps the rhythm of the prose.’

QUOTE...
‘British taxpayers spend far more on the privatised system than they did on the old nationalised model!’ – Owen Jones in the New York Times

…UNQUOTE

Paul Salveson, Visiting Professor in Transport & Logistics at Huddersfield University, blogs in the Weekly Salvo on his website about Leonora Carrington, ‘one of Lancashire’s most remarkable figures’. Leonora was born at Clayton Green near Chorley in 1917 but, says Salveson, ‘I doubt that there will be celebrations on the streets of her native town, which she left at the earliest possible opportunity. Or, more to the point, she left her highly privileged home as quickly as she could, to live the life of a revolutionary bohemian figure, lover of Max Ernst, pioneer of the women’s movement, in Mexico, and a key figure in the inter-war Surrealist movement. I like to imagine her as a young girl cycling down to Euxton Junction to see what was on the up Royal Scot, giving coy waves to the footplate crews. Or maybe not so coy – she wasn’t exactly a shrinking violet’.

Guido Fawkes, the must read website run by right-wing reptile Paul Staines, rarely has anything positive to say about anyone on the progressive, liberal left; ultra-right neoliberal ‘devil take the hindmost’ capitalism is his sort of thing. So you know the Tories are in trouble when Guido runs, early doors, ‘Voters are already tired of Theresa May’s coalition of clichés…’
Though I’m a working man I can ruin the government’s plan

SLEF activists from right around the country joined general secretary Mick Whelan, assistant general secretary Simon Weller, executive committee vice-president Dave Calfe, EC members Marz Colombini and Howard Kaye, and district organisers Finn Brennan, Dicky Fisher, Nigel Gibson and Graham Morris on the traditional May Day march in central London.

Members met at 11am on Monday 1 May at Clerkenwell Green, close by the ASLEF head office in St John Street, an area with strong historical radical roots. Wat Tyler camped here during the Peasants’ Revolt in 1381 and George Loveless, the first of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to return to these shores after transportation to Australia for having the temerity to form a trade union, came back to a heroes’ welcome on Clerkenwell Green in 1838.

Mick made a barnstorming speech on the steps of the Marx Memorial Library at midday, making a passionate and convincing case for why Britain needs a Labour government – now more than ever – elected on 8 June. ASLEF marchers, together with activists from other trade unions, workers from many countries, students, pensioners, and anti-austerity campaigners, moved off at 1pm, making their way through the capital in the rain to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

Have they given up and all gone home to bed

GS Mick Whelan made a moving, thoughtful, and eloquent speech remembering all those working men and women who have been killed in industrial accidents, or died from industrial diseases contracted on the job, at an International Workers’ Memorial Day rally at Lincoln Square in Manchester on Friday 28 April. ‘They died while trying to earn an honest living,’ he said. ‘For themselves and for their families.’ EC president Tosh McDonald spoke at a Workers’ Memorial Day remembrance service and wreath laying ceremony at Christ Church in Hartlepool.

COVER STORY OR MYSTIC MEG?

Mark Carne, chief executive of Network Rail, has suggested that electrification may be old hat and battery operated trains are the future. ‘Is this a cover for NR’s inability to deliver electrification on time or on budget,’ wonders a cynical Andrew Bosi of the Capital Transport Campaign. ‘Or a realistic peer into the future?’

GOVERNMENT RAIL BETRAYAL

Nearly £2 billion generated from the sale of Network Rail assets such as arches and depots has been taken by the Treasury to reduce the Tory government deficit rather than fund urgent rail upgrades. The decision to deny Network Rail the proceeds from its asset sale is a further blow to the country’s rail infrastructure improvement programme which includes the electrification of major routes such as the Great Western main line.

GS Mick Whelan said: ‘The government is clearly not committed to growing the railway and prefers to manage the decline of the industry rather than to get a grip of it. The franchising system is in disarray and this means vital infrastructure upgrades will be kicked further into the long grass. Stakeholders from across the rail industry feel betrayed by and passengers are asking if the Tories can deliver for them. On this evidence, they clearly can’t.’

GRAYLING GOES COLD ON CROSSRAIL 2

The DfT is briefing that Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has gone off plans for Crossrail 2. Not, his aides insist, because of his antipathy towards London Mayor Sadiq Khan but because he doubts the private sector’s willingness to come up with the cash.
Flash! Bang! Wallop! What a picture, what a photograph

Thompsons solicitors, the campaigning law firm, has launched a nationwide photography competition to highlight the health & safety regulations that help keep Britain’s workers safe.

Thompsons’ safety at work competition, which closes on 28 June, invites budding snappers to capture an image which explores one or more of the following themes: what health and safety means to me; why h&s is important; why h&s is not a burden; and why h&s should be protected.

‘Critics dismiss “elf & safety” as “red tape”; says Tom Jones, head of policy at Thompsons solicitors. ‘But it’s the planning and common sense that helps to make our workplaces safe and ensures that employees return home safely to their families at the end of the working day.’

Photos should be submitted at www.thompsons.law/compassion and the winners will share a £5,000 pot and be displayed in an exhibition at the People’s History Museum in Manchester.

QUOTE...
‘Nigel Farage and Douglas Carswell don’t need to stand again as MPs – they’ve already won.’ - Jonn Elledge in the New Statesman

...UNQUOTE

BEYOND STUPID
British Transport Police officers have described vandals who threw a fridge freezer into the path of an oncoming train as ‘beyond stupid’. The incident happened at 6.15pm on 10 April between Harrow & Wealdstone and Headstone Lane stations. The fridge freezer was dropped from a bridge and smashed to pieces by a London Midland train.

‘Throwing a fridge freezer into the path of an oncoming train is beyond stupid,’ said PC Gary Thomas. ‘Numerous people could have been hurt or killed by this idiotic act. Fortunately, on this occasion, nobody was injured and the train was not damaged, but the consequences could have been fatal.’

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Transport Benevolent Fund CIO, known as TBF, is a registered charity in England and Wales, 1160901, and Scotland, SC047016.
Round the horn on solar power

Audible warning devices have been installed at footpath level crossings in Pulborough, Rustington, and Rye in Sussex to alert pedestrians of approaching trains. Each solar-powered unit, which reproduces the sound of a train horn, is triggered automatically as a train approaches, providing a secondary warning in the event that a crossing user does not hear the train horn itself. These units don’t require a lot of maintenance, so they’re practical and efficient ways to improve safety at footpath level crossings. We have now installed 13 of these devices across the south-east, with plans for more to come.

RAIB reports on near misses

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has published a report into accidents and near misses involving trains and track workers when the normal running of trains has not been blocked to allow engineering work to be carried out.

The RAIB makes five recommendations to Network Rail, covering improvements in training and procedures for those in leadership roles; improvements to the training of track workers; changes to the competence requirements for people who lead track work in higher-risk situations; making location-specific photo and video information more easily available; and improvements in the collection, analysis and reporting of information on incidents involving track workers.

Simon French, chief inspector of rail accidents, said: ‘The last fatality as a result of a track worker being struck by a train occurred in 2014; there have been six such fatalities over the last ten years. However, in our recent annual report the RAIB has expressed a concern about the number and severity of serious near miss incidents, some of which have included the potential to result in multiple fatalities. For example, during 2015 we identified 71 incidents in which track workers working outside a possession on Network Rail infrastructure were at risk of being struck by moving trains.

‘I have detected a real determination in the railway industry to address this issue, and recognise the significant number of initiatives with the potential to reduce the risk to track workers, including the use of technology to provide improved protection from trains.’

RAIL NOT ROAD IS THE BEST ANSWER

Sending more goods by rail could ease congestion on the UK’s busiest roads and yield great economic benefits, according to new research. The findings of a cross-modal freight study by consultants MTRU for the Campaign for Better Transport examined the benefit of increasing freight capacity of rail routes that run parallel to three badly congested roads.

A spokesperson for the DfT said: ‘We agree with the Campaign for Better Transport that rail freight offers real benefits for the environment and helps keep bulky loads off the road network, helping to ease congestion for other motorists. We look forward to using these findings to help inform our coming road and rail strategies and are committed to working with the rail freight industry to support growth of the sector.’

CAMPAIGNERS CONDEMN DRIVERLESS M-WAY CARS

Road safety campaigners have slammed plans unveiled by a consortium of British companies to test driverless cars on UK motorways in 2019. The Driven group – led by Oxbotica, which makes software for driverless vehicles – also wants to try out a fleet of autonomous vehicles between London and Oxford. Previous tests have been at low speeds and not on public roads.

Fantastic four make railway history

OUR high speed trains from four different rail generations ran side by side on the East Coast main line to celebrate St George’s Day on Sunday 23 April. The fantastic four – The Flying Scotsman, Virgin’s new Azuma Class 800, a Class 91 InterCity 125 HST – set off from Tollerton, in North Yorkshire, to York at 25mph in a staggered formation.

A Class 55 Deltic – the locomotive which preceded the HST on the London to Edinburgh route – hauled The Flying Scotsman into place for an event jointly organised by the National Railway Museum, Network Rail, Virgin Trains and Hitachi.

Rob McIntosh, managing director for Network Rail on the East Midlands route, said: ‘The East Coast main line and its long heritage is uniquely placed to run these four historic trains side by side.

‘This was a long-standing vision for us and our industry partners and that vision has become a reality, creating a wonderful occasion to help celebrate our proud rail heritage as well as the ongoing success of Britain’s railways.

‘To have achieved this special, once in a generation, event with the eyes of the world watching – and to have not caused any disruption to regular rail passengers – makes me immensely proud to have helped make a moment in railway history.’

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The government is trying to take away your right to free or affordable legal representation if you’re injured at work or anywhere else.

Why? They’re prioritising #FeedingFatCats

If government plans go ahead, nearly one million people will lose their right to free legal representation. Meanwhile it will cost the NHS and the government at least £150 million of your taxes every year and fat cat insurers will be rewarded with multimillion pound profits.

Visit www.feedingfatcats.co.uk to take action and stop the government #FeedingFatCats.
Vote Labour on 8 June

ASLEF’s general secretary MICK WHELAN spells out why a Labour government would be good for Britain

OHN MCDONNELL, the Shadow Chancellor, speaking at the traditional May Day rally in Trafalgar Square last month, said the general election on Thursday 8 June is ‘the biggest chance of a lifetime’ for the left in Britain. He’s right. Because the Labour Party is going to the country this month with a manifesto which could significantly, and fundamentally, change this country. For the better.

I am proud to be a member of the Labour Party. And I am loyal. So you won’t be surprised to learn that I vote Labour. That’s where I put my cross on the ballot paper.

Because I believe that Britain is better off with a Labour government than a Tory government or a Conservative-led coalition.

EMBARRASSING UNCLE

But there were times, during the New Labour years, when my trade union – and all the trade unions – were treated by Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson as if we were distant relatives rather than close family friends – an embarrassing uncle at the Christmas party, perhaps – and it was sometimes hard to keep the faith. But we did. Because we knew the Tories, and the Lib Dems, would be worse. And so they proved from 2010 to 2015. It wasn’t just that Tony and Peter and the New Labour apparatchiks surrounding them were embarrassed by the trade union link – which is a bit rich considering the history of the Labour Party born, as it was, out of the trade unions – were embarrassed by our values as well.

In their rush to grab the centre ground and in their rush to grab the centre ground and ‘free market’ rather than representing the ambitions and aspirations of the vast majority of ordinary hard-working men and women in this country.

Jeremy is proud – not embarrassed or ashamed – to talk about public ownership. He understands how ordinary people are suffering in the Conservative Age of Austerity ushered in by David Cameron and George Osborne – and the Lib Dems – and continued by Theresa May and Philip Hammond who have redistributed wealth from the poor to the rich – the reverse of Robin Hood! – to bail out the bankers who caused the economic crisis of 2008.

Jeremy wants to rebuild Britain, to create a fairer, more modern society, with a more productive economy that delivers for all the people, not just the few, fit for the 21st century.

The Labour manifesto promises to bring Britain’s railways back into public ownership – a policy on which ASLEF has campaigned passionately ever since John Major’s ill-starred privatisation of British Rail in 1994 – and freeze passenger fares across the network.

It also pledges to reverse the privatisation of Royal Mail, create a publicly-owned energy company to put an end to the rip-offs of the oil and gas cartels – even Theresa May says the energy market doesn’t work! – and stop the insidious ‘salami slicing’ back door privatisation of our National Health Service.

WHAT’S NOT TO LIKE?

Labour, if elected, will repeal the ill-conceived Trade Union Act and embrace sectoral collective bargaining, so unions can once again negotiate terms and conditions across an industry and across the country. The party will end the public sector pay cap, guarantee trade union access to the workplace, enforce employees’ right to union representation, and use public spending power to drive up standards by only awarding public sector contracts to companies which recognise trade unions.

The party will end pernicious zero hours contracts and shift the burden of proof in the gig economy so the law assumes a worker is an employee unless an employer can prove otherwise.

Labour will provide education, ‘from the cradle to the grave,’ that is free at the point of use – from early years through primary, secondary and tertiary education to adult education – abolish university tuition fees and reintroduce maintenance grants.

What’s not to like? This is a sensible socialist platform on which any of the great Labour Party leaders of the past – Keir Hardie, Clement Attlee, and Harold Wilson – would have been happy to stand. That’s why I urge you to vote Labour on 8 June and help return a Labour government to build a better Britain.

MICK WHELAN is also chair of the Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation. TULO co-ordinates the activities of the 13 trade unions which affiliate to the Labour Party – ASLEF; BECTU; the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers’ Union; Community; CWU; FBU; GMB; Musicians’ Union; NUM; TSSA; Unison; Unite and the Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers.
We need a public railway

The Labour manifesto promises to bring Britain’s railways back into public ownership. Assistant general secretary SIMON WELLER says that’s what ASLEF has been campaigning for since 1993.

The aims of ASLEF are quite clear and enshrined in our rule book. ASLEF exists to secure the best terms and conditions for train drivers, to negotiate on behalf of our members with the train and freight operating companies, to promote a pride in the job we do, to champion equality in our industry, to provide education services for our members, and to work for a fairer, more just, and more equitable society. A socialist society.

That’s what we want. A Labour government committed to socialist values. And that includes bringing back into public ownership the key parts of the British economy which belong to the British people.

Britain’s railways were first nationalised in 1948 by Clement Attlee’s great reforming post-war government. Attlee, who swept to power on an avowedly socialist platform in the Labour landslide of 1945, was determined to seize the economic levers of power in this country. By bringing the UK’s strategic heavy industries, and our key public utilities, into the public sector. Partly, because the private sector had failed. Partly, because the Labour government led by Attlee had to rebuild a shattered country after the Second World War. And, partly, because he wanted to remake Britain as a better, fairer, country. A country which worked for everyone, not just a few.

The railways were nationalised to rebuild the network, and the infrastructure, and the rolling stock, after the devastation caused by the Luftwaffe. The coal industry was nationalised a year earlier, iron and steel a year later. Water, gas, electricity – and the Bank of England – were all brought into public ownership by a great reforming Labour government which also created the National Health Service – its enduring achievement – and the welfare state.

Public ownership gave the government, and the people of this country, control over our national assets, the commanding heights of the economy. It ensured a co-ordinated approach to production and supply to ensure economic efficiency, survival and revival as post-war reconstruction got under way. The advantage of a nationalised rail network, as with other natural monopolies, was that central planning could create a better co-ordinated service.

The post-war consensus meant that the Conservative governments of Winston Churchill (1951-55), Anthony Eden (1955-57), Harold Macmillan (1957-63), Sir Alec Douglas-Home (1963-64) and Edward Heath (1970-74) also believed that public ownership of key parts of the economy was best for Britain.

It was Margaret Thatcher, influenced by Sir Keith Joseph, and the ‘voodoo economics’ of Ronald Reagan – that was the damning verdict of his fellow Republican, George Bush – and Milton Friedman’s Chicago School, which became so influential in neoliberal thinking, which tried to turn back time. Though, ironically, even this arch-privatist balked at privatising the Queen’s head, on the Royal Mail, and the railway. And when John Major brought in the Railways Act 1994, Thatcher described it as ‘a privatisation too far’.

When Major privatised our railway he promised three things – competition, innovation, and investment. But there is no competition – the privatised train operating companies all have protected routes, private monopolies – there is precious little innovation – the TOCs were against the introduction of Oyster cards, an innovation of the publicly-owned Transport for London – and all the investment in the industry comes from central government.

Fares have gone up, not down – we now have the highest rail fares in Europe – while trains have become much more crowded. To the point where passengers, even those commuters in the south-east of England who usually vote Conservative, are calling for a return of the railways to public ownership.

We know why the train operating companies like privatisation – when they talk about ‘risk and reward’ they mean there is no risk, it’s all reward – but the model is broken. It doesn’t work. It’s no way to run a railway in the 21st century.

For the sake of passengers, and taxpayers, and those of us who work in the rail industry, it is time to rediscover a political purpose, vote Labour, and bring the railway back into public ownership.

Jeremy offers hope

The Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell offers the chance for real change for working people in this country. They will take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Brexit to deliver workers’ rights for all and not the low wage tax haven of our enemies. A publicly-owned railway run for the people rather than for privateers and foreign states. A National Health Service serving all, not a privatised milk cow channelling taxpayers’ money into the hands of Branson and the rest of the parasites and destroying our public services.

Son of my father

Five ASLEF members (see centre pages) are standing for Labour at the general election. And Jared O’Mara, whose father Ian was a train driver, is standing against Nick Clegg in Sheffield Hallam. It’s a winnable seat. At the last election, in 2015, the Lib Dems took 22,215 votes, 2,353 ahead of Labour on 19,862, with the Tories a distant third.

Jeremy Corbyn with Nick Whelan (above); speaking at the ASLEF fringe at party conference (above left); and with the ASLEF contingent at Burston (left).

‘I’m voting Labour because it’s the only party that will defend the overwhelming majority of people in this country, whether young, old, sick or healthy, and support working people.’ – Brian Corbett, District 7 Organiser

‘I’m voting Labour because it’s the only party that will defend the overwhelming majority of people in this country, whether young, old, sick or healthy, and support working people.’ – Brian Corbett, District 7 Organiser

‘I’m voting Labour for the sake of the wealth, health, welfare and housing of our people – on an equal basis for all the population – for pensioners, workers, students and our children. Inequality has rocketed under the Tories.’ – Colin Smith, District 3 Organiser

‘I’m voting Labour because I want my son, and all of the coming generation, to inhabit a society where everyone, not just the rich and powerful, benefit from a quality National Health Service and excellent lifelong education.’ – Dicky Fisher, District 6 Organiser
The funny thing about democracy, a vote for me is a vote for me!

It's a long time – 47 years, in fact – since a member of ASLEF sat in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament. Five of our members are trying to put that right on Thursday 8 June

ASLEF is a small craft union – we have 19,540 members, as well as 2,350 former drivers in our Retired Members’ Section – but, in boxing parlance, we punch well above our weight.

Despite the litany of anti-union legislation passed by the Tory governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major in the 1980s and 1990s and by David Cameron last year, 96% of the train drivers in England, Scotland and Wales choose to join ASLEF. That gives us real industrial muscle when dealing with the privatised train and freight operating companies who put profits before passengers, staff, and providing a proper public service.

ASLEF also plays a big role, for a small union, in the Labour Party – formed in 1900 by the trade unions – and the labour movement. Mick Whelan, ASLEF’s general secretary, was elected chair of the Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation in Liverpool last year. Simon Weller, assistant general secretary, was re-elected to the general council of the TUC in Brighton last year – he got 271,000 votes and topped the poll in his section – and was also re-elected to serve on the TUC’s executive committee. Tosh McDonald, president of ASLEF’s executive committee, is in great demand as a speaker at Constituency Labour Party and trade union branch meetings, as well as fringe meetings at conference and congress. The Labour Party, and the labour movement, take notice of what we think, what we say, and what we do.

ASLEF has a two-track approach to meaningful engagement. We engage industrially, with the TOCs and FOCs, every day. That is meat and drink for the union. But we also engage politically, because it is at Westminster – and at Holyrood, and in Cardiff Bay – that politicians decide the policies and the parameters that affect the way we live and work.

It is now 47 years since an ASLEF member – Archie Manuel – last sat in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament. Two years ago, in 2015, three ASLEF members stood – sadly, unsuccessfully – for Parliament. This year, five ASLEF members are standing for Labour at the general election.

I’m voting Labour because I want to be part of a caring society that gives opportunity to all – rather than a few – and aspires to reduce and remove the huge disparity between the rich and the poor, the wealthy and the homeless.’ – Nigel Gibson, District 5 Organiser

‘Read the manifesto, it’s bold and radical. Only Labour has the policies that will prioritise public services over private profit and deliver the legacy of a better, fairer, more equal society for all.’ – Marx Colombini, EC member for District 1

Bucking the national trend

TOM CORBIN is positive – and pragmatic. In the local elections last month he managed to buck the national trend and was successfully re-elected as a councillor for Bemerton on Salisbury city council. Part of that was personal – even those who do not normally vote Labour admire him as a hardworking councillor, while others like the fact that he is a local man, not a carpetbagger – but part was political as well. A feeling that Salisbury has not been well served by the Conservative Party.

Now, as Labour’s candidate in the general election, he wants to defend his success last time out. Tom, 40, a train driver for 15 years, is again standing against John Glen, the sitting Conservative, in Salisbury.

Two years ago Tom polled 7,771 votes and increased Labour’s share of the vote in the constituency to 15.3%. He finished second behind the Tory but ahead of UKIP, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens, and, er, King Arthur Pendragon, perhaps not his real name, who stood as an Independent.

‘The election was won on us, and we haven’t had much time to organise, but I was determined to defend the gains we made last time. It’s not going to be easy, because the UKIP vote has collapsed and it’s going to the Tories and the hard Brexiteers. ‘There’s a lot of anti-Corbyn feeling on the
few years – trebled the number here in Matlock – and because, one day, this will be a winnable seat for Labour. It’s incremental, getting members, building support, increasing the vote. And we’re getting there’.

He admits people, on the ground, are fed up with elections. ‘They’re fed up with politicians. There was the general election two years ago, then the EU referendum, then the local elections, and now another general election. People aren’t particularly enthusiastic and it’s hard to get them engaged. ‘But I’m engaged. I think it’s a brilliant manifesto. It’s a platform on which I am very proud to stand. It’s something I can really fight for. Because I know a Labour government, committed to these policies, would change Britain for the better.’

I’m voting Labour because I want a future for my children, and for all children, not just the children of the richest 1%.’ – Dave Calfe, EC vice-president

Train driver takes on Transport Secretary

ED MAYNE, of Feltham Electric, is standing in Epsom & Ewell against the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling. At the last general election Andy Botham took on Patrick McLoughlin in a contest dubbed the Train Driver versus the Fat Controller. Nobody would ever describe Grayling as fat – though many, on his own side, have described him in unflattering terms – so this time the papers are calling it the Train Driver versus the Transport Secretary.

At the last election Grayling polled 33,309 votes; Labour, 8,866; UKIP, 7,117; the Lib Dems 5,002; and the Greens 2,116.

‘So it’s a challenge,’ says Ed, 32, a driver with South West Trains and a Labour councillor in the London Borough of Hounslow – he’s cabinet member for corporate performance and customer care – who represents Isleworth. ‘As a train driver, it’s too good a chance to miss! Because it’s a chance to stand up for all those people who have suffered at the hands of the Tories and their transport policies.’

Ed, who started on the railway as an OTR on Gatwick Express, knows all about the frustration of local commuters and is looking forward to meeting Grayling at the hustings. ‘My campaign, as you would expect, will highlight transport issues, especially the problems with Southern Rail, and the fact that local commuters are not able to use Oyster cards on the route, as promised.’

Mark on the campaign trail – and on the cover of the ASLEF Journal last year

Mark, a member of the Garking main line, is standing in Rayleigh & Wickford. Two years ago the Tories held the seat with 29,088 votes; UKIP polled 11,858; Labour 6,705; Linda Kendall, an Independent, 2,418; the Lib Dems 1,622; and the Greens 1,529.

‘It’s going to be difficult. Of course it is, it’s a Tory area. But who said life would ever be easy? The point is to make a stand, say this is what we believe in, and give people a chance to vote for the Labour Party.

The chance to make a difference

MARK DANIELS, like many of our activists, came to politics through his involvement in the trade union movement. Mark, 44, has been a train driver for 21 years, and has worked on the railway for 25 – he was a guard before he became a driver – and it was his work as a rep that led him to become interested in the political issues that lie behind the industrial.

‘I could see the effect Conservative measures were having on people like me – the people I lived and worked with – and I didn’t like it. I really got involved after Labour won the general election in 1997. I was buying my first home, getting married, and having kids, and it concentrated my mind about the sort of country in which I wanted to live.’

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‘It’s going to be difficult. Of course it is, it’s a Tory area. But who said life would ever be easy? The point is to make a stand, say this is what we believe in, and give people a chance to vote for the Labour Party.

I’m voting Labour because I want a future for my children, and for all children, not just the children of the richest 1%.’ – Dave Calfe, EC vice-president

I’m voting Scottish Labour as it’s the only party with policies which place the Scottish people before flags or borders.’

Kevin Lindsay, District 2 Organiser

I am voting Labour to support a party which believes in humanity, fairness, honesty and equality. Not the elitist, barbaric, selfish and contemptuous alternatives.’

Andrew Hourigan, EC member for District 3

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Come all you rounders if you want to hear the story of a brave engineer

TERRY TUITE, a driver with Chiltern Railways, who works out of Banbury depot, reflects on a life in the driver’s cab. First on the buses, then on the railway. With a few pertinent points about politics, pantos, and what the Tories – and the TOCs and FOCs – have in mind for us

I BECAME politically aware at an early age; I was seven when President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 and remember it like it was only yesterday. I can also remember the antics of Tory politicians in the 1960s – the Profumo affair; Ernest Marples, the corrupt road builder and Transport Secretary working Beeching’s strings; and the antics of Lord Boothby, a bit of string pulling by Reggie and Ronnie with him!

Growing up in the ‘60s was like being in a political pantomime! When a rather attractive Conservative councillor started coming round for tea after choir practice with my dad every Thursday evening, encouraged by my mother, whose nose had been put out of joint, I would be waiting at the front room piano for Councillor Smith’s 1600E to pull up outside. Then I’d play her in with The Red Flag! While we had tea I’d draw cartoons of her beloved leader, Edward Heath, sinking on his yacht, the sail of the Morning Cloud disappearing long before his nose did. That hooter was a cartoonist’s dream!

PANTOMIME IS OVER

Then, all of a sudden, the pantomime is over and I’m going to work in the 1970s and there’s a lot of industrial unrest. I sympathise with the miners, in spite of falling down the dark black hole that was a lift shaft, and not the lift, when I was working in Halfords during a blackout! You, too, can make good use of a hi-vis rucksack on wheels if you fall down a lift shaft!

I passed my driving test and ended up driving a Rail Express Parcels Commer Walkthru out of Banbury goods shed. That shed typified the dying carry it all days of the railway with the lorry driver, crane driver and 08 driver sat around an oil drum playing cards with no work to do! No idleness for me, my Commer was rammed full of Grattan catalogue stuff. That’s why the Commer badge that fell off the back now adorns my locker door! I joined my first union, the NUR, and learned after an altercation with a pompous traction inspector, who wanted to park his big Wolseley where my van was, just how the reps look after inspector, who wanted to park his big Wolseley after an altercation with a pompous traction of the back now adorns my locker door! I

ENTER MARGARET THATCHER

Enter Margaret Thatcher, deregulation, and privatisation. Oxford and South Midland became separate entities. It started reasonably well, with drivers buying shares in their companies, and managers they trusted running them. But there is always greed and wickedness waiting to manifest itself and, sure enough, another pantomime starts. We had the likes of Brian Souter, yes, ‘Look out, he’s behind you’, with his heavy mob, assisted by his sister. They used sharp practice to gain control of other bus companies or put them out of business and take over their routes.

A husband and wife team, the Blundells, who had bought out the GWR Omnibus Company Devon General, took over my company, now South Midland, to incorporate it into their Oxford operation, Thames Transit and the Oxford Tube. Panto turned to soap opera and, to undermine our t&cs, they set about us with the divide and concur routine of Ancient Rome. New keen young minibus drivers were brought in on the same pay but no increments. They had chequered flags incorporated into the bus livery and on the uniforms! Almost as bad as Souter’s Starsky and Hutch stripes! We had two unions, the RMT and the TGWU; the T&G was stronger. So the Blundreeds set about the T&G, closed the country garages and sold the land for development; 24 colleagues at Bicester garage, the seat of the union, were made redundant.

Just in time I transferred to Chipping Norton and became the union branch secretary. Then they targeted the Wantage drivers whose garage was also sold; they operated from a bomb site with a portakabin on it. Management started surveillance of the portakabin with observers in the bushes and tape recorders hidden behind the sofa to catch drivers out for doing something silly like taking a girlfriend back to the portakabin, or loading shopping from a bus into the back of a car. If that car ran on diesel, ooh, extra special attention! Sounds bizarre, I know, but I was summoned to represent these drivers at the disciplinary hearings! I said to the ops manager, ‘Why are you doing this, Roy, you know it won’t last for you’ and he said, ‘It’s just a job, Terry!’ I had to ask, ‘But for how long?’ Six weeks later he was driving a milk float! In the meantime, I managed to get the membership back up, although I did get threatened with the Bridlington agreement!

TURN OUT THE LIGHTS

We muddled on until 1992 and, with Neil Kinnock doing well in the polls, this cowboy company wanted to start talking to the unions! But Rupert Murdoch took care of things with that infamous front page headline, next to Neil’s head inside a lightbulb, ‘If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights’. John Major won and they immediately set about us. First union payroll deductions were stopped. Sound familiar? Then a consolidated pay offer was made which meant a 9% increase to a chequered flag thrash about minibus driver and a £50 a week cut for us proud old ‘On loan from the National Bus Company’ lot on the old
conditions. The ballot was 51% against but was implemented anyway. Then they derecognised both unions.

All this – the fragmentation, deregulation, asset stripping, and sharp practice – was to find the rising stars! Funny how they all got rail franchises! I left the bus industry and ran my own business for a while but remained branch secretary to keep the branch ticking over. We lost a lot of members but, after seven years, the branch recovered. Here’s how, here’s the irony. It started two years later at a Bilderberg meeting when a rising star was discovered to take part in their New World Order. It’s no surprise that a frequent fellow Bilderberg delegate, and media magnate, supported him when he swept Labour to victory in 1997! I don’t think they’d ever invite Jeremy Corbyn to a Bilderberg meeting. All of a sudden, Thames Transit, which is now Stagecoach Oxford, no surprise there, wanted to recognise a union again. This was because, in the efforts to get rid of the old hands, like they did with SWT, they ended up without enough drivers to run the services! Problem is that if you ever prune the tree you might just cut through the branch you are sitting on and fall on your arse!

YOU NEED TO TALK TO A UNION

So you have to put up wages and improve conditions and to do this you need to talk to a union. There was also competition for workers from BMW’s new Mini factory at Cowley. Many of my displaced colleagues went there. By this time I was back driving buses for the competition, the Oxford Bus Company, which is also TGWU. I had licence to recruit new members and am proud of what we achieved. All the Oxford bus drivers are, to this day, in the same union, which is now Unite. The former RMT branch secretary who had threatened me with the Bridlington agreement, and tried to recruit my members, jumped ship from the RMT to my TGWU branch; we shook hands and he replaced me as branch secretary! By now they were all big bus drivers, mini buses with chequered flags being as much use for carrying capacity as Southern’s new timetable! Job done, I transferred to the Oxford Bus Company branch.

With a Labour government – albeit a Tony Blair New Labour government – in power wages and conditions were quite good considering the attacks under the Tories. When we asked for a 6% pay increase – hoping for 4% – they gave us 9%!

We also got in motion that every year we reduce our weekly hours by one without detriment to pay to achieve a 39 hour week (from 44). Similar things were happening on the railway and another drain on the bus business was the number of bus drivers passing the train driver assessment and moving to the railway. I was one of them and there are two other ex-Oxford bus drivers at Banbury depot – Leon Brown and Dave ‘Marvellous’ Mollington.

So this pantomime has three acts with three governments – Tory, Labour, Tory. The final act will be by far the worst for us, for all trade unionists and all workers. These young new broom managers hop about in their suits like a bunch of overkeen estate agents, trying to get mother bird’s attention so they get the big worm! ‘Me! Me! Me!’ This is evident in middle management in most corporate life, not exclusively the railway. Not all are bad and I feel sorry for those who aren’t because they’re put under pressure to гріt whatever грі the mill requires to meet their targets. Many decent, older, experienced and personable managers could claim unfair dismissal. ‘Just get rid of em’ because the management consultant says so! It’s called ‘cultural change’.

NO MORE STATION MASTERS

Just as those minibus drivers were recruited to undermine the conditions and skills of the old hands, they do the same on the railway. Agency dispatchers, no more station masters, customer service inspectors instead of qualified guards, drivers taught to drive by numbers, not by learning the skill, frightened to death of using the brake in full service! It’s like being taught to fly without learning how to get out of a stall and a spin! By the way, it was a management consultant who taught me how to do that. Nice honest guy, on the airfield, he said, ‘A management consultant will borrow your watch to tell you the time!’ Sounds about right. You can see what’s going on with outside agencies, doing the recruiting, looking for people with a different mindset to us. It’s a real shame because old hand train drivers are some of the proudest and most skilled men and women I know. Sadly, because we are proud of what we do, and proud to be in ASLEF, we are worthless to the new order.

I felt so privileged to be a delegate to last year’s AAD in Aviemore. Unlike the new world order, our pyramid works from the bottom up, as we, the members, make the union policy and not who has the ever seeing eye on the dollar bill at the top of the other pyramid. Yes, we have our grumbles, but ASLEF is the most democratic trade union I have ever been in.

That is why they are coming for us. That is why Harry Hill’s evil twin, Peter Wilkinson at the DFT, calls us ‘muppets’ and says he is going to break us. We are not puppets, but they would like us to be.

So dumb down the job, lessen our route and traction knowledge, bring in ATO, put cameras facing into the cab, set the BTP on us using the ancient Offences Against the Person Act 1861 when all other investigations prove us blameless and it will be easier to break us. This is why laws will come in to enable our union to be sued if any action we take affects our employer’s profits. Health and safety practices will be savagely cut, too.

HELLO OXFORD

We need to pull together and welcome new drivers to the fold and make sure no matter what traction or routes they sign they get the exact same pay and conditions as the rest of us. That’s what we didn’t do with the minibus drivers, because we were so ‘superior’, and we got a kicking for it. They ended up like us in the end. When I did my first run in a Bristol VR all the way from Oxford to Bedford, fresh faced and only 23, I went up to the canteen at Bedford bus station and a big guy with a big voice piped up ‘Hello Oxford’ and a chair was pulled out for me at a table where a bunch of guys were sat. They didn’t look like bus drivers – most of them were ex-Bedford depot train drivers – so we sat and talked trains.

The big guy was over the moon as he had just been to the model shop next door and got a Lima model of the Western he once drove. ‘I shall dirty her up and make her just like the real thing,’ he said. I was just a sprog then but was made to feel welcome.

We are not so different. Train drivers follow a link, busmen follow a duty roster, a term which goes back to the involvement of ex-Army officers in the new bus companies after the Great War, but it’s the same thing. We all run to timetables, get up at stupid o’clock in the morning, work weekends and bank holidays and are managed in similar ways. So no surprise when the bus oligarchs now running the rail companies use tried and tested means to give train drivers – and guards – a kicking!

I had a chat with Mick Whelan during time out at AAD about my experiences and he said Unite has kept him well-informed about what will come for us. Speakers from sister transport unions in Australia and New Zealand gave us the same message.

I watched an old Casey Jones episode on YouTube the other day. Nothing like the real thing – or is it? Casey got accused of speeding and setting light to farmsteads with the hot cinders he was supposed to have been blasting out of his stack when he was highballing along. So they put a Dutch Clock in his cab to see how fast he was going! So you see, not even the union scab is safe! Scab, perhaps, but he died saving his passengers’ lives. Watch ya caboose, y’all, they’re coming for us and they won’t be blowing five chimes before they hit us!
Upcoming events

- **DERBY – FRIDAY 9 JUNE**
  Derby branch celebrates 125 years from 15.00 at Nunsfield House, 33 Boulton Lane, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0FD. Former Derby four shed crews/staff all welcome. Contact Eamonn Tague on 07500 099190 or eamonn.tague@sky.com

- **OLD OAK COMMON – TUESDAY 13 JUNE**
  Annual reunion from 12.00 to 16.00 at the Acton Garden Village Club, Alwyn Gardens, Acton, London, W3 0JH.

- **LEICESTER – SATURDAY 17 JUNE**
  Annual reunion from 12.00 at the Barley Mow, Granby Street, Leicester, LE1 6FE. All retired and active members welcome. Details from Si Goode on 07841 354041.

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

Pint or few

Faces gathered to catch up, reminisce, and have a good ol’ chin wag at the annual Stratford reunion on 1 April at the Railway Tavern. Looking around, it was difficult to imagine how many years’ seniority there was in the room! Expertly organised by Chris Daughters, there was a raffle with a vast array of prizes, and a superb buffet laid on for all to enjoy whilst having a pint or a few. Thanks to Stratford branch for subsidising the buffet, to the staff at the tavern for making us welcome, and to AGS Simon Weller for his contribution and for presenting membership badges and medallions to members.

At the Stratford branch meeting on 24 April we had the pleasure of welcoming DOS Nigel Gibson and ECS Howard Kaye who both kindly gave up their evening to report on issues both local and national. Nigel and Howard also made presentations to members earning their badges, with the rest being distributed via post or at the respective depots.

Black magic

This year’s TUC Black Workers’ Conference, at Congress House from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 April, had the theme of ‘Mobilising black workers and communities’. There were 28 unions registered, 218 delegates, 53 visitors and two media. The ASLEF delegation consisted of five members – Paul Patmore (D2); Surjeet Puee (D4); Khalid Nasim Rana (D5); Trevor Robinson (D8), secretary of ASLEF’s Black and Ethnic Minority Representatives’ Committee; and Floyd Doyle (DS), BEMRC chair – plus head office celebrities Simon Weller, AGS, and Lee James, our equalities adviser.

Floyd, a member of our BEMRC since it was set up 17 years ago, was invited to chair the conference. ‘A big honour,’ said Simon. ‘He’s the first ASLEF member to chair a TUC conference since Ray Buckton, GS from 1970 to 1987, back in the 1980s.’

There were 20 motions submitted, including: tackling underemployment among BAME workers; Brexit and the rise in hate crime; challenging racism and hatred; inclusive casting in the entertainment industry; the visible impact of racism in education; bullying and harassment in the NHS; black mental health; rainbow racism; and prostate cancer awareness, the ASLEF motion, moved by Trevor and seconded by Prospect. It was interesting to note that the other five speakers on our motion were women. Trevor also spoke on challenging racism and hatred and Khalid spoke in favour of three motions, on Brexit and the rise in hate crime, underemployment among BAME workers, and bullying and harassment in the NHS. When he wasn’t trying to get pictures with the chair!

Guest speakers included Frances O’Grady, general secretary of the TUC, who did a great job considering the RMT tried to disrupt her by staging a walk out past her with their flags; Mary Bousted, GS of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers; Mala Bouatta, the first female black British Muslim president of the National Union of Students; Sandra Kerr of Business in the Community; Chris Booth, clinical director of CHAPS, and Faiza Shaheen, director of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies. Alex Pascall paid an emotional tribute to the late, great, Darius Howe, and Marilyn Reed spoke movingly about her daughter Sarah, a young black mother who died tragically in Holloway prison.

There were four workshops – on hate crime, housing, health, and young workers – and Trevor, Surjeet, Paul and Khalid took one each. There was also an art exhibition on roots, culture and identity by 10 young artists and photographers. Floyd Doyle, BEMRC chair

WHY IT’S TIME TO TAKE THE TEST

Thanks to ASLEF, conference was treated to a first in the form of free PSA blood tests for all men over 40. Knowing you have a high PSA blood level could save your life – a high level of Prostate Specific Antigen indicates you might have, or are getting, prostate cancer.

The PSA tests were provided by two charities, Tackle Prostate Cancer and CHAPS: The Men’s Health Charity. Chris Booth, a urology surgeon, spoke about the prostate and explained how men of African and Caribbean descent have a 1:4 chance of getting prostate cancer compared to 1:8 for all men. With those figures, and the fact that prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in the UK, mobilising conference delegates to get a PSA test neatly tied in with this year’s theme of mobilising black workers and communities – 42 men were tested over the weekend, of which two were abnormal, and require careful follow-up.

It only takes a few minutes to have a PSA test – but it could stop you from dying years early. All men aged 50 and above are entitled to a free annual PSA test but, due to ignorance on the part of some doctors, many have been denied them. A PSA test is the best tool available to find prostate cancer early, so it’s worth insisting. To find out more visit www.tackleprostate.org and www.chaps.uk.com and www.psatests.org.uk

John Thorpe, branch reporter

ECs Howard Kaye, Jason Thorpe, G Underwood, John Thorpe and Nigel Gibson (top) and R Oliver, J Colpus, R Haley and Simon Weller (above)

Recipients: J Ellerbeck, P McCarthy, Jason Thorpe (5 years); C Barwell (15); R Taylor, John Thorpe (20); B Appleby, J Colpus, D Smith (25); R Hayley, G Underwood (40); M Masters (45); J Batt, R Mosby, R Oliver (50).
ASLEF leads, others follow

MARK McMULLEN of the LUL trains health & safety council reports on our h&s rep conference

ONDON Underground health & safety council representatives held another dedicated training and awareness day for local h&s reps on Friday 31 March.

Mark McMullen and Julian Vaughan packed the agenda with subjects that are very important in today’s workplace, and not just specific to trains. The event aimed to give reps the information and tools to carry out their roles more effectively and answer the many questions they receive from members.

Paul Cooper, one of LU’s senior health, safety & environment managers, kicked off proceedings by informing us of the role the HSE team play at LU and how the local machinery plays a big part. He spoke about the importance of training and updating procedures and keeping players updated with open contact, such as an email, direct to him, or one of his team. There were various questions asked, especially given the reduced purse strings recently handed to LU, and safety seems to have taken a back seat at times. A big thank you to Paul for giving up his time to attend; he handled the rigorous Q&A session very well!

Keith Atkinson, our well-respected Office of Rail and Road officer, gave us an update on recent incidents, such as the Chorleywood landslide and how this led to the ORR insisting LU changed the way it acts after a reported infrastructure breach. Keith, as always, was very informative and stayed for a Q&A.

Health & safety reps are not just concerned about safety, crucial though that is, but about health, too, the first part of our job description. So we were very glad that Ray Roberts, LU’s head of mental health, came along and gave a presentation. This is an extremely important subject, and a steep learning curve for us all, helping raise awareness in the workplace and reduce the stigma still attached to mental health issues. The session was extremely enlightening, and a number of our colleague reps came forward to become champions for mental health.

Unfortunately our guest from the British Transport Police was called to Transport for London at the last minute, so we had a tier 1 committee Q&A and LU machinery discussion, with reps raising various matters with company-wide implications. This allowed reps to raise matters face to face with the THSC.

Stuart Johnson, a senior inspector at the Rail Accident Investigation Branch, explained how they conduct investigations, and follow up the many recommendations they give to rail companies, and emphasised that they are an independent body. Stuart also explained how h&s reps can assist the RAIB carry out investigations; many found very informative as you don’t often get the chance to chat informally to an RAIB inspector.

Finally, to top off the day, we had assistant general secretary Simon Weller to talk about problems in our industry, not just on passenger trains but also in freight as well. He spoke about the difficulties we are likely to see going forward with all rail companies tightening finances and cutting back. It was a welcome presentation from such a senior figure in ASLEF and a very informative session, which we all appreciated. It’s not often seminars like this are held with so many important figures from our industry.

We are proud of the motto ‘ASLEF lead, others follow and that is how we THSC reps on LU work and organising training seminars such as this goes a long way to justify that motto.

We would like to thank all those reps who attended, the guests who gave presentations, and District 8 Organiser Finn Brennan for supporting the event and arranging release for reps to attend.

He spoke about mental health issues. The session was extremely enlightening, and a number of our colleague reps came forward to become champions for mental health.

Mick Holder turns back time to June 1917

Medical examinations, excessive hours and problems getting a meal were in the Journal 100 years ago

INDISCRIMINATE EXAMINATIONS

The report, of the Annual Delegate Conference in 1917, raised an issue not far from the concerns of members at our Annual Assembly of Delegates in Bristol 100 years later. ‘That this conference indignantly protests against the action of certain railway companies in sending their locomotive men for medical examination indiscriminately, in spite of assurances given by the Army Council to the general secretary “that skilled men would not be called upon to submit to medical examination unless such skilled men were required and were to be released by the railway companies for the Army”. We call upon all locomotive men to refuse to submit to such medical examinations except under the aforesaid arrangement.’

UNPROVIDED WITH FOOD

‘This conference, realising the difficulty to our members in obtaining food when away from home, especially during the operating of the present Early Closing of Shops Act, and that in spite of applications being made to the proper authorities to bring about an alteration for the benefit of the men who, in addition to their ordinary train running, are responsible for working troops, ammunition and military service trains; further, that men unprovided with food when working this traffic, owing to the absence of relief, are often kept on excessive hours, do hereby decide that application be again made by the executive committee to the proper authorities to bring about an alteration whereby provisions can be obtained for the locomotive men, working under the aforesaid circumstances, and that they also make application to the Railway Executive to introduce a system of relief whereby men can return to their own homes each day. Failing success, we pledge to support all men who resist such improper treatment by refusing to work long hours or to book off away from home.’

CALLS ON BENEVOLENT FUND

The 133rd Durham Miners’ Gala will be held on Saturday 8 July 2017.
TERRY WINTERS
TRACTION GOD
Sad to announce the death, at 75, of Terence Alfred Winters (1942-2017). He started at 5A Crewe North MPD in 1957 when the shed had 119 steam engines to clean, including six Patriots, 17 Jubilees, 23 Royal Scots, six Princess Royals, 10 Coronations and, of course, the Duke. Not bad for a small town in Cheshire! Terry was coming off the shed as a passed cleaner as we were still sitting on the railings at the north end taking numbers. He transferred to 9A Longsight where diesel and electric traction were added to his CV. He always said that Longsight cured him of all the good habits he had picked up at Crewe…

I first met him in 1990 when doing my rules at Crewe. Arthur Pepper (Stoke legend) let me out to see the North Wales coast express leave, and I got to know all the steam link. In 1996 I joined him at rail freight distribution and we became friends because we both had a love of steam. When the Venice Simplon Orient Express operation launched the Northern Belle, Terry joined them as the designated driver of 6229 Duchess of Hamilton topping and tailing with 50017. This never happened, and the VSSE link came under the control of EWS, but Terry had added Deltic 55019 to his traction-trained list.

I joined him in the VSSE link in 2003 and we had three years working together. His route card was amazing, all six ways out of Crewe – Bath, London, Derby, Manchester, Holyhead, and Scotland. I was honoured to spend four days training Class 67s with him, his last new traction. Within minutes of leaving Crewe with 5260, PO vans for Kingmoor, he had 67007 up to 110mph. I kept thinking, slow down, I’ve just come off 60mph MPVs. Route learning with Terry was unique. ‘I never go in the cab,’ he said. ‘I travel in the train, have a look around, and get a feel of the road.’

He was 65 on 11 March 2007 but managed to work the Belle on 16 March because of a shortage of Class 1 men. For this, he received an extra week’s pay – typical Terry! This last day fell just 43 days short of 50 years’ service. Having strong ASLEF views, he didn’t make the expected move to Carnforth WCR. I would see him on Nantwich Road with a carrier bag heading for the Manchester train. When I asked him if he was going shopping, he would answer, ‘No, Spain.’ Some said he had a villa over there, others a senorita.

The photo shows what I believe was Terry’s last do on a steamer. Sent on a conducting job to turn a loco at Earlestown in 2006, his old mates let him loose on the regulator on the return out of Lime Street. Rumour has it he had 6201 on the second nut by Mossley Hill. It took more than a Lizette to frighten Terry – he was a traction God! Mel Thorley, Longsight

BERT TONDO
STEAM, DIESEL AND ELECTRIC
Bert Tondo started as a cleaner on LMS at Nine Elms. After three years he transferred to Tonbridge where he progressed to passed fireman. In 1962 he moved to St Leonard’s West Marina and, when that closed, he went to Hastings. Bert drove steam, diesel, and electric locos, and multiple units; he was a minder driver as well and ran improvement classes in his own time. He was a strong ASLEF supporter and active branch member up until 1994 when he retired at 64. Bert enjoyed 22 years retirement but sadly passed away on 10 January.

Tony Tondo and Ricky McCaurn, Hastings

GARY CHANNING
ASLEF STALWART
Feltham Electric lost Brother Gary Channing on 4 April. He was, like three generations before him, an ASLEF stalwart, a proud and active member of the branch, a comrade in many fights, a friend to me and many who needed one. Gary started on the railway in 1981 as a guard at Strawberry Hill, becoming a driver in 1988. He was elected health & safety rep as a guard, a role he kept until he was voted onto the LDC in 2014. He was forthright, not suffering fools, and challenged those who felt they had the right to discriminate or intimidate, something that won him many friends in the driving grade, and respect from the managers he met. He recently took on the role of secretary of the LDC at Strawberry Hill, something of which he was immensely proud.

Gary was diagnosed with a brain tumour and fought the cancer head on – as usual – but this was one fight he lost. He was 57. I’ve known Gary for 26 years, sharing some massive moments in our lives, like many of you; I will always remember a friend I called my Brother. Our thoughts are with his wife and mum, and family and friends. Nothing made him smile more than spending time with his grandchildren; a cheeky smile from one of them made his day! Gary was proud of his family’s service on the railway, and his tireless service to train drivers, the branch and ASLEF will be greatly missed.

Gary Weller, Feltham Electric

BILL METCALFE
SORELY MISSED
I am very sorry to report the demise of one of our retired colleagues, Bill Metcalfe, who was 79. Bill came to Bedford after the demise of Cricklewood depot where he was a driver for many years. His railway career started in far different climes, Hellifield. His father had been a ganger and a signalman at Ais Gill so the Settle and Carlisle was where Bill cut his teeth as a fireman. On passing out as a driver the inspector told Bill he didn’t want to see him for a very long time but, on his first driving turn, Bill succeeded in derailing his loco whilst on snowplough duty. The very same inspector was not amused! When Hellifield closed he moved to London where he met and married Rose, moving to Rushden where they remained bringing up their son and daughter.

Bill had a turbulent career as a driver having the extreme misfortune to be involved in a large number of fatalities, far more than most, and finally had the terrible experience of coming off the road at 70mph near Cricklewood. Following this last incident he became a shed driver at Bedford, helping as many as possible to get away a little early and always working without complaint. I suspect Bill was a cleaner on LMS at Nine Elms. After three years he transferred to Tonbridge where he progressed to passed fireman. In 1962 he moved to St Leonard’s West Marina and, when that closed, he went to Hastings. Bert drove steam, diesel, and electric locos, and multiple units; he was a minder driver as well and ran improvement classes in his own time. He was a strong ASLEF supporter and active branch member up until 1994 when he retired at 64. Bert enjoyed 22 years retirement but sadly passed away on 10 January.

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Gary Weller, Feltham Electric

Bill: The last survivor from Hellifield depot?

must have been the last survivor from Hellifield.
He will be sorely missed by his family and friends, both at work and in Rushden. Our deepest sympathies to Rose and his family.

Bill Davies, RMS, Bedford
Best bacon roll on the rails

I try to go to all the King’s Cross Retired Members’ Section dos and overhear Mick Whelan talking about railway history, one of my favourite subjects.

When in control link at 1A I always worked up to Willesden, never back, always home passenger. That’s where I came across Bill Bassett, outside shed foreman at Willesden shed, who became a driver team manager at Bletchley and overall control at WAGN. He was originally a passed fireman at Camden, never made driver, and I used to wind him up about this, especially when he tried to wind me up about my name. He was high up (an angel) in a national secret society. I still remember Willesden main line station, and the wee café, on the bank, on the road down to the TMD. Best bacon rolls on the railway!

Another I remember from 1A was Bill Andrews, a fitter, who lived at Stoke Hammond, and went on the council, where he made a name by building houses for young married couples, many of them railwaymen; he had a street named after him.

As for Old Bill, the time clerk on the loco, Bill Bassett was always outside, telling us what train to go home on. Old Bill just stamped our tickets ‘Home Pass’ on the ticket, enough said. Then there was John Player on the footplate, the exact double of the sailor on the packet of John Player fags.

Bill Arnott, a Cork man, Reg Edwards and I all stood for Labour in Bletchley in the 1980s. Bill made mayor, and Reg would do anything to help his people on the Lakes estate, and made a name by building houses for young married couples, many of them railwaymen; he had a street named after him.

Hughie Connolly. Glasgow

By Great Central Railway
I sat down and read

I am writing to the ASLEF Journal to try to contact any long retired branch officials along the route of the former Great Central Railway. The reason is in connection with some personal research I am undertaking into the closure of the line in the mid-1960s which seeks to establish some facts. The archives of the union do not incorporate such detail and the British Railways Board and TUC lines of inquiry have been unsuccessful.

I realise this is a very long shot, but I wonder whether any former member who was involved in the process of closure of the former Great Central Railway route from Marylebone to Manchester via the Met/GW route – Woodford Halse, Rugby, Leicester, Nottingham, Annesley and Sheffield – has still got any of the official papers issued at the time, particularly those justifying the reasons for the proposed closure.

Also, any papers regarding the terms of redundancy. The reason for the interest is some personal research I am undertaking and I wouldn’t mind seeing any papers. If anyone can assist please drop me a line. All reasonable costs will be reimbursed.

John Palmer. 57 Ford Lane, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2EY

A QUESTION FOR CHRIS GRAYLING AND SOUTHERN

I am reading the book A Dangerous Place: The Story of the Railway Murders by Simon Farquhar and I think that it is highly relevant to your staffing campaigns. The killer pair systematically scoured the London rail system, and a bit beyond, into Surrey, looking for suitable locations around unmanned stations to trap their victims, rape and murder them.

On one occasion, it appears that coming back from Surrey to London, a woman was so disturbed by the way that one of the murderers was looking at her that she was forced to get out of the train and, as I recall, move carriages or wait for another train.

My argument to Chris Grayling and the management of Southern Railways would be as follows. ‘Would you be happy if your wife, mother or daughter were to be travelling alone on a single-operator train and getting off at night on an unmanned station?’ I hope that this might be useful.

Frederick Toates. Professor of Biological Psychology, The Open University, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Fred Toates (left) argues that the railway murders committed at unmanned stations by John Duffy and David Mulcahy in the 1980s should make Chris Grayling and Southern Rail think again

I suppose it takes all sorts

I must first thank Arno Brooks (Journal, May) for pointing out that there are now three men in the cab of a steam engine. I can only assume this is because there is no proper fireman to call on. I suppose there are only secondmen. Not the ideal training for firing to a main line express. I learnt my craft, spending 14 years with a shovel in my hand. Our secondmen swept the floor, cleaned the driver’s window, and made a can of tea. Then spent the rest of his shift watching the driver, learning the art of train driving. Hardly firemen material. I wasn’t bashing West Coast, I was merely pointing out that it seemed a strange way to spend your retirement, encouraging an outfit like them.

But then it takes all sorts. But, regardless of our differences, I wish you all well.

Ron Kettle. Southend Vic retired

Fight to the bitter end

We have got a terrific rail network. I am 65 and draw my pension but, for all my working life, I travelled by train. For 10 years I travelled four days per week between Birmingham New Street and Euston, then between Plymouth and Worcester, and then between Totnes and Exeter.

You must never ever give in to Southern Rail. They will start with driver only trains followed by driverless trains which already exist in London. They don’t care about people, only profits for wealthy shareholders and bosses’ bonuses. Business owners don’t care about people and want robots, so what happens when all the staff are robots and trains run themselves? They have done that to banks and car making. In fact, in every type of business, machines are doing what people once did. So where do we end up as a society if no one is working?

Southern Rail – aided and abetted by the Department for Transport – seem to think, oh great, let’s destroy our wonderful railway system – which is its people. If there were going to be no job losses why are they...
Different view up here

I was fortunate enough to be invited to chair this year’s TUC Black Workers’ Conference at Congress House from 7 to 9 April, which had the theme of ‘Mobilising black workers and communities’ (see report on page 16). The conference was, as usual, very informative and so much different from the perspective of being the chair! As a delegation, ASLEF networked with other unions and visited all the exhibition tables.

Time now to plan for next year’s motion ideas…

Floyd Doyle, chair, ASLEF’s Black and Ethnic Minority Representatives’ Committee

What a waste of money!

When the Tories privatised the railway the reason they gave was that the railways would be better run under private management. I remember, when I was employed in 1994 as a train driver by the West Anglia Great Northern Railway, the first private company to take over after the end of British Rail, they asked for 50 drivers to take voluntary redundancy to prove to the Conservative government of John Major that they could run the railway with fewer drivers but the same number of trains.

They got what they wanted. Many drivers took the money under the voluntary redundancy terms. Then, faced with a train driver shortage, the company was forced to ask the existing staff to help out with rest day working and overtime. Then they had to recruit back the same number of drivers as before.

What a waste of taxpayers’ – and fare paying passengers’ – money! All in the name of private railway management.

P Begley, Bedford

You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone

Matthew Pakes – an ASLEF member – passes the ASLEF Journal on to me. I do not work on the railways, but support the fight to keep guards on trains and other actions.

The magazine is well informed, funny, witty and covers stories beyond those directly affecting your union. I also like the way your letters page is quite open for people to have their say. That, to me, is crucial.

What a contrast for me as that tends to be stifled within my union and also in our union magazine. I am in a general union and our magazine tends to be dry, sterile, and deals with a lot of adulation for our general secretary. In fact, so much praise, I often wonder if he walks on water!

So, to your membership, I wish you well and enjoy your magazine and in line with various musical headlines enjoy and support because you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.

Chaz Stoll, Halesowen

pushing this?

Fight them to the bitter end and people like me, passengers, will write to them and tell them to stop what they are doing and to MPs telling them to get involved and stop Southern Rail.

Mark Elliot Smith, Totnes, Devon

It’s time to get involved

Is it me or does our trade union seem reluctant to take up the fight against DOO with Northern? Every mess room you go in across the Northern network the talk is the same, ‘When are we going to be balloted?” Our leaders say it’s not our fight, but we all know it is our fight and we should be involved. In every depot you go in there are official letters on mess room walls from the company stating their intentions about DOO. If that’s not our fight, I don’t know what is.

Seems to me our union is doing its best not to get involved. If there is a legitimate reason for not approaching the company over our concerns and their intentions then we need to be told. But ask an LDC rep why and they can’t answer the question. Communication, yet again, is very poor.

We are not Southern. We don’t already have driver only trains and we don’t want them. We need to stop leaving this battle to the guards to fight alone.

Steve Hall, Wigan

Mick Whelan says: ‘There has been no formal contact with the company in relation to DOO. We will deal with it, through the machinery, if, as, and when, it arises. I am looking forward to coming to Wigan branch on Sunday 25 June – to listen as well as to speak – and look forward to hearing what you have to say.’

CLASS 15 locomotive (D8233) enamel badge on sale for restoration of the sole surviving Class 15 loco by the Class 15 Preservation Society. £5 + £1 p&p. Please send cheques payable to Network South East Railway Society to NSERS, 41 Highfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6DD.

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You say you want a revolution

A fascinating new exhibition at the British Library offers a powerful picture of Russia and the war-torn world of 1917. CHRIS PROCTOR explores the hopes, tragedies and myths of the year the Bolsheviks shook the world...

NE OF the first exhibits as you enter this rich display is a thin green booklet sitting unobtrusively in a glass-covered case. Apparently harmless, it has proved more explosive than any Molotov cocktail: for this is a first printing of the Communist Manifesto, a tract whose ideas of class-based revolution would divide the world.

A treasure trove of posters, film, banners, pamphlets, photographs, music, uniforms, banknotes, and memoirs brings to life the state of Russia from the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II in 1896 to the death of Lenin in 1924.

'We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand.' – Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

The autocratic rule of the last Romanov emperor began ominously enough: 1,389 people were crushed to death at the celebrations, and as many again were injured, although this is not mentioned in the lavish coronation album on display. When it became apparent, even to the tsar, that reform was needed, it was too late: revolution was in the air, fermented by stubborn Nicholas and his empress. Tsarina Alexandra echoed Marie Antoinette with her complaints that 'young people run and shout that there is no bread' and her relationship with the enigmatic Rasputin, who is mercilessly caricatured, stoked the anger.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin made his way from Zurich as the revolution began; by train, of course. Germany permitted his crossing its frontiers in a locked carriage because its rulers felt he would help to weaken Russia, and so help the Berlin war effort. Once there, Lenin refused him asylum, fearing 'serious consequences' from the extreme left in this country which could 'stir up public opinion against us'. Self-preservation, for the British royals, proved thicker than blood ties.

But the revolution attracted its supporters. The novelist HG Wells was one, for a time, travelling to meet Lenin in 1920 and coming away calling him 'The Dreamer in the Kremlin'. There is a banner presented to the Young Communist League of Shipley, in Yorkshire, promising 'Determine to win – and we will help you' as well as an account of the short-lived Limerick Soviet in 1919.

There is a magnificent display of propaganda from both Red and White armies at the exhibition, that not only explains differences but also shows the extent and diversity of Imperial Russia: one poster, seeking Caucasian Muslim support for the Whites, is written in four languages. Then there is an image of the anarchic Nestor Makhno's guerrilla army that, at various times, fought the Whites, the Reds and the Ukrainian armies!

Just when the scope of the exhibition threatens to become overwhelming, there are homely gems to be found, like the 1902 application form of one Jacob Richter to become a reader at the British Library. It was one of the pseudonyms used by Lenin, in exile in London, and anxious to avoid Tsarist agents. Another letter to the library on show is from Scotland Yard, requesting the removal of Bolshevik literature, lest it help ferment discontent. And then there is the diary of Meriel Buchanan, daughter of the British Ambassador to Imperial Russia, who had a front seat for these world-shattering events.

'It is my will. Remember, we live in Russia. Therefore I shall not consider the possibility of resigning.' – Tsar Nicholas II

A copy of diplomatic correspondence explains that King George V liked his cousin, but refused him asylum, fearing 'serious consequences' from the extreme left in this country which could 'stir up public opinion against us'. Self-preservation, for the British royals, proved thicker than blood ties.

All manner of uncelebrated people brush shoulders with the vast names of Lenin, Trotsky and Rasputin; which makes the exhibition accessible. Women like Alexandra Kollontai, the first woman in Lenin's cabinet, who later became Soviet Ambassador to Norway; and Maggie Jordan, the millworker who led Shipley's young communists to Petrograd.

For good or evil, the Russian revolution was an enormously important historical event, bursting with enthusiasm, violence, antagonism, idealism and tragedy. This exhibition brings it alive in a treat for the eyes and the mind.

Red Army and White Army recruiting posters; Red Army hat; Tsar Nicholas II with his cousin King George V; and first editions of Dr Zhitvago and the Communist Manifesto

Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myths is at the British Library in London until 29 August. Admission 13.50; over 60s E11; students E8; unemployed E5; children 5-17 E6.50.
On Track

Prize Crossword

TO THOSE WHO HAVE MORE WILL BE GIVEN

A

T THE beginning of the 20th century,’ wrote Giles Fraser recently in The Guardian, ‘our political lords and masters dressed like they’d just come off a grouse moor. By the end of the century, they looked like they worked in an international hedge fund. When the grouse moor lot were in power, the battle lines were clear. The class war had its recognisable uniforms, from tweeds to cloth caps. But this was made irrelevant by the forward march of modern capitalism, with power leaking to those who were able to manipulate the workings of the market, leaving a few harmless toffs deadheading their roses.’

Giles, who shot to prominence during the Occupy protest outside St Paul’s cathedral in 2011, knows what he is talking about. He has worked in some of London’s poorest – as well as richest – boroughs. He was happy for people to ‘exercise their right to protest peacefully’ outside St Paul’s, resigned as canon chancellor after the dean and chapter forcibly removed the protesters, and is now parish priest at St Mary’s, Newington, near Elephant and Castle, writes a weekly column for The Guardian, and is a panellist on The Moral Maze on Radio 4. Power, he argues, has been reconcentrated in the hands of the few. They may have different accents, and different values, but they don’t want to share power, money, or influence, or anything else, with anyone else.

‘Jeremy Corbyn is the only political leader since Michael Foot to understand how the power of money comes to be concentrated in the hands of a few. To those who have, more will be given. To those who have little, even what they have will be taken away. This is the logic of modern capitalism. Corbyn is right to call it out. There really is such a thing as being too rich. Ordinary people know it and Corbyn gets it. We have a moral problem in this country with greed, which is bad for the poor and, yes, bad for the rich, too. It rots people from the inside out – look at Philip Green and Mike Ashley. The problem with neoliberal capitalism, of both the Thatcher and New Labour varieties, is that it surrendered morality to the invisible hand of the market. Perhaps, just perhaps, the dismantling of the neoliberal legacy has finally begun.’

Solution to Crossword 133

Across:
1 Second 7 Noose 8 Crescent 9 Range
10 Sash 12 Each 13 Wall 14 Baby 15 Bias
17 Gale 19 Three 20 Fortress 21 Niece
22 Whelks

Down:
1 Socks 2 Cheeseburger 3 Drench 4 Entry 5 Sound as a bell 6 Cereal
11 Hay 13 Wag 14 Botany 15 Burrow 16 Defer
18 Eases

Congratulations to Steve Hugett, of Ludchurch, Pembrokeshire, 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’s crosswords, word games and puzzles at wordgames.co.uk

Thanks for all your responses to the 133rd prize crossword in the May 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 June

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 interviewed 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.

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