Flower of Scotland

Inside: A special 4 page report on the state of the railway – passenger and freight – in Scotland
railway enginemen’s tax free saver plans

tax free savings plans for
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On Track, Prize Crossword, ASLEF’s Last Word: Chris Proctor follows in the
Jim Lafferty on the Scottish Labour Party
Hugh Bradley on freight on rail in Scotland
Driverless trains is ‘madness’ says Sadiq Khan
GS Mick Whelan a media magnet in March
Steven Nimmo reviews
Hey ho, let’s go – ASLEF’s new political tee
Kevin Lindsay and Hugh Bradley open our
Branch News
Steven Nimmo reviews Detroit ’67, a book that lifts the lid on music, politics and ethnic tensions in motor city, USA; and 100 Years of Union
Obituaries
Letters and Classified Advertisements
Last Word: Chris Proctor follows in the sunny footsteps of Ernest Hemingway
On Track, Prize Crossword, ASLEF’s Legal Services and Change of Address

GS Mick Whelan

‘Rail fragmentation is getting ever more surreal’
ARKET madness caused by the fragmentation of our industry is getting more and more surreal. We have at least two operators in the south-east replacing new rolling stock with new rolling stock because it’s cheaper! Traction and coaches were criminally undervalued at privatisation creating a cartel where the ROSCOs have the industry – and the government – over a barrel.

New trains were introduced with a fanfare on one TOC only to go to another because of franchise delay – putting passengers back on the crap they had before! The cost of borrowing is so low new trains are being replaced by new trains even though they have a 30 year shelf life. This should be good news but, in those areas where these trains are required, we hear no plans for their introduction. Will they stand idle?

New figures on investment highlight the massive disparity between the south-east and the rest of the UK. Mr Grayling’s recent speech on the Northern Powerhouse was big on numbers but light on detail leading commentators to believe this is not new money but part of existing projects.

Crowded services in Scotland are being hit by a lack of coaches due to the old contract ending and the new trains not being ready; one of the reasons is that the windscreen on the new 385s is not fit for purpose. You might think the driver’s ability to see out of the train properly would have been a prime consideration?

Carillion’s impact on the economy, including rail, continues; ARC has withdrawn from bidding for the Wales & Borders services. And the DfT seems to be blocking the necessary funds to make an independent Assembly-run railway a 21st century reality.

Despite the government – and Boris Johnson when London Mayor – slashing the cash to TfL, leaving a £1.5 billion shortfall, it is great to see Heathrow, which is very welcome.

The most significant figure for our industry is the 9% drop in season ticket sales – the economic basis of most franchises is season ticket revenue supported by step up and go leisure travel. Have high fares reached the point where the model is collapsing? Fewer people bidding, more direct awards, and keys being handed back – the clock is ticking on the time bomb that is privatisation...

Yours fraternally
Mick Whelan, general secretary

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April 2018 | The ASLEF Journal
If the kids are united

ICK WHELAN, as well as being general secretary of ASLEF, is chair of TULO, which co-ordinates the activities of the 13 trade unions that affiliate to the Labour Party, and sits on the party’s national executive committee.

After a controversial call for the disaffiliation of unions, Mick wrote a thoughtful article which was published on the centre pages of the Morning Star on 13 March spelling out the importance of the union link.

‘I’ve been a member of the Labour Party, and an active trade unionist, all my working life. For me, as for many people, they walk hand in hand. Why? Because the Labour Party was built by the collective voice of the trade unions – and the work on the streets of Britain by hundreds of thousands of trade union members – at the start of the 20th century.

‘To remove the collective voice of organised labour from the Labour Party would destroy its foundations. And for what purpose? Other than to shift the party – which, under Jeremy Corbyn, is on the brink of power – to perpetual opposition. The call to disengage the party from the unions will only sabotage all the good work that Jeremy has been doing since he was elected leader two and a half years ago, and undermine our efforts to rid this country of a Conservative government that is damaging working men and women every day.

‘Labour’s link with the union movement has been an historic – and successful – relationship for more than a century. Trade unions formed the party to give ordinary working people a voice in Parliament as well as the workplace and that link is as important now as it was then.’

Trade unions formed the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 at a meeting in Farrington, central London, just a few hundred yards from where the ASLEF head office stands today. The 29 LRC Members of Parliament returned to Westminster in 1906 elected Keir Hardie, MP for Merthyr Tydfil, as leader and adopted the name of the Labour Party.

What’s not to like?

Nazmeen Ishfaq (right), a trainee driver with MTR Crossrail, and a member of Paddington branch, was featured in an article in the working.mums.co.uk online magazine.

Under the headline ‘The rewards of being a train driver’, Nazmeen explains: ‘Salaries rise to well over £40k. There are good holidays and flexible work patterns for a better work/life balance than the average 9 to 5. What’s not to like? If all goes according to plan, I’ll be driving on the Elizabeth line from the end of this year.’

Heartily welcome Simon Weller

AGS Simon Weller, a guest of the All India Railwaymen’s Federation in New Delhi, posted this picture on Instagram, saying: ‘I really don’t know what to think of this but it’s very touching. It’s the picture from the TUC website!’ Simon is speaking about the deleterious effects of privatisation, against which the federation is campaigning.

RAIL’S KEY ROLE IN CONSTRUCTION

The latest quarterly ORR freight statistics show record expansion in construction traffic – up 5% – demonstrating the importance of moving freight by rail around the country.

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

It’s good to see the usual anti-Corbyn crew lining up to prove the old saw about the profession of patriotism being the last refuge of scoundrels.

Finn Brennan

RIP former @FT &@heraldscotland industrial correspondent Roy Rogers. The wittiest man I’ve ever met, Roy bore his name with great humour. Asked by a bumptious restaurant owner where Trigger was, he shot back: ‘I think I’ve just eaten him.’ Gone too soon.

Kevin Maguire

Very sad to hear about the death of Brenda Dean. A tough woman, leader of SOGAT, who took the fight to Rupert Murdoch at Wapping.

Frances O’Grady

PREMIUM FARES TO HEATHROW

Fares on the Elizabeth line will match Tube prices across most of London, but Heathrow passengers will be charged a premium. Travelling between the airport and zone 1 in central London will cost £12.10 at peak times – £7 more than the same journey on the Piccadilly line. Crossrail journeys everywhere else in zones 1-6 will cost the same as pay-as-you-go prices on the Tube.
**Wisdom born of pain**

**BIANCA RENNIE, WRC member for District 5, reports on a new ASLEF badge and an exhibition celebrating the Suffragettes**

A SLEF celebrated International Women’s Day on Thursday 8 March by commissioning a badge – sent to all female ASLEF members, branch equality reps, and officers, and which will also be given to delegates at AAD in Liverpool next month – to mark the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act which gave women over 30 the right to vote for the first time.

The Women’s Representatives Committee was lucky enough to be given a guided tour – by Katie Balcombe and Ellen Stuart – of a fascinating Suffragettes exhibition at the Museum of London. More than 1,300 women went to prison for their commitment to the cause of Votes for Women. But Suffragettes were not just militants. They were successful fundraisers, accomplished organisers, and inspirational speakers.

**HIGH HOPES**

ASLEF’s Black & Ethnic Minorities’ Representatives Committee is holding a fundraiser for Hope Not Hate to mark Black History Month at the Castle in Farringdon, near head office, from 6pm on Wednesday 10 October.

**CONFERENCES & RALLIES**

The 121st Scottish Trades Union Congress is at the Macdonald Highlands Hotel, Aviemore, from Monday 16 to Wednesday 18 April. The Welsh Labour Party conference is at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno from Friday 20 to Sunday 22 April. Workers’ Memorial Day is Saturday 28 April. ASLEF’s annual assembly of delegates is at the Marriott Hotel, Liverpool, from Monday 21 to Friday 25 May. The Durham Miners’ Gala is on Saturday 14 July. The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival, near Dorchester, is from Friday 20 to Sunday 22 July. The 150th Trades Union Congress is at the Manchester Central convention complex from Sunday 9 to Wednesday 12 September. The Labour Party conference is at the Arena & Convention Centre in Liverpool from Sunday 20 to Sunday 22 April.

**500 CLUB:** M Davison, with number 124, won the March draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £382.

**Off the rails**

**LISA STANSFIELD** has been on feisty form promoting her new album *Deeper.* She remembers her parents in Rochdale buying the *Daily Mirror,* but voting Tory, and seeing no discrepancy. ‘Working class people vote Tory because they think it makes them look a bit posh. They don’t know the Tories are going to shit all over them because they’re poor.’ Lisa, a Labour donor, was invited to meet Tony Blair in his pomp. ‘He’s like you would imagine. That good, he’d eat himself. He asked me, “How’s it going?” and I said, “The tour’s going really well, thanks,” and he said, “I’m talking about me!” I gave him a lot of money but I’m not going to f***ing do it again! I hope Labour get in, but I see Jeremy Corbyn as someone who plays guitar in church to get down with the kids. One of those people who’s always talking to young people because he’s afraid that if he talked to a peer he might, you know, get it a bit wrong?’

**SAUL DAVID,** in his review in the *Daily Telegraph* of Philip Walker’s new book *Behind the Lawrence Legend* (OUP, £25), about Lawrence of Arabia and the part British agents played in the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, observes: ‘Walker repeats a claim that Captain Norman Bray, an intelligence officer in Jeddah, was able to read a secret dispatch from a German agent in Syria to Kaiser Wilhelm II “which seemed to state that Germany intended to make war in August 1914.” Walker likens it to a passage from John Buchan’s spy novel *Greenmantle,* yet fails to question the doubtful authenticity. In reality, there was never a blueprint for war and even the bellicose Kaiser would have backed down at the last minute had not his generals told him that, because of railway timetables, there was no going back.’ A point we made on the centre pages of the *Journal* in February...

**REX TILLERSON,** the former chief executive of Exxon Mobil who was fired as Secretary of State by Donald Trump on 13 March – due, the President said, to a lack of ‘personal chemistry’ – was always living on borrowed time after calling Trump a ‘f***ing moron’ last July after a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Pentagon officials at which Trump – apparently seriously – called for a ten-fold increase in the United States’ nuclear arsenal.

**JOAN BAEZ,** touring to promote *Whistle Down the Wind,* her first studio album for ten years and, she says, probably her last, was asked about the best piece of advice she has ever been given. ‘I was 21 and splitting up with my first serious boyfriend and I was in a state. Should I do this or should I do that? ’Don’t sweat the small shit.’ I try to adhere to that.’

**HENRY ‘BOX’ BROWN,** born into slavery on the Hermitage plantation in Louisa county, Virginia, mailed himself to freedom – to Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania, a free state – in a 3ft by 2ft 8in by 2ft wooden crate in March 1849. ‘If you have never been deprived of your liberty,’ he said, ‘you cannot realize the power of that hope of freedom.’

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Hey ho, let’s go

HE last two ASLEF tee-shirts making a powerful political point – the Kes top, based on the iconic image from the Ken Loach film, and the Penguin paperback by Barry Hines, with the line ‘ASLEF says [the famous image of David Bradley as Billy Casper giving a V-sign] to strike ballot thresholds’ and our affectionate tribute to the Ramones logo, with ‘Educate, Agitate, Organise’ replacing ‘Tommy, Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee’ – have proved really popular with members, not just of ASLEF, but of other trade unions, too.

Our new shirt, designed by those Hoxton hipsters at Philosophy Football, features a snarling Rik Mayall as the obnoxious anarchist Rick in The Young Ones, alongside this classic exchange from the 1980s BBC comedy: ‘He threw us off the train because you said ASLEF was an anagram for “total and complete bastard”’ ‘And apart from everything else…it isn’t, even.’

Conrad Landin who, after four years as industrial reporter of the Morning Star, is moving to Glasgow as the paper’s Scotland editor, and his replacement, Marcus Barnett, secretary of London Young Labour, contributor to the left-wing US online magazine Jacobin, and a former South West & Wales political officer for the RMT, have both been spotted out and about sporting our new tee. Price £10 (including p&p); email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

The outsider

Tosh McDonald, EC president, was a guest speaker at a seminar on the role – and success – of outsiders in politics at City University, London, on Friday 2 March. Tosh spoke about Jeremy Corbyn and ‘Tommy, Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee’ – and the vote – the politics module on City’s one-year MA in journalism course. The workshop was chaired by Barney Jones, Professor of Journalism at City University, and programme editor of Breakfast with Frost from 1993 to 2005 and the Andrew Marr Show from 2005 to 2015 and, before that, a producer and

TFL ACCUSED OF KEEPING REPORT SECRET
Transport for London has been accused of keeping a safety audit on oversight of driver fatigue secret from investigators examining the Sandilands train crash on the Croydon Tramlink network. Safety campaigner Tom Kearney has accused TFL of a cover-up.

NETWORK RAIL FINED AFTER ORR PROSECUTION
Network Rail was fined £733,000, plus £70,000 costs, at Bristol crown court on 15 March for failing to undertake adequate maintenance to prevent the derailment of a freight train four miles south-west of Gloucester station in October 2013.

SIEMENS OUTLINES PLANS FOR NEW FACTORY
Siemens has announced plans to build a £200 million state of the art factory at Goole in East Yorkshire to design and build trains in Britain. The company says it will create 700 jobs on site, and another 1,700 in the supply chain.

Esther resigns

Esther McVey, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, has resigned from the advisory board of the Samaritans after accusations of hypocrisy. As Minister for the Disabled in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government she was responsible for the revised bedroom tax and benefits sanctions which drove many desperate people to suicide.

QUOTE…
‘Free market capitalism, left to itself, always tends towards monopolistic and anti-competitive practices’ – Peter Wilby in The New Statesman

BTP merger on hold

ASLEF has welcomed the decision by the Scottish government to put the controversial decision to merge the British Transport Police with Police Scotland on hold.

Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF’s organiser in Scotland, said: ‘We welcome the decision to put the merger on hold. But the SNP government should listen to the rail companies, to the rail trade unions, to passengers, and to the Police Federation, and call off this disastrous merger for good.’

‘The proposals are opposed by everyone who knows anything about the way the railway works. BTP in Scotland understands the way the railway works and has the special expertise needed to deal with the special problems encountered on the railway every day.’

The BTP was due to be absorbed into Police Scotland on 1 April 2019 – a date and a decision condemned as ‘a savage April fool’s joke’. But Police Scotland has admitted that date cannot be met ‘without compromising public safety’.

Esther walks away from the Samaritans
Mick in the media

ICK WHELAN was a media magnet in March. The GS was interviewed by Haxie Meyers-Belkin and Jonathan Walsh for an extended report on the France 24 rolling news network on Thursday 22 March to coincide with protests in Paris against the part-privatisation of SNCF.

Mick talked about the failure of privatisation in Britain, the problems with a fragmented rail network, the benefits of bringing the wheels and steel back together, and the popularity – even amongst Conservative voters – of bringing the train and freight operating companies back into public ownership.

Mick was also interviewed by Ibrahim Doğuş and Erem Kansoy for the Free Öcalan! campaign. Abdullah Öcalan is one of the founding fathers of the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, which wants to establish an independent state for Kurds in an area which is, at the moment, divided between Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran.

He was seized in Kenya in 1999 by the Turkish National Intelligence Organization, aided by the CIA, taken to Turkey, and been kept in prison ever since. The European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey in 2005 but President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is determined that Öcalan will die in jail.

Ibrahim, 37, is the son of Kurdish refugees who fled to the UK in 1994. He runs the Troia restaurant in Waterloo, organises the British Kebab Awards, launched Bira beer, founded the Centre for Kurdish Progress and SME4Labour, and stood for Labour in Cities & Westminster at the general election last year.

Laser pen targets trains in Devon

Police have condemned the people who shine a powerful pin-point green laser pen at trains in Devon on the night of 10 March. The BTP said: ‘Shining a laser isn’t a good idea. This could have seriously injured a train driver or members of the public. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate those responsible.’

DEBBIE RE-ELECTED
Deborah Reay, a driver on London Underground, member of Northern Line North branch, and chair of our Women’s Representatives’ Committee, has been re-elected to the TUC women’s committee.

RAIB PROBES LEWISHAM
The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has launched an investigation into how trains came to be stranded for hours in freezing weather at Lewisham on Friday 2 March.

DANGER CROSSING
Network Rail staff have warned pedestrians and cyclists after 787 dangerous incidents in 18 days at the Cotton Mill Lane level crossing in St Albans in Hertfordshire.

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Driverless trains dream ‘madness’

ADIQ KHAN has branded the prospect of driverless Tube trains on London Underground as ‘madness.’

The Mayor of London told a meeting of the London Assembly that he would not risk the safety of millions of Londoners for the sake of saving a few pounds.

Four years ago, the then London Mayor, Boris Johnson, who has a history of announcing projects that subsequently fall by the wayside, unveiled new-look driverless trains which he said would enter service on the Piccadilly line in 2022.

But Sadiq said: ‘Anybody who understands the Underground system will know there are some deep level, deep underground services, where the idea of having driverless trains is madness. In the interests of saving some pounds to risk the safety of Londoners, of staff and visitors, is the height of recklessness.’

S

In the interests of saving some pounds to risk the safety of Londoners, of staff and visitors, is the height of recklessness.

Chris Grayling has told businessmen and women in the West Country that the government is ‘on the case’ but admits there are ‘no quick fixes’ for the Dawlish line in Devon. The Transport Secretary has been criticised because a scheme to make the line secure has still not started, four years after the sea wall and track – one of the most picturesque stretches of railway line in the country – were washed away by waves. ‘It will be done,’ he promised. ‘This is the most important rail project in the entire country and I am committed to finding a permanent solution for this vital connection. I understand the frustration locals feel but this is unique and complex terrain and can’t be rushed.’

Grayling says ‘no quick fix’

SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO SEAT DESIGN

After complaints about ‘numb bums’ from passengers the Rail Safety and Standards Board has called for more research into the design of train seats in order to improve comfort and safety. The research will include ‘human factors’ while assessing shape, cushioning, vibration, material, lumbar spine support and leg room, as well as length of journey.

PASSENGER SUES OVER WOEFUL SERVICE

Seph Pochin, an ecologist from halesworth in Suffolk, has successfully sued Greater Anglia over train delays and its ‘woeful service’. A small claims court awarded him £350.

QUOTE...

‘Nationalisation of the train operating companies is a popular Labour Party policy. And you can see why. While non-dom Richard Branson jets off to his private island, the rest of us just want a decent way to get to work. Taking back control is not radical; it is both fair and plain common sense.’ – Chris Williamson, Labour MP for Derby North, in Politics First

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Rechargeable loco to run on network this summer

Adrian Shooter watches Simon Weller drive a prototype D-train on the Vivarail test track between Evesham and Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire

IVARAIL, the firm run by rail industry veteran Adrian Shooter, former boss of Chiltern Railways and DB Regio, which is giving a new lease of life to old Underground trains, is to run its first production battery-powered unit on the national rail network this summer, with full approval for passenger service.

The two-car D-train – Vivarail bought 200 30-year-old LU District line trains – has four banks of lithium-ion batteries, two under each vehicle, with a combined capacity of 106kWh. It requires an eight minute charge at each end of the journey, but with a 10 minute charge its range is extended to 50 miles.

The train can be charged through existing infrastructure – overhead line or third rail – and, for non-electrified lines, Vivarail has developed a static battery bank. The charging system is fully automated. The D-train – tested by AGS Simon Weller for the Journal in July 2016 – halts at the stop board and connects to a power source without the need for human intervention. The rate of charge is identified by on-board electronics and, once complete, or when the system detects the driver selecting power, it shuts down before the train pulls away.

West Midland Trains will use diesel versions of the D-train on the Marston Vale line, between Bedford and Bletchley, from December, subject to testing.

TRAIN BOSSES ‘SORRY’ FOR DANGEROUS OVERCROWDING

CrossCountry bosses have apologised for overcrowding at Nuneaton station that commuters described as ‘dangerous’. Cancelled peak time trains meant that passengers trying to get to Birmingham were packed in on platforms and frightened of being pushed onto the tracks.
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Snouts in the trough

In a coruscating analysis of what’s wrong with British business GREGOR GALLOWS, Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Bradford, lifts the lid on the boys’ club where, succeed or fail, the financial rewards are enormous.

The phrase ‘membership comes with benefits’ is a particularly apt way to describe the elite club of directors and executives running the companies and organisations that dominate everyday life in Britain. This membership, though, comes with benefits of pay, pensions, bonuses and other terrific perks – collectively called the remuneration package – that are not only eye-wateringly large but also, often, unrelated to performance.

They used to say ‘Succeed – do well, hit that target – and you’ll get a bonus.’ Now it’s ‘Fail – muck up, miss the target – and you’ll still pick up a bonus.’ There’s room and reward for failure, rather than success, at the top. There are golden hellos as well as golden goodbyes – sometimes referred to as gold-lined parachutes – as well as golden handshakes and golden handcuffs. Just for doing your job. Nice work if you can get it!

IT’S A BIT OF A RACKET

The situation has got so out of hand that even some Tories, card-carrying capitalists, and buccaneering right-wing businessmen and women are finding it frankly embarrassing. Because all this munificence has revealed the free market economy, or capitalist society, to be a bit of a racket and not the meritocracy it was supposed to be where a fair day’s work earned a fair day’s wage. The feeling is ‘money begets money’ and those at the top want to get their snouts in the trough.

Enter Theresa May, stage right, in the summer of 2016. Making her pitch to succeed David Cameron as Conservative Party leader, and Prime Minister, she promised her premiership would lead to Britain having ‘an economy that works for everyone.’

One of her targets, she said, was executive pay. She found it troubling that top execs themselves could set their own pay without much recourse to shareholders or other stakeholders such as trade unions or, in a non-unionised workforce, employees. She promised action. But all we have had are empty words and talk about taking action rather than action itself.

For nearly a year she did nothing, despite the BHS scandal rumbling on with its pensioners left up the creek without the proverbial paddle after Philip Green and Dominic Chappell both did a runner with their money. And, after the 2017 general election, May ditched her promise – a manifesto commitment – to force shareholder votes on pay, fearful that her backbenchers would not wear it. Instead, bosses will simply have to publish information about pay ratios at their companies, with no requirement to hold shareholder votes on pay. The worst companies will be named and shamed. If this is anything like the naming and shaming of employers that do not pay the minimum wage, there’s little for them to fear.

So much for tackling the ‘unacceptable face of capitalism’, as she put it, where a minority of bosses, to use her words, ‘undermined faith in free enterprise’ and damaged ‘the social fabric of our country’!

COLLAPSE OF CARILLION

In early 2018, the collapse of Carillion – which paid out handsome dividends while losing money hand over fist and leaving a £900 million hole in its pension scheme – led May to say that irresponsible company bosses who ‘line their own pockets’ while failing to protect workers’ pension schemes would be hit with tough new rules and huge fines.

Those familiar with betting odds would advise against placing too much money on anything significant emerging from one of her periodic fits of moral pique.

All this prevarication, watering down and inaction follows the same pattern of retreat as her climb down on her pledge to put workers on company boards – she performed a quick U-turn on that idea after behind the scenes lobbying by big business. All companies now have to do is ‘take employees’ interests into account’. This means employers can mount a PR exercise to show they have done something when, in fact, they have done pretty much nothing at all.

The Prime Minister’s response to the Taylor Review on employment standards was also pitiful, merely promising to raise awareness of existing employment rights and enforce them, offering barely any new – and much-needed – rights, and to further punish only the very worst offenders. This fell well short of even the Taylor Review’s mild recommendations.

There is no commitment to ending the Swedish derogation which allows agency workers to be paid less than permanent colleagues doing the same job. Neither will bogus self-employment be ended.

Theresa, typically, announced more consultation on various aspects of employment. Despite this, she had the brass neck to claim: ‘Our response to this report will mean tangible progress towards that goal as we build an economy that works for everyone’. In fact, she has stressed the importance of enforcing existing legislation and facilitating co-operation from companies, saying she wants to go down the route of persuading British business to change its practices voluntarily and for its own benefit.

There are clubs and then there are clubs, of course. Right at the bottom of the labour market are those self-employed workers who want to be employed. Membership of this club comes with the benefit of not having the meagre rights that other workers have.

THE TROUBLE WITH THREA

Approaching the two year mark of her premiership, some political commentators attribute May’s wavering and weakness to being mesmerised by Brexit. She hasn’t had the time or energy to do anything else. There is a little truth in this.

But it’s not enough to explain why she is buffeted by the rich and powerful in the big business boys’ club – and there are still far more men than women at the top of British business. The trouble with Theresa is that she is a lame wooden duck. Wooden ducks, even lame ones, float rather than sink. But they are like flotsam and jetsam – moving this way and that on a tide they do not control.
Groundhog Day

KEVIN LINDSAY, ASLEF’s organiser in Scotland, opens our four page special report by reflecting on a different year, with the same old problems, and by paying tribute to the EC member for District 2 who is standing down.

VERY time I sit down to write a report for our Journal I feel like I’m in the movie Groundhog Day as our union seems to be facing the same problems every year.

The way that the UK and Scottish governments have sat back and allowed the demise of the rail freight industry is shocking. Rail freight is not only environmentally friendly but vital to our economy. The destruction of freight on rail has FOCs chasing each other’s contracts leading to mass redundancies and uncertainty for our members.

The East Coast franchise is no different; we now have the ludicrous situation where Stagecoach/Virgin hands back the keys on the East Coast but gets an extension on the West Coast. These decisions are politically driven and don’t serve the needs of the passengers and staff. This franchise should be the first TOC to be returned to public ownership.

Abellio ScotRail staggers from one crisis to the next. We have an unbelievable situation where the company has purchased 70 new 385 units from Hitachi only to discover that the curved windscreens distort the driver’s view of the signals in the dark and gives the impression that there are multiple signals rather than one! We’ve informed ScotRail and the Scottish government that we won’t allow these trains into passenger service without the problem being addressed. This is going to cause yet a further delay in bringing in these trains but new trains must be fit for purpose.

We’ve had several meetings with ScotRail on an updated DRI package but, again, it’s like Groundhog Day as we continually reject their one-sided proposals to make drivers’ &Cs worse with their changes. As a negotiating team we are up for doing a deal but key issues around continuous driving, turnaround times, and diagram length must be addressed. The only thing the company has confirmed is that Sundays will remain outside the working week as they don’t have enough drivers – or the money – to deliver it.

Politically, things in Scotland have changed. The Scottish Labour Party has a new leader in Richard Leonard, a former trade union official with the GMB and STUC and a firm supporter of a nationalised railway but, more importantly, he’s a lifelong socialist. I look forward to working and campaigning with him to deliver a socialist government in Scotland.

I also meet regularly with Humza Yousaf, Scotland’s Transport Minister, and keep him abreast of the issues on ScotRail. He is supportive of our stance on the 385 trains and has given me an assurance that he will look at strengthening legislation to help protect rail staff from anti-social behaviour and violence. This is something with which we’ve had real problems, especially in the Helensburgh area.

Our campaign to guarantee a second person on every train continues to have an effect, with ScotRail recruiting more ticket examiners, and under real scrutiny from the Scottish government to ensure that no train has only the driver on board. This has been achieved by local reps recording and reporting every train that is single manned.

Finally, as the executive committee has called the election for our EC member here in Scotland I wish to place on record my thanks to Hugh Bradley, who has decided not to seek re-election, for his friendship and support.

Hugh will be a big miss to our union nationally and, especially, here in Scotland. Whoever is lucky enough to follow him will have big shoes to fill but I will be here to support, guide and work alongside him or her.

Working well as a team in Scotland

HUGH BRADLEY, EC member for Scotland, reflects on DB Cargo, Southern Rail, Theresa May, Donald Trump and Brexit.

We have been doing these articles now for 10 years and, throughout that time in Scotland, we have worked well as a team with Kevin Lindsay, the company councils, district council, branches, reps, activists and members normally being in harmony, and united, looking to improve conditions for the membership and delivering the policies of this trade union.

There are always challenges for us as a union and last year was, arguably, one of the most difficult with the massive job losses on freight after the changes at DB Cargo and the ongoing dispute with Southern, which was finally resolved.

We are now looking for some sort of stability in the freight industry, some sort of consolidation and, indeed, expansion to ensure job security for our members and the future of rail freight and maintenance of the track in Britain. We also know there are going to be further challenges in relation to DOO and are ready to deal with them as they happen.

As an EC we are also pushing for the Employer Justified Retirement Age to be delivered in all companies, not just in the few we have currently. We will also be pushing for the delivery of the four day week with at least 156 rest days. We are always aware of the threat to our pensions and will be ever vigilant on any attacks we face and we are aware of the desire of the membership for staff travel facilities for all.

We endeavour to deliver the ASLEF charter for our members with our reps but, equally, have to be mindful of the impact this government and its policies have on us as a trade union. Issues we face include re-franchising bids with a requirement for more DOO trains; the Trade Union Act and its implication for strike action and membership of the political fund; trying to take away our right to strike in the Southern dispute; total disregard for our freight members and their recent plight at DBC; reduced investment on track maintenance; reneging on promises of further electrification; and the uncertainty of Brexit. That is why we need to return a Labour government and renationalise our railway.

It is gratifying that the Scottish government has delayed the merger of the BTP in Scotland with Police Scotland – hopefully it will be a permanent delay! Every organisation which responded to the consultation was against it with the exception of the Scottish government!

Finally, as this is my last article for the Journal I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful people I have met over the years and their commitment to our small trade union.

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**ScotRail problems hit the headlines**

**MURRAY FRASER**, company council, is sceptical about ScotRail’s claim that the company is busy building ‘the best railway we have ever had in Scotland’

The ScotRail alliance continues to hit the headlines on a regular basis these days. Most of it is negative. Delays, overcrowding, cancellations and station skipping all contributing to passenger ire. The end of a lease agreement on four 170 units has also seen a reduction in seating at a time when passenger numbers are on the increase.

The Edinburgh-Glasgow improvement project has been beseeched by delays, first to the infrastructure, and now the new 385 units have been delayed. Testing continues and, although driver training has started, the latest problem is in darkness and low sunlight when drivers are seeing two or three signals due to the curved windscreen causing a mirror image reflection. A solution is urgently being sought.

DOCCO – an acronym for Driver Open Conductor Close Operation – started last year and will continue when the 385s enter service. Our ‘new’ 42-year-old HSTs have also started to arrive and training started at the turn of the year.

Restructuring talks are taking place. Progress is slow and, with a pay anniversary soon, but bearing in mind we can’t make changes until we know what’s going on, it will outline planned details of what they require very soon.

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**VTEC directors’ claim is shot down in flames**

**RAB WICKSTED**, company council secretary, reports on Virgin Trains East Coast – a joint venture between Richard Branson at Virgin (10%) and Brian Souter of Stagecoach (90%) – which runs the East Coast main line franchise.

The gap between what the company says – and what it delivers – can be seen by passengers and staff every day approaching, in April, talks are ongoing.

ASLEF continues to campaign for a guaranteed second person on every train and members are encouraged to report any instances where there isn’t one.

The electric depot planned for Millerhill was built but not opened for main line drivers and will be used as a stabling depot using depot drivers.

ScotRail is, the company says, ‘continuing to build the best railway we have ever had in Scotland’. It looks to those of who work at ScotRail like we may have to wait just a little bit longer.

Everything is always sunny in Richard Branson’s world – even when there are clouds overhead and the heavens have opened.

**VTEC directors’ claim is shot down in flames**

The company council has been trying to address and change the current Professional Drivers’ Agreement and has continuously asked the company exactly what it wants for the introduction and training required for the new Azuma trains, on which we will negotiate the t&cs. (Bearing in mind that we can’t make changes until we know what’s required).

We have been told they will outline planned details of what they require very soon, but bearing in mind that we’ve asked this question over the last three years, and that drivers don’t believe the company doesn’t know, don’t hold your breath for the answers.

The company, via the directors’ newsletter, has stated that it has just finished the ‘training of the first two drivers’ for the new Azuma trains! A statement that’s been shot down in flames by our company council, as what actually took place was the training of two managers – so why did a director proclaim they were drivers?

We had problems with National Express which ultimately ended in another failed franchise but this company clearly takes the basis, due to the problems we’ve had, from pay, to t&cs, etc.

The bad publicity recently regarding the franchise and how bad/good it’s doing beggars belief, as on the one hand we get the Transport Secretary’s speech to the House of Commons, slating the company, with the termination of the franchise come 2020, or maybe sooner, and then we get informed, internally, at 18.30 the same night, just how well and how great and how amazing the company still is.

Although this company thinks we are either very naive, or just ignorant of believing the factual evidence, the company council knows exactly how much drivers know and how they feel about these announcements. Hopefully, once this franchise is brought back into public ownership – and this happened after National Express failed – another £1 billion will be delivered back to the public purse.

How can the UK government argue for privatisation after the failing of not one, but three of its given franchisees over the East Coast route – GNER, National Express and now Virgin Trains East Coast? The sorry thing is that this Tory government has also stated they will be allowed to rebid for their failure. Oh to be a Tory and rich!

We do get comments from drivers asking what we’re doing and, in reality, this company just tells everyone how good they are. But maybe now drivers will understand that trying to get better agreements with this company has been a continual nightmare for us as a council. We will do as much as we are allowed to in seeking better conditions with the current franchisee and with the future franchise owner whoever that may be.
**£63,000 productivity deal**

**Virgin West Coast company council rep**

**MARK FREND reports on a good productivity deal**

On Virgin West Coast returned a large majority in a referendum in favour of a productivity deal which involved Kevin Lindsay and the company council negotiating with the company to withdraw the depot prep and replace it with a driver’s safety check. This brought the drivers’ headline salary up to £63,000 and represented an overall increase of just over 9% with all associated allowances increased by the same amount. Local reps will monitor the new safety check. The company has started to publish a drivers’ bulletin, a newsletter aimed at drivers who do not have (or wish to have) access to the company’s on-line system Yammer.

The company gave a commitment to recruit a further 18 qualified drivers (including two at Polmadie and one at Edinburgh) and to recruit 20 unqualified drivers, three under the driver apprenticeship scheme. We agreed a banked rest day trial, for four months from February to June 2018 (drivers can bank a maximum of three rest days).

Finally, on behalf of the council, I would like to welcome Mick Connelly, the new Polmadie council rep, who takes over from Jim Morrison. We wish Jim a long and happy retirement.

**John Hay, company council secretary, reports on positive developments at CrossCountry**

ROSSCOUNTRY is heading to the end of the franchise in November 2019. The 2017 pay claim was settled with the drivers’ headline salary coming in at £60,772 with an improvement to the spare arrangements as part of the one-year deal. This year’s pay claim has been submitted, after consultation with the EC sub group on pay, and talks are expected to start soon.

CrossCountry lead officer Colin Smith retires in May; the council wishes Colin all the best in retirement and welcomes his replacement Andy Hourigan. We look forward to a long and productive relationship with Andy. There is no doubt that tough times may await us going forward, with rumours of franchise remapping, and attacks on our pension arrangements, but one thing is sure – we have the best chance of meeting these challenges head on if we all stick together.

**Tough times ahead**

Hugh Bradley on the platform (centre) at the Scottish Labour Party conference in Dundee in March as Kevin Lindsay brings the conference to its collective feet with a barnstorming speech about public ownership.

**Left turn for Labour**

Richard Leonard, who was endorsed by ASLEF, was elected in November to replace Kezia Dugdale as leader of the Scottish Labour Party. Richard, 55, MSP for Central Scotland, and a former GMB official, decisively beat the centre-right candidate, Anas Sarwar, in a two-horse race. Richard set out his agenda – including a radical programme of public ownership – in an article in the ASLEF Journal last year.

‘Richard shares our values and we were proud to support his campaign,’ said GS Mick Whelan. ‘I’ve known Richard for many years,’ said Kevin Lindsay. ‘He’s a dedicated and hardworking socialist, who recognises the value of public ownership, and wants to ensure Scotland’s railways are run for the people of Scotland, not to subsidise the fares of our European neighbours or give away as dividends to line the pockets of the shareholders of private companies.’

Jeremy Corbyn and Richard Leonard at the Caird Hall in Dundee last month.

**Should auld acquaintance be forgot? Jim Lafferty (Motherwell), EC2 Hugh Bradley, DO2 Kevin Lindsay, GS Mick Whelan and Rab Wicksted (Edinburgh No2) outside the Caird Hall in Dundee.**
Down at the end of old Chestnut Street

EC2 HUGH BRADLEY, a driver with Freightliner Intermodal, reports on the state of freight in Scotland

T MUST be 10 years now that we have been using this format for the Scottish edition of the Journal whereby we get reps to give reports and updates, usually specific to Scotland. Due to my being a driver with Freightliner Intermodal, and previously working with the business councils of Intermodal and Heavy Haul, I have always been asked to write a report on freight in Scotland.

As this is my last report I have been looking back at previous reports and there is a constant theme running through them all – job losses and surplus freight drivers!

We’ve seen depot closures due mainly to the elimination of coal traffic to Longannet power station and the Anglo/Scottish services. Throughout all of this ASLEF has been at the forefront in securing employment of freight drivers. I think we have now reached the lowest point with the largest freight company, DB Cargo, now only employing just 40 drivers in Scotland!

We also have Freightliner Heavy Haul with its core work in Scotland being the TPE Manchester airport services from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Carlisle; GB Railfreight’s core work being the Caledonian Sleepers; and DRS part covering the ScotRail Fife Circle service with a loco and coaches.

On a positive note intermodal traffic has remained steady with supermarket traffic increasing – apparently this is where the growth in the market is supposed to continue!

And on a further positive note proposals for a new Mossend international rail freight park have been approved which will create the country’s largest state of the art rail freight development with the potential to deliver 5,000 new jobs during the construction and operational phases.

This will be adjacent to existing facilities at Mossend and will enable more businesses to shift long distance freight from road to rail with increased capacity to various UK destinations and European markets. There will be warehousing and manufacturing space, easy access to and from the hub due to improved motorway connections, which will help to encourage a modal shift from road to rail. The terminal is looking to tap into the increasing popularity of supermarkets and material handling firms looking to transfer goods to and from Europe on the new 775 metre long electric trains. This will also tick the box in assisting in the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

Hopefully, this will be a successful venture which will provide good job opportunities for the local area with regular rail freight services to and from the park.

Given the recent history of the rail freight industry, and its importance to the economy, it is surely imperative that we continue to campaign for the freight sector to be brought back into public ownership.

Rock’n’roll high school

WULLIE SIMPSON, ASLEF Education’s project worker in Scotland, reflects on another successful year

AST month was the end of year one of a two-year Scottish Union Learning project. The SUL, alongside our partners at the Collective Learning Partnership and ScotRail, have run courses throughout Scotland. They include ECDL in Aberdeen, where eight learners started, with three going on to complete; Spanish Level 1 at Atrium Court and Yoker with a total of 51 learners taking part; and we started Spanish Level 2 in Glasgow at the beginning of February with 22 learners taking part.

For mental health awareness – understanding trauma, we had five learners at Ayr, five at Edinburgh, and 27 at Glasgow, of which 22 were at district council, but, unfortunately, we then had to cancel two of the mental health courses at Motherwell and Glasgow due to lack of interest from members.

We took part in Scottish Book Week where Alison Miller, ULR Glasgow Central, ran a very successful book stall where no less than 100 staff from all grades attended and exchanged books. She also secured sponsorship from Polmadie branch and SUL to run a raffle with an Amazon Kindle as the prize; this was won by Motherwell driver Andy Irvine and a book token was won by Glasgow ticket examiner Helen Brown. We secured funding to run eight week British sign language courses at Glasgow, where we have 11 learners, and Edinburgh Waverley where we have 12.

It is our intention to run a series of pensions courses throughout the central belt in April; however they can only take place if we have enough interest from our members.

We now have rail union learning centres at Ayr, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh Waverley, Inverness, Shields, Stirling, and Yoker. These centres are available to all staff. We also use the City of Glasgow College and the Centre of Excellence at Atrium Court; the learning centres can be used for a range of learning facilities which include e-learning and classroom sessions.

We currently have seven Union Learning Reps at ScotRail – Tony Dale (Ayr); Les Maxwell (Dumfries); Alison Miller (Glasgow Central); Andrew Gardner (Inverness); Jim Baxter (Motherwell); with elections in progress at Dundee and Yoker; and two at Virgin Trains – Stephen Curran (Virgin West Coast) and Ross Clark (VTec). The ULRs are the first point of contact for the learning programme and are there to assist members to facilitate any learning requests.

Going forward, I regret to say I will be standing down as project worker in April.
ASLEF at the heart of policy making process

JIM LAFFERTY, Motherwell branch, reports from the Scottish Labour Party conference in Dundee

I HAD the pleasure of being part of the ASLEF delegation which attended the Scottish Labour Party conference at the Caird Hall in Dundee from Friday 9 to Sunday 11 March.

We heard Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard lay out the agenda which, we hope, will see Labour return to power with a Labour Prime Minister at Westminster and a Labour First Minister in Edinburgh. They both reaffirmed the link between Labour and the trade unions, which they see as being both strong and lasting.

Richard also spoke about the need for a new customs union with our EU neighbours, taking Scotland’s rail services back into public ownership at the earliest opportunity and, whilst talking about poverty, he said, ‘This should not only anger us as socialists, it should offend our sense of morality as a nation.’ A point we all should think about.

Hugh Bradley, ASLEF’s executive committee member for Scotland, was at the top table, as part of the Scottish executive committee, when Kevin Lindsay moved the ASLEF motion on the Caledonian sleeper and the taking back of the ScotRail franchise into public ownership. (If Kevin can get over his natural shyness he’ll be a good speaker!)

The TSSA moved a motion which will protect the BTP as the police force which will look after our railways and stop the politically motivated merger of the BTP with Police Scotland. Both motions were carried.

Whilst there may be ‘tea, coffee, and light refreshments’ in the background ASLEF is at the heart of the policy making process where we belong. When we have a Labour government in power the ‘natural order will be restored’ and we will have a government that will care for the many and not the few.

Thanks to Mick, Hughie, Kevin and Rab for making the weekend memorable.

150 years fighting for women

ASHLEIGH SMART, Polmadie branch, reports from the TUC women’s conference in London

A T THE 2018 TUC women’s conference, held at Congress House in London, the ASLEF delegation included Deborah Reay (WRC chair); Alison Miller (WRC secretary); Nicola Griffin-Sapey (District 4); Maeve Hanley (District 8); and Ashleigh Smart (District 2). This year celebrates 150 years of the TUC and the theme of the conference was 150 years fighting for women and solidarity.

ASLEF submitted motions on diversity in the rail freight sector, which was moved by Alison Miller, and equality for all women, which reaffirmed a commitment to trans women’s rights, moved by Debbie Reay.

We also supported motions calling for 24-hour child care, apprenticeships, and covering menopause in the workplace and sexual assault on public transport.

We were able to celebrate International Women’s Day at conference by proudly wearing our specially commissioned badges to commemorate the 100th anniversary of women getting the right to vote in Britain.

This was my first time attending a trade union conference and I really enjoyed it! Having never been before I was interested to see what it would be like. There were so many inspiring speakers from all different backgrounds. As a young member, and relatively new to the driving grade, it was great for me to develop my views on matters that affect us all in the workplace.

I had the chance to support the TSSA motion on apprenticeships which is something I am passionate about. I completed an apprenticeship in the rail industry in 2012 which enabled me to move forward to the driving grade at the age of 22. I was able to highlight the introduction of train driver apprenticeships in our industry, a development in which ASLEF has been instrumental.

I have been inspired by attending this event and it has made me want to get more involved in similar events in the future.

Debbie speaks about trans inclusion in TUC women’s structures; Alison calls for the renationalisation of rail freight and the need to improve diversity in the sector; Ashleigh talks about the value of apprenticeships; Nicola supports an RMT motion on sex assaults; and Maeve speaks about child care.
The game of life is hard to play

EMBERS attended a seminar on suicide prevention – something that affects us all as drivers and rail staff – at the Houses of Parliament on 7 March. The meeting, organised by Ian Stevens of Network Rail, and sponsored by Iain Stewart, Conservative MP for Milton Keynes South, was exceptionally well attended by members from all walks of the railway family, and included Members of Parliament and peers from the House of Lords.

Key topics included the small talk saves lives campaign; an ideas session about new initiatives to help save someone’s life; and the involvement of trade unions in arranging release for Samaritans training for relevant reps and drivers and the benefits this brings not only for the company but also for individuals who can use such skills in and out of their railway life. I urge all reps to raise this matter with their companies in a bid to agree more release for more drivers to attend these hugely beneficial training days. Station staff colleagues at Preston in Lancashire told of how quick thinking saved the life of a person suffering from mental health issues and this was followed by a moving speech by Lisa Fogerty, a driver with Virgin Trains West Coast based at Manchester, who was, through no fault of her own, a victim of circumstances. Both talks earned a well-deserved round of applause from the full function room.

Luciana Berger, Labour MP for Wavertree, spoke about how the government intends to use funds to address issues surrounding mental health and vulnerable individuals. Luciana sits on the Select Committee and would welcome suggestions. Every contribution, no matter how small, can help save someone’s life.

The key points to remember are any of these methods could, at some point, save a life so, if you have any thoughts or suggestions, please bring them up with your reps and urge them to take these forward either through a branch meeting or through local agenda meetings.

We can all work together to try and reduce the number of suicides.

Pete Petrovic
Virgin Trains West Coast company council chair, Euston

HAZARDS THANKS

I’d like to extend thanks to our executive committee, my own branch, and all the other branches in District 3 that supported my nomination to attend the 2018 Hazards conference. To attend on behalf of ASLEF is a privilege and one that must be put to good use. The seminars, workshops and networking will further enable me to represent members to the best of my ability and ensure their concerns are always addressed. I’m immensely looking forward to the conference with my comrades.

Alan Moss, Longsight

Lee Stevenson, VTWC company council Manchester; Pete Petrovic; Lisa Fogerty; Nick Chadwick, head of drivers, VTWC

Upcoming events

■ RAMSGATE – THURSDAY 5 APRIL
Southeastern retired and working members’ reunion from 11.00 at the Red Arrow Club, Newington Road, Ramsgate.

■ STRATFORD – SATURDAY 21 APRIL
Annual reunion at the Railway Tavern, Stratford, from 17.00 till late. Buffet provided. All welcome.

■ DIDCOT – SATURDAY 28 APRIL
Reunion at the GWRSA club, by the station, from 12.0. Buffet.

■ BRIGHTON & SUSSEX – TUESDAY 8 MAY
Informal open afternoon for all retired and working members of Brighton or any of the Sussex ASLEF branches from 14.00 at the Brighton Railway Club, Belmont, off Dyke Road.

■ HITHER GREEN – WEDNESDAY 9 MAY
From 11.00 at the Richmal Crompton at Bromley South station.

■ NORWICH – FRIDAY 11 MAY
Norwich loco welfare fund reunion for footplate staff past and present from 19.00 at the Canary Social Club, 104 Thorpe Road, Norwich, NR1 1RT. Free buffet.

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

Grecians celebrate 40 up

The GS came to Exeter branch to present badges for long term membership. Rodney Cox received his 40 year badge, and also announced he would be leaving the railway. We wish him a happy retirement – he will be much missed. From left: Dave Fowkes, Bill Ashman, Warren Sheppard, Stuart Butler, EC7 Andy Hudd, GS Mick Whelan, Giles Bowerman, Rod Cox, Brian Corbett, Steve Austin. Brian Corbett, DO7

Good luck, Dougie

Slade Green branch would like to wish Dougie Garrett a happy retirement after 16 years at Slade Green and Dartford depots. He is taking early retirement due to health issues. Branch members wish him all the best in the future.

Richard White, branch secretary

Ripples spread

As the LT Club at Hornchurch has finally closed its doors, for the time being the Old Ripple Lane depot monthly gatherings will revert to the first Friday of the month at The Windmill pub just down from Upminster Bridge station from 13.00. Staff, friends, and associates – anyone who wishes to come along – will be welcome.

Cliff Blackwell, Retired Members’ Section
While hippies were celebrating the summer of love in San Francisco, there was discontent in Detroit and riots – as well as dancing – in the streets.

In his book Detroit ’67: The Year That Changed Soul (Polygon, £9.99) Stuart Cosgrove opens a window on a tumultuous year behind the scenes at Tamla Motown and out on the streets of Detroit.

Cosgrove is probably better known, to many of our Scottish members, as the St Johnstone supporting co-presenter of the BBC Radio Scotland football programme Off the Ball. But he has a deep love for, and knowledge of, soul music and his background as a journalist, writing for the NME, comes to the fore in this book.

Detroit ’67 – the first in a trilogy, with Memphis ’68 and Harlem ’69 being books two and three – is written with each chapter covering a month, starting in a claustrophobic snowbound January, building through inner city summer rioting, and racist shootings by police, and ending with injustice and catastrophic loss as well as change in soul music.

The inner workings of Motown are a main facet of this book, with the internal wranglings that would break up the original Supremes line-up and dissent from other artists running in parallel with racist policing, inner city decline, and an increasingly unpopular Vietnam War that led to riots on the streets of Motor City and the infamous Algiers motel incident. It’s as if the two are intrinsically linked; yet Motown, through Berry Gordy, resisted being drawn into politics.

**REVOLUTIONARY FORCE**

One of the most compelling things, for me, is the way the book shows different attitudes towards music, its role in society, and the fight for civil rights. Motown management wanted to stick to the proven teenage love song format with little or no social comment while the Detroit hippies, around John Sinclair and MCS, saw music as a revolutionary force and Motown artists increasingly wanted to have a say.

Berry Gordy’s approach to civil rights was to make his artists acceptable to the mainstream by sticking to universal themes and shedding ghetto stereotypes; a contrast to the more militant approach of, say, the Black Panthers.

The book highlights the terrible racism that pervaded society at that time with white only neighbourhoods, institutional racism and an ongoing, and irrational, fear of African-American culture.

This last point is still pertinent now and as I read some of the examples and language I couldn’t help but think about Donald Trump and the way he talks about Mexican immigrants.

**WHO’S WHO OF SOUL**

Cosgrove says he intends to look at these events impartially, and he achieves this. It would have been easy to take sides with Flo Ballard of the Supremes or the Motown artists against Berry Gordy but he maintains that neutrality. This gives the book a great deal of historical integrity and draws you further into the world, and time, it portrays and certainly led me to want to find out more about the key events and protagonists. That this book is populated with a who’s who of soul and civil rights activists is a great advantage.

The book flows beautifully with the author going into detail where necessary without bogging down in minutiae. In the end I felt I could see and understand the motivations of all the main characters. There is only one thing that would improve this book, and that would be an accompanying soundtrack CD. I can’t recommend it highly enough so, if you are interested in soul music and/or the civil rights movement of the ’60s then stick on Motown’s greatest hits and give Detroit ’67 a read.
**KEVIN SEVERS WE WERE ALL CHELSEA FANS THAT NIGHT**

It is with a heavy heart that I write about the passing of one of Bedford depot’s finest, Kevin Severs, at the age of 61.

Kevin joined the railway as a trainee driver in September 2002 after a long and successful career as a lorry driver and quickly became a favourite with everyone at the depot. He qualified as a train driver on his first attempt and went on to become a driver trainer, briefing drivers on training days and routes.

In September 2016 Kevin was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of leukaemia and underwent an intensive course of treatment that included blood transfusions, chemotherapy, and bone marrow and stem cell transplants. By September 2017 his condition worsened, and he was placed on life support, and his family made the heartbreaking decision to switch off his life support at 20.00 hours; Kevin passed away peacefully at 23.15 on 11 February surrounded by his loving family.

Kevin was the quintessential railwayman. He was always smartly dressed, took great pride in his work, and in his role as a driver trainer. He always had an ear for anyone who needed to sound off, always had a smile, and always had a funny story to tell. He was a role model to drivers young and old, loved life, his family, his job, and Chelsea FC. The night after he died Chelsea were playing and, that night, we were all Chelsea fans, for Kevin.

Kev was on black shift at Bedford but was loved and respected by the other shifts based there too. His passing has left a huge hole that will never be filled. He was one of a kind and will never be forgotten. Kevin is survived by his wife Teresa, four children and four grandchildren. Bedford depot mourns his passing but remembers his smile.

Rob Reddan, Bedford branch

**ARTHUR ‘SARGO’ SARGENT**

It’s sad to have to report the recent passing of retired Ripple Lane driver Arthur ‘Sargo’ Sargent. He started his railway career at Plaistow on the steam and then Ripple Lane where he remained until the depot closed. He was an East London boy, coming from Canning Town, who enjoyed his football and supported West Ham. At work he was one of the lads, getting up to all the things the old school drivers did in those days! He also enjoyed the finer things in life by supporting the Sporting Life where he was partial to the odd flutter or two. He also enjoyed his beer, baccy, Sunday roasts, holidays and family. In his later years Sargo had his share of health problems but always seemed to bounce back to enjoy a Sunday pint at the Dagenham Trades Hall where we all finished up after the service for some refreshments and a chat over a glass of ale. A contingent of Pathfinders joined family and friends at Corbets Tey crematorium, Upminster, to celebrate his life. Our condolences to Arthur’s family. He will be sadly missed.

Cliff Blackwell, Ripple Lane Retired Members’ Section

**BOB BARRATT**

A full turnout was present at Charing crematorium on Friday 16 February to pay their last respects and say a final farewell to retired Ashford driver Bob Barratt who passed away on 11 January at the age of 92. Bob spent 49 years on the railway at Ashford.

He was on the LDC and Ashford ASLEF chair. Many wondered why he was often seen with bundles of newspapers under his arms.

The reason was that he collected tirelessly for Woking Homes – residential care with a railway heritage – and had a cupboard at the depot containing badges and other memorabilia he sold for the benefit of the charity. After his retirement he kept in touch by playing Santa at the train crews’ children’s Christmas party and was a regular at the drivers’ annual get together at the railway club. A proper gentleman to the end.

Rob Kilkie, branch reporter

**JOHN McKENNA**

John McKenna has died at the age of 92. John, a local man, started at Newton Heath on 30 April 1945. He was a person of real character, and a gentleman, with a great sense of humour. His hobbies were gardening and DIY and he was never happier than when he was making (and breaking) things.

S Black, Newton Heath RMS
ALAN BROOK

Alan Brook’s career progressed from cleaning wagons to driving the royal train. He started at Mexborough loco aged 14 and became a fireman at 18, often firing for his dad, Percy Brook, a senior ASLEF official.

Alan moved to Wath in 1958, working on the newly electrified Woodhead route, and then to Rotherham Masborough in 1965, where he became a driver at 36. In 1983 he moved to Doncaster, working on the East Coast main line between Newcastle and Doncaster. But six years later, in 1989, his career was cut short by an accident on his way home from work, when he was knocked off his moped, sustaining multiple fractures.

Alan leaves his wife, Edith, two sons, Simon and Chris, and four grandchildren.

Chris Brook

ANDREW RICE

It is with sadness that I report the sudden death in January of our friend and colleague from Grove Park, Andrew Rice. Andrew joined Southeastern in October 2012, quickly becoming a popular member of the branch and depot. He was a fiercely proud Welshman and Liverpool supporter and banter was always lively around the drivers’ room when Wales played England at rugby and football!

Settling in Ashford, he was looking forward to getting a move to the depot there when his life was unfortunately cut short, passing away at home at the young age of 48. He leaves his wife Rebekah and two young daughters. I will miss his Happy Christmas and Happy New Year texts in Welsh (well, I think that’s what they said!) Rest in Peace, Andrew.

Ray Garland, Grove Park

PHIL MINGO

I’m sad to announce the death of retired Exeter driver Phil Mingo. Phil started his railway career as a traction trainee at Exeter before moving to Old Oak Common as a second man, then to King’s Cross, on Deltics, to get his driving job.

He returned to Exeter where, under Wessex Trains, he became a DI and leading driver, before becoming an HST driver for FGW. He had to take early retirement due to ill health in 2014.

His great passion outside work was his love of any driven transport – boats, lifeboats, planes, buses and anything to do with trains – and he would travel the world in search of them.

He took his photography as seriously as his train driving and, having travelled large distances to photograph them, if the lighting, weather or setting was not right, his camera would stay in its case for another day.

He will be fondly remembered at Exeter, and will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues alike.

R West, ex-branch secretary

STAN MARSHALL

Stan Marshall, a true locoman, died on 12 January. He began his footplate career at Patricroft shed in July 1950 and, when it closed, transferred to Newton Heath, then Manchester Victoria. Broken only by national service – he served in a Scottish regiment, the Highland Light Infantry – Stan was back on the footplate after two years and instrumental in the founding of the BRSA Patricroft staff club.

On 20 December 1984 Stan endured a loco driver’s nightmare while working a train of tank wagons loaded with petrol and oil in Summit tunnel between Manchester and Leeds. A wagon became derailed, causing a fire, which spread quickly to other wagons. Stan and his guard were able to uncouple some unaffected wagons, pulling them clear of the tunnel. The Fire Brigade took over as this was a major incident, tackling the blaze, while Stan and his guard, under Fire Brigade supervision, re-entered the tunnel to remove further wagons.

Summit tunnel was closed for many weeks.

He loved following his beloved Salford Reds rugby league team and, although his health, in later years, was not kind to him he returned to work on the shed yard until retirement in 1986.

S Black, Newton Heath

JOHN RIGGINS

Ex-Motherwell branch member and retired driver John Riggins has died at 61. John was one of the railway’s great characters, a man who you would hear long before you saw him.

John began his career as a guard in 1978 at Motherwell, before moving into the footplate line of promotion as a driver’s assistant, and moving to Yoker to gain his promotion to driver. John returned to Motherwell’s ScotRail depot after privatisation, where he remained until retirement in 2014.

John was a great servant to ASLEF, attending branch meetings and standing shoulder to shoulder with his colleagues on picket lines.

Big JR will be sadly missed, but always remembered with a smile.

Andy Jones, Motherwell branch secretary

ANDREW RICE

Proud Welshman

David Norcliffe died in November after battling lung cancer; he was diagnosed with the disease, which later spread to his bones, towards the end of 2016.

Dave became a driver and member of ASLEF in 1991 and was one of the few drivers at Reading who learnt HSTs. He was elected onto the LDC 10 years ago. He leaves behind wife Sarah and children Hayley and Michael.

Paul Sedgebeer, Reading branch secretary

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Paul Sedgebeer, Reading branch secretary
Magna Carta, freedom, George Orwell and Brexit

It is not often I become indignant as quickly as I did when reading the March edition of the ASLEF Journal. Specifically, I take issue with the second sentence of the GS’s editorial. He states, ‘The irony of Magna Carta, and the associated freedoms achieved for the barons, is not lost when used in the context of Brexit and other debates.’

In an issue which also references George Orwell, I have rarely read such an Orwellian misrepresentation of a document described in 1956 by the late Lord Denning, former Master of the Rolls, as ‘The greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot.’

That Magna Carta was the basis for the constitution of the United States, and informed the legal systems in Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and others means I side with the late Lord Denning on this rather than our own GS. Indeed, of the three remaining clauses of Magna Carta still on the statute book, clause XXIX is directly relevant to the Brexit debate: ‘We will not deny or defer to any man either justice or right.’

As an afterword to Keith’s article, I would like to mention the controversy in 1974 surrounding the actor Richard Burton, who came from a mining family, and who played Churchill in the television drama Walk with Destiny. In an article in The New York Times under the headline ‘To Play Churchill is to Hate Him’ he wrote: ‘I realised afresh that I hate Churchill and all his kind. I hate them virulently.’ Burton wrote a portrait in vitriol, calling Churchill a ‘monster’, a ‘vindicative toy soldier’, and a ‘coward’, amongst other things, and was condemned in Parliament and on the BBC. The Times thundered: ‘Burton has damaged himself in the eyes of the British people and does not deserve to recover.’ This, then, was an example of an individual’s corrosating opinion not agreeing with accepted fact. This is how dichotomies develop – something the Tories thrive on. How else could the Ruritanian fantasy of the royal family survive? Closer to home, big business uses propaganda and lobbying to suppress the trade union movement. We must, therefore, remain vigilant and always question what we read and hear from establishment sources. Keep up the good work!

Aled Lloyd Morris, Manchester

Letters

Join the conversation! Send letters by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to the ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN

Remember when Richard Burton took a hammer to the memory of the ‘monster’ that was Winston Churchill?

How refreshing it was to read Keith Richmond’s account of Winston Churchill (Journal, March). Being informed trade union activists, we already know that the establishment, or powers that be, can embolden or arrogate this nation’s history and even seek to erase certain unsavoury episodes to suit their own agenda. In other words, censorship is alive and well in the mainstream media, much of it in the guise of jingoism.

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Richard Burton as Winston Churchill and Virginia McKenna as Clementine in Walk with Destiny

The Great Railway War

Further to my letter – and the reply – in the March issue of the Journal about the article on the part the railway played in the First World War (Journal, February) it looks like the writer of the original article is reasonably well versed in British rail use between 1914 and 1918, but that notable foreign wars escaped his attention. Let’s examine a few things.

The GS may not like the result – despite it being in line with the policy of ASLEF – but the one thing it did not do was entrench the property to the value of £5 or more. Magna Carta, in 1215, took away some of the powers of the monarch, but gave those powers to a small group of rich, powerful barons. It did not afford universal rights, because it only applied to ‘free men’ which was condemned in 1956 by the late Lord Denning, former Master of the Rolls, as ‘The greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot.’

The start of WWI in that far fresher, Prussian troops made them reconsider. The French used their railways extensively, albeit badly, to get troops to the front. It did not help them win that war. The Boer Wars, with very long distances through a hostile landscape, heavily increased British reliance on the comparatively scarce railways of South Africa. This included using an armoured train, conceived on the hop, to keep the Boers from raiding strongpoints and sabotaging the railway. The railway during that conflict absolutely was no sideshow to the Boer Wars, with very long distances through a hostile landscape, heavily increased British reliance on the comparatively scarce railways of South Africa. This included using an armoured train, conceived on the hop, to keep the Boers from raiding strongpoints and sabotaging the railway. The railway during that conflict absolutely was no sideshow to the railway. The railway during that conflict absolutely was no sideshow to the

The French, in the run-up to the Franco-Prussian War considered train travel for troops inappropriate as it would make the squaddies effeminate. Meeting the better organised, and far fresher, Prussian troops made them reconsider. The French used their railways extensively, albeit badly, to get troops to the front. It did not help them win that war. The wars mentioned made the railways more important. The start of WWI in that respect was logistically already supported by a great deal of transport management science
derived from conclusions made during earlier wars. Those lessons had mainly been learned on foreign fields, notably the US Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War. General Herman Haupt in the US was the man who developed the rule that under no circumstances were railroad goods vans to be kept back and used as storage facilities at terminals: it cost transport potential and kept fresh consignments from reaching the locations where they were most urgently needed. That, in turn, upset the organisation of running the trains to schedule to ensure the timely arrival of necessary stores.

Stopped trains en route were sitting ducks for enemy raiding parties as well as clogging up sections of single lines close to the front. You cannot be serious if you mean to say that the railways were a sideshow to the horses and marching men there. The Southern states lost because of their lack of comprehensive transport management. Read Christian Wolmar’s *Engines of War* to get the picture.

Yes, during and after WWII there indeed were motor vehicles and airplanes. Nevertheless, to get the kit to and from the ports in sufficient quantities the railways still were unbeatable. At the start of WWII the armed forces very effectively took operational control of the railways here. Not to play trains but because the railways were an essential part in the national logistics chain.

In order to get equipment to airports and harbours the train was and still is absolutely the only mode of land transport able to deliver fast and in quantity. That was the case during the Falklands conflict, where neither road freight transport nor helicopters nor other air transport would have got the shiploads to the ports on time and as secure as the railways.

The role of the railways in military logistics perhaps has altered as part of the extended range of the total mix, but declaring that the First World War was the first and last true railway war doesn’t really touch reality. That is what a friend of mine, a retired army logistics officer, told me, anyway.

*Peter van der Mark*, retired, GWT Bristol

**Ali – put in heart and soul**

We would like to place on record our gratitude and best wishes for our colleague Ali Hussein who has retired on medical grounds. Ali put his heart and soul into providing the best possible representation for the membership and worked tirelessly, particularly during his first term of office, to recover a decreasing ASLEF membership in the London area with massive success. He gained support and engagement from all drivers who recognised his efforts in promoting ASLEF as the only trade union for train drivers. His professional attitude and research has been invaluable in recent pay awards, notably the award of 2014 which, amongst other things, saw the end of committed hours and the introduction of a true four day week (Sundays inside). There was never a dull moment in his company, he had a fantastic sense of humour, enjoyed the social aspect of our job, and will be sorely missed. We wish you all the best Ali, keep in touch; we look forward to sharing your company again.

*Steve Burgess and Martin Brooks, your DCC colleagues, Southeastern*

**Blasphemy and asterisks**

To Christians, Jesus is someone worthy of the greatest respect. May I ask, when quoting Elton John (*Journal, March*) why a four letter word is asterisked to avoid offence but the blasphemy – *Christ!* That’s a lot of f***ing golf! – is printed whole. I don’t follow the logic, as the latter spoken as a curse is just as offensive as the former. Can you please explain and, hopefully, not repeat? We can’t stop people saying things, but we can refrain from reporting them as spoken.

*Eric Stuart*

Many – but not all – newspapers and magazines use asterisks rather than spelling out swear words. References to Jesus of Nazareth – like ‘zounds’, a contraction of ‘God’s wounds’ referring to Christ on the cross, and in use for 500 years – are only avoided in religious publications.

**History too kind to him**

Keith Richmond’s piece on Winston Churchill (*Journal, March*) nicely sums up the man: it’s just a pity that our institutions of learning appear to ignore the case and, instead, continuously glorify the man based on a very short period of a very long life. Churchill was no coward, as his war service in South Africa testified, and, no doubt, he was the right person to lead Britain through World War Two. It also has to be said that, were he in government now, the self-serving bureaucrats in Brussels would not be running rings around him over Brexit. But Churchill belonged to the 18th or 19th century, sharing the vicious political mindset of Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington.

*Roy Lingham, RMS, Bridlington*

**Money back, Mr Khan?**

Who thought the day would come when a high-ranking Labour politician would terminate an important public transport infrastructure project for no better reason that political expediency? Please, Mr Khan, if you aren’t going to build the Metropolitan line extension, can the taxpayers of Watford have their money back?

*Rodney Salter, RMS, and former chair, Rickmansworth branch*

GS Mick Whelan says: ‘If the Tories hadn’t taken £1.5 billion from the TfL budget, because a Labour Mayor had been elected, the projects would not have been deferred.’

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**SOUTH WESTERN**

Suburban 707 limited edition 35x30mm enamel badge £5 + £1 p&p from Martin Thompson (Wimbledon Park) email wdrai1grade@live.co.uk

**BRITISH RAIL**

driver lanyards with safety clip. £5 plus £1.50 p&p (same p&p cost for more than one). Paypal intercityexpress125@hotmail.co.uk

**CLASS 15**

Locomotive (DB233) enamel badge on sale to raise funds for restoration of the sole surviving Class 15 loco by the Class 15 Preservation Society. £5 + £1 p&p from Ipswich driver Clive Whiting. Payment can be sent via PayPal to treasurer@d8233.org.uk (friends & family to avoid fees).

**ASLEF BRANCH 111**

ASLEF branch 111 is 111 years old and has a limited edition numbered badge to celebrate the introduction of the Class 387 on KL services. Proceeds to the King’s Lynn branch welfare fund. £7.50 inc p&p from Mark Steele J Rosecroft, South Wootton, King’s Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 3WX.

**WOKING branch**

50 year commemorative badge. Slam door & Class 455. £6 + £1 p&p each. Contact aslefwoking23sbranch@hotmail.co.uk

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**KIRKDALE 121**

limited edition centenary badge 1917-2017 price £7.50 inc p&p from branch secretary Keith Devling. Call 07933 144768 or email kdevling@aol.com

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Hand made 40cm square cushions of railway engines and carriages. £50. Call Abi on 07954 659849 or email me at adm.uk.me@btinternet.com

**CLASS 40**

Preservation Society high quality enamel badges £5.50 each or £10 for both (50p p&p for one badge or £1 for both) email sales@c40ps.co.uk or text 07788 240088. All funds raised will go towards the maintenance of our three Class 40 locos.

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The old man and the sea – in the footsteps of Papa Hemingway

You don’t have to be a political geek to go to Cuba because it’s not all guerrillas, revolution and solidarity. It’s a Caribbean island, as CHRISS PROCTOR found out. Which makes it a perfect place for a sunny holiday.

AKE up in the morning in Havana and you feel you’ve stepped onto a film set: an impression reinforced by the cars that pass as you walk to the Old Town, where cruise liners edge into the docks to spoil their sightseers. Fifty-year-old Plymouths, Chevies and Caddies cruise the streets. These beautiful machines are mostly taxis for tourists, but they run around the rest of the island as well; even if some are more notable for their appearance than their reliability.

‘Courage is grace under pressure.’ – Ernest Hemingway

But, once you’ve gaped at them, you can’t help wondering why in the West most of our cars are junk after five years yet these vehicles are still running when they’re eligible for a pension. Partly it is – sorry to mention it – politics. The US trade blockade won’t allow exports to the island. It’s also about mechanics: these people fix things when they break. How many times has your garage told you, ‘I’ll have to order the part”? In Cuba there are no spare parts. Repairs are carried out with whatever is to hand. Waste is taboo.

You don’t need to go to an exhibition to see art in Havana. There’s not a street in the Old Town that doesn’t astonish and amaze: this is a city of decayed grandeur. The facades of the building are from another age of vibrant global commerce; before Havana declined into a playground for US tax exiles, the sanctuary of its seedy voyeurs and a haven for its gangsters and criminals. ‘Havana’ came to mean rum, cigars and vice: with the locals at the bottom of a fetid pile.

The rich ran, though, at the arrival of the revolutionaries, taking their money with them: the ornate magnificence of the opulent homes have crumbled, despite constant efforts to maintain them. But what is left, at every turn, is architecture that makes your chin drop and your heart sing.

Cuba’s also remarkable for things that aren’t there: like the blessed relief from advertising. They don’t have a greed-growing industry any more than they have a Fidel fixation.

On our way to Santa Clara to see the museum to Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara and the other heroic guerrillas, a Canadian asked if Castro was unpopular. After all, Che’s image is everywhere, and there are no monuments to Fidel Castro.

The guide explained that this is what Fidel wanted: in his egalitarian view, he was another Cuban. I couldn’t help but think of the proposed statue of Margaret Thatcher, the Blair Foundation, and Winston Churchill’s war rooms. The only memorial to Castro we saw was a small placard outside a small town that said simply, ‘Gracias Fidel’.

‘Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.’ – John Donne

The people were all too friendly and welcoming, too smiley and polite, too tolerant and relaxed to give the impression of a nation under the heel of a resented dictatorship. So is it a Western myth? Our bus driver smiled when we asked him the question. ‘In Cuba we have a two-year mandatory military service,’ he said. ‘For everyone.’ He paused. ‘If most of our people hated the government, they would be pretty silly to train them all in arms!’

Another well-known ‘fact’ is that Cuban food is universally inedible. I thought about this as I savoured a grilled lobster that cost me less than a tenner in a street-side cafe. Yes, there isn’t a huge range of foods or flavours: but there are fruits and juices that make you drool: and fresh fish, vegetables and chicken. We ate plainly but well.

There are beaches in Cuba that defy the scope of any camera. Long stretches of yellow powder massaged by transparent waves. I chuckled to think of the allegation that this beautiful island is only visited by ‘activists’. Active! I’ve seen corpses more active! This is a place to do nothing, slowly. At most, you’re required to smile back at people. Most of us can manage this.

‘Never go on trips with anyone you do not love.’ – Ernest Hemingway

You keep finding you’re asking yourself questions while you’re on this Caribbean island. Like, how come this impoverished place can offer free education, including university, when our Prime Minister has just conceded that UK universities are the most expensive on the planet? How come it offers free medical care when its neighbour, the richest state in the world, rejects the idea? And how come racism doesn’t exist in this wonderful mixture of vibrant humanity?

So you don’t have to swat up on left-wing politics to enjoy a relaxing holiday in the Cuban sunshine. But, while you’re there, you’ll find you can’t help thinking about the values of its society: and of our own.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign has lots of information about the country and is always happy to help with enquiries. Visit www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk.
BOOKED on at Longsight at 21.15 on Saturday 16 December 1989 at the end of my twentieth week on the railway. The window man greeted me, ‘Ah! You know Hadfield?’ ‘Well, I did a week as a guard at Picc before I came here.’ ‘OK, we have a job for you at Godley. Your driver is over there. I walked over and he confided, ‘I have let the second man go, he doesn’t know up there, thinks Godley is next to cleanly.’

47051 light engine to Guide Bridge for nine lima twenty. The shunter at Guide Bridge said, ‘Right, mate, you have three brake vans on the back to hold her, a shark, loaded sea cows, a crane and the barrier wagon.’ ‘You ride on the wagon, I’ll lend you a cushion from the hut.’

At 00.43, the engine dragged the circus out of the yard into the station, my red lamp stopping us behind the signal. Remember, with no mobile phones, no radios, and me perched on the cushion at the front of the train, two thoughts crossed my mind: (i) Is this for Beadle’s About? (ii) I don’t remember ticking the ‘borderline crazy’ box on my application form.

The peg came off, I waved my white Bardic beam from side to side, and my wagon jerked forward. Up past the old Dewsnap sidings, taking the former GC main line at Hyde Junction, then on through deserted stations at Flowery Field and Newton. When I saw the outline of the Wall’s factory I slowed the train with a yellow, then my red aspect brought me to cleanly.

When I saw the outline of the Wall’s factory I slowed the train with a yellow, then my red aspect brought me to cleanly. At 03.51 the Class 47 pushed me back into Guide Bridge sidings. When I see newish drivers stepping on and off their Voyagers and Pendolinos I wonder what they would think of the nocturnal activities of their predecessors on the permanent way?

— Mel Thorley

**On Track**

**CRAZY NIGHTS**

BOOKED on at Longsight at 21.15 on Saturday 16 December 1989 at the end of my twentieth week on the railway. The window man greeted me, ‘Ah! You know Hadfield?’ ‘Well, I did a week as a guard at Picc before I came here.’ ‘OK, we have a job for you at Godley. Your driver is over there. I walked over and he confided, ‘I have let the second man go, he doesn’t know up there, thinks Godley is next to cleanly.’

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**Prize Crossword**

**Crossword 144 by Tom Williams**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Person hooked on drugs</td>
<td>1 Greenfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Scottish lord</td>
<td>2 Shop selling unusual cooked and foreign foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mid-game break (4, 4)</td>
<td>3 Half three score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pie fruit</td>
<td>4 Pressed fold in cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Electric cable pipe</td>
<td>5 Large African river mammal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Military ground troops</td>
<td>6 Farewell all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Summit or tip</td>
<td>7 Rugby score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Tax on goods</td>
<td>8 Beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Capital of Norway</td>
<td>14 Second-in-command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Cut a design in glass</td>
<td>15 Segmented fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Spaghetti and lasagne</td>
<td>16 Light fast-sailing vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Cake spice</td>
<td>18 Pointers on a clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Fangs</td>
<td>19 Amateur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Continues to live</td>
<td>20 Ugli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution to Crossword 143**

**Across:**
1. Horseradish
2. Oval
3. Errands
4. Air
5. 10 Litre
6. 11 Marshy
7. 13 Classy
8. 16 Glues
9. 18 Ant
10. 19 Amateur
11. 20 Ugli
12. 21 Table tennis

**Down:**
1. Havana
2. Relays
3. Energy
4. April
5. Ignites
6. 6 Hosiery
7. 11 Migrant
8. 12 Rhubarb
9. 13 Coarse
10. 14 Autumn
11. 15 Scales
12. 17 Sieve

Congratulations to **Gareth Cadwallader**, of Swansea, who was last month’s winner. The winner of this month’s Prize Crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25.

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

Thanks for all your responses to the 143rd prize crossword in the March 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 April.

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**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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**Changed your address? Please let us know! Just fill in this form**

Name....................................................................................................................................................
Address..................................................................................................................................................
Postcode...................................................Telephone.....................................................................
Branch.........................................................................Membership No..........................................

Please return coupon to: ASLEF, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN
The 134th Durham Miners’ Gala

will be held on Saturday 14 July 2018

Please support the Big Meeting by joining the Friends of Durham Miners’ Gala www.friendsofdurhamminersgala.org

The 500 Club

The 500 Club is a fundraising venture for ASLEF’s Retired Members’ Section. Numbers in the draw cost £4 each and, to begin making payments into club funds, all you have to do is complete the standing order form and return it to your bank. Alternatively, you can pay by cheque a year in advance; the cheque should be made payable to ASLEF RMS 500 Club.

Payments need to reach the club account by 1st of every month and the draw takes place on 12th of every month – with the winning number, name, and prize printed on page 5 of the ASLEF Journal.

Once you have arranged your method of payment just complete the form and return it to the Admin Department at head office. The Retired Members’ Section committee would like to thank you for your support and wish you luck in the draw!

Yours fraternally, Mick Whelan, general secretary

ASLEF RMS 500 Club application form

Name...........................................................................................................................................
Address.......................................................................................................................................
Telephone No................................................
email.............................................................................................................................................

Each number costs £4. You can purchase as many numbers as you like. I confirm that I wish to purchase __ numbers as part of the 500 Club.
A) I have set up my standing order (£48 per annum or £4 per month)
B) I enclose a cheque for advance payment (£48 per annum)

Signed..................................................Date............................................

Please return to: Andrea Weston in the Administration Department, ASLEF, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To Bank
Address

Please pay

BANK BRANCH TITLE (NOT ADDRESS) SORTING CODE NO.

Unity Trust Bank Birmingham 08-60-01

For the credit of

BENEFICIARY’S NAME ACCOUNT NUMBER

ASLEF RMS 500 CLUB ACCOUNT 2 0 2 0 1 1 9 5

The sum of

AMOUNT IN FIGURES

AMOUNT IN WORDS

DATE AND AMOUNT OF FIRST PAYMENT

DUE DATE AND FREQUENCY

1ST OF EVERY MONTH

DATE AND AMOUNT OF LAST PAYMENT

*Until you receive further notice from me/us in writing

Signature(s) ........................................Date ......................................

ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED ACCOUNT NUMBER

Note: The Bank will not undertake to: (i) make any reference to Value Added Tax or other indeterminate element
(ii) advise payer’s address to beneficiary
(iii) advise beneficiary of inability to pay
(iv) request beneficiary’s banker to advise beneficiary of receipt

* Delete if not applicable

If the amounts of the periodic payments vary, they should be incorporated in a schedule overleaf

Please cancel any previous standing order or direct debit in favour of the beneficiary named above

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Retired Members’ Section committee would like to thank you for your support and wish you luck in the draw!

Yours fraternally, Mick Whelan, general secretary

ASLEF RMS 500 Club application form

Name...........................................................................................................................................
Address.......................................................................................................................................