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News

- Exposed – Whitehall scandal of DfT cash
- Wayne Hurlow reports on the Wales TUC
- Lilian turns spotlight on TOCs’ timetables
- Northern papers slam Northern Rail chaos
- Naming names in the UK’s coroner’s courts

AAD

- ASLEF’s parliament, Peter Dowd, the Morning Star and fringe events
- EC president Tosh McDonald, Albert Kennedy Trust, and Off the AAD Rails
- John Hendy QC, Kevin Courtney, Ronnie Draper, and Howard Philips
- Southern Rail, auditor’s report, rest day working, h&s, and ASLEF Education
- Øystein Aslaksen, Bob Hayden, Daniel Leece, Elliott Hackett, and Susan Gray
- Nick MacWilliam, Dawn Butler, staff travel, freight, and rail pensions
- Mick Whelan on Tosh, Hugh, Colin, Ray and Cliff; and AAD chair Darran Brown

Regulars

- Branch News
- Obituaries
- Letters, 100 Years of Union and Classified Advertisements
- Last Word: Aftermath – Art in the Wake of World War One at the Tate
- On Track, Prize Crossword, ASLEF’s Legal Services and Change of Address

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July 2018 | The ASLEF Journal 3

Grayling’s failings

‘Our industry seems to get more and more surreal’

This month’s Journal captures the essence of your parliament, the annual assembly of delegates, which is at the core of our representative democracy with reps from virtually 50% of our branches commenting and building on existing and future policy. May I take this opportunity to thank all delegates, and visitors, for your contributions that made the debates so vibrant and valid? The executive committee will meet shortly to collate the items and action them in health & safety and industrial documents for the relevant company / functional councils to list and discuss in the machinery.

Our industry seems to get more and more surreal with GTR and Northern announcing timetables that cannot be delivered because infrastructure work, particularly electrification, that would facilitate the new timetables, is not in place. Training has not taken place on routes or tractions needed to facilitate or even operate the basic timetable, and where are the people responsible? The press seems to have finally cottoned on to the fact that the failings lie with Network Rail, the DfT, and the operators, although on one radio interview I was asked if we were getting revenge for the previous actions of GTR? How much worse would it have been without the goodwill of drivers, and all staff, who, in some cases, had their rosters ripped up on the lies of short-term planning? This timetable was known about months ago! We have areas without trains, hundreds of cancellations, overcrowding, and misery. Is it not time that certain people considered their positions?

Mark Carne is leaving Network Rail, having not taken certain bonuses for lack of delivery, and it is announced he is getting a CBE; timing and public relations at their best. Naturally, during this period, it is announced that 16 out of the top 20 best paid civil servants and senior officials in Britain operate under the DfT and the top ten all work in the rail industry. Actually 36 of the top 50 report to Chris Grayling. Obviously it is not performance related, and people are being paid for failure, not success. When are the shadowy Tax Payers’ Alliance going to speak out about this?

Charles Horton is, belatedly, falling on his sword. I still have not met him – and hope now never to do so – but, no doubt, he will appear back in our industry at a future date somewhere else.

To end on a happy note, congratulations to Tosh on his council election win. Well done, mate!

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary
Exposed – Whitehall scandal of top paid officials rewarded for failure by the DfT

RANSPORT Secretary Chris Grayling – dubbed Failing Grayling by fed-up cabinet colleagues – is under pressure to resign after it was revealed that 16 of Britain’s 20 highest paid civil servants and senior officials operate under the Department for Transport – and the top ten all work in the rail industry.

That’s right. The men responsible for the mistakes, failures and chaos on Britain’s railways are the best-paid officials in Britain. The revelation, which comes hot on the heels of the uproar over the award of CBEs for failure to Mark Carne and Ian Prosser, is another serious embarrassment for Chris Grayling.

Figures for senior civil service salaries published by the cabinet office show that Carne, the outgoing chief executive of Network Rail, is paid a whopping £750,000 a year – £600,000 more than the Prime Minister – while Mark Thurston, chief executive of High Speed 2, takes home £600,000 and Francesco Paonessa, managing director, NR, picks up £480,000.

Philip Hufton, managing director, England & Wales, NR, gets £480,000; Graham Hopkins, group safety, technical and engineering director, NR, £475,000; Steve Allen, chief financial officer, HS2, £420,000; Jim Crawford, phase one managing director, HS2, £405,000; Jeremy Westlake, chief financial officer, NR, £390,000; David Waboso, managing director, digital railway, NR, £385,000; and Peter Hendy, NR chair, £380,000.

In fact, roles that report to Failing Grayling account for 36 of the top 50 salaries on the list. David Peattie, chief executive of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, who gets £370,000, is the highest-paid non-DfT Whitehall wallah on the list.

Prime Minister Theresa May earns £150,000 while Jeremy Heywood, the country’s top civil servant, as cabinet secretary and head of the civil service, earns £200,000.

GS Mick Whelan said: ‘These figures will shock many people. It’s not just the scale of the rewards from the public purse – which dwarf what most hard-working men and women earn each year – it’s the fact that they are being paid over the odds for failure, rather than success.’

Andy McDonald, Shadow Transport Secretary, said: ‘This government’s catastrophic rail policy is threatening the very integrity of the rail industry as well as future funding and growth. Following the news that so many of the highest paid civil servants work directly in rail, taxpayers and passengers will rightly ask if they are getting what they pay for.’

Oh, Go(via) Horton, go

Charles Horton, chief executive officer of Govia Thameslink Railway, has been forced out of his job. The Go-Ahead Group announced on Friday 15 June that Horton ‘has tendered his resignation’ but insiders say he was told to fall on his sword after a litany of failures, mistakes and desperately poor decisions made on his watch.

Passenger numbers and season tickets plummet

New figures published by the Office of Rail and Road reveal that passenger numbers fell by 1.7 billion in the 2017-18 financial year – the sharpest decline since privatisation – while season ticket sales plummeted 9.2%. Soaring fares, overcrowding, delays, cancellations and ‘the greed of the privatised train companies’ have been blamed by passengers.

 Quote...

‘I got a phone call saying, “Hello, I’m a journalist from The Sun.” I said, you can be one or the other but you can’t be both.’ – John McDonnell

...UNQUOTE
Fierce the beacon’s light is flaming

WAYNE HURLOW of Carmarthen branch reports from the Wales Trades Union Congress in Llandudno

WAS fortunate to attend this year’s Wales TUC in Llandudno from 22 to 24 May with District 7 Organiser Brian Corbett. We had the opportunity to talk about the importance of freight on rail, not only in Wales, but in the whole of the UK; infrastructure in Wales, including the proposed Cardiff area metro system; and, as ASLEF reps, we took the opportunity to support the Save Our Steel campaign. Interaction with members from other unions in Wales showed a great strength and camaraderie that was encouraging.

QUOTE…
‘Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light!’ – John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book II, lines 432-433

…UNQUOTE

ASLEF shows solidarity with Community, the old Iron & Steel Trades Confederation

CONFERENCES & RALLIES

The Durham Miners’ Gala, main assembly point in the city centre Market Place, 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 23 to Wednesday 26 September. The STUC women’s conference is at the Caird Hall, Dundee, from Monday 29 to Tuesday 30 October.

I am woman

ASLEF gained 236 members (net) in 2017. More than that joined us but, of course, others retired from the railway, and that’s the net figure. Of those new members, 97 were women. ‘Given that only 6% of train drivers in Britain are women, that’s a remarkably encouraging figure,’ said GS Mick Whelan. ASLEF now has 19,784 active members.

500 CLUB: K Cristie with number 83 won the June draw scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £390.

Our new ASLEF mug has images from the Mick Jones triptych in reception at head office. There are four versions – three have an image on one side and the ASLEF logo on the other; the fourth has all three images. £6 each (inc p&p) or £15 for a set of three; email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Off the Rails

MATTHEW ENGEL, the author, broadcaster, and former Wisden editor, who lives in the Welsh Marches, waspishly observes: ‘Hereford is still served by a few direct daily trains to London, all slow enough in the timetable, but worse in reality. It is quickier, but dearer, to divert via Wales. Great Western is introducing the long-awaited InterCity Expresses, designed for the forthcoming electric age, which began in the south-east 135 years ago (and will reach Hereford c AD3000). The new trains have rock hard seats with a discomfort level not seen in the west since the 1840s, when Brunel conveyed third class passengers in open-top wagons. Even first class is crap. Gavia Thameslink, which has pulled a similar trick with its new trains, claimed it was all about health and safety, foam padding being flammable. The Rail Safety and Standards Board denied this. A Great Western guard told me the real reason was that if coffee gets spilt on these seats a replacement cover costs under a tenner.’

TOM WOLFE, who died in May, was famous for his books – such as The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby, The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, and The Right Stuff – for his novels – The Bonfire of the Vanities and I Am Charlotte Simmons – for coining the term ‘radical chic’ and for his pale linen suits, hats, spats, and whole Southern gentleman shтик (he was born and brought up in Richmond, Virginia, where his father was editor of the Southern Planter). He was, with Norman Mailer and Hunter S Thompson, a pioneer of the New Journalism, but more right-wing than many of the people in whose circles he mixed. After telling dinner party guests in 2004 that he was backing George W Bush, the incumbent Republican, against the Democrat, John Kerry, in the upcoming presidential election, Wolfe recalled dryly that the reaction in the room was as if he had said, ‘I forgot to tell you – I’m a child molester.’

HUGH GRANT, who still makes the hearts of women of a certain age beat a little faster, delivered a wicked Russell T Davies line in A Very English Scandal, BBC1’s version of the Jeremy Thorpe and Norman Scott affair, with his usual panache. Grant, as Thorpe, in the bedroom with Ben Whishaw, playing Scott, manfully barks the instruction, ‘Just hop on to all fours, there’s a good chap – that always works best, don’t you think?’

SEYMOUR HERSH, the veteran American Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist, who broke the story about the My Lai massacre, and cover-up, and has just published Reporter: A Memoir (Allen Lane, £20), has three projects to finish: ‘Cheney; Hilary; and Pakistan has over 100 nuclear bombs. And they are completely out of control. How is this not the most pressing foreign policy issue of our time?’

GAVIN JACOBSON notes in the New Statesman: ‘North Korea, under first the Great Leader, Kim Il-sung; then the Dear Leader, Kim Jong-il; and now the Great Successor, Kim Jong-un, is the world’s first communist monarchy.’

July 2018 I The ASLEF Journal 5
Lilian turns spotlight on TOCs’ timetable chaos

The House of Commons Select Committee on Transport is to launch an inquiry into the fiasco of the new railway timetables introduced on 20 May.

Lilian Greenwood, committee chair, Labour MP for Nottingham South, and a former Shadow Transport Secretary, said: ‘Passengers continue to suffer from terrible disruption to their train services, particularly on Northern and GTR services. My committee is launching an inquiry into the timetable change; we will begin by questioning Northern, GTR and Network Rail but plan to take further evidence, including from the Department for Transport, so that we properly understand why the introduction of the new timetable has gone so badly wrong, what is being done to put it right including from the Department for Transport, Network Rail but plan to take further evidence, including from the Department for Transport, so that we properly understand why the introduction of the new timetable has gone so badly wrong, what is being done to put it right and the steps needed to prevent this happening again.

‘The Secretary of State has said there have been ‘major failures’ – we want to unpick this mess and understand how it can be prevented from occurring in December, when another timetable change is due.’

Heil Hunt!

This Conservative rally looks uncomfortably close to those extraordinary shows their right-wing German friends put on at Nuremberg in the 1930s.

Especially when you realise that Jeremy Hunt appears to be giving a straight arm salute, rather than a traditional English wave. EC5 Howard Kaye, who doubled Labour’s share of the vote when he stood against the Health Secretary in South West Surrey in 2015, gives him the benefit of the doubt. ‘I’m sure it’s his idea of a triumphal wave, not the infamous Nazi salute,’ said Howard. ‘But with his trenchant right-wing views, and his ambition to replace Theresa May, he needs to be a little more careful…’

STERNGUNIONS MEAN INCOME EQUALITY

A fall in trade union membership since Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister in 1979 has resulted in an increase in income inequality, according to a new study by the Institute for Public Policy Research. Union membership more than doubled between 1937 and 1979, while the share of income going to the top 1% fell by two-thirds. Between 1979 and 2014 though, when union membership halved, the share of the wealth that went to the top 1% rocketed by 134%.

ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL AT TAFF’S WELL

The Welsh government has announced a new £100 million train depot at Taff’s Well as part of plans for the South Wales Metro. The Transport for Wales depot will be the base for 400 train crew, 35 maintenance workers, and 52 in the control centre, as well as housing 36 trains for the Taff Vale lines.

VTEC SORRY FOR RACIAL TICKET CHECK

Virgin Trains has apologised to Olympic medal-winning gymnast Louis Smith after he and another black passenger were singled out for a ‘racially targeted’ ticket inspection while sitting in first class.

SCOTSTOREVIEW MINERS’ STRIKE POLICE

An independent review, led by John Scott QC, is to examine the impact of policing on communities in Scotland during the bitter miners’ strike of 1984-85.

Champagne Supernova

The first of TransPennine Express’s 19 new 140mph Nova 1 trains, built by Hitachi and leased from Angel Trains, arrived in Britain on 11 June after a two month journey from Japan, crossing the Pacific and then, after passing through the Panama Canal, the Atlantic Ocean.

QUOTE...

‘Donald Trump has grown tired of Theresa May’s “school mistress” tone, the president’s allies have told the Telegraph as it emerged the pair will not hold formal talks in Canada.’ – Ben Riley-Smith, US editor of the Daily Telegraph

Buskers sing praises of contactless payment

Buskers on London Underground and main line stations will accept contactless card payments in the world’s first such scheme. Under the Busk in London initiative between London Mayor Sadiq Khan and techco iZettle performers will get a reader allowing them to set a fixed donation they will be able to accept from a contactless card, wearable technology, or a chip and pin card.

Carne gets a gong

Mark Carne, the outgoing boss of Network Rail, picked up a CBE ‘for service to the rail industry’ in the Queen’s birthday honours list. ‘If you don’t take your bonus because the organisation you run serially fails to deliver, you get rewarded anyway?’ said GS Mick Whelan. ‘How else can Mark Carne’s CBE be regarded? Or is it for what he has tried to do despite the ineptitude of this government?’

Strong Unions Mean Income Equality

A fall in trade union membership since Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister in 1979 has resulted in an increase in income inequality, according to a new study by the Institute for Public Policy Research. Union membership more than doubled between 1937 and 1979, while the share of income going to the top 1% fell by two-thirds. Between 1979 and 2014 though, when union membership halved, the share of the wealth that went to the top 1% rocketed by 134%.
Mick Whelan has written to 25 newspapers in the north of England which joined forces to complain about the chaos on Northern Rail, the inept way in which the privatised TOC introduced its new timetables, without proper preparation or planning, and the multiple failures of transport Secretary Chris Grayling.

The papers – including the Yorkshire Post, Sheffield Star, Lancashire Evening Post, Northern Echo, Manchester Evening News, Liverpool Echo, Newcastle Journal, Bradford Telegraph & Argus, and Huddersfield Examiner, called on the Prime Minister to intervene and ‘get a grip’.

The GS wrote: ‘I support your call for the Prime Minister to “get a grip” on the chaos caused to passengers by the new timetable introduced by Northern Rail. The truth is that Theresa May and the Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, are badly letting down passengers in the north of England.

‘The fault lies with Mr Grayling; the Department for Transport; Network Rail; and Northern Rail, which does not employ enough drivers to deliver the service it promised, in its franchise application, to deliver; and which started training drivers – giving drivers the route knowledge they need – far too late.

‘It makes a mockery of the idea of a Northern Powerhouse. The lack of investment in rail in the north is an utter disgrace; the north receives £2,555 less per person than London in rail investment each year (£1,600 per person compared with £4,155).

‘As train drivers, and as a progressive trade union, we believe in a modern railway, fit for passengers, and staff, to help build a better Britain in the 21st century.’

QUOTE...

‘Trains with square wheels would be more useful than useless Transport Secretary Chris “Failing” Grayling.’ – Kevin Maguire, Daily Mirror

…UNQUOTE

SNOUTS IN TROUGH

Accountants and lawyers will earn £70 million from the collapse of Carillion, according to the National Audit Office.

PricewaterhouseCoopers, the firm that cooked up the vote at the Oscars last year, pocketed £17 million in fees as Carillion headed for the cliffs; and will trouser a further £50 million from managing the insolvency.

PAINT IT BLACK

The name of ASLEF’s Black & Ethnic Minority (BEM) representatives’ committee was changed under rule at AAD to the Black & Minority Ethnic (BAME) committee. This brings it into line with similar committees in the Labour Party, TUC, and other trade unions.

SILVER BULLET: JR Central unveiled its revised Shinkansen N700S high speed silver bullet train – with its distinctive aerodynamic nose – at Mikawa-Anjo station in Japan last month. It should come into service in 2020.

John Metcalfe joins EC

John Metcalfe, a Northern Rail driver, and member of Carlisle branch, has been elected as executive committee member for District 3, replacing Andy Hourigan, who is now District 3 Organiser after Colin Smith retired in May.

Five candidates stood for the position – Gary Boyle, Manchester Piccadilly No 1; Darran Brown, Preston; Pete Cashman, Birkenhead; James Glew, Buxton & Peak Forest; and John Metcalfe.

John polled 456 votes and Pete 405 in the run-off between the top two candidates. Turnout was 39%.

He took his seat around the EC table at head office for the first time on Tuesday 12 June.

Rail privatisation has failed

A poll for The Independent has revealed that six out of ten people believe the privatisation of Britain’s railways has been a failure and the industry should be renationalised. ‘An overwhelming majority of the public would support renationalising the railways amid cancellations, delays and complaints of poor service from private rail operators,’ reported Lizzy Buchan, the paper’s political correspondent. Research, by BMG, published in June, found that 64% of voters would support bringing the railways back into public ownership, while only 15% thought privatisation had been a success.

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Naming names causes pain

FOLLOWING the recent inquest into the murder and suicide of a mother and her child on the railway, GS Mick Whelan has written, again, to the Chief Coroner, Mark Lucraft, to ask that coroners sitting at coroner’s courts in England and Wales do not name a train driver involved at an inquest if that detail is not substantial evidence to the case.

Previous lobbying by ASLEF has seen the guidance issued by the Chief Coroner change so that drivers involved in fatalities on the railway need not attend court in person to give evidence, but can provide written testimony instead. This guidance was followed but the driver, an ASLEF member, was not informed that the inquest was to be reconvened. He and his family only found out when the inquest was reported in the national press and he was named, resulting in unnecessary distress.

Mick wrote: ‘Whilst we are very pleased that you did not call our member as a witness in this case, the driver was not informed of the commencement of the inquest by any authority and the first he knew about it was when his name appeared in the media. This has caused much distress to our member and his family.

‘We are very much of the opinion that if the identity of a train driver does not form a substantial part of the evidence in such cases it is not necessary for it to be put into the public domain.’

Mick Holder, ASLEF’s h&s dept

We say there is no need for the train driver’s name to be known

Running man

Andy Wakefield, a driver with East Midlands Trains, who was featured in the Journal in January last year after losing 14 stone in 12 months, has run his first marathon. This year’s London marathon, on Sunday 22 April, was the hottest on record, but Andy covered the full distance – the 26 miles 385 yards run by Pheidippides from a battlefield near Marathon to Athens in 490BC – in a very creditable 4 hours 58 minutes. Andy, 50, and 5ft 6in, used to weigh 26st. Now he weighs 12st. His waist was 60in; now it’s 34in. His collar was 21; now it’s 14½. Andy, famous on the railway for his magnificent moustache, blamed the biscuits in the LCC office for piling on the pounds, and praised Slimming World for helping him get back into shape.

Banner man held the banner high

ASLEF activists joined members of the Labour Party and many other trade unions in Sir Nigel Gresley Square, Doncaster, on International Workers’ Day for the first May Day march in Donny for more than a quarter of a century!

The theme was 70 years of the National Health Service and a protest against the underfunding – and creeping privatisation – of this Conservative government. As you can see, the march was led by ASLEF’s Doncaster branch banner.

In the afternoon everyone assembled at the Trades & Labour Club for a rally hosted by ASLEF’s president, Tosh McDonald. Speakers included Rachael Maskell, Labour MP for York and Shadow Rail Minister; Len McCluskey, general secretary, Unite; and Councillor Lani Ball from Doncaster Central CLP.

The day was a total success.

Johnny Red tweeted: ‘Great to have the Doncaster @ASLEFunion banner out on the first May Day event in Doncaster for a quarter of a century with ASLEF stalwart and fireman of the Flying Scotsman Dave Court.

‘Thanks to @McDonaldTosh for compering the rally superbly.’

David Court, RMS

Our new topical tee-shirt, designed by those Hoxton hipsters at Philosophy Football, features Rik Mayall as the obnoxious anarchist Rick in The Young Ones, and this classic exchange: ‘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.’ £10 (inc p&p); email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

The train not standing

‘He was 10 feet tall and he touched the sky’

This picture, taken by Chris Proctor, once of this parish, at Gospel Oak, with the display board announcing, to an empty platform, ‘Please stand clear, this train is ready to depart’ raised smiles at head office…

HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

All District 3 safety reps are invited to the annual training day at the People’s History Museum in Manchester on Tuesday 9 October. Speakers include GS Mick Whelan and there are workshops on fatalities prevention and mental health. Details from DO3 Andy Hourigan (hourigana@aslef.org.uk) or health and safety rep Alan Moss (alanmossaslef@sky.com).
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AAD

All together now

SLEF’s annual assembly of delegates – our annual conference – was held at the Marriott Hotel, Liverpool, from Monday 21 to Friday 25 May. AAD is SLEF’s policy-making parliament, and the foundation stone of our democratic structure.

‘This is the week when we turn our trade union over to members to evaluate what we have done, where we are, and what we want to do in the future; to assess and discuss and evolve policy based on items sent in from branches,’ said GS Mick Whelan.

‘This AAD will define our attitudes and our policy; what it cannot do is dictate strategy. That will always lie with the lead officers and, when the machinery is exhausted, the executive committee, who apply policy on a daily basis, and is often subject to the vagaries of changing circumstances or what can be moved forward through negotiation.’

EC president Tosh McDonald said: ‘AAD is SLEF’s most important body. You make the policy that we carry out.’

Every branch has the right to propose a motion and the chance to send a delegate to the forum where, each year, we establish our priorities and make plans for the year ahead.

QUOTE...

‘Politically, we punch above our weight. Now we need to get an ASLEF member into Parliament.’

– EC5 Howard Kaye

UNQUOTE

The fool on the hill

Peter Dowd, Labour MP for Bootle, and a man born and brought up on Merseyside, opened AAD and welcomed delegates to Liverpool with a sparkling speech that stuck it to the Tories. ‘Welcome to Meltdown Monday! Although I have to say that, with this government, every day is a meltdown day. It’s chaotic, this government, at Westminster. Because they don’t know what they’re doing. Especially Chris Grayling, who is particularly useless, and has the opposite of the Midas touch. Alchemists in the 17th century tried to turn base metal into gold; but Failing Grayling turns gold into base metal! First he buggers up Culture Media & Sport; then he buggers up Justice; then, he thinks, why not go over to Transport and buggers that up as well!’

Mick Whelan thanks Peter for opening AAD

You never give me your money

AAD donated £1,000 to the Morning Star on Monday morning. Cliff Holloway, Euston, said: ‘Working people, and trade unions, come under attack every day in most of the papers. But the Morning Star, six days a week, gives us a voice.’ Mick Byrne, Bletchley, added: ‘It’s the paper of the left. Look at this morning’s paper. There’s an article by Mick Whelan on the centre pages.’ And Tosh McDonald said: ‘I should declare an interest. I have a share in the People’s Press and I’m on the management committee. The dividend you get every year is not a wedge of money; it’s an education. Every day.’

IN THE CHAIR

Two candidates – Darran Brown, Preston, and David Dobson, Leeds – stood for AAD chair. Darran was elected. Then Daniel Masrani, Cardiff, was elected vice-chair over Bro Dobson.

Fringe benefits

- ASLEF’s Merseyside branches, and the new district officer, Andy Hourigan, hosted an evening upstairs at the Ship & Mitre on Dale Street on Tuesday night where GS Mick Whelan paid (another) handsome tribute to Colin Smith, who retired in May after 20 years as District 3 Organiser.

- A gala evening, in aid of the Albert Kennedy Trust, which works to support young LGBT people facing homelessness, was held at the Bistro at the Bluecoat in School Lane on Wednesday night.

- The Mind the Gag! campaign held a training session for delegates in the Hornby room at the Marriott Hotel on Thursday lunchtime.

RUNNING ORDER

The arrangements committee for AAD, which met at head office on 23 and 24 April, and in Liverpool on 20 May, comprised Mark Wakenshaw, Gateshead & Newcastle, chair; Rob O’Connell, Northern Line North, secretary; Jim Baxter, Motherwell; and EC5 Howard Kaye.
You say you want a revolution

OSH MCDONALD urged MPs to get behind Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn in a barnstorming speech on Monday morning. He was making his last address to conference as president as he steps down from the EC at the end of this year and retires from the railway shortly afterwards. Tosh told delegates:

‘It’s been a busy and challenging year but then every one of the 14 years I’ve been on the EC has been busy and challenging. I started on the railway in 1979, just a month after Thatcher was elected – I hated her then and I still hate her today – then we had Major, who privatised the railway, and I disliked him intensely, too, then Cameron and now May and they are all the same, they are there to do us in. The Tory Party is the most successful class-based political party in history. They look after the bosses. They are not there to represent us.’

Turning his attention to Labour, to which ASLEF is affiliated, Tosh said: ‘For a long while we had a party that didn’t look after us. It got said: ‘For a long while we had a shadow cabinet – I have ever seen. Under Labour, with Corbyn & company, we will bring the railways back into public ownership. And we will enshrine in law, the rights of the workers. That’s why the whole party needs to get behind the party – and the manifesto on which we fought the last election – and if there are some who can’t, then they should, as Len McCluskey said the other day, shove it where the sun don’t shine.’

He added: ‘ASLEF is doing today what this union has been doing since it was formed, in Leeds, in 1880. Fighting for our members’ terms and conditions. Fighting for our members’ jobs. And fighting for our members’ pensions. It’s what we’ve been doing for 138 years.’

Tosh bitterly attacked DB Cargo. ‘The Tories doubled the tax on coal the other day, shove it where the sun don’t shine.’

And he signed off, to a standing ovation, after his valedictory address, with a rallying call for a revolution.

QUOTE...
‘The DUP are a disgrace. Bigots living in the Dark Ages, propping up this Tory government.’ – Jim Walsh, Glasgow

…UNQUOTE

NOWHERE MAN

After poignant contributions from Rab Wicksted, Edinburgh No 2; James Patton, Polmadie; Daniel Jaszczak, Newton Heath; Darran Brown, Preston; Angie Geddes-Smith, Birmingham New Street; and Daniel Masrani, Cardiff; AAD voted to donate £2,000 to the Albert Kennedy Trust. A lunchtime collection – Dan held the bucket and demanded notes not coins – raised a further £1,345.

Off the AAD Rails

LUCIO BUFFONE, Paddington, coined the word ‘hypothecate’ – from the Medieval Latin hypothecat, first used in English, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, in the early 17th century, and meaning to pledge money for a specific purpose – in a debate about a Tory proposal to raise funds for the NHS – a hypothecated tax – which promptly became delegates’ favourite word of the week.

And TIM VAN TINTEREN, Sheffield, came up with the line – ‘I won’t die in the ditch for it’ – which, for one motion or amendment or another, quickly became AAD’s quote of the conference. With due attribution to Tim every time.

JIM WALSH, Glasgow, brought the house down on Tuesday morning when, looking at the traffic light system on the rostrum, which moves from green to amber to red to tell speakers when their time is up, he muttered, ‘I’m taking up where I finished last night,’ and then, as the amber warning light flashed, crowed, as only a former Taggart actor can, stared at the chair, and dared him, ‘Go on, press it…’

Panto time for ECS HOWARD KAYE, speaking from the podium on Wednesday afternoon about the political report. ‘For my sins,’ he confessed, ‘my MP is Jeremy Hunt.’ Cue boos around the room. ‘He’s worse than that,’ snarled Howard. So delegates booed again – much louder, this time.

CLIFF HOLLOWAY, Euston, was typically dry during a discussion about social media. ‘Being ex-British Rail I use parchment, and a quill pen, and had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century.’

DELEGATES were surprised to find, next to the Holy Bible placed by the bed by Gideons International of Lutterworth, Leicestershire, a copy of The Book of Mormon – ‘another testament of Jesus Christ’ – courtesy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints of Salt Lake City, Utah. Testament to the power of a Broadway – and West End – musical, too.

A NOTICE on the towel rail in each bathroom told delegates: ‘Like we care for you, we care for our planet. Please help us help the environment by hanging your towels for future use.’ Which translates as, ‘Help us make more money by cutting costs and persuading you to use dirty towels each day.’

After JEREMY MURFIN, Machynlleth, a noted contributor to proceedings, began by saying, on Thursday, ‘I wasn’t going to get up [to the rostrum] this morning,’ laughter filled the room, and a voice at the top table said, ‘It’s West Brompton’s relief!’

GS MICK WHELAN rocked the room at roll call when one delegate failed to respond with a clear and simple ‘Yes’ or ‘Here.’ ‘If you raise your hand, Morden, I can’t hear you…’
The long and winding road

OHN HENDY QC set out what life at work would be like – with sectoral collective bargaining – under a Labour government. John, a leading employment barrister, head of Old Square Chambers, and chair of the Institute of Employment Rights, was speaking to AAD on Tuesday afternoon.

He said: ‘In 2016 the IER published A Manifesto for Labour Law, which sets out how employment law could be under a progressive Labour government. Many of our proposals found their way into For the Many Not the Few; the Labour Party manifesto at the last general election.

‘We are now trying to refine this, so there will be a programme for labour law that they can introduce at short notice when they are elected. There are two key proposals – the first is the introduction of a Ministry of Labour and the second is the reintroduction of compulsory collective bargaining between employers and unions on an industry-wide basis.

‘You’ve got comprehensive collective bargaining that determines pay, terms and conditions on the railway, fragmented and privatised as it is.

But in other industries – such as the care sector – this is desperately needed. Because there are carers driving in their own car, to spend 15 minutes being paid. They are not organised, there is no collective bargaining, and we need to change that.

‘Since Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 the status of 39 million working people has been degraded to the position of serfs – subservient to management. Managers have a right to manage but that doesn’t mean workers are chattels. Workers have a right to have a say.

‘People in Britain now work longer than any other workers in Europe. A higher proportion in Britain are subsidised by state benefits than in any other country in Europe. This didn’t come about by accident, but by design, and one way was to alter the protection of workers under the law at work. In 1979 82% of British workers were governed by a collective agreement. That is now 20%. Most workers are now at the whim of the employer, without the benefits of a collective agreement.

‘If we are to create a new society then a key element is to reintroduce collective bargaining on an industry by industry basis. This may seem like pie in the sky but in Austria it is 98% and in Scandinavia well over 70%. I believe we can do these things. We need a Collective Bargaining Act.

‘In the care sector, and for agricultural workers, we are going to have to set up something new. This is not a present we are offering the trade union movement, it is a winding road.’

Too much monkey business

EVIN COURTNEY, joint general secretary of the new National Education Union, brought solidarity greetings from teachers to what he described as ‘one of our proudest craft trade unions, fighting for a decent public service on the railway’.

Speaking on Tuesday afternoon, he said: ‘Trade union density for young workers, in the private sector, is as low as 6%. When you consider that, in some sectors, like the railway, you are so well organised, that is very worrying. Because if we let trade unionism disappear elsewhere, they will come for us as well.

‘We have suffered wave after wave of attacks on trade unionism since Margaret Thatcher and the deindustrialisation of Britain. I come from south Wales and I’ve seen it, first hand, in the land of my fathers. My mam, in Pontypridd, was a school dinner lady, and one of the first to be privatised. Remember, the private sector doesn’t have some genius way of doing things that we have never thought of: it’s about getting support staff and your children, and putting the whole notion of a public service system at risk. Public voices – like local councillors – have been reduced while private voices, increasingly influential, have private interests. And they pay themselves more than the prime minister!

‘There’s a bit of corruption, too, as they use other companies because they own an IT company and a school services company. It’s corruption! Private influence, private voices, private interests.

‘And we need to deal with the threat of creeping casualisation. We need to get a government to put these things right. We’re not an affiliated union, like ASLEF, but we’re excited by what Labour is proposing. Because we’re all in it together, as George Osborne said, but never meant. Facing the threats of privatisation. Solidarity to ASLEF!’

LIVERPOOL: A CITY BUILT ON SLAVE TRADE

Liverpool was a city built, in the 18th century, on Liverpool, in their indiscriminate rage for commerce, nearly engrossed the trade. ‘A transatlantic slave trade’. William Matthewson, writes: ‘Liverpool, in their indiscriminate rage for commerce, nearly engrossed the trade. More than 1.5 million slaves were shipped in cargo, on ships owned by Liverpool’s merchants. They had to remember that we were sold, but not that we were able to fight back, in 1937. They will remember that we were sold, but not that we were able to fight back, in 1937. They will remember that we were able to fight back.’

Kevin Courtney: ‘Privatisation means getting working-class women to work longer for less’
Ticket to ride

ONNIE DRAPER, general secretary of the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers’ Union, told delegates on Tuesday morning that strikes work – and that’s why the Tories have tried so hard to make it so difficult for workers in this country to go on strike.

He said: ‘People say strikes don’t work. I don’t believe that. Four years ago we had the Hovis strike in Wigan. The company rang me and said, “You’ve got to call it off, it’s illegal. We’ll come after you and sequestrate your funds.”

‘Well, when in 1847 we started we had no funds. “We’ll come after you, personally, we’ll take your house.” I said, look, mate, join the queue. My ex-wife’s after that. And the strike worked. We won. And the Hovis bosses who were responsible have all gone.’

Happy, he said, to be ‘returning to my home city, Tory-free Liverpool!’ Ronnie brought solidarity greetings from the bakers, ‘a campaigning trade union of similar size to ASLEF’.

‘Remember the crap Cameron, and now May, said about being the party of working people? They’ve given us eight years of austerity and eight years of poverty and a Trade Union Act that hamstring workers. When I started work, if we had a problem it was “out brothers, and sisters, out.” Now we’ve got to give notice so they can prepare to take us on. The Tory Party is not, and never has been, the party of working people.

‘McDonald’s is also proof that strikes work. Workers there now get two weeks’ notice of shift changes and they got the biggest pay rise in living memory. They deserve it. Because the man who runs this global monster is paid $13.4m a year! And the success of the McStrikes shows what workers can achieve when they organise.

‘The members I represent will struggle to get a house, and have a holiday, because of the poor wages they are paid.

‘The answer to these problems lies in a strong trade union movement which is prepared to take action. We get castigated for it. But we have delivered for our members. We need to agitate, not capitulate. We need to campaign. To change our country for the better.’

Ronnie has been a loyal member of the Labour Party for 45 years – ‘except for three weeks when I was suspended.’

‘Now, for the first time, in Jeremy Corbyn we have a leader I can stand side by side with. A Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, who values workers’ rights. And a manifesto we can support which calls for renationalisation of the railways. And, while we’re at it, let’s take gas, water, and electricity back, too!’

‘The MPs who oppose Jeremy Corbyn while standing under the Labour banner – people like John Woodcock and Jess Phillips – well, if they don’t want to support John and Jeremy then they should piss off. And take Blair and Mandelson and Campbell with you. And make sure you shut the door after you’ve gone:’

We can work it out

OWARD PHILIPS, vice-president of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union in New Zealand, greeted delegates on Monday morning with the words: ‘Kia ora tatou katoa! Or, greetings to all present, as we say in the Land of the Long White Cloud!

‘Given that New Zealand’s population is around that of Greater Manchester, we have fewer members than you – we hover around 5,000. But, like you, we have a long and proud history of struggle on behalf of our members, and the working-class, and, like you, we can only realise our full power and potential by educating workers in the full benefits of solidarity.

‘In New Zealand we have a system of PR and, since 2008, have been governed by a succession of centre-right coalitions, and seen the usual tired litany of right-wing politics – tax cuts for the rich, reduced spending on public health and education, the privatisation of state assets, and attacks on organised labour, and a disregard for the ordinary people who try and keep our society from coming completely unglued.

‘Our union has a proud history of resistance. And our experience has taught us there is no substitute for vigorous campaigning, integrated with a sound political strategy, built upon solid organisation: Building organisation, on and off the job, and reaching out to the public, is how to keep the bosses and the politicians honest, or, at least, keep them less dishonest.’

‘That crew of Liverpool hard cases had in them the right stuff,’ wrote Joseph Conrad in Youth. ‘It’s my experience they always have. It is the sea that gives it – the vastness, the loneliness, surrounding their dark, stolid souls.’

‘My love of New York is something to do with Liverpool,’ said John Lennon. ‘There is the same energy in both places.’
Southern comfort

C PRESIDENT Tosh McDonald, speaking on Monday, and reflecting on the 18 month dispute with Southern Rail, set out ASLEF’s position on driver only operation.

‘Six days on strike, and a six month overtime ban, brought Southern back to the table where we hammered out a deal. Our members, on a high turnout, voted overwhelmingly yes to that deal. We secured a second safety-critical person on every train, except in exceptional circumstances; and there are fewer exceptional circumstances than when there were guards, as they were called. We reinstated the terms and conditions of our members on Southern. The agreement also gave us the pay rise that had been missing – a 28.5% pay rise over five years. And I will make no apologies to anyone for securing decent pay rises and decent terms and conditions for our members.

‘The things a sister trade union said, well, it’s a nonsense. They made dreadful attacks on our general secretary. We kept a dignified silence. Our enemy is the DfT, and GTR, our enemy is not another union.

‘That deal was a resolution to a dispute, not a template for the industry. ASLEF is opposed to DOO. We will honour existing agreements. Because we don’t break agreements. But we will seek to change them.’

EIGHT DAYS A WEEK

Tony Holloway, Waterloo Nine Elms, speaking during a debate about rest day working on Monday, said: ‘Rest day working is for recruitment, not to run the service. Have we got the right establishments at the depots? Get the depots full to the brim to run the services to get our days off.

‘The GS is right to have an ambition to create work, especially when this crap government, like the mill owners, puts people out of work. We have gone from 13,000 members to 19,700. Because we took control of the supply of labour. We should say we will voluntarily work rest days, when you are recruiting, we will give you the necessary tools to do what you need to do.’

‘No, it’s a nonsense!’

Tam McKendrick, Grangemouth, added: ‘DBC has been begging drivers who’ve left to come back. “We crapped all over you, now come back, so we can crap all over you again!” There may be a few Tory MPs who like that sort of thing, but…’

Lucio Buffone, Paddington, said: ‘The freight industry is in trouble not because we work rest days but because of diabolical decisions by the DfT.’

Phil Clark, a partner of Moore Stephens, presented the auditor’s report on Monday morning. ‘There are, by my reckoning, two fundamental pillars of a successful organisation. One is reputation – which, ultimately, encourages members to join and stay – and the other is financial sustainability. Income, in total, was £6,686,625 – an increase of £334,691 or 5.64% on 2016. In terms of other income, rents have contributed £6,324,990 – an increase of £337,938 million higher than it was back then!’

‘Two fundam ental pillars of a successful auditors report on Monday morning. ‘There are, by my reckoning, two fundamental pillars of a successful organisation. One is reputation – which, ultimately, encourages members to join and stay – and the other is financial sustainability. Income, in total, was £6,686,625 – an increase of £334,691 or 4.45% on last year. A positive result for the union. And it is worth noting that, back in 2009, the union’s income was £4.6 million so now it is £2 million higher than it was back then! ’

‘The key element, of course, is membership. In 2017 contributions totalled £6,324,990 – an increase of £337,938 or 5.64% on 2016. In terms of other income, rents have remained strong as the union’s property in St John Street is fully let.

‘The accounts show the union in very good financial shape. As an auditor I should like ticking boxes and, in terms of the union’s financial sustainability, I am pleased to report that all the necessary boxes are, indeed, ticked.’

THE YOUNG ONES

AAD voted on Monday to turn ASLEF’s Young Members’ Forum into a full representative committee – like the Women’s Representatives’ Committee; the Black & Ethnic Minority committee; and the Retired Members’ Section – ‘to ensure the next generation of ASLEF reps and activists are able to play as full a part in the work of our union as possible.’

QUOTE...

‘The personal is political.’ – Jeremy Murfin.
Machynlleth

…UNQUOTE

HERE COMES THE SUN

Lesley Critelli, Neasden, speaking about mental health in a debate about health and safety on the railway on Tuesday, said: ‘A problem shared is a problem halved. I believe in that. Open up and talk if you have a good friend.’ Alan Horner, Morden, confessed that, as a teenager he once tried to commit suicide. Alan paused and added, ‘Obviously, I failed…’ to warm laughter around the room and applause when he left the rostrum.

WE DON’T NEED NO EDUCATION

Julie Clegg, Manchester Piccadilly No 1, speaking in the education and training debate, said: ‘Education is power. We all need to take as much education as we can. It’s free, all reps should be trained, and the ASLEF Education programme is second to none.’

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol, said: ‘This is one of the most important parts of our report. It’s how we train our reps. Nothing is as good as our in-house training and it’s under attack by the Tory government.’

Mark Wakenshaw, Gateshead & Newcastle, added: ‘Our LURs work tirelessly. Whether it’s basic Maths and English courses, or guitar lessons, it gets people back into education.’
Norwegian wood

YSTEIN ASLAKSEN, international secretary of the Norsk Lokomotivmannsforbund, the Norwegian train drivers’ union, told delegates on Wednesday morning ‘many of our fights are your fights, too.’ His union has 1,600 members, and 100% density, across the public and private sectors in Norway.

‘We choose to stay as a separate union, representing locomotive drivers, on the main line network – metro drivers belong to the municipal union – and we have good relationships, mostly, with other rail unions.

‘We want to discuss policy with other trade unions because different countries can learn from each other. You have been through the privatisation process and people all over the world are very interested in listening to your thoughts and hearing the lessons you have learned. Simon Weller and I were in India recently and UK experiences are highly valued among colleagues.

‘Norway is not a member of the European Union and I strongly advise you not to use our model. Because we recognise that legislation from the EU is harmful for workers. Some of the laws – and directives – are very problematic for us.’

Phil Devonport, Ilford, thanked Øystein, who retires this year after driving freight since 1977, for ‘one of the most enlightening speeches this week’ and Rab Wicksted, Edinburgh No 2, praised Øystein’s English ‘because it’s hard enough for me to speak English, and I don’t support the SNP’.

Mailman, bring me no more blues

OB HAYDEN, New South Wales locomotive divisional secretary of the Rail, Tram & Bus Union in Australia, told delegates on Wednesday morning how the centre-right government – and train companies – are trying to make life difficult, if not impossible, for trade unions to protect workers.

‘Under “fair work”, which is anything but fair, they seize our phone records and try to stop us doing our job. But we’re not giving up. Because when you get hit, and knocked down, you get right up and keep going because it’s right. And that’s what we’re going to do.’

Daniel Leece, vice-president of the RTBU loco division, candidly admitted ‘I think I need a liver transplant’ after returning to ‘Liverpool, the city of my birth.’

And Elliott Hackett, a fourth generation driver and trade unionist, said: ‘I joined the union because I believe in the rights of the workers and getting good pay and conditions.

‘Some people are sceptical about confidentiality but I’ve never felt any concern as we remove any information that could identify the reporter and do everything we can to protect the identity of the individual – and won’t take a case unless we can. We’re not about undermining relationships; we aim to provide choice, so I hope you see us as a tool in your armoury.’

From me to you

SUSAN GRAY, stakeholder manager at the Confidential Incident Reporting & Analysis Service, a not for profit organisation with a brief to improve safety in our industry, spoke to delegates on Thursday afternoon.

‘At CI RAS we share goals with you and want to learn how to work with you more effectively. We’re a safety net, an insurance policy, when other systems haven’t worked.

‘When you raise a concern, we do a confidential interview, at a time that suits you, make a report, send it to the company, monitor the response, and send that as feedback to the person who reported the concern. We examine welfare issues, such as fatigue and distraction, equipment, the work environment, safety practices, shift design, rules and procedures – all of these can be reported to us. We don’t take personal grievances.

‘Some people are undermining confidentiality but I’ve never felt any concern as we remove any information that could identify the reporter and do everything we can to protect the identity of the individual – and won’t take a case unless we can. We’re not about undermining relationships; we aim to provide choice, so I hope you see us as a tool in your armoury.’
While my guitar gently weeps

A SLEF, under general secretary Mick Rix, set up Justice for Colombia with the FBU and the TUC in 2002 to support workers in that country in their struggle for basic human – and trade union – rights. Nick MacWilliam, trade unions and programmes officer at JFC, brought delegates up to speed with the peace process – and the work that still needs to be done – on Monday afternoon.

JFC has taken more than 250 trade unionists and politicians to Colombia – visits which have saved the lives of activists in the country who were being picked up and summarily executed by government troops and their right-wing paramilitary allies.

It organised the first shared platform outside Colombia for the two sides – the Colombian government and the FARC rebels – at the House of Commons in 2015, a significant step in the peace process, and Mariela Kohon, JFC’s director, working with the UN, is an official adviser at the peace talks in Havana.

Nick showed a short film about Huber Ballasteros, a member of the national executive of the Colombian TUC, vice-president of the agricultural workers’ union, and a leader of the Patriotic March, who spent three and a half years in prison in Bogota after being illegally detained in 2013. International pressure, led by JFC, finally secured his release in January last year: ‘Yo te nombro libertad’.

‘Despite the peace agreement, there is still much work to be done. We thought there would be a pushback, but this is far stronger than we feared. There were 170 extra-judicial killings in 2017, and more than 50 in the first three months of this year. Implementation of agreements has been slow; communities promised land haven’t got it yet; political prisoners remain in jail and agriculture has been decimated by neo-liberal trade deals.’

Don’t let me down

Paul Cutmore, Chingford, spoke about staff travel. ‘This item comes up year after year. The president, RMS, Euston and, possibly, Bristol may not be back. But I will be! Non-safeguarded members do not receive the same benefits as safeguarded members. BR boxes are getting rarer than the EC1 smiling in a photo. “Thank you for your years of service, now get out of our industry!” Is that right? No, it isn’t! When I retire I’ll have done 34 years on the railway and I’ll get nothing. Will I be able to get to the RMS weekend school? I live in London, an off-peak single to Manchester is £85. Peak is £120. Edinburgh’s £141 off-peak. We need dignity. The RDG is denying us this. And it’s a scandal.’

HARD ROAD

Colin Thornhill, Hoo Junction, in a debate about the plight of the rail freight industry, said: ‘I enjoy my job but, if I were sitting in a nice clean passenger cab, why would I leave? If a TOC changes, your loco gets a paint job and you get a new uniform. But there’s no security in the freight industry. It’s a hard, hard road we’re going.’

WHEN I’M SIXTY-FOUR

AGS Simon Weller spelt out the problems facing us on pensions. ‘They’re desperate to get rid of defined benefit pensions and move into defined contributions. They make it sound better. Better for them. Not so good for us.’

The higher you build your barriers, the taller I become

Dawn Butler ended on a song, Something Inside So Strong by Labi Siffre, ‘but I’m not going to sing it, because my voice has gone after Mick kept me out last night’

‘As a black woman – just in case you didn’t notice – I was always told you had to work twice as hard and be twice as good to get to where you want to be. You’re visible and invisible. If you

QUOTE...

“I’m a big fan of social media but I don’t like to be told what to do when I’m on the keyboard at 3am having had a skinful of whisky.” – Mark Wakenshaw, Gateshead & Newcastle...

“Something Inside So Strong”... Something... It used to be mess room lawyers, now it’s Facebook wankers. At least in the mess room you could debate but you cannot debate on Facebook.’ – Phil Devonport, Ilford...

“Something Inside So Strong”... Somethings... I’d like to thank Bristol for calling me a young member. I wish I’m 42...” – Lucio Buffone, Paddington...
Hello, goodbye

Mick Whelan, addressing delegates on Friday, paid moving and heartfelt tributes to five people who were – probably – making their last appearances at an ASLEF AAD.

‘Tosh McDonald has been the voice of reason in the EC room as well as the voice of passion on the platform. He has been the heartbeat of our union. The reason he is not here this morning is that he felt tears would come to his eyes.

‘One of the brightest, kindest, most self-effacing men I have ever known, for 30 years, Hugh Bradley, is leaving our industry – as Tosh is – but Hugh, having gone up and down the main line once a month for umpteen years, is going back to just driving trains for a while.

‘Colin Smith – I think he’s had about 27 leaving dos so far – we’ll remember the jobs he’s saved and the people he’s helped and the high regard in which he is held up here in the north-west by other unions and civil society.

‘RMS – I truly hope this is not your last conference, but if it is, then I truly thank you, Ray, for everything you have done for this union."

A view from the chair

Darran Brown, Preston, who drives Pendolinos and Voyagers for Virgin West Coast, has been a railwayman for 21 years, and a driver for 14. ‘I was going to be a History teacher but realised that although I liked history I didn’t like kids, so I got a job as a station announcer at Preston. It was just a fill-in job until I found something else, but the railway is a land of opportunity, with so many jobs available, and I worked on the platform, and as a guard for six years, before I became a driver.

‘I joined ASLEF because Cliff Holloway, this big bear of a man, came to the driving school and told me to! I’d been in the RMT, knew the importance of being a union member, and not once have I regretted joining this great trade union.’

Darran, 50, has been branch secretary, district secretary, is District 3 rep on ASLEF’s LGBT+ committee and stood for the EC when Andy Hourigan stood down earlier this year. He was voted in as chair – overwhelmingly in a two-horse race – but why put himself forward?

‘Because it’s my district and I feel it’s important we have someone on the main stage. I felt confident I could do the job – until I got up there! It’s very much more involved than I ever thought.

‘I was quite nervous at first, and a little unsure, wobbly underfoot. But I gained confidence, improved, and settled in.’

In fact, Darran quickly got into the groove, and delegates praised him as an outstanding chair.

‘I want to thank Dave [Calfe] and Mick [Whelan] for putting pens in my ribs at times and thank Tosh, a working-class hero, as Mick called him, outstanding president and genuinely nice guy. The delegates, on the whole, have been absolutely fantastic. And a whole lot of new delegates have spoken for the first time this year.’

Any advice for someone thinking of doing it next year? ‘Don’t get drunk the night before.’

Liverpool 1 Everton 2

Liverpool One is the stylish, new(ish), rather pleased with itself shopping centre in the heart of the city (where the postcode, for the pun, is Liverpool 1). Liverpool FC, naturally, has a shop in the centre. But two doors away, separated only by The Perfume Shop, are those cheeky chappies from the other side of Stanley Park, trading under the name Everton Two…

AAD ended, in the traditional way, on Friday with everyone singing the Red Flag.

QUOTE…
‘We don’t want bigots in our union.’ – Tony Cashman, West Brompton

…UNQUOTE

ROLL OVER BEETHOVEN

QUOTE…
‘Glad to get up here. This rostrum has the elixir of youth. RMS feels ten years younger and Glasgow says he’s middle-aged. Mind you, in Glasgow, 27 is middle-aged!’ – Tam McKendrick, Grangemouth

…UNQUOTE

Liverpool One is the stylish, new(ish), rather pleased with itself shopping centre in the heart of the city (where the postcode, for the pun, is Liverpool 1). Liverpool FC, naturally, has a shop in the centre. But two doors away, separated only by The Perfume Shop, are those cheeky chappies from the other side of Stanley Park, trading under the name Everton Two…
By the banks of the Leam

We were very pleased to welcome EC vice-president Dave Calfe and Bob Earlam, West Midlands Trains company council, to our latest meeting. Bob spoke about local issues on WMT, including the new Leamington-Coventry-Nuneaton service starting in December, giving a welcome increase in work for our depot; diagramming and linking issues; pay and new uniform talks; new units for 2020; and driver training. Dave spoke on national issues, including pensions, industrial action on Freightliner, productivity talks on TPE, disputes on London Underground, and various resignalling schemes around the country. Dave also presented Ross Cash with gifts from the branch. Ross started off at Salthley in 1974 as a second man, getting his driver’s job in 1981, transferring to Leamington in 1993, and retiring at the end of last year after 43 years’ service. Congratulations and a happy retirement, Ross! At the other end of the service scale, Bob presented Daljit Sandhu with her 5 year badge. Thank you, Bob and Dave, for coming, and also our Good Old Boys, retired section members Phil Spice, Ken Mason, Tim Clifford and Ross Cash for your continued support of our little branch.

Nick Walker, Leamington Spa branch chair

Big Bad Bill is Sweet William now

When Bro Bill Williams announced his retirement it came as quite a shock to many people, as they thought he’d retired years ago! Asked to find a picture of young Bill at work, this is the closest I could get. Admittedly he’s not working, or even awake, but he’s at work! Bill’s dad worked in the ticket office at Sheperdswell and got him a job as a shunter in 1974. A year later he came to Faversham as a second man. A staunch socialist from the mining village of Aylesham, we had a coal train marooned in our sidings for over a year during the miners’ strike. No one would go near it with Billy around! An honourable and highly principled man, Bill was also a fierce negotiator. Bill will be sorely missed, not just at Faversham but on the whole of Southeastern. He’s been our LDC, AAD delegate and served four terms on company council, where he helped secure a four day 35 hour week. Faversham also bids farewell to Bro John McAvoy. J Mac was our branch chair, LDR, and ULR. He has left to join Crossrail at Abbey Wood and we wish him all the best.

Andy Cooke, Faversham branch secretary

BESCOT BRANCH

Bescot branch has been amalgamated into Saltley 023 branch after the restructuring of DB Cargo.

Michael Clatworthy, Saltley branch reporter

Upcoming events

- **MARYLEBONE – FRIDAY 5 OCTOBER**
  Branch reunion from 15.30 at the Allsop Arms, 137 Gloucester Place, Marylebone, NW1 5AL.

- **LONGSIGHT – THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER**
  Reunion at the Navigation Railway BRSA club, next to Navigation Road station, from 13.00. Always a great event.

- **FRATTON – FRIDAY 2 NOVEMBER**
  Fratton train crew and railway reunion from 12.00 to 18.00 at the BRSA Club next to Fratton station.

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

Up the junction

John Edwards joined British Rail’s Parkeston depot in January 1978 as a traction trainee. He was promoted to driver’s assistant and, in November 1983, was passed out by traction inspector Bert Pell. His first driving turn was a Class 47 light diesel from Parkeston to Stratford with a quarter tank of header water and a bright blue fault light. John clocked up 82 of the 100 driving turns required to get the acting driver’s rate. He was promoted to driver in April 1985 at Ipswich and loved it so much he’s still here now! In 1986 he became a driving instructor and in 1989 an acting traction inspector until privatisation in 1996. John has now done 40 years’ service and feels his ash pan will be emptied for the last time. He said ASLEF should be commended for being his bedrock throughout and would like to thank all his union reps, past and present, at Ipswich and Parkeston. He finished by saying that, while we may not

Lee Barber presents John Edwards with his 40 years’ award always agree with ASLEF, its officers always act with dedication and with the interests of our members at heart.

Lee Barber, Ipswich branch secretary

Working in Woking

Woking branch would like to thank Nigel Cummins and Andy Davey from South Western Railway company council for coming to our very well attended May meeting where they presented members with their long service awards.

Chris Smith, branch secretary

Keith Packett (15 years), Nigel Cummins, Andy Davey, Andy Baigent (30), Neil Wood (15), Ian Moore (10) and Alan Nichols (15)
CHARLIE WILLIS
WORKING WITH THE FINESalten MIEN IN THE LAND

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Charlie Willis, a very proud Salop man. Charlie began his 51 years of railway service at the age of 14 when he started as a temporary clerk at Minsterley station, moving to Dorrington nine months later. On 10 August 1941 Charlie started his career with the GWR as a call-up boy, cycling to the houses of the drivers, firemen and guards to make sure they were on duty, and on 17 February 1943 he was transferred to the Salop loco depot as a cleaner.

During the war years Charlie was a member of the National Auxiliary Fire Service, working on Sundays and his days off, based at Cross Hill or Castlefields fire station in Shrewsbury. He became a locomotive fireman in 1944, first at Hereford for six weeks, and then Shrewsbury, and passed as a driver on 18 May 1960, being appointed driver on Shrewsbury shed on 29 January 1962.

Charlie served on the royal train three times, once as fireman, on 28 July 1958, for which he received a gratuity of 10s, and later twice as driver. In 1970 he received a letter of thanks from the railways for his help in dealing with a fatality. From 1982 Charlie began his promotion in the offices, first as train crew supervisor, rising to train crew inspector, before retiring in 1991.

Charlie was very proud to be an active member of ASLEF and was honoured when he received his 40 year medal after 51 years working, in his words, ‘with the finest men in the land.’

Martin Wood

MALCOLM TALBOT
BLOWING BUBBLES

It is with great sadness that I have to inform the Locomotive Journal about the death of Malcolm Talbot. Malcolm left the Halifax and came on as a trainee under Connex in 1999, at Slade Green, where he stayed as a driver for his entire railway career. A lifelong West Ham fan, he won his first battle with cancer in 2015, returning to work in 2016, and I had the great pleasure of working with him briefing other Southeastern drivers about signalling changes at Rochester in Kent. Unfortunately, in October last year, he had bad news; cancerous cells had returned, and he passed away on 18 May. Malcolm fought his battle bravely and with dignity. He is survived by his wife Barbara and son Luke.

Richard White, Slade Green

ANDY JOYNES
HAPPY GO LUCKY

A full turnout was present at Steetley crematorium on Monday 16 April to pay their last respects and say a final farewell to Bescot driver Andy Joynes, who sadly passed away on Friday 16 March at the age of 53. Andy started on the railway at Bescot in 1989 as a train man and later as a driver. Andy loved the railway, enjoyed ironing, ironing – Malcolm and a crafty blonde loved a drink and his caravan which was in Barmouth, where everybody knew him. Andy will be sadly missed by his partner Maxine, his children, his father, and all who knew him. God bless you, Andrew, you will not be forgotten. Rest in peace, dear friend.

Martin Friar, Birmingham Snow Hill (ex Bescot)

CHARLIE WOOD
TRUE RAILWAYMAN

My dad Charles ‘Charlie’ Wood has passed away at the age of 95. He started life on the railway from school, based at Ardsley shed (56B) then Copley Hill (56C) and Holbeck (55A) and finally Leeds station where he ended in the top link driving trains to London up to his retirement in 1986. Although he liked driving the HSTs his favourites were the Deltics. He lived all his life in the village of Ardsley and was given the honour of driving the last train to stop at Ardsley station after the Beeching cuts. Dad passed away on 18 April, one day after his 95th birthday. He was a true railwayman, and ASLEF member, a great dad, and well-liked by family, friends, and work colleagues, and will be greatly missed.

David Wood (son)

JOHNNIE BATT
STARTED ON STEAM

It is sad, once again, to report the passing of a retired Ripple Lane driver. Johnnie Batt died suddenly at home recently despite the efforts of paramedics to revive him. John started his career at Stratford, on the steam, and although he enjoyed the job, he decided to call it a day as all his mates were out enjoying themselves on a Saturday night, tripping the light fantastic in the local dance halls. But after a little while John realised he had made a mistake, and missed the job, so he rejoined and later became a driver at his beloved Ripple Lane depot where he remained until its closure.

He did the panel foreman’s job during the run down. He was a popular driver and got involved with the depot’s social and welfare club activities, and was also loyal to ASLEF during various industrial actions in those troubled times of the 1980s. He recently received his 50 year loyalty badge – a distinction of which he was extremely proud.

The service was held at Hainault crematorium and then, afterwards, we went to the Conservative Club in Dagenham for some light refreshments and to reminisce about the good times with family, friends and Pathfinders. Our condolences go out to his wife Maureen, son Glenn, family and friends.

Cliff Blackwell, Ripple Lane
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

Letters

Steven’s right to call for a carer’s leave policy on rail

Brother Steven Nimmo’s letter in the June Journal really struck a chord with me. My wife has an incurable condition that will only get worse, and last year had an emergency admission to A&E, including having to be put into resus. This situation could reoccur at any time. However, despite my having an exemplary attendance record, I had to think twice about calling in sick and, in the end, had to use outstanding leave, which had to be authorised, to cover the four days that I was unable to go to work. This was an additional worry that I really did not need at that time. Our union should negotiate for sickness leave to be given for emergency situations, when an immediate family member (spouse, partner or child) has to be admitted to hospital. After all, how can a driver be expected to carry out his or her duties with an often enormous worry on their mind?

Also, having been involved in the often slow process of assessments and diagnosis involved with my wife’s condition, and the long periods between consultations that my wife is having to endure, I cannot help feeling that it is about time that our union started to think about negotiating for a private health care scheme for members, and their spouses/partners. If managers are entitled to private health care, then why aren’t drivers, we all work for the same company, don’t we?

Tony Emptage, Ramsgate

GS Mick Whelan says: ‘We believe that, as workers in a safety-critical role, we should have the benefit of family leave. But, as a trade union, affiliated to the Labour Party, we believe in a properly-funded National Health Service designed to deliver the best possible care to everyone in this country, regardless of income. That’s what the NHS has been doing since it was created, by the post-war Labour government, 70 years ago, on 5 July 1948. We also believe in the renationalisation of all previously publicly-owned public utilities and are against anything that undermines that aspiration.’

Company council action puts depot on death row

I feel I have to write to the Journal to inform members of the situation at the CrossCountry depot at Bournemouth. Our company council are in discussions with management to open a depot at Eastleigh on the cheap. Company council used a vote of Bournemouth members to justify their own weaknesses to enter negotiations which was a total cop out on their part. We have fought for years to keep our PTR conditions yet this company council are willing to throw them away when it suits, especially, ironically, as one member of the council lives in Eastleigh. This could have knock-on effects for many CrossCountry depots to follow suit, if management wish. I really do feel that if this depot goes ahead Bournemouth CrossCountry depot will be placed on death row.

Steve Lang, Bournemouth

GS Mick Whelan says: ‘On looking at this, a discussion did take place at the branch last July to see the feelings of the members at the time. There have been no subsequent discussions with the company. We would, of course, have to react to changes in franchise shape, as determined by the DfT, but would insist on the current agreed PTR being utilised.’

Trams are not ‘buses on rails’ – but neither are they trains. A tram is a tram – strictly a ‘light rail vehicle’

No, trams are not buses – and neither are they trains. A tram is a tram – or a light rail vehicle, to be pedantic, as DOI Finn Brennan accurately describes them (Journal, June). To treat a tram as a bus or a train is likely to damage the future of tram/light rail in Britain. A tram needs to be considered as the hybrid vehicle it is. If we do not get a grip on this, we are likely to spoil the future of this useful mode of transport, which is popular with the public as buses are not.

Look at the success of the mode in the Manchester area, which is providing a transport coverage that trains and buses could not in their own right. Part of Metrolink’s success is due to its ability to use the flexible, hybrid qualities of the tram that no other mode can. For example, instead of forcing passengers to use a poorly-sited station, it can reach the town centre. And there is the possibility of a new network in South Wales that could do the same. Yes, the vehicles need to be strong enough to withstand likely accidents and the bodywork needs suitable attention. Not forgetting that some buses travel at higher speeds than trams and we have seen the results of serious bus accidents.

One point that needs stressing is that the cause of the Sandilands accident was not high speed per se; indeed, I cannot recall a rail accident that was due simply to high speed, which makes me concerned when I hear that the maximum speed on Tramlink has been reduced. The essential cause of this accident was the incredible oversight by numerous parties in failing to realise the potential of a few seconds’ lack of awareness of a sharp curve ahead, which has caused a number of railway accidents recently and back over the years (Morpeth, Salisbury, Eckersheim and Santiago de Compostela: that is the main issue to be addressed.

Trams need to be seen as a specific mode, with its own needs, and not pushed into boxes which already exist but will not serve. This is not something that can be left to politicians or others who are bound by preconceived ideas or we are likely to stunt the growth of trams/light rail in the UK, for no one’s benefit.

I am fortunate to travel fairly frequently on tram services on the continent, which also travel at high speed, and in streets, as well as traversing sharp curves. Possibly more visits to some of these networks might build up a positive ethos to help us in the UK – and even share our own less happy experiences.

Eric Stuart

‘ASLEF has consistently argued that the root cause of the tragic derailment at Sandilands was a management and regulatory culture that saw trams as “buses on rails” rather than light rail vehicles’ wrote District 8 Organiser Finn Brennan in the Journal in June

Light rail vehicles – not buses on rails

The RAIB report did recommend steps toward an automatic tram protection system, but it is unclear when this will be addressed. Trams need to be seen as a specific mode, with its own needs, and not pushed into boxes which already exist but will not serve. This is not something that can be left to politicians or others who are bound by preconceived ideas or we are likely to stunt the growth of trams/light rail in the UK, for no one’s benefit.

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Eric Stuart
MICK HOLDER turns back time to July 1918 when Army medicals were a hot topic in the Journal

LONGER THAN NECESSARY
The Annual Assembly of Delegates has come and gone, and a few remarks on its labours may not be out of place. The 1918 Assembly, like some of its predecessors, was longer than it need have been if speeches had ended when the speaker had finished.

INCREASE IN BENEFITS
Many benefits have been increased without increase of contributions, notably those of the Orphans Fund, which will commence after a much shorter period of membership, and continue for a year longer than has hitherto been the case.

Is bio-degradable potato starch wrap the solution?
I recently had my magazine from the National Trust in a bio-degradable wrap made from potato starch. It looks like plastic but isn’t and it can be just put on the compost or thrown in the normal bin. I wondered when the ASLEF Journal is going to start to take responsibility (like many other magazines and companies) for the environment and start using this biodegradable wrap? Peter McGrady, DB Cargo

Thanks for all your help
I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me throughout the last three years, during which I have, like borrowing from a loan shark… what a lot of people don’t know is that while Harley-Davidson motorcycles (the ‘tractors’ to which Dave refers) are one of the biggest symbols of the rugged individual, free in the wind on the American roads, the Harley-Davidson motor company is a unionised firm and has been for a very long time. Mick Holder, ASLEF’s h&s dept

The increase of 100% in Strike Pay and in other benefits are all to the good.

FOOLISH WASTE OF TIME
Immediately following the raising of the age for military service some Railway Companies’ officers appeared to rather lose their heads in releasing Footplatemen for the Army or sending them for medical examination, as did some local recruiting officers in calling up for such examination all Footplatemen up to 50 years of age, which was a foolish waste of the time of the medical officers and of the men examined, who could not possibly be released, to say nothing of public money. The General Secretary has been in communication with the Railway Executive and Ministry of National Service and we may reasonably expect that the nation’s need of an efficient railway service will be recognised, and the necessary Footplate staff retained in railway service. Certainly the useless and unnecessary medical examinations should cease.

London & North Eastern
Good old LNER, my grandad drove for them from 1923 to 1948. But is a ‘graying’ a young loan shark? I ask because the New Statesman has equated the Public Finance Initiative as like borrowing from a loan shark… Mel Thorley, Longsight

Those tractors are union, you know
Re Dave Weddle’s letter (Journal, June) about the restoration of his Triumph Thunderbird, and his payoff, ‘Eat your heart out, Tosh, with that tractor of yours!’ what a lot of people don’t know is that while Harley-Davidson motorcycles (the ‘tractors’ to which Dave refers) are one of the biggest symbols of the rugged individual, free in the wind on the American roads, the Harley-Davidson motor company is a unionised firm and has been for a very long time. Mick Holder, ASLEF’s h&s dept

CLASS 308 NSERS badge to raise funds for the preservation of the last complete Phase One 4 CIG train 1753. £6 inc p&p from NSERS, 41 Highfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6DD. Cheques payable to Network South East Railway Society.

SOUTH WESTERN
Suburban 707 limited edition 35x30mm enamel badge £5 + £1 p&p from Martin Thompson (Wimbledon Park) email wdrailbadge@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 (D8233) 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

CLASS 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. £7.50 inc p&p from Mark Steele, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, King’s Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 3XW.

THREE BRIDGES branch strike badge 2016/17. £5 inc p&p (proceeds to charity) from Paul Eden (branch secretary) email paul@homerdaz.com.

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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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In the wake of ‘the war that will end war’

A new exhibition at the Tate examines the impact of the Great War on the work of artists in Britain, France and Germany in the years from 1916 to 1932. KEITH RICHMOND picks up his passport to Pimlico – and a world in the shadows of the aftermath of war.

The Great War of 1914-18 – it did not become known as the First World War until, from 1939-45, there was a second – was, according to HG Wells, in a collection of essays published in October 1914, The War That Will End War. It didn’t, of course. But it did leave more than 10 million people dead, and more than 20 million traumatised and injured.

‘If I should die, think only this of me / That there’s some corner of a foreign field / That is forever England’ – Rupert Brooke, The Soldier

As we count down to the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of this year, when we mark 100 years since the signing of the armistice between the Allied and Axis powers in a carriage of Marshal Foch’s private train in the Forest of Compiègne, in Picardy, Emma Chambers and Rachel Rose Smith have curated a fascinating new exhibition at Tate Britain.

The tone is quiet and reflective – melancholy, even – rather than jingoistic, with paintings such as Paths of Glory by Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson – the title taken from a line in Thomas Gray’s Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, ‘The paths of glory lead but to the grave’ – which, despite Nevinson being sent to the Fields of Flanders as an official war artist, was banned by the War Office censor on the grounds that ‘representations of the dead have an ill-effect at home’ and Grave of a Serbian Soldier by the French painter Paul Jouve. After the bodies and the battlefields came the memorials; Charles Sargeant Jagger designed Soldier Reading a Letter for a memorial at Paddington station to commemorate Great Western Railway workers killed during the war. The model, on display here, shows a soldier, off duty, wearing a scarf and sheepskin jerkin to keep warm in a freezing trench, a symbol of ‘the link which united the fighting man at the front with the home for whose defence he fought and died’.

‘Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew / Your cosmopolitan sympathies’ – Isaac Rosenberg, Break of Day in the Trenches

The great German satirists George Grosz and Otto Dix were savage in their denunciation of what a war between two 19th century imperial powers had done to the ordinary man and woman. Grey Day contrasts the affluence of a well-fed boss class businessman, who has done well out of war, with the poverty of an emaciated veteran who has lost an arm and been pushed to the periphery. Prostitute and Disabled War Veteran by Otto Dix; Self-Portrait by Christian Schad; Paths of Glory by CRW Nevinson; The Jazz Club (The Dance Party) by William Roberts; Grey Day by George Grosz; Soldier Reading a Letter by Charles Sargeant Jagger

There are shades of Cabaret – the musical by Kander and Ebb, the film by Bob Fosse, the book on which it was based – in post-war paintings such as Les Folies de Belleville by Edward Burra, a frequent visitor to Paris, and the Folies-Belleville music hall, theatre and coffee house in Montmartre; The Jazz Club by William Roberts, who had served as a gunner on the Western front; and the narcissistic Self-Portrait by Christian Schad.

The Great War cast a long, dark shadow over the 20th century; this exhibition shines new light on its effect on art – and the reality that art reflected – in three of the countries most deeply affected. Go if you can.

‘The old lie: Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori’ – Wilfred Owen, Dulce et Decorum Est

There are concessions £17; 12-18 years £5; children under 12, veterans and members of the armed forces free.
STANDING WITH YOUR MATES

ACKLING the Housing Crisis by Tony O’Brien is more about trade unionism in the construction industry over the last century than that title might suggest – and well worth reading. Tony is a carpenter and lifelong activist in UCATT (now Unite) having been convenor on Southwark council’s direct labour organisation.

Whilst the book does make clear arguments for local authorities to build many more council houses, and directly employ local people to build, maintain and refurbish them, there’s far more than that here. Tony has published before, notably the story of the Construction Safety Campaign and on the fight against asbestos. This book adds to those histories.

Now, Tony is a carpenter, not an author, so Dickens or a university professor he ain’t, and this book could do with an edit to make it flow and read better, so any prospective reader should bear that in mind. But he has so much of interest to tell that becomes much less of an issue. There’s loads here. What a crappy industry construction can be to work in and the fight to improve it; gangster contractors; trying to organise in a fractured industry; the ’72 national strike; bosses getting away with killing workers, and the victory in turning that around with CSC et al; the reasons why strike; bosses getting away with killing; fighting to preserve benefits gained; the fractured industry; the ‘72 national industry construction can be to work in and the fight to improve it; gangster contractors and bogus self-workers, and the victory in turning that around with CSC et al; the reasons why

More in here than the title suggests.

Mick Holder

Tackling the Housing Crisis

On track

Prize Crossword

Crossword 147 by Tom Williams

Across
1 Capital of Spain
2 Accommodation for holidaymakers or business travellers
3 Dark seedy fruit
4 Royal, navy or turquoise
5 Large fierce striped cat
6 High speed train
7 Brilliant red
8 Throwing game
9 Lager or bitter
10 Sour citrus fruit
11 Sample a morsel
12 Sample a morsel
13 Highly seasoned sauce
14 Glass ball

Down
1 Child’s small round glass ball
2 Regulation
3 Duke’s wife
4 Addiction
5 Bitumen
6 Hen
7 Horizontal shock absorber on car exterior
8 Throat
9 Abrasive pan cleaner
10 Beat soundly
11 Finger or toe
12 Turnip-like stew ingredient
13 Bird’s beak
14 Donkey

Solution to Crossword 146

Across: 3 Glass 6 Goulash 7 Oxtail 8 Unlit 9 Literate 12 Theme 14 Facet 15 Dressage 18 Mason 19 Cinema 20 Fall out 21 Spree


Congratulations to Philip Chambers of Swindon, who was last month’s winner. The winner of this month’s Prize Crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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

Thanks for all your responses to the 146th prize crossword in the June edition of the ASLEF Journal. If you successfully complete this month’s crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 July

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.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS: TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RELATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1992 (AS AMENDED)

A resolution approving the furtherance of political objects within the meaning of the above Act as an object of the union has been adopted by ballot under the Act. Any payments in furtherance of those objects will be made out of a separate fund, the political fund of the union. Every member of the union has a right to be exempt from contributing to that fund. A form of exemption notice can be obtained by or on behalf of any member either by application at, or by post from, head office, or from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers’ Associations, Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London, EC4Y 8JX. This form, when filled in, or a written request to the like effect, should be handed or sent to the general secretary.
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

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Shadow Chancellor
Professor Keith Ewing
IER / CTUf
Mick Whelan
ASLEF General Secretary
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BFAWU / McStrav
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