Freight on rail in Britain

Inside this issue: A special report on the state of rail freight in the UK plus Steve Williams on the creeping privatisation of our schools, Dave Chapple on trades councils and Gregor Gall on the gig economy
save for your future
for less than your
favourite song on iTunes

railway enginemen’s tax free saver plans

tax free policies from 70p per day

children’s saver plan
saver plan
saver and disability plan

for further information call us on freephone 0800 328 9140
visit our website at www.enginemens.co.uk

or write to us at Railway Enginemen’s Assurance Society Limited,
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE
Who’s responsible?

HEN the Transport Secretary says in Parliament he ‘is not responsible for running the railways’ you know we are in the midst of a crisis. Is it the forced taking over of the East Coast franchise, the failure to deliver infrastructure improvements, and electrification, or the drop in season ticket sales for the second consecutive period? The madness of franchises replacing new trains with new trains, because it’s cheaper, or the rumours of more franchises seeking to renegotiate their contracts while considering handing back the keys? No! It’s the failure to deliver the timetables on GTR and Northern, serially cancelling trains, and short forming the few trains that do finally arrive. All the stakeholders are busy blaming each other; Network Rail not giving enough notice of the paths available, companies not being able to train drivers on the new routes, or recruit the numbers they need, and the DfT awarding contracts that are undeliverable. Mr Grayling, we know, ultimately, where the responsibility lies.

I must have missed the thanks from the government and the companies to the drivers and other staff bearing the brunt of the failings and incompetence of others. Rail staff are trapped out there with the passengers, not getting home, or their scheduled breaks, and, more importantly, in the frontline for the anger of the travelling public. I hope when the authorities, such as the ORR, look at this fiasco they take cognisance of the safety implications of continual roster and diagram change, of fatigue and people not getting their proper breaks. The situation would be a thousand times worse if we were not working over and above our agreed hours.

Some time ago I congratulated Unison on the great result they had ensuring that those who go to employment tribunals have some sort of recourse to support and have a voice when treated badly or illegally by employers. Now we need to challenge the Civil Liability Bill which will, under the guise of dealing with whiplash complaints, take away support in real terms for anyone who suffers an injury at work or elsewhere. The insurance lobby has worked hard to claim that the number of claims necessitates this. Our view is investigate properly; do not deny recom pense to those who deserve it by making it impossible to get legal support or afford advice.

I want to thank all those who attended the anti-Trump and anti-fascist demonstrations, Pride, the Durham Miners’ Gala and Tolpuddle. And to John Metcalfe, who has joined the EC, I look forward to working with you.

Yours fraternally
Mick Whelan, general secretary

August 2018 | The ASLEF Journal 3
The Big Meeting

CRAIG BEHARRIE, LLC, Edinburgh No 2 branch, reports from the Durham Miners’ Gala on Saturday 14 July

RYING to describe the Durham Miners’ Gala to someone who hasn’t had the pleasure of attending is never a simple task. You’ll almost certainly undersell it. The atmosphere, the passion, and the energy of the people involved in the Big Meeting just doesn’t compare to anything else.

District 2 – in the shape of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Motherwell and Airdrie branches – made our annual trip armed with a heavy cool box to combat the hot weather. There was also a contingent from Gateshead & Newcastle but they are adopted Scots on most occasions anyway!

The march through the scenic – and baking hot – streets is always a highlight with the proud waving of district council banners for the passionate crowds. Speaking of passion, I didn’t quite catch EC president Tosh McDonald’s face, but nobody missed the unmistakable tattooed forearm raised higher than anyone else’s as we passed the County Hotel!

On to the cricket ground, where we were joined by members of District 5, and convened around Edinburgh No 2 chair Stuart Williamson’s cool box. The speeches are rabble-rousing at worst, mesmerising at best. How anyone can find anything to disagree with in a speech by Dennis Skinner or Jeremy Corbyn is utterly beyond me. Perhaps the most memorable was an emotional speech by FBU GS Matt Wrack, who spoke of the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, one year on, and the disgusting trial-by-media to which his heroic firefighters have been subjected. The crowd were visibly moved by his words.

Afterwards we retired to the Bridge Hotel for refreshments where BEM D2 rep Paul Patmore was finally able to drink a beer to which water hadn’t been added and shirtless district council secretary John McCue seemed to think he was in Dalaman rather than Durham.

Another fantastic day spent among comrades, celebrating trade unionism, internationalism, and socialism. I strongly advise anyone thinking of going along next year to do so. Roll on Durham 2019!

ASLEF welcomes laser law

The Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Act came into force on 10 July with tough new penalties – up to five years in prison and unlimited fines – for people who target trains, planes, cars and boats with lasers. GS Mick Whelan said: ‘It’s dangerous – and potentially deadly – as well as stupid to shine a laser pen into the eyes of the driver of any vehicle, but especially one carrying hundreds of passengers. We hope this acts as a deterrent to such behaviour, and prevents what could be a catastrophe.’

NETWORK RAIL LAUNCH FOOTBRIDGE COMP

A competition for fully accessible new footbridge designs that can be used across Britain’s railways has been launched by Network Rail and the Royal Institute of British Architects. Entrants have been encouraged to think about how they might be adapted to level crossings.

ONE KNIGHT FOR ANOTHER

Sir Terry Morgan, chair of Crossrail, who previously worked for Tube Lines, BAE, Royal Ordnance, and Land Rover, replaces Sir David Higgins as chair of HS2 on Wednesday 1 August.

Our hip, hot and happening red baseball cap will keep the sun out of your eyes this summer. £5 (inc p&p); email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

Class act? Think not. GTR boss doesn’t know his place. Rail row as passengers kicked out of first class by Gvia Thameslink boss.

Marz Colombini

If memory serves, 29% of the UK electorate voted for a government led by Theresa May in 2017. I have no recollection of anyone voting for a government led by Jacob Rees-Mogg and his European Research Group. So how come he seems to be in charge?

George Monbiot

This is what happens when you have men in government who’ve been raised from birth to believe it’s someone else’s job to clean up after them. They throw tantrums when they finally make a mess no-one can fix. #Brexit

JK Rowling

If you want to solve the obesity problem, you have to solve the inequality problem first.

The Economist

Supporting and loving your country is searching for and telling the truth, not swallowing then retelling lies.

Kevin Maguire
Soul man

ARTIN O'Neill, ASLEF’s health & safety rep on TPE at Newcastle, sent the Journal this poem ‘my wife Heather has written for Colin Smith who has been a great resource of information over the years. He helped me out on more than one occasion, and we’d like to wish him all the best in his retirement.’

AN ODE TO A NORTHERN SOUL

Colin you were born in 1953
To mum Lillian and Dad Freddie,
The youngest brother in siblings four
All born with sport at their core.
Rugby players, boxer and pentathlete
Achievements galore, no mean feat
From rugby union and onto league
A marathon skill known to intrigue.

Children and grandchildren bringing such pride.
You have your family by your side
You accepted the challenge, resolved to be strong
With fresh faces joining day by day.

Now a movement leading the way
Once a political mystery
Inspector sent to move you swift!
When limping along on a painful knee).

Railway and union seemed the perfect choice
For a leader with a strong voice
Driving for Mersey and British Rail
Very nearly a career fail

The unique respect just your cup of tea
Achievem ents galore, no mean feat
From rugby union and onto league
All born with sport at their core.
Rugby players, boxer and pentathlete
The youngest brother in siblings four
To mum Lillian and Dad Freddie,

500 CLUB: J Simpson with number 7 won the July draw scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £414.

CONFERENCE & RALLIES

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. The STUC disabled workers’ conference is at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel, Glasgow, from Saturday 17 to Sunday 18 November. The Scottish Trades Union Congress is at the Caird Hall, Dundee, from Monday 15 to Wednesday 17 April 2019.

QUOTE...

‘These days people talk and talk, yet seem to say so very little.’ – Rachel Cooke. New Statesman

...UNQUOTE

Our new ASLEF mug has images of 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

CAITLIN MORAN, in her Celebrity Watch column in The Times, reflects on our royals on the rails. ‘Much has been made about the person we will never actually refer to as “the Duchess of Sussex” – Meghan Markle – accompanying the Queen on the royal train while visiting Runcorn in Cheshire. Perhaps the most pleasing detail about the royal train was the information that the Queen likes to take her morning bath at 7.30am, at which point the train “travels below the speed limit and avoids going over bumpy points” lest the bath water be jolted all over the 1970s Formica panels. Celebrity Watch doesn’t know if the Queen has ever travelled on the Southern Rail all-stations service to Brighton, but is happy to inform her that she could safely take her bath at any point in the journey, given that the train operates at speeds that sloths would find “a bit slow” and often grinds to a halt at Three Bridges for so long that the Queen could stick on a face pack, shave her legs, and still have time to exfoliate her knees. Just in case she ever wants to save money and travel Muggle class.’

SIMON HEFFER, columnist for both the Daily and Sunday Telegraph, is skiing further and further off piste – well, off the official Tory Party line – these days. ‘The Brexit fiasco is just another example of how Theresa May lacks the fundamentals of a prime minister. It was apparent in her bunker-like conduct of the Home Office, for those who chose to see it; in her foolishness in calling last year’s election; in her catastrophic oversight of the campaign; her inability to engage in acts of governance other than Brexit; her poor choice of cabinet colleagues; and, above all, how she has appeared helpless to stop a breakdown of collective cabinet responsibility that mocks what most took to be a basic precept of the British constitution.’

PAUL KRUGMAN, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, is no fan of Donald Trump but argues, in the New York Times, as the US President prepares to torch the world economy with a full-on global trade war, that big business is paying the price for decades of cynical politics. ‘What do I mean by cynical politics? The tacit alliance between businesses and the wealthy, on one side, and racists on the other, that is the essence of the modern conservative movement.’

WE USED to have lorry firms and delivery companies, which became haulage, then logistics, and now truckers based in Warrington, claims it is ‘delivering sustainable distribution’ Similarly, while companies used to have a personnel department, which morphed into human (or inhuman) resources, LNER now has what it loftily, if risibly, likes to call a Chief People Officer…

PASSENGERS on a peak time Southeastern service from Tonbridge, Kent, into Cannon Street in July heard this announcement from the guard: ‘Thank you for making the ticket check so easy this morning,’ followed by, after a Pinteresque pause, ‘compared with some.’
The power of love

DARRAN BROWN, secretary of ASLEF’s LGBT+ Representatives’ Committee, reports from London Pride

HIS year’s London Pride on Saturday 7 March was, once again, another huge success, with 30,000 people marching. There was an issue over the restricted numbers, with 20,000 applicants turned down, so a smaller march than in previous years. This seems unfair, as the NHS rally had 50,000 marchers, but that’s a debate for another day.

Notices were sent to all branch secretaries to place in ASLEF display cases and, as ASLEF members do, they responded in support. Members came from Bournemouth, Preston, Swansea, Gateshead & Newcastle, and many of the home counties. The GS came along but had to leave before the end to lay a wreath at the IWMT memorial. We set off in glorious but baking sunshine after what appears to be a regularly delayed start but, once under way, the parade was fantastic. The streets were packed, with people on balconies, looking out of windows, hanging off monuments, to be there and support the marchers. They were waving, cheering, whistling, and waving flags as we marched past with our banners and flags held high in joyful pride.

Not everyone who was there at the very beginning lasted to the very end – something about seeking refreshments – but most did manage the whole march. And then, at the end, after group photos, we piled off to a pub for a much-needed drink and a chance to watch England beat Sweden. I have to say thank you to everyone who came along and, hopefully, had as enjoyable a day as I did. There is no march quite like London Pride. So, if you didn’t make it this year, there’s always next year’s march to enjoy.

Making his Mark

Mark Wakenshaw, an LNER driver, and a member of Gateshead & Newcastle branch, has been elected as executive committee member for District 4. He replaces Tosh McDonald, who steps down from the EC at the end of this year. Mark, who narrowly beat Pete James, Sheffield Midland, will start work as an EC member on 1 January 2019. Mark polled 311 votes and Pete 308, a result confirmed by Electoral Reform Services with a recount. Turnout was 35.4%.

SEVEN HANGED FOR SARIN SUBWAY ATTACK

Shoko Asahara, leader of Aum Shinrikyo, a doomsday cult, has been executed with six of his followers in Japan for the poison gas attack on rush hour commuters travelling on the Tokyo subway which killed 13 people in 1995.

NIGHT FEVER MEANS MORE INJURIES ON Tube

There were more than 3,000 injuries recorded on London Underground in 2017 – a 23% increase since 2015 – which TfL puts down to the launch of Night Tube services and ‘some people who have had far too much to drink’.

GTR SENDS PASSENGERS SECOND CLASS

GTR declassified all first class coaches on all Thameslink and Great Northern services during peak times from Friday 29 June until the new interim timetable was introduced on Sunday 15 July.

Passengers ‘pay for their own refunds’

Rail passengers are paying for their own ticket compensation, say MPs. Commuters who get a partial refund for a delayed or cancelled train are effectively ‘paying themselves’ as Network Rail is funded by taxes. And as ‘Nero – Failing Grayling – fiddles while the timetable burns’ Labour MPs called on the government to ‘step in and take control’ of the chaos of Britain’s failing franchised railway.

Shadow Rail Minister Rachael Maskell asked her opposite number Jo Johnson: ‘Does the minister agree that, while the operating companies write the cheques, it is the state that pays?’ Boris’s kid brother answered: ‘The rail industry is partly in public control through Network Rail and partly run by private operators. Each will pay their fair share.’

QUOTES

‘Like a slow drip of arsenic, Brexit has poisoned our politics – and there is no antidote in sight.’ – Helen Lewis, deputy editor, New Statesman

‘Astonishing!’ said Rachael. ‘Network Rail paying compensation means this is coming from the public. So, in effect, passengers will be funding their own compensation for delayed and cancelled trains, for missing exams, for being sacked from their jobs or for lost business revenue. How much has the minister budgeted for, to pay compensation for the Secretary of State’s decision to press ahead with this rail timetable chaos? Or will he instead cut more Network Rail projects to pay for it?’ Jo Johnson swerved that one.

London takes pride. Photos: Paul Adams

Carry all your stuff – papers, sandwiches, keys – in style with our smart new sturdy black ASLEF bag. Price £17.50 (inc p&p); email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk
The air that I breathe

MICK HOLDER, of ASLEF’s health & safety dept, reports on our new air quality policy

OW unhealthy is the air that we breathe has become a hot topic of late. The issue was debated at AAD in Bristol in 2017 and it was agreed that ASLEF had much to say about the subject and should have a policy on the matter.

Two health & safety reps, Rachel Gentle, of Bristol branch, and Jason Wyatt, of Bakerloo line branch, got their heads together and drafted an air quality policy which has now been adopted by the EC and put on ASLEF’s website for reps and members.

The document sets out what the issues are for members but also, more importantly, gives ideas to H&Rs reps on how they might act to improve things at their workplace, in the cab, and in the general environment.

ASLEF has already addressed broader issues on air quality by adopting policies such as lobbying for more freight on rail, electrification, idling reduction, reducing use of road vehicles, etc, which would all help to significantly reduce diesel fume pollution. However, the policy goes deeper into aspects of work which may affect members’ health such as poor air conditioning in the mess room or the cab (where fitted), air filters, and their maintenance, etc.

GS Mick Whelan said: ‘Pulling all these issues into one policy gives our reps the chance to revisit these issues and ensure their employer is acting on them. And we’ll keep pushing government for proper investment in the railways for electrification and policies that deliver more freight on rail which will all add up to a healthier environment for us and generations to come.’

- The policy is free to download from the public and members’ areas of the ASLEF website.

ASLEF’s Jim joins EC

Jim Baxter points the way from the podium at AAD at the Marriott Hotel in Liverpool

Jim Baxter, a ScotRail driver, and member of Motherwell branch, has been elected as executive committee member for District 2, replacing Hugh Bradley, who steps down at the end of the year. Jim polled 415 votes; John McCue, Glasgow, 219; and Tam McKendrick, Grangemouth, 36. Turnout was 39.3%.

Jim’s term of office begins on 1 January 2019.

Do you know these men?

Longsight legend Mel Thorley wonders if you can put a name to the face of any of these fellers on the line in front of British Rail Class 28 diesel loco D5716. He reckons the pic was taken in 1958, at Derby, Trafford Park, Kentish Town, or Kingsmooer.

Who controls the past controls the future

I had the pleasure of attending the London, East & South East TUC as an observer where I met Collette Gibson, Shenfield branch, and the ASLEF delegate, who has been elected to serve on the regional executive committee. It was a very interesting meeting, with motions on decent homes for all; abortion rights, climate change, and jobs. The debate about artificial intelligence and the future of work rang the bell for me of HG Wells’ The War of the Worlds and George Orwell’s 1984.

PJ Smith, RMS

What can you get for your new, shiny £1 coin?

TBF membership...

just £1 a week covers you, your partner and dependent children.

0300 333 2000 www.tbf.org.uk

Transport Benevolent Fund CIO, known as TBF, is a registered charity in England and Wales, 1160901, and Scotland, SC047016.
Truth be told

District 4 Organiser NICK WHITEHEAD reports on a march and rally to demand the Tories – and police – come clean about what really happened at Orgreave during the miners’ strike

A SLEF activists once again attended the march and meeting to seek truth and justice for the miners brutally attacked by South Yorkshire Police at the Battle of Orgreave in 1984.

Speakers included Gill Furniss, Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside & Hillsborough; Joe Whitworth, our great friend and chair of the Durham Miners’ Association; Matt Abbott, ‘poet, practitioner and producer’, who read a poignant poem; and GMB GS Tim Roache who, in a rousing finale, told of the many pieces of evidence still not accepted by the Tory government.

Thirty-four years ago, on 18 June 1984, striking miners made their way to Orgreave, a coking plant between Rotherham and Sheffield, to organise a picket. Many assembling that day were surprised – and suspicious – that the police were happy to let them through and onto a field near the plant. Their suspicions proved right as the miners were surrounded by police, charged, and savagely attacked by mounted officers on horseback. Those who tried to escape were hunted down; it was not so much a battle but a rout. Miraculously, there were no deaths, but many suffered injuries, some serious.

Ninety-five miners were arrested and charged with riot and unlawful assembly – risible and politically-motivated charges given that the miners were the victims of police aggression, but which carried the possibility of life in prison – yet trials subsequently collapsed after what Michael Mansfield QC called ‘the biggest frame-up ever’ as it was revealed that police officers provided forged evidence and provided false testimony.

Despite calls for an inquiry the Thatcher government ordered a cover-up and celebrated with South Yorkshire police chiefs in Downing Street for their part in beating the miners.

Peter Wright, the controversial chief constable who oversaw the operation at Orgreave, was still in charge four years later for the FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough in 1989. For 27 years after that tragedy the force tried to deny responsibility and blame the victims. It’s clear that the despicable response of South Yorkshire Police was bred, and given government sanction, by methods employed during the miners’ strike.

The Hillsborough Family Support Group finally got the review they campaigned for, and, in April 2016, the jury at the second inquest into the disaster determined that 96 men, women and children crushed to death at the match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest had been unlawfully killed. They died principally owing to the serial failures and gross negligence of South Yorkshire Police. It would not be far from the truth to say that the Hillsborough disaster may not have happened if a true and fair inquiry had taken place after Orgreave. Although it is scant consolation for their loss, at least the families and friends of the Hillsborough victims finally got the truth and justice they deserved. It is way over the time for the victims of Orgreave to get the same.

JC calls for end to privatisation racket

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott joined ASLEF activists at King’s Cross on Monday 25 June to demand an end to the ‘privatisation racket’ and the renationalisation of Britain’s railways. It was the day the East Coast main line was taken back into what Jeremy called ‘fake public ownership’ after the collapse of VTEC, the joint Stagecoach-Virgin enterprise. It is the third time a private operator has failed on this flagship route since the Tories privatised the country’s rail network in 1994.

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

DO3 Andy Hourigan; Pete James, Sheffield Midland; EC vice-president Dave Calfe; Andy Botham, Derby; James Glew, Buxton & Peak Forest; Mandy Whitehead and DO4 Nick Whitehead looking for justice

FATAL CRASH UBER DRIVER WATCHING TV

The ‘safety operator’ of a ‘self-driving’ Uber car was watching television when the vehicle was involved in a fatal collision in Tempe, Arizona. The driverless Volvo was travelling at 44mph when it hit and killed Elaine Herzberg, 49. Police say Rafaela Vasquez, the Uber operator, was streaming an episode of The Voice rather than ‘monitoring the progress of the vehicle’. She now faces manslaughter charges. The car’s on-board technology failed to identify Ms Herzberg as a pedestrian and took no action to avoid smashing into her. Critics say autonomous vehicles can – and will – never be safe.

COMING UP FOR AIR

Freight on Rail manager Philippa Edmunds has welcomed planning permission for new freight sidings at Redbridge, Southampton, which will pave the way for longer, 775 metre, freight trains and improved air quality. ‘The development means that the existing 20 daily freight trains in and out of the port of Southampton, which already remove 1,600 HGVs per day, will be capable of removing an additional 728 HGVs every day.’

...UNQUOTE

QUOTE...

“We are going over the Tay Bridge, and there are few more thrilling views from a train than that. You feel as though you are flying over the water, while at the same time being mindful of the disaster immortalised by William McGonagall.” – Nicholas Lezard, New Statesman

ACTON BRANCH

Acton branch has closed and the remaining members moved into Paddington branch.
Comprehensive legal cover to keep you and your family on track

ASLEF members get free, specialist legal advice and representation for:
- Personal injury at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury including brain and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness
- Employment law (accessed via your ASLEF district organiser)

Additional member benefits include:
- Special terms for clinical negligence
- Discounted rates for wills and conveyancing
- Work-related criminal law advice (0800 587 7530)
- Cover for family members (personal injury claims away from work)

Use the ASLEF legal service, provided by Thompsons Solicitors, and keep 100% of your compensation within the union scheme.

Call the ASLEF legal service today on 0808 100 8009

www.thompsonstradeunion.law/aslef
Another brick in the wall

STEVIE WILLIAMS, a former headteacher, Labour Party councillor and parliamentary candidate, tells the alarming story of the creeping privatisation of English education

ICK Whelan is quoted in the May edition of the Journal, sending a message of solidarity to the Fédération Nationale des Cheminots CGT, in its battle with President Macron, who is trying to change their terms and conditions to ready SNCF, the French railway, for privatisation. Mick says: ‘Privatisation hasn’t worked; privatisation doesn’t work; and privatisation will not work’ pointing out that ‘It was an ideological, not a practical, decision here in Britain, and we are suffering the consequences with the highest fares in Europe, and the oldest rolling stock, and we see millions of pounds haemorrhage from the railway system every year in profits and dividends for the privateers.’

PRIVATISATION BY STEALTH

ASLEF members are aware that on each passenger rail journey, it is the professionalism of the train driver and the train staff that enables the thousand or so passengers to reach their intended destination in safety and comfort – not the pursuit of company profits. Speaking to union members at a recent ASLEF event confirmed me in my belief that the railways are a natural monopoly and need to be under direct public ownership and public control.

In my own area of experience and expertise, the world of education, it is the professionalism of the headteacher, the teachers, and all the other teaching and non-teaching support staff, that enables the thousand or so pupils in a typical secondary school, or the few hundred pupils in a typical primary school, to reach their intended learning destinations in safety and comfort.

And yet in education, as in health, under present and past Tory governments, we have experienced creeping privatisation – privatisation by stealth. Many patients believe that, when they walk into a National Health Service hospital, they are being treated by employees of the NHS, rather than employees of a sub-contracted private health company, as is often the case.

And many parents believe that, when they stand at the gates of their children’s school, they are looking into a publicly owned building, managed and staffed by publicly employed, and publicly accountable, teaching and non-teaching staff, rather than the reality – which can be very different.

Melissa Benn, back in 2012, talked of the rise of what she described as ‘edu-business’: ‘As we move away from state provision of state education, the remnants of a universal comprehensive system are being dismantled and replaced by new providers at every level.’ She described how private schools, at the time, were beginning to set up or take over failing schools – a process that, sadly, began under New Labour.

PRIVATE PROFIT AT PUBLIC EXPENSE

Education in Wales, and in Scotland, and in Northern Ireland, is separately managed, but in England, since 1998, many state schools have been transferred into private ownership by the private finance initiative established under Tony Blair’s government. No definitive list of privately owned maintained schools in England exists, because the Department for Education holds only details of the contractors and local authorities involved, with local authorities individually retaining lists of schools. However, it is estimated that, by 2020, schools will have paid PFI firms a staggering £4.8 billion, yielding £270 million profit for private companies out of taxpayers’ money.

And difficulties with PFI schools remain, with the new breed of private sector providers of state education reluctant to take them on, because they are so financially draining. The academisation of schools, begun by New Labour and accelerated by successive Conservative governments, has also moved schools from being funded by local authorities to being centrally funded but operated by private (currently non-profit making) trusts. Academy schools in England are, therefore, no longer accountable to local authorities and ‘new’ schools, even if they are simply established schools taken over by an academy trust, are no longer able to be inspected by Ofsted for five school terms (almost two years), even if the predecessor school had been placed into special measures.

FORCED ACADEMISATION

The public accountability of schools has been significantly undermined, as was clearly demonstrated by Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, in evidence he gave to the House of Commons Education Select Committee.

Although the government has dropped its policy of forced academisation of all schools, and although only one in five primary schools has been privatised, almost two-thirds of secondary schools (5,905) are now academies and there is no evidence, using Ofsted inspection grades as a benchmark, to suggest that they perform any better.

This massive shift in resources from local authorities (at a time when they have been crippled by swinging local government cuts) to private academy trusts was meant to have a positive effect by raising educational standards. However, after all these years of privatisation, there is no evidence for this whatsoever.

So, whilst education has been a political football – another public service sacrificed on the altar of free market economics – the professionals have continued to keep up the standard of service in the face of public spending cuts and policy prescriptions driven by an obsessive right-wing ideology. Does this sound familiar to ASLEF members?
Finding a strawberry crème in a tin of chocolates

NIGEL GIBSON, District 5 Organiser, and lead officer for Freightliner Heavy Haul, Freightliner Intermodal, and GB Railfreight, reckons the freight industry is finally coming to terms with a clutch of poor decisions made in the recent past

BELIEVE the rail freight industry is beginning to wake up to some of the realities of their past decisions and realise that recruitment of qualified drivers is going to be the occasional luxury – a bit like finding a strawberry crème in a tin of chocolates.

Whether it be around insecurity, because of the decisions to offload hundreds of drivers, or changes to pension schemes, making them far less attractive than those on offer elsewhere, it is clear that our members are turning away from a once thriving sector. And whilst we are now told that things are on the up, and business is coming thick and fast, with HS2 or CP6, which is all wonderful, how will these contracts be fulfilled without a driver resource? This, of course, means the freight operators need to take on trainee drivers and give them the skills needed in our industry to have a lasting career.

The freight operators need to review the diversity of our grade which reflects a shocking shortfall, even by comparison with train operators, whose statistics are not something to boast about. Whilst I am very pleased to see an interest being shown by the employers, I remain sceptical as to whether this is more about the recent requirement to publish the gender pay gap for which the statistics in our grade almost certainly negatively affect the figures of the wider company. We will work with the companies if they are serious about improving the general demographic of the grade; they have the opportunity, given the levels of recruitment taking place, but they need to be open minded about how they advertise and promote these positions.

When recruitment is taking place, and with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, the freight companies need to look at what can be done to make their organisations attractive and start to engage properly in relation to apprenticeships which can provide real and transferable qualifications. The ASLEF apprenticeship charter provides a basis from which to work and we will be pursuing the companies we work with to see some proper commitment for our future members. Whilst, as a union, we do not expect freight operators to bear the brunt of training costs for the rest of the industry, they cannot survive in the belief that training contracts are going to save them from the eagle eyes of their enemys and we do need to implement a long-term view if DBC is to succeed.

DB Cargo – where next?

SIMON WELLER, ASLEF’s assistant general secretary, and lead officer for DB Cargo, says it’s time for the company to deliver – without the fiddles and the back door deals

S YOU are no doubt aware, the DB company council and I have insisted that management work to the deal. No more begging texts, no more ‘favours’ and no more picking and choosing what overtime they offer to drivers.

We have done this for two main reasons – the first is that whilst those arrangements may suit the person asked the subsequent shuffling of diagrams and jobs results in other drivers swinging from shift to shift and that usually does not suit the person affected by the changes. The second is that it is their deal. They imposed it as the saviour of the company and it is now up to them to make it work. Without the fiddles and back door deals.

We have not done this simply to be awkward; the whole system was becoming like the Wild West. Some unlucky members were treated as if they had ‘white rosters’ and others saw it as a licence to print money. I think we all know that this is a totally unsustainable state of affairs for everyone, including the company.

It seems there is a small number of managers who will oppose anything the company council suggests as they feel they should not allow ‘ASLEF to run the show’. I’m afraid to say there’s no danger of us running the show any worse than they have.

Their utter incompetence and short sightedness is placing real jobs at risk. We are still seeing the route learning programme being short-changed and not carried out correctly. The same managers who don’t want us involved are resorting to the familiar, tired old tricks of just training a few and expecting them to support the whole service.

We have a long-term objective of getting back some form of certainty to rostering so members can plan their lives. Constant chopping and changing and taking shortcuts is no way to achieve this. If the company says its deal does not work and needs changing we will be the first to agree. We’ll be there to discuss the changes that are needed to provide secure and predictable jobs.

However, certain managers need to drop their pathetic ‘we can’t be seen to have ASLEF making the decisions’ attitude. Ironically, those managers who say that are incapable of making decisions for themselves. We are not their enemy and we do need to implement a long-term view if DBC is to succeed.

The rail freight industry is beginning to wake up to some of the realities of their past decisions and realise that recruitment of qualified drivers is going to be the occasional luxury – a bit like finding a strawberry crème in a tin of chocolates.
**Freight must stay at heart of the railway**

**MAGGIE SIMPSON,** executive director of the Rail Freight Group, calls on the government to support the freight sector, and make sure it is not pushed to the periphery in key discussions about the future of Britain’s railways.

HICHEVER way you look at it, change is coming to the railways. With the current timetable crisis, the East Coast franchise, and uncertainty over future network upgrades, there is a strong sense across the industry that something will have to give, and new approaches tried. There are, however, many different views on what the future should be, and how the railways can get there smoothly, with the least impact on staff and customers.

The government has set out its stall with proposals for the East Coast partnership, and greater devolution of Network Rail. The Labour Party has strong support from the unions and the public for its policy of renationalisation. The Scottish and Welsh governments have already taken a more hands-on approach to their railways and other sub-regional transport bodies, such as Transport for the North, are pressing for greater local control.

In most of these cases, the principle concern is for passenger services. Certainly, there is no overwhelming view amongst freight for any one particular reform and the majority of customers simply want their trains to run efficiently and to grow their businesses. There is continued investment by operators and customers with new facilities at sites including iPort in Doncaster, Cricklewood, and Hitchin, as well as in new equipment and wagons, and despite difficulties in recent years, the sector remains determined to press ahead for growth.

There is, though, a growing frustration that freight is being overlooked and that some proposals could leave our sector in a more difficult position than now. Freight is a smaller part of the railway, and its needs are different, but that does not mean it should be ignored, or that it somehow doesn’t matter if things get worse. It does!

So we are looking to make sure there is protection for freight in any new arrangement and, most importantly, that there are strong incentives to increase the amount of freight, as well as looking after existing trains.

To that end there have been productive discussions between the industry, unions, campaigners and the Labour Party transport team to see how freight can be supported in their emerging policies, and we will continue to develop this in coming months.

The Scottish government has set the ScotRail Alliance some specific targets for freight, including growth and new services, and measures to increase average speed and improve loading gauge on the network. The passenger franchise and Network Rail are now.

**Better to share than bottle up**

**PAUL BARBER,** company council secretary, Freightliner Heavy Haul, reports on a new initiative on mental health, pensions, and another organisational restructure.

HERE has been a lot of talk recently about mental health. It is good to see that an industry, dominated by men who will not talk about personal issues, is finally acknowledging that mental health illness is something to talk about. It can have a devastating effect on sufferers and their friends and families.

Freightliner recently launched a confidential telephone help line for staff affected by mental health and other personal issues. If you do not have the confidence to talk to your manager, please use this service. It is far better to share than bottle it up. It is confidential; the company has no access to any information apart from the number of staff using the services on offer.

Freightliner recently moved to a salary sacrifice scheme; national insurance contributions will have reduced for those who opted into the scheme.

Freightliner still has a defined benefit scheme open to new starters and staff who transfer in. Recent changes to the scheme should, hopefully, give it some security going forward. All the other freight companies’ pension schemes are either in serious financial trouble or have closed their defined benefit schemes to new entrants.

There has been yet another senior management and organisational change. The company is now split into three distinct operating groups.

From a negotiating point of view, we hope this is the last for a while so outstanding issues can be resolved, and there is some continuity going forward.

G&W recently announced it will invest $55 million in Freightliner, following years of under investment and private equity ownership. Hopefully, this is a positive message for the rail freight industry which is going through a very difficult period following the decline in coal traffic.

Although recruitment and retention is still a problem at Freightliner there will now be three graduate training courses being run this year which should bring 35 new drivers into the industry. There were some issues with the wording and terms of the contracts they were expected to sign but these have now been resolved. We wish them well in a part of the railway that is constantly changing.

**It’s 2018 and drivers...**

**BARRY HARE,** company council secretary, GB Railfreight, reflects on AAD, rest day working, diversity, and a lack of proper facilities throughout the rail freight sector.

HAD the privilege to attend this year’s annual assembly of delegates in Liverpool. I was pleasantly surprised by the number of first time delegates, and seeing them get involved was great. There are a couple of items that seem to be raised time and time again, such as rest day working and facilities.
Government needs to clean up its act

PHILIPPA EDMUNDS, manager of Freight on Rail, condemns the Tories’ inconsistent approach to a cleaner, greener Britain

The latest Climate Change Select Committee report, issued on 28 June, paints a damming picture of the government’s environmental record. Transport is now the largest emitting sector of the UK economy, responsible for 28% of the country’s carbon emissions.

The Department for Food and Rural Affairs’ clean air strategy says the government wants to accelerate the shift from road to rail but Department for Transport plans stack the cards in favour of HGVs. Its policy paper Road to Zero, which has been due for publication since March, is expected to exclude HGVs from the ban to sell new diesel cars and vans from 2040. Yet rail freight, the low carbon alternative to more HGVs on Britain’s already congested roads, is being penalised by the DfT’s electrification and diesel announcements. Freight diesel-only locomotives will not be allowed from 2040, even though they emit far less carbon dioxide and air pollution than HGVs for the equivalent journey. And electrification, the tried and tested solution, can no longer be mentioned in polite government circles, in an almost Harry Potteresque way.

The answer is for the government to get a grip on the costs of installing electrification, not halt adoption of the most sustainable fuel source, being rolled out across the rest of Europe, where there is no alternative fuel in the pipeline to match it. EU statistics show the UK trailing at a woeful 20th in the league table of electrified lines in Europe.

Julian Worth, a rail freight expert, has made the case for a modest re-wiring of 320 key miles over a 30 year period which could see two-thirds of rail freight moved by electric traction. But when I raised this with Jo Johnson, the Rail Minister, he said the diesel announcement was ‘a challenge to the rail industry’.

The government’s inconsistency across departments is worrying.

When it comes to rest day working, the freight sector needs to be seen a little differently from the passenger sector. It must be understood that if RDW was to stop within the whole of the network this would have a massive effect on freight companies. It’s my experience, as company council at a freight company, that contracts are bid for on the basis of RDW. This helps to keep the tender as low as possible but, ultimately, freight companies need RDW in case a contract is lost. It keeps the impact to a minimum and reduces the need for redundancies. As a norm the freight sector tends to run on 20% RDW. Normal agreements apply regarding RDW retraining and route learning.

As for facilities in the freight sector, what can I say? It’s 2018 and drivers are still going to the toilet in a bush by the side of the track. The question was raised regarding diversity, and female train drivers in the freight sector. It’s not very appealing for a female to join the freight side knowing facilities are not to the standard they are on the passenger side, but, that said, it’s wonderful to see three female drivers in the process of joining GBRf.

Facilities are improving in some locations while, in others, they are non-existent; there’s room for massive improvements in this area, regardless if you are male or female, and the fight must continue to raise standards to where they need to be for all our members.

I mentioned diversity. It’s good to know the company is taking this subject seriously, with a new campaign being planned to attract females and people from minority groups to join the company within the footplate grade. There is still a lot of work to be done but this is a great step in the correct direction.

Transfer policy within the company is just around the corner to be signed off; the first step to having a formal PT&R. As for EJRA, the employer justified retirement age, work continues with this controversial subject with more talks set to take place.

A little light at the end of the tunnel

JIM COCKBURN-POWELL, company council secretary, Direct Rail Services, introduces the newbies

It is all change at company council with the retirement of our lead officer, and long standing District 3 Officer, Colin Smith, in addition to Bros Richard Bamber and Rob H Smith who have taken up new ventures in the rail industry. David Hardie is the new north councillor and Jim Cockburn-Powell the new south councillor. David and I are extremely grateful for the support given to us by members in the company and we are very fortunate to have the new District 3 Officer Andy Hourigan to guide us as our new lead officer.

As a team, we have had to hit the ground running with negotiations taking place on a variety of issues including trainee train driver contracts, pay negotiations, and staff retention, and it has certainly been a steep learning curve for us.

Driver recruitment and retention is an area of concern for all freight companies at present, and the actions of some managers in the freight sector over the last couple of years have not helped, this coming despite advice from our comrades at the time pointing out that the closure of some depots and reductions to depot establishments elsewhere was not the best course of action.

With hard work and a common sense approach from both management and reps, we have just a little optimism that the freight sector can recover and thrive.

Freight
changing at management level and yet was to advertise 47 vacancies across both from other companies, and the latest effort are now looking mainly to TOCs to continue sister company, Heavy Haul, but many drivers effect on drivers’ morale. Upturn in work flows, the damage done during today. Whilst the company will point to an unfortunately, that is certainly not the case to write what a wonderful place we are in but, unfortunately, that is certainly not the case today. Whilst the company will point to an upturn in work flows, the damage done during the past 18 to 24 months has had a massive effect on drivers’ morale.

The redundancies may have been at our sister company, Heavy Haul, but many drivers are now looking mainly to TOCs to continue their career, whilst a bigger than expected number of drivers are moving to another TOC in the north-west. Freightliner has tried to recruit drivers, mainly experienced drivers from other companies, and the latest effort was to advertise 47 vacancies across both companies internally! What does not help is the constant changing at management level and yet another high level reorganisation. As a business council we have constantly told the company of the feeling of drivers and, whilst we will always be doing all we can to improve matters, it is time for Freightliner to step up to the mark.

There is very little communication with drivers. Take the HPA payment that was due in May; not a single word till two weeks after it hadn’t been paid. Again, we are willing to put out information for our members but I put out a message from management I believed to be true, but wasn’t kept, so I shall not be passing on messages like that from management again. I’ll take a kicking for my mistakes, but not for theirs.

G&W has now split the company into three sections, with rail a standalone concern. The

WORKERS KEY TO ENSURING RAIL REMAINS SAFE

The ORR’s annual safety performance report, published on 17 July, says ‘our railways are currently safe due to the diligence and professionalism of staff’ but warns that operator pressure, fatigue, new equipment and more services on Victorian infrastructure mean ‘the industry must focus on supporting its staff to ensure passengers travel safely’.

Obituaries

ANDREW HERON PLAYING FOOTIE WITH DAVE MACKAY

Andrew Heron, who has died at the age of 81, was born in Edinburgh, near Hearts’ Tynecastle ground, on 20 April 1937, and brought up in the West End of the city, attending Balgreen primary school and Carrick Vale secondary school. Family holidays were never an option, as money was very tight, although Andrew made up for that later in life, travelling to many countries.

He enjoyed football, played at Saughton Park, and remembered Dave Mackay – the legendary hard man centre-half who captained Hearts, Spors, Derby and Scotland – playing footie with the local lads. Andrew worked as a baker and milkman but got a lucky break when his father shouted through the fence at the railway yard asking if there was a job for his boy. He turned up the following day and got a job with British Rail which lasted 40 years – moving from cleaner to second man to driver. He worked on steam, diesel, electric, 125s and finally 225 engines, interrupted only by national service. He joined the Royal Scots – the oldest infantry regiment of the line in the British Army, formed in 1633 – and was posted to Egypt during the Suez crisis (and wasn’t given leave to return for his father’s death in 1956).

He met Rachel Paterson at the Dunedin dance hall in Edinburgh and they got married on 29 March 1958. Their first son, another Andrew, was born on 30 January the following year. Ten years later their second son Raymond was born on 2 February 1969. The Herons loved a party, especially at Hogmanay, and were always happy to sing a song or two. Andrew loved to yodel and sing about being the fireman on a steam train. He followed Hearts all over Scotland, loved his grandchildren Jasmine and Callum, and was happiest when they would count out all the £2 coins he had collected over the year so they could have holiday treats. He loved coming over to look after them while their mum and dad had a night out.

Andrew had a long and happy retirement, spending a lot of time in various pubs and clubs. He loved to play golf – and loved socialising at the 19th hole – and enjoyed the King’s Cross golf society breaks in Scotland and Devon. He will be sorely missed. Andrew Heron (son)

JESSE BRIDLE

KEEN GARDENER

Ex-Bath GWR and Bath Road retired driver Jesse Bridle died at 93 on 3 April 2017. Jesse began his railway career in Bath on GWR in the mid-1930s. He did the usual career path, starting as cleaner, promoted to fireman, and when a driver’s job came up under the old GWR line of promotion had to move up to London.

After moving back to the West Country he took up a driver’s position at Bath Road diesel depot in Bristol where he worked through the links until he retired in the mid-1980s. Jesse was a keen gardener – he enjoyed growing flowers and vegetables – and also loved a flutter on the horses.

He and his wife could be seen on Saturday night in their favourite seats in the lounge of the old railway club in Bristol until it closed. Jesse will be much missed by family Lesley, Jackie, Molly and Bess, friends and workmates. Bernard Kennedy, Bristol
OR many years ASLEF has actively pushed, both industrially and politically, for the diversifying of the driving grade which, even in 2018, is still predominantly made up of heterosexual white men aged over 35. The ASLEF charter states that the union endorses the ‘pro-active recruitment of persons of those groups, eg women and ethnic minorities, who are currently under-represented among our member grades in the industry’.

Indeed, the union’s commitment to this was further cemented in 2012 with the publication of our On Track with Diversity report which explored the reasons behind the lack of diversity in the grade and gave recommendations for change. Since publication of the report the union has engaged with the train operating companies over their recruitment practices. Focused efforts, from some companies, has seen some change in the make-up of the driving grades, albeit at a very slow rate. Given ASLEF’s high membership density our figures are an accurate reflection of the rail industry and, as can be seen, there is a stark comparison between TOCs and FO Cs, with diversity amongst freight drivers woefully low:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASSENGER MEMBERS</th>
<th>FREIGHT MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAME</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUNG MEMBERS</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(LGBT+ membership numbers not recorded)

There is hope – as well as room – for improvement at the FO Cs as the union has just begun to work in partnership with DB Cargo and Freightliner with a view to achieving a more diverse workforce.

Discussions with DBC have centred on their current recruitment campaign for junior drivers; they are focusing on attracting more women to apply for these roles. These drivers will be based at depots, making many of the traditional excuses – such as a lack of toilet facilities – for not employing women invalid.

Amy Pressland, professional development and change manager at DB Cargo, says: ‘The rail freight industry has historically been male dominated. Nonetheless, at DB Cargo UK, we believe that anyone can work and thrive in our business.

‘Partly due to the industry’s legacy, the number of women and other minorities who work for us – particularly in operational grades – is low. Despite this, we are an inclusive employer and committed to increasing our diversity.

‘This is a topic high on the HR agenda in 2018 and as part of our recruitment of junior drivers we are adapting our recruiting practices in order to attract a wider demographic – this has resulted in successfully recruiting two female main line qualified drivers and one female junior driver (currently in training).

‘We have representation at the Women in Rail national committee and we are proactively working with ASLEF to improve conditions for current and future employees (male and female). We have a lot of work to do but we are committed to change and welcome anyone, from any background, to consider working for us.’

‘Work with Freightliner is still in the initial stages and the company is looking at a wide change, aiming to increase the numbers of female, black and minority ethnic, and LGBT+ drivers they employ. To begin this process, they will be contacting current employees from these groups to ask for their suggestions and views on being a driver in a freight operating company.

A spokesperson said: ‘Freightliner fully supports and is committed to the key principles of rail, which is that teamwork and diversity is not only beneficial but also essential to the productivity and success of a business.

‘We want the rail industry to reflect the society it serves, a society comprised of men and women, regardless of ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or any other ideologies, performing essential jobs within their everyday lives. To not support inclusion, of whatever kind, would significantly limit our talent pool, thereby inhibiting opportunities for future growth and innovation in our industry.

‘We will wholeheartedly support ASLEF and other such bodies in their attempts to bring more diversity to the rail industry.’

ASLEF is pleased that working alongside FO Cs has, in a short time, already proven to be successful, with DB Cargo increasing its number of female drivers. Whilst we can celebrate this success as a union we need to continue to push as there are still freight companies which have yet to employ any female, BAME or young drivers. In 21st century Britain we should demand more.
Badges & buffet

UR June branch meeting began by remembering William Hickman who sadly passed away in May after a battle with cancer. Cambridge was pleased to welcome EC president Tosh McDonald and ECS Howard Kaye to our badges & buffet.

The Cambridge first VIII smile for the camera evening’ Tosh presented ASLEF badges to Martin Moore and Hollie Yates (5 years), Chris Mooney (10), Floyd Doyle (25), and Andy Yates (40) and retirement certificates to Steve Newman (GTR) and Stephen Leverett (CrossCountry). Tosh gave us an insight into the role of the executive committee, AAD, the Southern Rail dispute, the problems facing our colleagues in the freight sector, and the Greater Anglia harmonisation talks. A healthy, and sometimes heated, question and answer session followed. A vote of thanks was given by Andy Yates and we wish Tosh well in retirement. The next branch is on Monday 13 August at the Station Tavern who provided us with a superb buffet.

Martin Haylett, branch secretary

Get down and get with it

Wolverhampton’s well-attended retired reunion at Bushbury railway club was tinged with sadness as we lost Stan Brittain two days prior; we also remembered all our other colleagues lost over the last 12 months. Presentations were made by VT company council rep Simon Goode, on behalf of the GS, to Darran Hardwick-Dawson (15 years); Roy Bagnall (20); Brian Davis (25), Michael Boulanger and Tony Grainger (40), and Bhawneswer ‘Bernie’ Kumar who retired after 41 years in the industry covering rail man, guard, train man and driver.

N Harkness, R Earlam, R Bagnall, M Boulanger, D Hardwick-Dawson, B Kumar, B Davis, S Goode, and A Grainger.

Photo: G Thorne

DO3 Andy Hourigan and EC3 John Metcalfe present ASLEF retirement certificates to Preston stalwarts Paul Hayward (40 years), Tony Cole and Pete Harvey (42) and Don Roberts (27), a total of 141 years’ membership.

Graham Fazackerley, branch secretary

Crewe works

A healthy turnout for the June meeting of Crewe branch saw two company council reports, four LDC reports, two h&6s reports, and a wide-ranging speech by Laura Smith, Labour MP for Crewe & Nantwich, covering all aspects of Britain’s railway industry which was well received. Issues raised include allegations of fraud in a rostering department, mess room and toilet facilities, annual leave payments, the booking of taxis, and depot establishments (even the Loch Ness monster got a mention!) Retired District 3 Officer Colin Smith made long service awards to Keith Morum (45 years) and David Cruxon (40) before being presented with an engraved tankard in appreciation of all his efforts for and on behalf of our branch by Laura and vice-chair Mick Jacques.

Jim Cockburn-Powell, branch secretary

At our recent Corkerhill branch meeting Willie Carlin was presented with his 45 year badge; Alex Fenton (45) and Brian Easton (40) will receive their badges later. Newly retired driver Donald Main was presented with a tankard and cheque for his great service and his wife Hazel received vouchers.

Phil Gallagher, branch secretary

This year’s Old Oak Common reunion, on 12 June, with 100 retired and active members attending, was a great day. DO7 Brian Corbett made presentations to the recently retired Ian McClelland, Baz Banthorpe and Andy Perrin. Many thanks to Paddington branch and all who support this event.

Mark Urpeth

ABBAY WOOD BRANCH 277

Abby Wood held its inaugural meeting on Tuesday 26 June, a glorious sunny day. In attendance was District 1 Organiser Graham Morris. The meeting was very well attended, with existing ASLEF members joining from other TOCs and new members who have recently joined the grade. The only item on the agenda was the election of officers, all positions were filled, and Graham took questions from the floor. A good evening was had by all with plenty of debate, mainly surrounding the opening of our new depot. I’m sure you will all wish us every success as ASLEF’s newest branch.

John McAvoy, branch secretary

Ramsgate vice-chair Andy Bull presents his father Dave Bull with a small appreciation from the branch for all his work as former LDR and secretary. Good luck in retirement, Dave, and thanks for all you did.

Nik Fetherston, branch secretary
RADES union councils, or trades councils, are the local arms of the Trades Union Congress, tasked by the TUC with ‘Bringing together union branches at a local level to campaign around issues affecting working people in their workplaces and communities.’

There are 159 in England and Wales, overseen by a national committee (the TUC JCC) of nine elected regional reps, plus members of the general council, with around another 20 in Scotland.

Objects include: raising awareness of rights at work and the role of a union in enforcing those rights; promoting the interests of affiliated unions and securing united action on those interests; acting as the voice of trade union branches in the local community; supporting national TUC policies; organising recruitment drives to build union membership; campaigning in support of official industrial action; improving the economic and social conditions of working people; improving cultural, educational, social and sports facilities for working people; playing a leading role in anti-fascist and anti-racist activity; and playing a leading role in developing awareness of climate change issues.

Now you might think that these tasks of trade union solidarity, undertaken by trades councils, are what makes us a movement, as opposed to a collection of different organisations going their own ways, and you would be right. If you are on an ASLEF picket line, and other trades unionists are demonstrating solidarity with their banners, that has usually been organised by a trades council. When ASLEF members are on a coach to a national TUC march, that coach will usually have been booked by a trades council. If you see a trade union campaign stall on the high street, it will have trades council activists running it.

But the truth is that trades councils are the Cinderellas of the TUC, still waiting for proper funding and position after 150 years. They are under-funded, resourced almost entirely by over-stretched volunteers who are active in their own unions, with minimal representation at the Trades Union Congress.

Many trades unionists do not realise that trades councils are the Cinderellas of the TUC, still waiting for proper funding and position after 150 years. They are under-funded, resourced almost entirely by over-stretched volunteers who are active in their own unions, with minimal representation at the Trades Union Congress.

Many trades unionists do not realise that trades councils preceded the TUC. It was the Manchester & Salford Trades Council that organised the first Trades Union Congress at the Mechanics’ Institute in Princess Street, Manchester, in 1868. It was, in fact, called a Congress of Trades Councils!

Why, then, do trades council activists feel under-valued? It is not just a question of under-funding. Most trades councils are funded by trade union branch affiliations at a rate of 10p or 15p per member per year. Councils may apply, usually once a year, for a £300 campaign project grant; and that’s it!

Trades councils do not have a single seat on the general council and, at congress itself, trades councils have a singleton delegate (out of around 700) who can move a singleton motion (out of a total of 50 or 60) but cannot vote at all – not even on a motion the trades councils’ delegate has moved.

All this needs to change. But as trades councils have little influence within the TUC, it is up to TUC-affiliated unions to fight for the rights and proper funding of trades councils.

The trade union movement is in serious decline, and getting older, as we all know. One way to turn this around would be for trades unions, via strengthened trades councils, to become more visible to unorganised workers in high streets and shopping malls.

At present, trade union branch affiliation to trades councils is entirely voluntary and many, perhaps most, union branches do not affiliate and take part. What is needed is a debate at congress after which all unions understand that the policy of the TUC, and their own union, is that all branches should affiliate and send delegates to their trades councils. If ASLEF can consider supporting this demand, it will have the grateful thanks of thousands of hard-working trades council activists.

Cornwall trades council, with Dave far right (his position at table, not his politics) on the streets of St Austell
Companies love the gig economy – the ‘flexibility’ of short-term zero hours contracts, or gigs, means people have no job security, paid holidays, or pensions – because it gives them the right to hire and fire at will. GREGOR GALL, an affiliate research associate at the University of Glasgow, and editor of the Scottish Left Review, looks at how unions are taking on firms that exploit young workers.

TACKLING RIP-OFF MERCHANTS IN THE GIG ECONOMY

Companies love the gig economy – the ‘flexibility’ of short-term zero hours contracts, or gigs, means people have no job security, paid holidays, or pensions – because it gives them the right to hire and fire at will. GREGOR GALL, an affiliate research associate at the University of Glasgow, and editor of the Scottish Left Review, looks at how unions are taking on firms that exploit young workers.

This prospect is closer now than at any time in the last 30 years as a result of the leadership of the Labour Party by Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell. With the leftward shift and the expectation that Theresa May’s Tory government may not last its full parliamentary term, Labour has taken proposals from the Institute of Employment Rights’ Manifesto for Labour Law (as reported in the July Journal) so it has an off the shelf set of proposals that it can immediately implement if need be.

Amongst these proposals is establishing a Ministry of Labour, with the minister having a seat in cabinet, and the introduction of sectoral bargaining. For unions like ASLEF, the right through sectoral bargaining to be able to conduct one set of negotiations with all the employers in one industry would be a boon. It would simplify matters and allow unions to aggregate their strength. For unions not like ASLEF, and which do not have high levels of union density, the right to conduct sectoral bargaining won’t be enough.

NEO-LIBERAL EMPLOYER POWER

We also need a means by which union membership is vastly, and quickly, increased so that when sectoral bargaining is conducted, it is done from a position of strength. A union default system would allow for that. So instead it is done from a position of strength. A union member of his or her appropriate union, with legal compulsion upon employers to apply the hard won precedent to their other workers. Because the verdict applies only to the actual plaintiffs, even when it is a class action.

It will take pressure from trade unions and a change in the law – and a change of government – to ensure that all or at least the majority of bogus self-employed workers are given the full protective rights of employed workers. In other words, blanket application of narrow precedents is needed.
DAVE GOUGH KEEN PHOTOGRAPHER

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the death of Dave Gough who passed away on 1 March 2018 following a blood clot and heart attack. He was 71.

Dave joined the railway in 1962. He was a Midland man, starting as a cleaner at Barrow Road in Bristol. He was promoted to fireman but, unfortunately, was made redundant in 1965 when Barrow Road closed as part of the controversial Beeching cuts. He got a porter’s job at Bristol Temple Meads for a short time before becoming a guard at Bath Road diesel depot and continued working as a guard until the train crew concept came about in 1988. Dave applied, passed the aptitude test, and returned to the footplate line of promotion which had been taken away from him in 1965. He was the second senior guard at Bath Road to move to the FLOP and finally got his driver’s job in early 1989.

Dave progressed through the links at Bath Road until the depot split in 1995/96. He chose to work at the regional railways depot which moved to Collett House at Temple Meads, working at this TOC as it evolved to Wales and West, Wessex Trains, and GWR West in 2006. He retired through ill-health settlement – suffering problems with his knees – at 60 in 2007.

Outside of work Dave was a very happy family man, married to Linda for 49 years, and a much loved dad and grandad. He enjoyed holidays with the family to Weymouth in Dorset and Padstow in Cornwall and Dave and Linda also loved to go away on cruises. Dave was a keen photographer. He enjoyed taking holiday snaps and selfies (before they became what they are today) and enjoyed filming with early (and bulky) VCR cameras. Dave’s granddaughter Hope read a fantastic tribute at the service, which cannot have been an easy task; he will be much missed by Linda, his children and grandchildren, family, friends and work colleagues.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol branch secretary

KEN PORTER FOR VALOUR

Ex-Barrow Road and Bath Road retired driver

Ken Porter died on 29 April 2017. He was 92. Ken was a Midland man, starting at Bristol Barrow Road as a cleaner in the late 1930s. He was promoted to fireman at the beginning of the Second World War.

Ken served in the Royal Navy during the war, took part in the Normandy landings in 1944, and was decorated for his courage in action. When the war was over he returned to his career on the railway at Barrow Road. He was eventually promoted to driver just as his depot was being run down when it came under the Western Region. When the depot closed in 1965 he transferred to the new Bath Road diesel depot. Ken retired from the railway in the late 1980s having completed a 50 year career, most of them as a fireman and driver. He was a loyal ASLEF member, serving as a local staff rep at Barrow Road.

He managed to attend the Bristol branch 125 celebrations in 2009, meeting old colleagues and sharing stories of his generation.

Bernard Kennedy

TREVOR DAVIS

Trevor ‘Bonehead’ Davis died on 2 February at the age of 82. He joined the railway in the late 1940s, a Somerset and Dorset man, starting as a cleaner at Bath Green Park depot. He was promoted to fireman, and subsequently became a passed fireman/relief driver.

Unfortunately, Trevor was made redundant in 1966 when Bath Green Park was closed as part of the Beeching cuts. But he was able to transfer to Bath Road diesel depot as a relief driver where he remained for the rest of his railway career. Trevor eventually got his driver’s job in the mid-1980s and retired in the mid-1990s.

He was married to Mary and had two sons, Julian and Alan. Trevor liked his music, particularly Ken Mackintosh, the English saxophonist and bandleader. He was also partial to a game of cards and was particularly fond of playing crib. Trevor was an active member of his local sports and social club and served on its committee for a number of years.

Trevor was a quiet man who never made a fuss. He got on with business and disliked people who were pretentious. One day, whilst sat at his club with some friends, one of his company was boasting about how fast he had driven from London to Bath (in an hour and 50 minutes). Trevor muttered, ‘Well, that’s nothing, I did that journey and it only took me an hour and 30 minutes.’ ‘Wow’, said his friend. ‘What car were you driving?’ Trevor replied, ‘An InterCity 125!’

Bernard Kennedy

TED DOOLING TOP OF THE DRAFT

Richard Edward Dooling, who has died at 90, was born in Camden Town. Unlike many children, he was not evacuated, but when old enough left school and did various jobs until he was called up in 1945. He was top of his draft, was made up to acting sergeant, and posted to Malaya. He finally returned to the UK and was demobbed in 1948, and joined British Railways at King’s Cross top shed where he progressed through the ranks to become a top link driver. Ted met and married Dorothy (Doll, as he called her) and they moved to Tottenham, north London. Our thanks to their children and grandchildren for letting us celebrate Ted’s life with them at his funeral. May he rest in peace.

PJ Smith, Retired Members’ Section

Dave with a deck of cards at the depot (and right) with wife Linda

Ted Dooling 14 May 1927-6 May 2018

Dave with a young rating (and right) with the medals he was awarded for bravery

Ken as a young rating and (right) with the medals he was awarded for bravery

Trevor as a young man, suited and booted, and as a fireman (left) on the footplate

Obituaries
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

Using the trad train horn two tone warning could save lives on the railway

To people certified and trained to listen and look out for the approach of trains, we give a double note on the horn. To the untrained public, including children, usually out of sight, and often on blind bends, we give a short single note.

On 26 September 2017 Sarah Athersmith, 14, was killed on a crossing in Walsall after two freight trains blew their horns (single note) at this level crossing. The original practice of using a two tone, which was of course introduced to enable people to differentiate the sound of a train from background noises, would quite possibly have saved her.

Shortly after the ruling was changed about use of the horn, I was approaching one of the three foot crossings at Wool. The down train blew one tone and I blew one tone in the up direction. Then a family crossed behind the down train ahead of me. A young father stepped out in front of me holding a baby. He managed to step back in time. What warning did this family hear? Duh, duh; two low tones close together and not a double tone to differentiate where the sound was coming from.

Ask any member of the public what sound a train makes and probably 99% will say ‘Der duh’ imitating the sound of a two tone horn. This is what they expect to hear. Nobody told the general public that the horn rules had changed.

Last Sunday I was approaching Parlour Gates crossing near Basingstoke, a 60mph blind bend on the up and a 75mph blind bend on the down. I did a double note with the horn as I have always done since nearly hitting that father with his baby and taking two lives.

As the crossing came into view a young boy was crossing with his mother and, when she heard me, she ran. I blew another double note as a warning and, as the crossing came fully into view, a young girl aged about seven or eight ran out in front of me from the nearside and luckily ran back. I put the brake into emergency and hung on the horn.

There were several other members of the family/group about to cross, including the man I presume was her father. Hopefully the video from the front of my train has been downloaded; it’s eye opening. It is quite possible that my using a two tone on the approach to this crossing gave that much needed extra warning and saved that young girl’s life. I have had two suicides but to kill someone, especially a child, in a needless accident, that would traumatisme me.

Ironically, two whistle boards have been placed, one above the other, at Claverton crossing not far from Bath, due to near misses. The instruction is to give a double note at these boards. This should be the standard, though, at every crossing.

We learned on a driver development day that Network Rail assumed we blew the horn for a full three seconds at a whistle board. If that was the case, we may as well do a two second, proper, double note. Sadly, as it stands, many drivers just give a brief ‘blip’ of the horn. This is not a warning!

We need to give a proper two tone warning at whistle boards to prevent further tragedies. It is criminal not to reinstate the original horn code which was designed to save lives.

People’s lives, especially children’s, just starting out in life, are more important than somebody who bought a house next to a railway getting upset because there are trains. Please change this rule back.

Kristian Jendesen, Salisbury

Priests and preachers who cite the humble carpenter from Galilee side with the rich and powerful bosses

I write in response to Bro Brian Ayrton (Journal, June). Being aware of history as he is, Bro Ayrton must surely be aware that the list he produces, to show the good works of Christians in the UK, could just as easily be countered by a list of not so good works by Christians acting in Christ’s name, including murder, torture, and imprisonment, right up to the present day, providing justification and support for a social system which allows the kind of poverty which the Christians on his list tried to alleviate.

Bro Ayrton also gives credit to God for introducing the rest day. I’d rather give credit to the working-class, who organised themselves into trade unions to fight for rest days, for leisure time, for education, for health care, for restrictions on child labour and the number of hours worked, and for protection from being killed or maimed at work, etc.

They often fought for these things in the teeth of opposition from priests, preachers, parsons and bishops who, more often than not, and with some honourable exceptions, sided with wealth and power yet claimed to speak in the name of a humble carpenter from Galilee. Those things, rest days included, were not handed down to us by anyone or anything but fought for every step of the way – and will have to be fought for again. In the words of The Internationale: ‘No saviour from on high delivers / No faith have we in prince or peer. / Our own right hand the chains must shiver / Chains of hatred, greed and fear.’

Robert O’Connell. Northern Line North

CrossCountry company council and that new depot

I was surprised to see a letter (Journal, July) under the headline ‘Company council action puts depot on death row’. The letter refers to discussions with CrossCountry management regarding a potential new driver depot at Eastleigh. In 2016 management indicated that they were looking to put forward proposals for a driver depot at Eastleigh and, in early 2017, they indicated that they intended to formally initiate discussions at company council.

After a debate amongst the staff side of council it was decided that a consultation of the drivers at Bournemouth should take place to seek views on whether discussions should be entertained – 34 out of 53 drivers responded, of which approximately 80% indicated that they were in favour of discussions taking place. Subsequently discussions did take place regarding the potential opening of a depot and the wide range of matters that would have been involved; these culminated in July 2017 and no agreement was reached.

The Internationale, quoted by Robert O’Connell, was written by Eugène Pottier, to celebrate the Paris Commune of 1871

20 The ASLEF Journal | August 2018
government’s consultation and, hopefully, the potential impact on our members through a possible change of franchise shape will not go ahead. On a final note, on CrossCountry we have just successfully come out of a dispute situation regarding the application of the disciplinary procedure. Over my 14 years on the company council the support of members, reps and branches has enabled the negotiating team to achieve a strong position on pay, terms & conditions, and protection of members. I hope this continues, in what may be difficult times ahead.

Dave Sullivan, CrossCountry company council rep and Bournemouth branch

Trams are fine but they should stick to city limits

Eric Stuart’s letter ‘Trams are not buses on rails’ (Journal, July) was very informative. However, the success of the Manchester Metrolink has come at a cost. The original lines to Altrincham and Bury were well served by trains and the conversion for trams saw a loss of work for our members and the route became prohibitive for heavy freight movements. I like trams but they should be restricted to city limits; longer distances should be served by trains.

Gordon Young, RMS

B&Q to enter rail industry

‘Lake District DIY railway shunts Northern into a siding’ says the Financial Times. Doesn’t bring out some of the worst puns when a rail story breaks? What no paper will run – because they are ignorant of the facts – is that allowing a private TOC, who use mainly retired train crew, many drawing both state and railway pensions, to rescue another TOC will do nothing to reduce the shortage of drivers at the TOC being rescued.

Mel Thorley, Longsight

Thank you, Eastleigh

Please can you record our thanks to Eastleigh branch for its generous £500 donation to Freight on Rail which is much appreciated, especially seeing the branch has donated before. I will strive to use the money wisely. Philippa Edmunds, Freight on Rail

The letter in the July Journal refers to the company council being willing to throw away the PT&R conditions. This is not the case. The company council ensured that, as part of the current rest day agreement, in place until the end of October 2019, the company put in writing to ASLEF that they had no plans for compulsory redundancies or depot transfers, and that they accepted the RDA could terminate should this position change.

Management’s proposals on Eastleigh were that the proposed depot would be staffed by approximately 13 drivers, who may have wished to transfer voluntarily from Bournemouth, and therefore management proposed that they did not intend to provide relocation assistance. They also said that if there were insufficient volunteers then they would not proceed with the proposed depot. During the discussions staff side sought assurances about the proposed future workload and security of Bournemouth depot and, ultimately, no agreement on the project was reached. Management reserved their right to raise the matter again should they choose.

A year on from the last discussions, we now find ourselves in the situation of a DTI consultation taking place on the future of the CrossCountry franchise. Ideas being floated in the government document, issued in June 2018, include the possibility of trimming off some parts of the CrossCountry network. Amongst several routes mentioned are the sections from Bournemouth to Southampton, Penzance to Plymouth and Aberdeen to Edinburgh. Also mentioned is the potential transfer of local services from Birmingham to Leicester and Nottingham to another franchise. It has to be said that this government consultation is just that; it seeks views on the ideas put forward and it does not mean that they will necessarily happen.

One idea floated last year was the potential transfer of Stansted to Birmingham services to another franchise, but it has now been determined that this will not happen as a result of the consultation responses. Proposals for changes to franchise work all have the potential to lead to our members being subject to TUPE transfers, or PT&R arrangements, and ASLEF has been through this in 2006-2008 on CrossCountry. ASLEF will be responding to the
Railway station that’s a 21st century cathedral

CONRAD LANDIN, Scotland editor of the Morning Star, enjoys reading Georges Simenon and sipping Belgian beer as he marvels at the glories of the stunning new railway station in Liège

A TRIP to the cathedral is the natural starting point of any expedition to Liège. I don’t mean la Cathédrale Saint-Paul on the western banks of the Meuse. True, it hosts one of the world’s most famous depictions of Lucifer – which itself replaced an earlier version which the Roman Catholic church considered too seductive.

Way before encountering this imposing Gothic French edifice, you are more likely to glide into the Gare de Liège-Guillemins. This is not a station where you merely arrive. Designed by the Spanish architect-engineer Santiago Calatrava, who also has Bilbao airport and the Milwaukee Art Museum to his name, its premise of white steel, concrete and glass is straightforward.

But its impact is not. Few non-terminus stations – even the graceful York or the competitive Waverley – offer true visual thrills. Guillemins succeeds. If you’re not satisfied by your soaring arrival into this bird cage of free flight, pause before leaving the gare for a trip up and down the escalators from the platforms to the overpass. Then descend to the undercroft, which in place of the traditional facade concourse, is cavernous, but far from dingy: a functional gateway to the world beyond.

‘I have tried to get close to the frontier between architecture and sculpture and to understand architecture as an art.’ – Santiago Calatrava

It’s fitting that Liège should build such a great monument to rail travel. Not simply because of Belgium’s impressive modern day rail network, but because this has always been a city of transit. Its strategic proximity to the borders of France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands has made Liège a target in warfare campaigns ancient and modern.

And it’s no coincidence that the city’s most famous son, Georges Simenon, is presumed by many to have been French. Simenon, best known as the creator of the Parisian detective Jules Maigret, left Belgium in 1923, aged 19. He returned on very few occasions throughout his life – not least because of the legal trouble caused by his autobiographical novel *Pedigree*, whose characters were too close to comfort for some of Simenon’s teenage friends. *Pedigree* is an ambitious, rambling saga charting the everyday existence of the author’s fictionalised self and his associates. It was a novel in which, Simenon said, everything is true but nothing is accurate.

Perhaps this adage could be inverted for the two Maigret novels Simenon set in Liège. In both, the city’s vivid haunts are associated with the characters’ youthful immaturity – which turns rather dark rather quickly. The town is depicted as an insular community, compared with Maigret’s metropolitan home, but it is still defined by its transitory nature.

Since the railways first linked Liège to Brussels in 1838 – on a line, unusually for the age, developed with state rather than private sponsorship – the city’s position had become strategic not just for the army hedging its bets, but for anyone unwilling to lay down roots for too long. Liège was also one end of the first international railway, taking passengers to Aachen and Cologne.

*Maigret and the Hundred Gibbets* opens with a workaday yet atmospheric description of the customs rituals of a rail border crossing – this time between Holland and Germany. The detective is closely observing the erratic behaviour of his suspect who, before the day is out, has shot himself in a cheap Bremen hotel room.

The players in this novel are wealthy businessmen and poor artists, mechanics and photo- engravers, living and working across western Europe – but each is as itinerant as the last. Maigret’s investigations eventually lead him to their shared home town, Liège.

The action of *At the Gai-Moulin*, by contrast, takes place entirely within the city limits. But it is still thoroughly international, centring on the death of a mysterious, wealthy foreigner, known as the Turk (in fact, a Greek). Maigret, who appears only late on in the action, has followed the man on a Paris to Berlin train – only to find him cutting the journey short at Liège. One of the novel’s young protagonists has less luck in his own attempts at seamless movement, making it as far as Guillemins ‘bathed in sweat’ before repairing to a nearby bar, where he buys drinks for the entire neighbourhood and attempts to take the waitress upstairs.

‘The place smelled of fairgrounds, of lazy crowds, of nights when you stayed out because you couldn’t go to bed.’ – Georges Simenon

The city was also home to an extensive tram network – part of a national Belgian system of which very little remains. The Liège network closed in 1967, and all that was built of the planned replacement metro was half a tunnel. The city’s tram depot now houses the impressive Musée des Transports en Commun de Wallonie, a must-see for any inquisitive tourist. Its collection of classic tramcars and buses is pleasingly ramshackle, though engaging and well-maintained.

Irritatingly far from the centre, it’s the functional station, though, which is the city’s greatest monument. Describing the disappointment of the GLC’s Alton West Estate in Roehampton, Ian Nairn said that architecture, like patriotism, is not enough.

The new Gare de Liège-Guillemins could not succeed without its daring design. But its majesty is underscored by its commitment to public service, and its homage to this city’s enduring spirit of transience.
REBRANDING ADAM SMITH

ESSE Norman's new book Adam Smith: What He Thought, and Why it Matters (Allen Lane, £25) attempts to provide a corrective to the common conception that Smith, a key figure in the Scottish Enlightenment, an economist and moral philosopher, born and brought up at Kirkaldy in Fife, and considered the ‘father of capitalism’ because of his book The Wealth of Nations, was an advocate of a laissez faire economy.

Norman, Conservative MP for Hereford & South Herefordshire, recasts Smith as someone who recognises the selfishness that is economic activity in practice. Selfishness directed by the market to its collective social advantage. He analyses Smith’s core values to give a sense not just of his economic views but of his vastly wider intellectual projects, based on the entirety of his work, and tracing his influences over the past two centuries.

In doing so, Norman adapts Smith’s idea in order to mould him into a hero of Tory economic policy. The ideas he ascribes to Smith are, in essence, rather Utopian, which suggests this ‘new, improved’ version fails the practicality test. Because when reality shines through Norman’s theory, it’s clear for all to see that the economic system loathes the idea of tolerance and respect.

Businesses hate the thought of direct competition taking away their consumers. They dream of the total annihilation of business rivals. At its core, Norman’s theory is designed to conveniently fit his opinions; Tory ideology and not much more. Norman’s Smith shows awareness of others, courtesy, open-mindedness, consideration, tolerance, and respect to competitors in the financial market.

But does this ring true? Is this an adequate in-depth consideration of a wrongly maligned economist? Or, rather, is it reminiscent of Mahatma Gandhi, faced with the patronising question, ‘What do you think of Western civilisation?’ and his famous reply, ‘I think it would be a good idea’?

Lloyd Davies

The selfish gene

Prize Crossword

Crossword 148 by Tom Williams

Across
1 Young goose
2 Basin
3 Young man
8 Recognise as being a certain person
9 Resulting in death
10 Poultry enclosure
13 Ungenerous or stingy
14 Avoid spending money
18 Way out
19 Oil-producing fruit
21 Savings tin (5,3)
22 Fish eggs
23 American coin
24 Sincere

Down
1 Orange-red aquarium fish
2 Drug to calm you down
3 Frozen spike
4 Country whose capital is Athens
5 The base
6 Married woman
11 Pure bred animal
12 Obscene
15 Highly skilled in a certain subject
16 Building for horses
17 Practical joke
20 Cavity to aim golf ball into

Solution to Crossword 147
Across:
1 Madrid 4 Hotel 7 Blackberry 8 Blue 9 Tiger 11 Express 13 Scarlet 15 Darts 17 Beer 18 Grapefruit 20 Taste 21 Relish
2 Marble 3 Rule 4 Duchess 5 Habit 6 Tar 7 Layer 8 Bumper 10 Guilt 12 Scourer 14 Thrash 15 Digit 16 Swede 17 Bill 19 Ass

Congratulations to John Boocock, of Newcastle, 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 147th prize crossword in the July 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 August

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.

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 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 this half of the form to: Andrea Weston in the Admin Dept, ASLEF, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN and hand the other half, the standing order mandate, to your bank (or via your internet bank)