Under the stars on Brighton beach...

The Labour-union link has been an historic – and successful – relationship for more than a century

Inside: Mick Whelan, Andy Hudd, John McCue and Alan Moss at the Labour Party conference; caring companies; and cute cats
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● Cute cats (and other pets) get their noses into the ASLEF diary; and Off the Rails: Kidd, Gove, Supermac and Spitting Image

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● Cover photos: Andrew Wiard

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Rail’s green agenda

ALL and modal shift can help deliver the green agenda pledged at Kyoto and Paris but we need a progressive industrial strategy so, while I applaud the school strikers and Extinction Rebellion, it hurt to have to rebut their attacks on mass transit. Such actions are counter-productive, and dilute the message, and we will always have an over-arching concern for our members and other staff impacted. It’s about building the right kind of green capacity for freight and passengers, especially after recent figures on people suffering stroke or heart problems from pollution. The issue is urgent but must be part of a just transition to maintain skilled, high-paid, unionised jobs to replace those industries impacted. What about if we built greener new factories here in the UK?

I did not know whether to laugh, cry, scream or shout when I saw the Prime Minister and Dominic Raab proclaim about putting workers’ rights in another document to protect us. Look at what both have said, and written, in the past and wonder whether they were lying then or now. The credibility is stretched to Pinocchio proportions and we are not that stupid.

We have had cause to remember Ladbroke Grove, Hatfield, and Cowden in recent weeks – tragedies that could have been avoided. There should never be a step backwards on safety or circumstances that impacted. It’s about building the right kind of green capacity for freight and passengers, especially after recent figures on people suffering stroke or heart problems from pollution. The issue is urgent but must be part of a just transition to maintain skilled, high-paid, unionised jobs to replace those industries impacted. What about if we built greener new factories here in the UK?

Even with the Trade Union Act and Maggie’s laws we have, through your solidarity and unity, even with enhanced thresholds, been able to deliver a mandate to have our voice heard. Hats off to the CWU for its campaign and the resulting vote against a management seeking to break its undertakings. Rail and mail have historic links and we are proud of the result and will support them in any way we can.

Sadly, former AGS Tony West has passed away; he was a friend and mentor to many, including me, and to generations of reps personified what it meant to be a comrade. His humanity to all, personality, timeliness, and effort, and encouragement went with a determination to make people’s working (and all-round) lives better. Our condolences and thoughts are with Pat and the family – a family of which, because of Tony, we always felt a part.

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary

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GS Mick Whelan

GS Mick: ‘The Prime Minister Is Pinocchio

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Williams set to replace failed franchise model

ASLEF has responded to the Prime Minister's promise of 'rail reform' made in the Queen's Speech to Parliament on Monday 14 October. None of the measures in the speech – described by commentators as 'more election campaign than legislative programme' – is likely to be enacted with a general election in the offing. But the part about transport – trailed in the Johnson-friendly Sunday Telegraph – suggested that the government will introduce a bill to replace the failed franchising model.

GS Mick Whelan said: 'I suppose we should be happy that a Tory Prime Minister has finally admitted what those of us who work in the rail industry have always known – that privatisation has failed.

I'm dreaming dreams, building castles high

Tony West, a former AGS, and national secretary of the RMS, has died at the age of 79. He was on holiday in Spain.

Tony, who joined ASLEF when he joined the railway in 1962, was a giant of the labour movement, known and respected throughout the rail industry.

A member of Stratford branch, he was a Labour councillor in Bexley and stood for election to Parliament as the Labour candidate for Gillingham in Kent.

Tony was a long-standing member of the board of Transport for London. And a passionate West Ham fan, claiming that the Irons – in the shape of skipper Bobby Moore, and the two men who scored England’s four goals, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters – won the FIFA World Cup final at Wembley on 30 July 1966.

QUOTE...

'I remain convinced that renationalising the railways, which in effect means bringing the operators and Network Rail back together into a single organisation under the aegis of the state, is a good idea.'

– Christian Wolmar, Rail

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

This whole speech [Boris Johnson at the Conservative Party conference] is a triumph of rhetoric over reality; built around a Brexit offer whose wheels were coming off before he stood up. The hall loved it; it changes nothing outside. @gabyhinsliff

Leading Brexiteer and No Deal supporter Sir James Dyson collected £5m of EU farming subsidies. He previously received UK taxpayer subsidy to develop an electric car, then chose to manufacture it in Singapore and later deferred the project. @premnsikka

TUC analysis shows that pay for the highest earners rose by 7.6% over the last two years compared to just 0.1% for the typical worker. The Prime Minister is focused on helping his wealthy mates and donors – not working people. @AngelaRayner

I cross the river from Rojava into Iraqi Kurdistan in shame and sorrow. Our Kurdish friends risk being killed by Turkey or Assad. The British govt that supported them in the fight against ISIS alongside the US has abandoned them. It is shameful. @lindseyhilsum

CORONER SLAMS ‘SMART’ M-WAYS

The ‘smart’ motorway safety crisis deepened after Emma Brown, the West Midlands coroner, slammed Highways England after Dev Naran was killed when an HGV travelling at 56mph ploughed into his car stopped on the hard shoulder of the M6. Highways England admits its ‘smart’ technology, which temporarily opened the lane to vehicles, did not detect the stationary car.

BACK THE BAKERLOO EXTENSION

A cross-party group of politicians and businessmen and women has called on the Prime Minister to provide government funds for a £3 billion Bakerloo line extension he backed when Mayor of London. Transport for London wants to extend the line from Elephant & Castle to the Old Kent Road, New Cross Gate and Lewisham. A second phase would go to Catford, Lower Sydenham, Hayes and Beckenham Junction using a converted overground rail line.

OUR FRIENDS ELECTRIC

Members can receive the ASLEF Journal – and reps can receive circulars – electronically if they choose. Please contact the admin department at head office on 020 7324 2400.

Our woolly hat will keep you warm this winter. Price £5 (including p&p); email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

The rail industry have always known – that they choose. Please contact the admin department at head office on 020 7324 2400.
Cats, ‘says Matt and videos, of cute looking at pictures, ‘People like PhD on the phenomenon hard at work on a surely, already somewhere, is, academic, somewhere, is, surely, already hard at work on a PhD on the phenomenon. ‘People like looking at pictures, and videos, of cute cats,’ says Matt

Rhodes, head of strategy at Engine Creative while ThoughtCatalog calls the feline the ‘unofficial mascot of the internet’. No surprise, then, that the ASLEF diary, which went out last month with the October Journal, has become a mini-social media phenomenon with our furry four-legged friends, as you can see from these pictures. Not just cats, either. There’s this Black Jack newshound and an inquisitive parrot, too.

QUOTE…
‘Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.’
– Winston Churchill

…UNQUOTE

CONFERENCE & RALLIES
The STUC disabled workers’ conference is at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel, Glasgow, from Saturday 16 to Sunday 17 November. The Scottish Trades Union Congress is at the Concert Hall, Perth, from Monday 20 to Wednesday 22 April 2020. The Trades Union Congress is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 September. The Labour Party conference is at the ACC convention centre in Liverpool from Saturday 19 to Wednesday 23 September.

500 CLUB: Debbie Reay, with number 241, won the October draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £442.

Our new ASLEF LGBT+ purple polo shirt – ‘driving for equality’ – is available in S, M, L and XL. £15 inc p&p; email info@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Off the Rails

PATRICK KIDD, Diary editor at The Times, and the beast behind the cricket blog Line and Length, was the paper’s political sketch writer for four years before he was replaced by Quentin Letts from the Daily Mail. In a collection of his columns, The Weak Are a Long Time in Politics (Biteback, £12.99), he cherishes the endangered fauna that clutters the crumbling corridors of this mock Gothic pile – ‘loons, thieving magpies, gannets, boobies, bustards, lots of spotted shags and a multitude of tits’ – as well as lampooning many familiar characters. Jacob Rees-Mogg is ‘MP for the 19th century’; Theresa May ‘Margaret Thatcher without the warmth’, who speaks like ‘a nervous librarian reading the phone book to a conference of narcoleptics’; Nigel Farage barks like ‘an eel salesman at Billingsgate’ while Zac Goldsmith has the passion of ‘a vicar in Waitrose who has discovered they’re all out of halloumi’.

SPITTING IMAGE is on its way back to our TV screens – a pilot features Vladimir Putin as an S&M queen and Donald Trump tweeting out of his anus – after co-creator Roger Law decided the programme – ‘public service satire’ – was the appropriate response to the new political climate. ‘It’s better than shouting at the television set, isn’t it?’ says Law. There’s no room for lower league players this time. ‘Dominic f***ing Raab? You’ve got to be f***ing kidding! If you’re going after the bastards, you may as well go after the biggest bastards.’ Some say the US President is unsatisurable. ‘With puppets you can go much, much further and, by Christ, we are. Our puppet Trump is an absolute f***ing monster’.

MICHAEL GOVE – not normally seen as a radical lefty, though he did stand on an NUJ picket line as a young reporter on the Press & Journal, Aberdeen, in 1989 – should back Labour’s plan to tackle what even Tories call ‘our public school problem’. Independent, fee-paying, private schools – call them what you will – enjoy charitable status despite having no obvious charitable function. Gove, a former Education Secretary, wondered in a column for The Times in 2017 how we could possibly ‘consider the education of the children of plutocrats and oligarchs to be a charitable activity?’

HAROLD MACMILLAN was famous for his lugubrious demeanour. In his new book, Winds of Change (Allen Lane, £30), the historian and crossbench peer Peter Hennessy reveals how Whitehall mandarins, at the height of the Cold War, were worried about who, in the event of the Prime Minister’s death, would authorise retaliation against the Soviet Union after a pre-emptive nuclear strike. Macmillan informed the cabinet of his decision in October 1961 with the words: ‘First Gravedigger: Mr Butler. Second Gravedigger: Mr Lloyd.’

PHILIP PULLMAN, author of His Dark Materials, Lyra’s Oxford, and The Secret Commonwealth, says he’s not a great fan of science-fiction, swords & sorcery, and fantasy fiction. ‘Most fantasy isn’t interested in most people,’ he says. ‘Most fantasy seems more interested in dragons and swords and magic qualities. I’m interested in what makes us human beings.’
End of the line for XR Underground protests?

NGRy commuters in the capital pulled Extinction Rebellion protesters off the top of a Jubilee line Tube train at Canning Town after XR organised demonstrations at Canning Town, Shadwell and Stratford stations.

Although one LU employee, wearing a hi-vis orange jacket, tried to intervene to save the balding, bearded, ‘middle-class crusty’ from being beaten, other platform staff stood back and let passengers vent their anger. ‘Brilliant!’ said Ray Stantz.

‘Real people who need to go to work to support their families give some middle-class XR w**kers a good kicking.’

The irony, as ASLEF was quick to point out, is that Tube trains run on electricity, are environmentally friendly, and a green mode of transport. Disrupting public transport and forcing people into environmentally unfriendly vehicles seems perverse.

Mick Whelan, interviewed by James Waterhouse for the half hour BBC London news programme on Thursday 17 October (BBC1, 6.30pm) said: ‘The Tube, and all modes of public transport, are part of the solution to climate change, not the problem. XR should stick to protesting against those who create the problem. Not our industry, members, and hard-working commuters. Tackling climate change is at the heart of our work. Whether it’s campaigning to reinstate the electrification work cancelled by the Tories, or our push to get more freight on rail. That’s how you face the challenge.’

Finn Brennan, ASLEF’s organiser on the Underground, said: ‘Targeting public transport is dangerous, foolish and counter-productive. XR need to build alliances with workers and trade unionists, not antagonise them.

And FBU GS Matt Wrack said: ‘We need huge investment in modern public transport systems as part of any plan to tackle the climate emergency. So why on earth would XR target public transport – and ordinary people trying to get to work? Utterly nonsensical.’

Don’t cut our firefighters

ASLEF has a proud tradition of supporting the Fire Brigades Union, politically and industrially, and we recognise our members depend on a fire service for every emergency, domestic or industrial, especially railway incidents.

But this is under threat in Devon and Somerset where the fire authority want to make the biggest cuts in living memory. It wants to close eight fire stations at Appledore, Ashburton, Budleigh Salterton, Colyton, Kingston, Porlock, Topsham, and Woolacombe; cut night cover in Barnstaple, Exmouth, and Paignton; cut the second fire engine at Crediton, Lynton, Martock, and Totnes; cut the third fire engine from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay, and Yeovil; cut the day cover for the second fire engine at 14 stations in Brixham, Chard, Dartmouth, Frome, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Okehampton, Sidmouth, Tavistock, Teignmouth, Tiverton, Wells, Wellington, and Williton. You can sign a petition against these savage cuts by visiting www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/don-t-cut-fire-services-in-devon-and-somerset

GREEN SPEED AHEAD

SNCF, France’s state-owned railway, SNCB, the Belgian government-owned corporation, and the Canadian investment vehicle Patina Rail announced on 27 September their intention to merge the Eurostar and Thalys high speed rail operations under a project branded Green Speed. ‘The imperative of fighting climate change means the time is right to redouble efforts to drive traffic from air and road to environmentally-friendly high speed rail,’ they said. The two operators envisage increasing their combined ridership from 18 million passenger journeys per year in 2018 to 30 million by 2030.

For the fallen

This year’s ASLEF poppy badge, remembering those who lost their lives on active service for their country, is available in two versions: a traditional red poppy, inspired by the poem In Flanders Fields by John McCrae – ‘In Flanders fields the poppies blow / Between the crosses, row by row’ – and worn since 1921 to commemorate those who died in the Great War of 1914-18; and a white, pacifist, poppy, first made by the Co-operative Women’s Guild in 1933 and then the Peace Pledge Union in 1936 for the No More War Movement. Price £6 (inc p&p) each; email our admin dept at head office on info@aslef.org.uk
PAUL PATMORE, District 2 rep on our Black & Minority Ethnic Representatives’ Committee, reports from the Scottish Trades Union Congress black workers’ conference at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel in Clydebank on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 October

TTENDING this year’s conference – chaired by Layla-Roxanne Hill of the National Union of Journalists – were Paul Patmore from District 2 and Trevor Robinson from District 8.

The first guest speaker was Sir Godfrey ‘Geoff’ Palmer OBE, Jamaica’s first honorary consul to Scotland, and Emeritus Professor at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, who arrived in England as a 14-year-old from St Elizabeth in Jamaica as one of the Windrush generation. Sir Geoff spoke about the lack of BAMEs in higher management; the importance of diversity; and the challenges he faced in gaining his degree in Botany at Leicester University in 1965. He is now a human rights activist who travels tirelessly giving speeches at conferences and universities.

Mary Senior, vice-president of the STUC, spoke about the anti-racism campaign; the St Andrew’s Day rally; about building a mass movement against racism within the trade union movement, and about encouraging diversity.

ASLEF’s motion to conference, moved by Bro Robinson, called on young workers to become members of their trade unions, and take an active part in their union. It was a pleasure to see so many new faces at this year’s conference – I hope this trend continues – and I would like to thank Trevor for coming up from London to attend conference with me.

QUOTE...

‘Fighting populists might be like wrestling with a pig – you both get dirty, and the pig likes it – but it has to be done.’

– Jonathan Freedland, The Guardian

…UNQUOTE

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Scotch on the rocks

A SLEF called on Members of the Scottish Parliament to back a motion, brought by Colin Smyth, Scottish Labour Party transport spokesman, to bring ScotRail back into public ownership.

Kevin Lindsay, our organiser in Scotland, said before the vote on Wednesday 2 October: ‘We are urging every MSP to do the right thing because it’s clear to everyone – to businesses as well as passengers and all those of us who work in the industry – that privatisation has failed the people of this country.

‘Criticism of ScotRail has come from all quarters because the company is coming up short in what it delivers – or, rather, fails to deliver – for Scotland. The performance of Abellio has been truly terrible. The company has failed to recruit enough drivers, is continually skipping stations, doesn’t have enough stock, has used HSTs that have not been refurbished, and has a history of poor industrial relations.

‘But we don’t want to replace one failing private train operator with another because the franchise model is a broken model. The Tories privatised our railways but anyone who believes in a modern, progressive vision for Scotland – whether they are Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green or SNP – should vote for a motion that will offer real value for money to every Scottish taxpayer. It’s time to stand up for Scotland and run our railway as a public service, not for private profit.’

GS Mick Whelan wrote to every MSP: ‘Abellio’s franchise has been a failure by nearly every measure – it’s on its third improvement plan – but receives the second highest share of net government funding of any franchise in the UK. That is terrible value for money for the Scottish taxpayer and passenger. Enough is enough. We need to bring the franchise back into the hands of the Scottish people. Let passengers have lower fares and invest any surpluses back into our network.’

Richard Leonard, leader of the Scottish Labour Party, said: ‘The shareholder dividend and profit motive should never have had any place in our National Health Service, bus services, post, prisons, or in our railways, either. Why is it we are forcing a vote to end the Abellio franchise of ScotRail?’

Despite support from the Lib Dems and Greens, the Labour motion was voted down by the SNP and the Tories 85-32.

Northern boss Burchell slammed for pay hike

Chris Burchell, managing director of Arriva Trains, and chair of the Rail Delivery Group, has been criticised for trousering a hefty pay rise – up from £298,000 to £311,000 – in the year his company Northern Rail axed 165 services and failed to deliver its new timetable.

The news follows revelations that Arriva directors pocketed a porky £2.05 million in 2018 – up from £1.80 million – while government subsidies to the company soared to £282 million.

Angry passengers in Manchester, Liverpool, and the Lake District, who were victims of months of disruption, condemned the greed and ‘snouts in the trough’ culture at the company.

And Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham said: ‘This news will stick in the throats of long-suffering Northern passengers – and shows our rail industry is in dire need of radical reform.

Bosses should take a pay cut, not line their pockets. Government action on Northern is as overdue as their trains.’
Mourn the dead, fight like hell for the living

ROSS JONES, Euston branch equalities rep, reports ahead of the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance on Wednesday 20 November

OR many, 20 November each year is just another day in the build up to the shopping bonanza of Black Friday. But, for the worldwide transgender community, it is the day they honour the lives that have been brutally lost, either by suicide or murder.

In the 12 months to 1 October 2018 just over 350 trans deaths were recorded around the globe, an increase of 12% from the year to 1 October 2017. Most were in Central and South America; due to lack of employment protection, many find themselves working in the sex industry which usually involves drugs, etc. There was an increasing number in the USA, too, mainly people of colour, again the sex worker/drugs scenario, and, tragically, five in the UK, including Naomi Hersi near Heathrow airport.

This figure may not be complete as there are many countries that do not recognise the transgender community, so trans-related deaths go unrecorded. Those murdered have been shot, stabbed, beaten, and sometimes mutilated before their bodies are dumped away from the scene of the crime. It’s bigotry, ignorance, and hate, and in some cases local police are in on the crime as well, protecting the criminals instead of the victim.

As for those who take their own lives, this is usually down to long waiting times at gender identity clinics or having been disowned by families and friends.

TDOR – the Transgender Day of Remembrance – began in Boston in 1999 as an internet project run by Gwendolyn Ann Smith, a trans woman exercised by the death of Rita Hester. She began comparing notes with another trans death a few years earlier, especially the police account of events. It gradually gained momentum, with events at which the names of people who had died were read out, and by 2010 TDOR was observed in 185 cities in 20 countries.

Last year my partner Paul and I travelled to a TDOR event at the Quadrant, Network Rail’s head office in Milton Keynes, where I was delegated to give a speech written by Lee James, ASLEF’s equalities adviser, on behalf of our union.

We were met by local trans activist Connie Firtree, MC for the evening. I had met Connie at the previous year’s event, where I was accompanied by a Virgin Trains DTM based at Euston after her twin brother, a senior driver at Euston, invited me along in my capacity as equalities rep.

The event started with a welcome from Connie and speeches from the mayor of Milton Keynes, a Network Rail employee who runs their Archway LGBT project, and me. The next part of the programme was the first of four presentations of the deceased, with 90 on each, showing name, age, location, description of incident and, where available, a picture of the deceased, accompanied with soft and moving music.

Each presentation was interspersed with readings by the trans community present and two religious offerings, one from a Buddhist sister and one from a local Church of England vicar who led us in the Lord’s Prayer towards the end.
Companies used to like to parrot Milton Friedman’s claim that the only ‘social responsibility of business is to increase its profits’. Now, as GREGOR GALL reports, worried that this is not a good look, firms are trying to come across as caring and compassionate and, in a good way, all touchy-feely.

URING the 1979 general election campaign, Tim Bell, the Tory advertising executive who died recently, came up with the famous ‘Labour isn’t Working’ campaign poster. Turn the clock forward 30 years, and after the global financial crash, protesters in London on an anti-G20 demonstration in 2009 took the old image and turned it into a huge professional-looking banner, proclaiming: ‘Capitalism isn’t Working: Another World is Possible’.

This reminded me of a similar but less well-known banner from the anti-capitalist protests in Britain in the early 2000s following the Battle of Seattle in 1999 – the demo by trade union activists and environmentalists outside the World Trade Organisation meeting there. That was a very amateurish banner which stated: ‘Capitalism isn’t working… replace it with something nicer’.

VAGUE AND WIMPISH CALL

As many people feel that capitalism does not work for a majority of people or, indeed, for humanity and the environment as a whole, the question of what system to replace it with follows logically. Not everyone is convinced socialism is the answer; hence the rather vague and wimpish exhortation to ‘replace it with something nicer’.

This is where various ideas about different types of democratic, ethical, accountable, or caring capitalism come into play. Every time there is a systemic crisis for capitalism, the thinkers and think tanks for capitalism try to come up with a newer, softer, and friendlier version of the same old, hard, and unfriendly capitalism system.

And so it was in August. Fearing the beginnings of a new crisis, the bosses of 181 of the biggest companies in the United States changed the official definition of ‘the purpose of a corporation’ from making the most money possible for shareholders to ‘improving our society’ by also looking out for employees, caring for the environment, and dealing ethically. Big business bosses signing up to the change, by the influential Business Roundtable lobby group, included Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Tim Cook of Apple, and Jamie Dimon of JP Morgan.

This radical change of emphasis comes after corporate America spent decades echoing the words of Milton Friedman, one of the ugliest mentors of free market capitalism, red in tooth and claw, who stated, plainly and simply, that the only ‘social responsibility of business is to increase its profits’.

This modification of language – which does not necessarily mean a change of heart or any alteration of deeds – is not because of the growing gap between rich and poor but because of the prospect of social unrest as a result of that gap. And that’s a bad environment in which to do business.

Fears of depressed trading conditions – people don’t go shopping when rioting, unless they are looting – and further regulation prompted the move.

That’s the bottom line. That’s why the hedge fund billionaire, Ray Dalio, says income inequality poses an ‘existential threat’ because it could lead to conflict, populism and ‘revolution of one sort or another’.

BUSINESS ADMITS THERE’S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A TIGER

Many of the leading contenders for the 2020 Democratic Party presidential nomination, such as Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, have attacked the sky rocketing pay of business leaders and called for a rethink about the purpose of business together with better pay and protection for workers.

The rhetoric in response from business is couched in heartwarming words. ‘These modernised principles reflect the business community’s unwavering commitment to continue to push for an economy that serves all Americans’, fluttered Business Roundtable chair Dimon. Companies, he reckons, recognise they have to invest in workers and communities because ‘it is the only way to be successful over the long term’.

So there we have it. Big business admits there is more than one way to skin its tiger. It is now having to contemplate being ‘nicer’ to the very workers whose exploitation provides for their profits – instead of treating them like entirely dispensable economic commodities which is how, privately, they see us.

But the sting in this little tale is that the Business Roundtable still says, after all the warm words: ‘We believe the free market system is the best means of generating good jobs, a strong and sustainable economy, innovation, a healthy environment, and economic opportunity for all’.

As the French, say ‘Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose’. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

CREATING NEW STRUCTURES

If we want – as many of us do – real, substantive change, and not mere window dressing, then it’s not very sensible to hope or trust that those already in power are the ones to bring about the change required. It’s far more sensible to bring in a change of guard – and that means people with no vested interest in continuing with the old ways.

In the US, that means Elizabeth Warren and, in Britain, that means Jeremy Corbyn. But it also means you and me doing more than just voting for them as, when, and if they assume office, we should not think that necessarily means they will also assume power. For you and me, it means supporting them collectively outside of elections and working towards creating new power structures that will make the world economically fairer and environmentally safer. Only then will we have truly found a good solution to replacing capitalism ‘with something nicer’.
**Rumble in Brighton**

**ASLEF** sent four delegates – Mick Whelan, general secretary; Andy Hudd, EC vice-president; John McCue, Glasgow branch; and Alan Moss, Longsight – to the Labour Party conference at the Brighton Centre from Saturday 21 to Wednesday 25 September. Simon Weller, assistant general secretary; EC president Dave Calfe; executive committee members Marz Colombini, Howard Kaye, John Metcalfe and Mark Wakenshaw; district organiser Dicky Fisher; Jamal Ajane and Ed Mayne, Feltham Electric; Debbie Reay and Julian Vaughan, Northern Line North; and Karen Tily, West London Electric, all attended as visitors. Collette Gibson, Shenfield, went as a member of Labour’s National Policy Forum; and Phil Graham as a delegate for Islington South & Finsbury constituency Labour Party.

‘Conference is a special time when our movement comes together to set a course for the year ahead,’ said Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. ‘Our members and affiliates are the heart and soul of our party. Annual conference ensures they are sovereign.’

Our delegates and visitors were busy, attending lots of fringe events, and ensuring that the ASLEF voice was heard throughout the party.

**Chair in the sky**

Mick Whelan chaired conference on Saturday afternoon. It’s a great honour – as well as a tricky job – and Mick is the first ASLEF general secretary to chair a conference session for 35 years, since the legendary Ray Buckton, who was GS from 1970 to 1987.

Mick has spent 35 years as a railwayman, and 35 years as a trade union activist, since he began his career as a guard on British Rail’s Midland region in 1984, after which he became a freight driver and a member of ASLEF. Mick was elected District 6 Organiser in 2000 and general secretary in 2011. He became chair of TULO, the Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation, which is now known as Labour Unions, in 2016; and was elected to the Labour Party’s NEC in 2017.

ASLEF is one of the smallest of the 12 trade unions which affiliate to the Labour Party. While Unison has 1,370,000 members; Unite 1,290,000; and the GMB 615,000 we have 20,500. But we punch well above our weight, both industrially, where ASLEF has more muscle, and more influence, than the other rail unions, and politically.

Since Mick became GS, he and AGS Simon Weller have worked extremely hard within the Labour Party, and the Trades Union Congress, to re-establish the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen as a voice to which people should listen. Which is why, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, and in the wake of difficult headlines for the party in that morning’s newspapers, Mick walked on stage, sat down in the big chair as party conference chair, grasped the nettle of changes to conference procedures, and settled the ragged nerves of delegates in the hall who, rather than fight each other, wanted to turn their fire and their ire on the Tories. It was a masterful performance by Mick and a triumph for ASLEF.

‘The Brighton train it goes real soon, my Brighton belle is in her room’

– The Stranglers

**Tosh on basement tapes**

Former EC president Tosh McDonald was in Brighton with his wife Nikki – both are councillors in Donny – for Doncaster CLP. On Saturday night Tosh spoke at the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy’s fringe meeting in the basement room of the Queens Hotel. Other speakers included Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott; Margaret Greenwood, MP for Wirral West; and Lloyd Russell-Moyle, MP for Brighton Kemp Town.

**Passengers before profit**

Richard Leonard, leader of the Scottish Labour Party, in a barnstorming speech on Monday morning, announced that he would be forcing a vote in the Scottish Parliament to bring the railway in Scotland back into public ownership.

‘The shareholder dividend and the profit motive should never have had any place in our National Health Service, in the delivery of our bus services, in the delivery of our post, in our prisons, in our asylum system, or in our railways, either.’

‘Which is why Scottish Labour will be forcing a vote next week to end the Abellio franchise of ScotRail so that, once again, we can put passengers before profits.’

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Proud to be union

Jeremy Corbyn underlined the importance of the Labour-union link at the annual reception given by Labour Unions and Thompsons solicitors in the Alexandra room of the Grand Hotel on Sunday night.

The Labour leader reminded delegates of the historic links between the party and the unions – the Labour Party was established by the trade unions to represent working men and women in Parliament after the Liberal Party turned out to be reliably unreliable – and how the party of labour was, originally, the political arm of the industrial movement.

Mick is chair of Labour Unions, which used to be called TULO – the Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation – which co-ordinates the activities of the 12 unions which affiliate to the party – ASLEF; the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers’ Union; Community; CUW; FBU; GMB; Musicians’ Union; NUM; TSSA; Unison; Unite and USDAW.

Mick made a barnstorming speech about Labour, the unions, the next election, and the next government, and introduced the speakers – Jeremy Corbyn; Jo Stevens, MP for Cardiff Central; and Ian Lavery, MP for Wansbeck, Labour Party chair, and a former president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

At the heart of the party

Mick Whelan set out the importance of the Labour-union link in a keynote article in the weekend edition of the Morning Star, which was on sale on Saturday and Sunday, widely distributed throughout the Brighton Centre, and at hotels up and down the seafront, and which triggered lively conversations over cups of coffee, bottles of beer, and glasses of wine wherever conference delegates met.

‘It was the trade unions – the voice of the organised working-class – which formed the Labour Representation Committee at a meeting in Farringdon, central London, just a few hundred yards from where ASLEF’s head office is today,’ wrote Mick. ‘That was in 1900. The 29 LRC Members of Parliament returned at the general election of 1906 elected Keir Hardie, MP for Merthyr Tydfil, as leader, and adopted the name of the Labour Party.

‘From time to time, over the last 119 years, there have been calls – usually, though not exclusively, from the right – to break the link between the Labour Party and the labour movement. But to remove the collective voice of organised labour from the party would be to destroy its foundations. And for what purpose?

‘The only people who want that – and they are not all in the Tory Party – are not on the side of the angels. They want to marginalise, if not destroy, the trade unions, and the organised working class, because they are frightened of the power of the organised working-class – as Shelley wrote, after Peterloo, “Ye are many, they are few” – and want to protect the vested interests of the few.

‘This is a critical time for the Labour Party and the labour movement. A general election is imminent – I expect it to be called for mid-or late-November – and a Labour government, committed to socialist values, with a manifesto pledged to deliver the ideas for which we in the labour movement have fought for so long, could be in power before Christmas. Then the trade unions, alongside the Labour Party, will help rebuild Britain after nine years of Tory austerity.

‘The Labour-union link has been an historic – and successful – relationship for more than a century. Trade unions formed the party to give working people a voice in Parliament as well as the workplace. I am proud to be a member of the Labour Party and proud to be an active trade unionist. I am loyal to both traditions and passionately believe this link will enable our party to get into government at the general election.’

Mick: Do the right thing

Mick Whelan told a Labour & Palestine fringe meeting in the Charlotte room of the Grand Hotel on Monday night that it is high time the UK government ‘does the right thing’ and recognises the rights of Palestinians as well as the rights of Israelis. He also challenged delegates by saying ‘it’s not enough to pass resolutions; and asked what

Mick Whelan had a meeting with London Mayor Sadiq Khan on Monday afternoon to talk through all our concerns about Transport for London, aggressive management on London Underground, and safety on Croydon Tramlink.

We need cleaner

Andy Hudd, EC vice-president, spoke as part of the debate on a green new deal on Tuesday morning.

‘In May this year, Jeremy Corbyn announced a climate emergency and, conference, he was right. Climate change will affect every living being on our planet. But you can be sure it is affecting working people, and the vulnerable, first.

‘Just a couple of weeks ago, the Bahamas saw the strongest hurricane to have ever hit the islands. It was the second most powerful Atlantic storm on record. This summer, globally, we have seen weather patterns which demonstrate that our climate is changing. Record high temperatures. Record rain fall.

‘Earlier this year a report in the New England Journal of Medicine explained that, due to climate change-related food shortages alone, the world could see a net increase of 529,000 adult deaths by 2050. 100 million
WISHING ON A STAR

GS Mick Whelan was invited to speak at a Morning Star fringe meeting on Saturday night – titled The Media War on Labour and How to Defeat It – in the Empress room of the Grand Hotel. Other speakers at a packed event included John McDonnell, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer; Richard Leonard, leader of the Scottish Labour Party; Diane Abbott, Shadow Home Secretary; Len McCluskey, GS of Unite; Dave Ward, GS of the CWU; Mick Cash, GS of the RMT; and Ben Chacko, editor of the Morning Star. Richard, a former GMB organiser in Scotland, and a good friend of ASLEF, felt obliged to apologise to Ben for ‘stealing’ Conrad Landin, the Morning Star’s Scottish reporter, to become his new spin doctor at Holyrood.

Andy: ‘More freight on rail is the green answer’

people could be forced into extreme poverty by 2030.

‘Transport is the largest polluter, in terms of CO2 emissions. The latest figures show that 33% of carbon dioxide emissions are sure from the transport sector. But rail accounts for less than 2% of this.

‘There have been huge developments in electric vehicle technology and this will play a significant role in tackling climate change. But all transport has a carbon footprint and, if we are serious about dealing with this issue, we need to create a fully integrated transport network, powered by renewable energy.

‘This means better, greener, and cleaner public transport. This means more freight on our rail and waterways… This means better regulation of buses.

‘Comrades, I will end with this. There are difficulties for many trade unionists in dealing with this issue. Some of our members have jobs that are reliant on fossil fuels. But these workers are not the enemy and their trade unions have a duty to protect them.

‘We must work with our fellow unions. The term “just transition” should be more than just words. Let us always make sure that whatever we do to deal with climate change we bring working people with us. Because this challenge we can only face if we are united.’

OUTSIDE

STEVE CAVALIER, chief executive of Thompsons solicitors, stepped in to chair the Justice for Colombia fringe – Where Now for the Peace Process? – on Tuesday night when GS Mick Whelan was called to an emergency NEC meeting. ‘I’m Mick Whelan’s stunt double, but with more hair,’ said Steve, welcoming delegates to ‘the most bizarre fringe venue in conference history – a bijou bedroom at the Grand Hotel!’ After serious speeches by Dan Carden, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, and Helen Goodman, MP for Bishop Auckland, Steve closed with these words: ‘If you’ve enjoyed this, I’m Steve Cavalier, Thompsons solicitors. If you haven’t, I’m Mick Whelan, ASLEF.’

SAMUEL ROGERS, a minor poet, popular in his lifetime, but best known now for his account of his friendships with William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, wrote memorably after one trip to the south coast in 1829: ‘Brighton is still very gay and full of balls.’

MOMENTUM has been criticised recently for its ‘preachy, teachy’ approach to members. Criticism which hardened during conference with its daily bulletin called The Organiser which was subtitled, somewhat patronisingly, ‘Momentum’s Daily Conference Explainer’. In case you didn’t understand…

MICK RE-ELECTED

Mick Whelan was re-elected unopposed to serve another term on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

QUOTE...

‘We have a fantastic manifesto, and we must unite behind it to win the next election.’ – Ian Lavery, Labour Party chair

OFF MESSAGE

THE ASLEF train crew stayed at the Old Ship, on the seashore, where our annual assembly of delegates was held in 2014. AAD met in the ballroom where the Italian composer and violin virtuoso Niccolo Paganini played a concert in 1831. Five years later Paganini opened a casino in Paris, the failure of which ruined him financially. It was ironic, then, that after Andrew Lloyd Webber lost a wager with his cellist brother Julian over the result of a Leyton Orient game, the good lord settled his debt by writing Variations on a Theme by Paganini for his brother, who played cello on the original album, alongside Gary Moore (guitars), Don Airey and Rod Argent (keyboards); Herbie Flowers (bass); Barbara Thompson (flute and sax); and Jon Hiseman and Phil Collins (drums). The opening variation was used, for 22 years, as the theme tune for The South Bank Show.

MOSTIDEOLOGICAL ELECTION SINCE 1979

Keith Ewing, Professor of Law at King’s College, London, has a famously dry sense of humour. After spelling out, at AAD in Southend in 2015, days after the unexpected Conservative victory under Cameron in the general election, just how bad things would get under the Tory government, he paused, looked around the room, and smiled: ‘You see, I’m from a Scottish Presbyterian background, so my glass isn’t half empty, it’s always three-quarters empty…’ At the IER fringe on Labour Rights Under a Labour Government in the Grand Hotel on Monday lunchtime he revealed he had just had a cataract operation, carried out, of course, by the NHS. ‘I can see clearly now,’ he mused, ‘Yes, my eyes have been opened. More seriously, he added: ‘The next election will be the most ideological in the history of Labour Party – if I remember it correctly. The Labour Party was formed to defeat the Tories, to bring about the socialist revolution the great men of the past who built the Labour Party talked about.’

‘People change,’ she said. ‘Oh, no they don’t. Look at me. I’ve never changed. It’s like those sticks of rock: bite it all the way down, you’ll still read Brighton. That’s human nature!’ – Graham Greene

Keith: voters will have a stark choice

‘My grandad drove a steam train, my father drove a truck / Right across North Africa, taken prisoner at Tobruk / And my grandad got promoted to my grandad / When the war was over, and he returned from Hell / My grandad got promoted to the pretty pretty pretty / From Hell’ – Ralph McTell

Andy: ‘More freight on rail is the green answer’

‘My party was the creation of the trade unions’

Jeremy: ‘Our party was the creation of the trade unions’
Climate change – the challenge of our times

ICK Whelan, following Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite, to the podium on Monday morning, and speaking, like him, on a composite motion about an industrial strategy for the many, not the few, dryly began, to a gale of laughter around the conference hall, ‘What Len said!’

More seriously, Mick told delegates: ‘Conference, we are consistently told that technology is changing our world and that we must move with the times. The economy is changing and, therefore, the world of work must also change.

‘And, yes, this is true. We aren’t Luddites. Our movement is based on progress. The labour movement must embrace technology that makes us a more prosperous country. A more efficient country. And a country that improves the quality of life for the many.

‘But, for too long, many of these voices have also used these changes as an excuse to neglect our core industries. Occasionally we’ve had politicians piping up about the need for an industrial strategy but these words have not been followed by action. Well, conference, it’s time for action. Because there will never be an app that deals with our housing crisis, crumbling transport network, or inadequate school and hospital buildings.

‘The only way to deal with these is a strategy that’s based around the need for better infrastructure. That boosts construction and looks at the social impact of procurement in the supply chain.

‘But, conference, at its core, a Labour industrial strategy must deal with the biggest challenge of our times. Climate change.

‘We must electrify our railways and have a properly integrated multi-model transport system. Build housing that is designed to produce less carbon. And make sure our schools, hospitals, and all public buildings are energy efficient.

‘Trade union voices must be central to the strategy. And, whilst I’m here, trade union voices must also be central to our party. Our party was established to be the voice of organised labour. The clue is in the name!

‘Trade unions created the party and, comrades, if the collective voices of train drivers, nurses, school support staff, postal workers, firefighters, and shopworkers is diminished, this party would no longer be worthy of that name.

‘Conference, climate change has been one of the free market’s biggest failures. Dealing with it must be one of the labour movement’s greatest successes.

‘Now let’s get Jeremy into Number 10 and have an industrial strategy that deals with climate change, rebuilds our infrastructure and works for the many, not the few.’

QUOTE...

‘We should not let anyone define us – or divide – us as Leavers or Remainers. We are socialists.’ – Len McCluskey, general secretary, Unite

When we own it

HE Rail Safety & Standards Board invited Mick Whelan to speak at its fringe – asking the question ‘What will rail look like under Labour?’ – in the Ambassador room of the Hilton Brighton Metropole on Monday lunchtime.

The GS took the opportunity to spell out what ASLEF – which has played a key part in helping Andy McDonald and Rachael Maskell draw up the party’s policy on public ownership of Britain’s railways – thinks it should look like, and how it will differ from the nationalisation of British Rail.

Other speakers included Mark Phillips, chief executive of the RSSB; Stewart Fox-Mills, commercial director of Abellio; Bill Esterson, MP for Sefton Central; and Jessie Joe Jacobs, director of the Northern Inclusion Consortium, who is also running to be metro mayor in the Tees Valley.

Alexi Ozorio, public affairs manager of the RSSB, stepped in to chair the fringe when Gwyn Topham of The Guardian had to return to London after the collapse of Thomas Cook.

The general smiled and said: ‘What Len said!’

‘I love San Francisco, and Brighton has something of San Francisco about it. It’s by the sea, there’s a bigger gay community, a feeling of people being there because they enjoy their life there.’ – Brian Eno

Comedy Tosh

Tosh McDonald, who stood down as EC president at the end of last year, launched his new career as a stand up comic with Stand Up for Labour at the Komedia club in Brighton on Monday night. Tosh – billed as Democracy Roadshow, ‘which has caused a rumpus all over the country’, according to the flyer – was first on, looking a little more nervous than usual, before the professionals, who included Don Biswas, Patrick Monahan, Njambo McGrath and Norman Lovett. Crispin Flintoff was MC. Tosh need not have worried. He went down a storm.

This Unite banner – hanging from the ceiling in the Grand Hotel – succinctly made the point about trade union membership. Why join a union? Because you’ll be ‘Stronger. Safer. Better paid’.

So raise the scarlet standard high

Conference closed, in the traditional way, with a rousing rendition of The Red Flag coupled with loud and extended chants of ‘Johnson out!’

‘Seems like only yesterday, under the stars on Brighton beach’ – Rod Stewart
The people who’ll set that valley free

In the last of three features on fascism, KEITH RICHMOND examines the impact of racism in post-war Britain and the response from young men and women who took to the streets – and to the stage with guitars – to take on the white supremacists.

The Second World War fought between the Allied and Axis armies from 1939 to 1945 was – unlike the Great War of 1914-18 – as much a conflict of ideologies as it was a geopolitical battle for territory and treasure between the great powers of the world.

It was, for Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, a clash of competing ideologies, of fascism versus communism, at least after Operation Barbarossa in 1941; and it was, for Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan against Britain, America, France and the rest of Occupied Europe, a battle between the free democracies and the fascist jackboot.

‘I do not fight fascists because I will win. I fight fascists because they are fascists.’
– Chris Hedges

Violence on the streets against black people, some of whom had arrived from the West Indies on the Empire Windrush in 1948, some of whom came from Africa – such as the Asians forced to flee Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972 – India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh, and many who had been born here, and whose parents had lived in Britain for many years, together with the success of the far-right in elections, and the inability of politicians to deal with the problem, led the left to mobilise.

The Anti-Nazi League, set up in 1977 by the Socialist Workers Party, with support from trade unions and Labour Party activists, took to the streets to demonstrate wherever the National Front met to march.

And leftist rock bands, together with roots and reggae acts, organised Rock Against Racism concerts to preach a message of hope, not hate, against the neo-Nazis (the NF was routinely referred to as the Nazi, rather than the National Front).

On 30 April 1978 100,000 people marched from Trafalgar Square to Victoria Park in Hackney, east London, for a concert featuring the Tom Robinson Band, Steel Pulse, The Clash (third on the bill because they were playing Birmingham that night), X-Ray Spex, Jimmy Pursey of Sham ‘69, and Patrik Fitzgerald.

‘When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross’
– Sinclair Lewis

The tide turned but the fallout from the financial crash of 2008 has seen a rise, again, in the far right. And a repeat of what happened after the Great War and during the Great Depression. Economic collapse, say Boris Johnson and Donald Trump, is not the result of structural flaws in the market, the failure of neoliberalism, or a fundamental and inherent problem of capitalism. They have, like Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Mosley, found scapegoats – the usual suspects – to blame.

FIRST THEY CAME
First they came for the communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a communist.
Then they came for the socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me.
Martin Niemoller

Radio Luxemburg

At our annual assembly of delegates in Leeds in May, an agenda item put forward by Victoria Line 182, amended by Northern Line North 067, was approved by AAD and adopted by the EC. ‘AAD pays tribute to two giants of the socialist and international working-class, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Leibknecht, in this 100th year of their murder at the hands of the proto-Nazi Freikorps. In the midst of the horrors of the First World War, Luxemburg wrote: “Society stands at the crossroads of a transition to socialism or regression into barbarism.” We have witnessed the horrors of that regression into barbarism in the form of the Second World War and the Holocaust. Those words echo as a stark reminder about the struggles we face as far-right and fascist forces gain momentum in Europe today. This AAD instructs the executive committee to commission a series of articles about fascism for the ASLEF Journal, with a focus on what fascism is, with historical and contemporary examples, and how organised workers and their trade unions are always among those that fascism sets out to destroy.’
A FANTASTIC day was had by all on Friday 20 September as members of Edge Hill celebrated 125 years as a branch. Whilst the sun beamed down on the streets of Liverpool guests congregated in the Casa Bar on Hope Street. Accompanying me were members of Edge Hill, past and present; other ASLEF members in District 3; ex-EC3, ASLEF president and Edge Hill member Alan Donnelly; current EC3 John Metcalfe; and current president Dave Calfe. Service badges were handed out to Che Cosgrove (10 years); Mike Cooper, Colin Quine and Carol Testrow (20); Geoff Perry (25); Paul Hovell and Ronnie Richardson. (45). Members who could not attend will get them from the branch secretary. A bespoke badge has been designed to celebrate the anniversary and there was an opportunity to view a plaque, kindly arranged by District 3 council, which will soon be unveiled, in memory of former Edge Hill branch secretary and Northern company council secretary Mick Maher, who passed away last year. A big thank you to Edge Hill for inviting us to celebrate this landmark. And a special shout out to Mike Cooper who was instrumental in organising the day’s festivities.

Graham Davies and Gus McInnes (35); Dave Andrews (40); Peter Hovell and Ronnie Richardson (45). Members who could not attend will get them from the branch secretary. A bespoke badge has been designed to celebrate the anniversary and there was an opportunity to view a plaque, kindly arranged by District 3 council, which will soon be unveiled, in memory of former Edge Hill branch secretary and Northern company council secretary Mick Maher, who passed away last year. A big thank you to Edge Hill for inviting us to celebrate this landmark. And a special shout out to Mike Cooper who was instrumental in organising the day’s festivities.

DO3 Andy Hourigan

AUCHENGEICH COLLERY DISASTER

The Auchengeich colliery disaster claimed the lives of 47 men – leaving 41 wives without a husband and 76 children without a father. On 18 September 1959, 48 men went to work; descending into the pit at 6.30am for the day shift. All but one would never see daylight again. A fire that originated with one of the driving belts of a booster fan spread to wood props and laggings used as roof supports. As the fire took hold, 48 men were travelling in the direction of the fire, to the coal face, on the personnel train; 47 died within minutes, due to poisoning by carbon monoxide. There was only one survivor. When news of the disaster started to spread, 1,200 people descended on the pit to see if their loved ones were involved. As the hours passed it became clear it was a very serious incident and people’s worst fears were realised when the National Coal Board’s Scottish chairman Ronald Parker announced the mine had to be flooded in order to put out the fire.

The tragedy touched, and blighted, mining communities in the surrounding area, including Kirkintilloch, Kilbarchan, Chryston, Muirhead. The bodies of all the men were later recovered. George McEwan, the youngest to die, was 20; Henry Clayton, the oldest, was 62. Auchengeich colliery – which opened in 1908 – went back into full production, finally closing in 1965.
Are you a rider on a downbound train?

EC vice-president ANDY HUDD looks back at our ten year SQUASH campaign and looks forward to our new campaign for Better Driving

Cabs for all train drivers

At AAD in Bristol in 2017 conference adopted agenda item 42 which asked the executive committee to consider the relaunch of the SQUASH campaign. The EC dealt with the issue at June’s session under resolution 570/477.

The SQUASH campaign was launched in September 2006 to improve members’ working conditions in driving cabs. It aimed to highlight the current state of play and to get cabs that are ‘Safe, Quiet, User-friendly, Air-conditioned, Specially-seated and Healthy’. The issue was raised with TOCs and FOCs via pay claims and through the health & safety machinery.

ASLEF also raised the subject with the safety body at the time – the HMRI – and convinced the RSSB’s SPAD focus group to investigate what information needs to be collected from drivers about this issue and to evaluate cost-effective ways of cooling cabs.

So what was achieved?
Well, there is no doubt the campaign had an effect, but it is also clear that we still haven’t fully achieved SQUASH. As highlighted at AAD, ‘freight members, in particular, face excessive temperatures in driving cabs during the summer months’ and ‘the installation of air conditioning units on all forms of traction is a minimum requirement’.

Unfortunately, the privatised rail industry is not designed to enable the continual generation of decent (new) rolling stock. There is no incentive for ROSCOs to modernise their cabs – they continue to get ‘money for nothing’ from the TOCs as all the ROSCOs seem to do is keep collecting the cash for out of date trains that have already been paid for ten times over.

The European Transport Federation, to which ASLEF is affiliated, has produced a cab ergonomics guidance document to provide best practice guidelines for manufacturers and negotiators, ensure new rolling stock is fit for purpose, and current rolling stock is assessed against these standards.

The document highlights the fact that some European legislation on the design of rolling stock is out of date and some of the standards and technical specifications for interoperability need to be reviewed to take into account developments in the industry and the aspirations of the railway trade unions.

Unfortunately, this work within the European Union is time-consuming and difficult, as the bureaucratic process means that changes to legislation take a long time. So we have to get on with the task in hand and tackle these issues with our own negotiating machinery and legislation.

ASLEF has had some success in recent years by getting our negotiators and his reps involved in the design of new rolling stock and it is now broadly understood by the industry that having ASLEF’s input is not only good practice but can save the companies a small fortune as carrying out remedial work on poorly designed cabs can be very expensive.

The EC sub-committee for cab ergonomics has had meetings since AAD 2017 to work out a strategy for the reinvigoration of our cab campaign. Progress has been slow, for a variety of reasons, but the key objectives of our Better Driving Cabs campaign are:

- To raise awareness of the benefits of a good cab environment with industry bodies.
- To improve the training of reps and negotiators.
- To improve industry reporting processes.
- To campaign for a maximum cab temperature.
- To campaign for air conditioning in every cab.

We invited members to take part in a Better Cabs survey on Facebook and, in 14 days, had more than 500 responses and, in a month, just under 1,000, which proves that this issue is still high on the agenda for our members. Thank you for the comments you left; they will drive the campaign forward and form part of our objectives.

We hope to start some aspects of the main campaign in mid-November and address the issues you have raised as part of a long-running campaign that will, hopefully, deliver a modern, safe, and ergonomically sound driving cab.

We turn back time – and the pages of the Locomotive Journal – to November 1919 and the rail strike

COMPARISON OF WEEKLY WAGES

David Lloyd George, Prime Minister, £96 3s 1d; Sir Eric Geddes, Minister of Transport, £96 3s 1d; Sir Auckland Geddes, President of the Board of Trade, £96 3s 1d; A railwayman, £2 0s 0d.

THE RAILWAY STRIKE

The Commonweal, edited by RL Outhwaite, has some trenchant comments on the railway strike. It says: ‘Mr Lloyd George has stated that the railway strike is an “anarchist conspiracy against society”. Anyone who has sat opposite Sir Eric Geddes in the House of Commons will have a better perception of the underlying cause of the strike than can be gained from newspaper reports. In appearance and demeanour he is a typical American trust boss and trouble was assured when he was made dictator of Transport. The strike has followed immediately upon his securing full power under the Transport Act. He obviously had all preparations made to crush the National Union of Railwaymen at the first opportunity.

ANARCHIST CONSPIRACY?

It is significant that at the start of the crisis Sir Eric Geddes, with his brother Sir Auckland, had control of the situation. Sir Auckland has been a Professor of Anatomy at a Canadian university, and showed hopeless incapacity as Minister for National Service. The Geddes brothers are well qualified to make anarchists of the most law-abiding workers.

A FEW SHILLINGS FOR YOU, BUT THOUSANDS OF POUNDS FOR ME

The railwaymen remember that the man opposed to them in their endeavour to get a fair wage, computed in shillings, is the man who stipulated, on being offered the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, that he should continue to receive his salary of £20,000, payable under his agreement with the North Eastern Railway Company.

GS PICKED TO RUN IN SHEFFIELD

Mr John Bromley, our Society’s general secretary, has been selected as the Labour candidate for the Attercliffe Parliamentary division of Sheffield which can be congratulated on its choice, a candidate who enjoys a very direct, and real, contact with organised labour.
The ASLEF RMS 500 Club

Colleagues

The 500 Club is a fundraising venture for ASLEF’s Retired Members’ Section.

**Conditions of Membership:** Only retired and working members of ASLEF, including district councils and branches, plus permanent staff employed by ASLEF, can make an application to join the RMS 500 Club. The application form and standing order form can only be completed and submitted by the ASLEF member, or staff member.

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

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**ASLEF RMS 500 Club application form**

Name: .................................................................
Address: ................................................................
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Postcode: ..............................................................
Telephone: ............................................................
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).
Delete (A) or (B) accordingly.

Signed: .................................................................
Date: .................................................................

Please return this coupon to: RMS 500 Club, Admin Dept, ASLEF, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN and hand the standing order mandate (right), to your bank (or via your internet bank)

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**STANDING ORDER MANDATE**

To: Bank
Address: 

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<td>ASLEF RMS 500 CLUB ACCOUNT</td>
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Commencing

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<tr>
<th>DATE AND AMOUNT OF FIRST PAYMENT</th>
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*Quoting the reference*

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*Until you receive further notice from me/us in writing and debit my/us account accordingly

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

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

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

Note: The Bank will not undertake to:

(i) make any reference to Value Added Tax or other indeterminate element
(ii) advise payer’s address to beneficiary
(iii) advise beneficiary of inability to pay
(iv) request beneficiary’s banker to advise beneficiary of receipt

*Delete if not applicable

If the amounts of the periodic payments vary, they should be incorporated in a schedule overleaf
BTP’s new hotline – 0300 123 2277 – for drivers after a fatality on the line. Calling is voluntary, not mandatory

Who: Just for drivers following a person struck by a train – or after a body has been found. It is treated as an emergency line and, if anyone else calls on it, for any other reason, they will be cut off, so it is always free solely for train drivers.

What: BTP will ask the driver how he or she is (do you need medical assistance) as we will call an ambulance for the person struck but may need to call another for you if you are in shock or injured). Also, your details. Like where you are based and how we can contact you.

Then: BTP will ask you what happened. And a number of follow-up questions depending on your answers. Such as details of the train, direction of travel, description of the person/s involved and what they were doing. Conditions (BTP has only two control rooms – one in London, one in Birmingham – and the weather can be quite different!) And what speed the train was going – this is not to catch the driver out but to establish the facts as known. It also prepares officers for what they may face. BTP may also ask the driver for their opinion – such as ‘Do you think it was a deliberate act?’

Where: The call comes into one of our two control rooms and is usually answered by the sergeant (one is on duty in each control room 24/7) or the inspector (one in London). This is usually the sergeant or inspector who is not in command of the incident – this enables them to give as much time as is needed with the driver and keeps the officer in command free to deal with the incident (the officer in command may listen in to the call). These calls are recorded and a transcript will be placed on the BTP log.

Why: So BTP can classify the fatality in one of five classifications: suspicious (such as murder); non-suspicious (such as a deliberate act or accident); unexplained (unknown how they died – perhaps a body found on the side of the line); work-related (death at work, such as a track worker); or sudden death (natural causes, such as a heart attack).

Witness: Often the driver is the only witness and getting the information from you as soon as possible enables BTP to deal with the incident effectively and send the appropriate resources. If BTP doesn’t get a call officers will be tasked with locating the driver to ask the same questions and update the control room which extends the time to deal with an incident. Clearly if a driver is not fit to speak to BTP medical needs take priority.

When: As soon as possible after the event.

How: Either patched through by signaler/cab radio/equipment or a call from driver’s mobile phone.

What next: Statement for the coroner in England and Wales and the procurator fiscal in Scotland. This is usually taken at a later date, at a location preferred by the driver such as a BTP office, your depot or home address (but not a public place such as a coffee shop). You can have a friend, family member, union rep or manager with you (though, ideally, no more than two additional people).

Finally: Coroner’s court or inquest – where possible BTP try to get the coroner or procurator fiscal to use the statement as evidence and not call the driver if at all possible. This cannot always be accommodated for varying reasons – such as the seriousness of the incident or a lack of other evidence or at the request of the next of kin.

Further to Cliff Blackwell’s memories of Keith Stubbings (Journal, July) Stubbo, as he was known, was a larger than life character who was known by so many people on the railway. Keith started his career at Stratford back in 1979. After the partial closure of Stratford he moved to RFD at Stonebridge Park in January 1994 and then, in 1999, to Ipswich Freightliner Intermodal.

Members at Ipswich depot decided to raise a collection for a memorial bench in memory of Keith, towards which the Ipswich branch helped. On behalf of Ipswich Freightliner driver Kelvin Moody, whose idea it was to do this, a massive thank you to everybody who donated towards this beautiful bench (you all know who you are).

I will finish this tribute with the words on the plaque on the bench. In memory of Keith ‘Stubbo’ Stubbings (Ipswich driver). Sadly missed. Always remembered by all who knew him. RIP Keith. I would also like to thank Steve Read, who was a close friend of Keith’s; they struck up a friendship at Broxbourne in 1986 and remained mates for many years.

Lee Barber, Ipswich branch secretary

LONGSIGHT LEGENDS

Sadly, we have lost two more of the 184 ‘redcoats’ who greeted the public to Maplins. FRANK CHAPMAN who started at Bury on 4 February 1952, and came to Longsight from Manchester Victoria on 10 February 1992, died in July. I shall never forget when he let me have a go on an AC loco which he had learned after his transfer, and I had passed out on just five days earlier. Leaving Stoke on a greasy rail, I couldn’t help but have a couple of blasts on the sanders. As the sound echoed around the cab of 86228, Frank looked amazed and asked what the noise was. I told him it was the sanders. In his rich Lancashire accent, he exclaimed, “Ave we got ’em?” Priceless. When the BOP closed he chose CrossCountry. FRANK WAINWRIGHT, who died in August, was one of Trafford Park’s gentlemen of the road, commencing on 4 March 1957, working the old Midland line to St Pancras. This seniority made him a very rare 17F man, during a brief spell when Trafford came under Derby. When the depot behind the Stretford End closed, transfer to Longsight was usually via a spell at Oxford Road. At the great Longsight divide of July 1994, Frank opted for West Coast main line. Farewell, old chums.

Mel Thorley, RMS Longsight
Ladbrooke Grove lessons

I read with interest the article on the Ladbrooke Grove disaster (Journal, October). I also read a newsletter from the RSBB regarding an increase in SPADs. This year is the highest since 2014 and July this year was the highest single month since July 2007. I have looked into this increase and, from observation and deduction, it seems that a large increase in safety of the line incidents is by new drivers with less than three years’ experience.

The recruitment process for train drivers is flawed due to the fact that there is a wealth of information online, especially on open forums, with test practice material and even the correct answers at interview, which allows candidates that are not suitable into the role.

The training programme for new drivers and driver instructors has also changed considerably over the years, with a fast track process being adopted on both accounts. For example, driver instructors only need to attend a three hour course and are then allocated a trainee. I’m not saying all new drivers and instructors are not up to the level of quality but some are getting through the loop and this is not fair on either the instructor or the trainee.

Historically, ASLEF has had a very active role in improving the competence management of drivers since the Ladbrooke Grove disaster and I hope this can continue by addressing the hike in safety of the line incidents.

As a union, is it not time ASLEF stepped in to monitor this worsening situation and ensure the safety of its members? It’s only a matter of time before there will be another rail disaster and I believe being proactive is far better than being reactive.

TIW Chester driver (name supplied)

GS Mick Whelan says: ‘No organisation in the rail industry takes safety more seriously than ASLEF and you are quite right, we have been at the forefront of the fight for a safer railway. And we continue to work for a safe railway every day, and to lobby against new ways of working which might save money for the TOCs and FOCs, but will make our workplace less safe.’

Nuggets of wisdom

Attending the Labour Party conference in September as a delegate was truly a privilege. I’d like to place on record my huge thanks for the comradeship and support leading up to and during the conference, all the officials, head office staff and, last but not least, my fellow delegate John McCue from District 2. You all offered encouragement and nuggets of wisdom which made conference an amazing experience. It was also great to catch up with so many activists I’ve got to know over the years. Most importantly, I’d like to thank all the branches which supported and nominated me, and my own members from Longsight branch for their unsung support.

Alan Moss, Virgin Trains company council rep

Enough time on the front?

I always read the LJ and noted last month the existence of retirement certificates, and again in the letters section this month. I joined ASLEF in November 1993 at Morden on the Northern Line, on LT, and later transferred to Edgware.
Humpo’s eternally grateful

I wish, through these pages, to pass on my sincere thanks and gratitude to ASLEF’s general secretary and executive committee for their donation from the hardship fund. Also to all the branches up and down the country for their generous donations, with a special thanks to John Thorpe, Stratford branch. I found myself on zero pay prior to early retirement brought about by ill health, which made life extremely difficult. It’s great to have the ASLEF family behind me, for which I will be eternally grateful. I also wish to thank Nigel Gibson and Howard Kaye for presenting me with my retirement certificate at the Stratford branch meeting on 2 September.

Tony (Humpo) Humphreys, Stratford

Getting the Journal online

Would it be possible to receive my copy of the monthly Journal via email instead of the printed version and, if so, how do I arrange that please?
Jonathan Wall, East Midlands Trains, Sheffield

Mick says: ‘If you complete the electronic form ‘Sign me up to the Journal’ in the ASLEF Journal section of our website, you should receive it by email rather than by post.’

The summer of 1990

Those were the best days of my life. We were young and restless. Man, we were killin’ time every second attem pt, and disappeared, very, very sad. I w ould do those 12 weeks again, every summer not of ’69, but 1990. Alan Moss, Longsight, started as a carriage cleaner at Effingham Junction, retired Eurostar, 2009; Lee Perry, Longsight, started as a shunter at Garston, now Virgin West Coast, Lime Street; Lenny Hawkins, started as a crossing keeper on the Southport line, retired from Colas; Lee Griffiths, Longsight, started as a guard at Crewe, didn’t come in one morning at Longsight, then came back on as a driver on the MPVs for GTBB; and Victoria bloke who failed his rules at the second attempt, and disappeared, very, very sad. I would do those 12 weeks again, every year. Wonderful.
Mel Thorley, Longsight

Ex-certificate railwaymen

I started my career on the railway as a signal box lad at Miles Platting Junction in 1967, working in several grades until 1990 when I passed out as a driver at Manchester Victoria. I retired in October 2018 after 30 years as a driver and 51 years 6 months on the railway. I am still an ASLEF member, in the Retired Members’ Section, but have not received a retirement certificate from ASLEF.
Stephen Beech, by email

I’ve just read two letters re retirement certificates in the September issue of my husband’s Journal. David joined the railway in April 1961, at Thornaby depot, transferred to Gloucester in October 1963, and retired as a driver on 3 November 2007. He’s still a member of ASLEF, in the retirement section, but has never received his certificate.
Gill Barnett, by email

I left Chiltern Railways in 2002 and have not received my retirement certificate yet. I did 22 years on the railway, in various positions, and am a member of the RMS.
Terence R Tedman, by email

Mick says: ‘Badges and certificates are presented at branch meetings but our admin dept has sorted this out for you.’

Handmade

Mick Whelan says: ‘You did and you are! Our admin dept at head office has sorted this.’

To place an advertisement in the ASLEF Journal please phone 020 7324 2400 or send an email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to the ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN

Don’t let it cost you your job!
KEITH RICHMOND reviews a couple of novels about the red scare in Hollywood, poems about the Holocaust, and a murder in Istanbul that sent ripples around the world

ESMOND Frank, the central character – hero might be pushing it – of Patrick Flanery’s new novel, is a gay, left-wing screenwriter enjoying a clandestine affair with Myles Haywood, a good-looking – and, as far as his fans are concerned, heterosexual – movie star while Desmond’s director friend John Marsh tries to convince his actress wife not to turn informant to the G-men and the House Un-American Activities Committee.

‘America First! That’s what Lindbergh said, the Nazi.’ – John Marsh in Night for Day

Desmond later reflects – and it’s a view with which the author is clearly sympathetic – about one stool pigeon: ‘He volunteered to testify, to name countless people he either knew to be communists, suspected of being communists, had heard might be fellow travellers, or feared might simply be subservives, which was the damning catch-all category for those who had done nothing more than believe in the rights of ordinary people to make a decent living, have a reasonable quality of life, and not worry that they might get fired without notice.’

Flanery is, if not a Connecticut Yankee at the court of King Arthur, an American writer living in London. And Night for Day (Atlantic Books, £16.99) is his magnificent new novel set in Hollywood in 1950 as Joseph McCarthy, the Republican senator for Wisconsin, and J Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, run a ‘red scare’ withHUAC against suspected lefties and a ‘lavender scare’ against suspected homosexuals. While the structure – everything happens in 24 hours – is Joycean and the atmosphere is Chandleresque, the politics of the piece – with its personal, professional, and sexual betrayals – reveals echoes of John Steinbeck, Dalton Trumbo and Upton Sinclair.

‘I’ve kept an eye on you, Charlie. Your work, I mean. Your recent stuff, it’s just not the same. Doesn’t sound like it’s your writing at all.’ – Drake Miller in The Fade Out

The Fade Out (Image, £16) is an ambitious graphic novel by writer Ed Brubaker and artist Sean Phillips which covers much of the same territory as Night for Day. Set in Hollywood, in 1948, it tells the tale of Charlie Parish, a left-wing screenwriter struggling with writer’s block who teams up with a blacklisted communist, whose wife he happens to be bonking, to investigate the death of a blonde starlet. Which brings him to the attention of the studio security chief who will stop at nothing to keep misdemeanours, and murders, under wraps. It’s very stylish, very clever, and very film noir.

‘What did the boy do, when the mob came?’ – Pogrom by Ed Hoornik

Our feature on fascism (Journal, August) argued that it was a pernicious ideology, inspired by philosophers such as Hegel and Nietzsche, preaching ideas of racial purity, and white supremacy, that reached its apogee in Hitler’s Germany with the round-up of communists, socialists and trade union activists; Jews, Roma and Jehovah’s Witnesses; homosexuals and ‘social deviants’; all sent by train to die in the Nazi death camps at Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Treblinka in Poland.

Poetry of the Holocaust edited by Jean Boase-Beier and Marian de Vooght (Arc, £14.99) collects work in ‘languages less often associated with the Holocaust, by or about those victimised for perceived disabilities, or because they were gay, or because their political or religious beliefs made them targets of Nazi hatred.’

A perfect example is Encounter by Gunvor Hofmo, a Norwegian poet close to Ruth Maier, who fled from Germany to Norway in 1939 and then, in 1942, was deported to Auschwitz where she was sent to the gas chamber: ‘On such a rainy night / you know it’s her, / your Jewish friend they murdered, / whose body they let burn / together with a thousand others.’

‘Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?’ – Henry II, whose angry outburst at court in his castle at Bures in Normandy in 1170 led directly to the death of Thomas à Becket

The death of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident, and Washington Post journalist, on 2 October last year, on the orders, it is said, of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has cast a longer shadow than the Saudis expected. They made, they now admit privately, a major miscalculation. Owen Wilson (the nom de guerre for a journalist who used to work for the FT) investigates the machinations of, and fall-out from, that Murder in Istanbul (Gibson Square, £9.99).

Khashoggi was dragged from the consul-general’s office in the Saudi consulate and dumped on the table of his study next door. ‘There was no attempt to interrogate Khashoggi. They had come to kill him.’ He was injected with a sedative and stopped screaming but, while he was still breathing, Salah Tubaiqy, president of the Saudi Fellowship of Forensic Pathology, started disembowelling him. ‘When I do this job, I listen to music,’ he told the other members of the Saudi intelligence Tiger team. ‘You should, too.’ The killing took seven minutes.

‘Showered in shale.’ – Jeff Scott

For his Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Speedway Grand Prix (Methanol Press, £20) shaleurine Jeff Scott spent the summer of 2018 hitching lifts, riding buses, and catching trains to attend all 10 SGP meetings in Poland, Sweden, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. He writes elegantly, amusingly, and with real insight, as a true fan of the dirt track rather than as an on message spin machine.
**Train driver, cowboy, or astronaut**

RAIN driver is one of those jobs that many kids – and, these days, not just boys – dream of doing when they grow up, thinking ‘that would be fun’ as they take their Hornby 00 gauge trains into and out of model stations.

Proof that it is still right up there – with cowboy and astronaut, in fact – on a list of dream jobs comes in David Nicholls’ new novel *Sweet Sorrow* (Hodder & Stoughton, £20) which is set during the long, and mostly hot, summer of 1997 when 16-year-old Charlie Lewis, who has just left school after taking his GCSEs, is at a loose end, working part-time at a petrol station to earn the minimum wage, and falling big time for Fran Fisher.

Charlie is talking to – well, being talked at by – his Mum about his Dad, on whom she has recently walked out: ‘Has he mentioned the possibility of looking for work?’

‘He has, yeah.’

This was only partly true. On days when our joint presence in the house became unbearable, Dad would grab pens and paper and turn the TV over to the Situations Vacant pages of *Ceefax*. Could we contemplate new professions in the same way that children do: train driver, cowboy, astronaut, could we fit our faces to the role? The answer was invariably no and the exercise was both dispiriting and deeply uncomfortable.

Looking for work was not something father and son should do together, the discomfort greater even than watching sex scenes, and soon we’d snap back to the programme, change the subject, mention it no more. I changed the subject now [to his Mum’s new love].

‘How’s Jonathan?’

‘Parting is such sweet sorrow’ (*Juliet to Romeo*)

‘either of us be a gas fitter? Insurance salesman? Diver on an oil rig?’

We contemplated new professions in the same way that children do: train driver, cowboy, astronaut, could we fit our faces to the role? The answer was invariably no and the exercise was both dispiriting and deeply uncomfortable.

Looking for work was not something father and son should do together, the discomfort greater even than watching sex scenes, and soon we’d snap back to the programme, change the subject, mention it no more. I changed the subject now [to his Mum’s new love].

‘How’s Jonathan?’

Keith Richmond

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**Prize Crossword**

Crossword 163 by Tom Williams

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Across:
1  Native of Merseyside
7  An extra perk
8  Sprites and demons
10  Out-and-out, or speak
11  Regal
13  Say again
15  Songbird
17  Emblem
18  Cap or bear?
19  Shout and scream
21  Living
22  Light-as-a-bird boxer?

Down:
1  Room for scientific research
2  Where grapes are grown
3  Final scores in football
4  Northern Ireland
5  Animal’s den
6  Swiss or French mountain
9  Colony
12  Very young plant
14  Hug
16  Extremely light gas
18  Small piece of land for vegetables?
20  Period of time
```

Solution to Crossword 162

Across:
1 Shaver 7 Risky 8 Confetti 9 Bacon 10 Soup 12 Nine 13 Pint 14 Pact 15 Plea 17 Atom 19 Lemon 20 Guardian 21 Singe 22 Orator

Down:
1 Sacks 2 Announcement 3 Rattle 4 Bribe 5 Psychiatrist 6 Cygnet 11 Pit 13 Pea 14 Polish 15 Potato 16 Angel 18 Minor

Congratulations to Martin Calvert, of Leeds, West Yorkshire, 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 162nd prize crossword in the October 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 November.

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Have you been sacked, or are in trouble at work, and cannot get hold of your branch secretary, local representative or District Organiser in an emergency? Call our industrial relations department on 020 7324 2400 (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday or 9am to 4pm on Friday) or leave a message on the answer service, or email info@aslef.org.uk with a subject heading of ‘For the attention of the industrial relations dept.’

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