Elections are all about taking sides – and Labour is on ours

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News

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- Nye Bevan on the Tory Party; plus Off the Rails: Philip Norman, Mick Holder, Lenny Henry, and Diving Against Intolerance
- Trevor Robinson on the Grenfell fundraiser
- Saltley service awards and Obama on woke
- Tributes to Tony West as he is laid to rest
- Graham Dean on the TfL pension fund

Features

- Sherelle Cadogan on ASLEF’s equalities weekend; and Helen Balami on what bosses can do about migraines in the workplace
- We’re all gonna rock to the rules that I make: Tom Corbin, Howard Kaye, Ed Mayne and Julian Vaughan want to be elected
- Chris Proctor has a waspish word or two about Grant Shapps, Chris Grayling, and Pacers in his wicked review of 2019
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Regulars

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- Last Word: Pre-Raphaelite Sisters at the National Portrait Gallery in London
- On Track: John le Carré on Britain, betrayal, and Brexit; Prize Crossword; Legal Services; and ASLEF’s Change of Address form

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The magazine of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen

DECEMBER 2019

Vote for the railway

We are not able, as train drivers who provide a public service, in a 24/7 industry, to celebrate Christmas and New Year fully. But we hope that the security and safety of everyone in this party period is paramount, and that the travelling public takes a moment to think of all those in the railway family doing the necessary maintenance and upgrade work that keeps our railway running, and who want to see their own loved ones over the festive fortnight.

We have the cynical timing of a failing government seeking to impose a poor anti-worker Brexit, not getting their own way, and forcing an election when students have gone home for the holidays and those in seasonal work may have their ability to vote impacted. Democracy denied is democracy undermined. So I would urge all those eligible to vote, regardless of their electoral preference, to register; and those who may have problems at this dark, cold, time of year to get a postal vote, out of respect for all those who fought for everyone to have a voice.

Naturally, as an affiliated union to the Labour Party, we have a pronounced bias to the party that will protect our NHS and schools, give a free broadband guarantee for a better start in life for our children and grandchildren. That will improve education, build houses, restore trade union rights, and do away with the bedroom tax, zero hours contracts and faux self-employment. That will introduce green policies that will take our economy forward with a just transition with quality, unionised, policies that will take our economy forward.

Labour will do a Brexit deal and put it to the people with the option to remain on the ballot paper. We remain in favour of Brexit but believe, after all the concerns raised by those on both sides of the debate, that no one was fully informed, and so support this way forward as sensible.

Labour will nationalise water, mail and rail. The party has promised a rolling programme of electrification, an extension of HS2 into Scotland, Crossrail for the North, and more connectivity, as well as the re-opening of branch lines. Support for publicly-owned rail freight and the end of driver only operation – something against which we have campaigned for 30 years. There is a lot for our industry in this Labour manifesto – and far more for the country as a whole.

As always, we will enter the New Year in a spirit of renewal and hope. Thank you for all you do and please may you and yours have a great Christmas and holiday period. Please be safe.

Yours fraternally
Mick Whelan, general secretary
Back Labour – and Britain’s railway – at the ballot box

A Labour Party commitment: A Labour government will work with ASLEF to develop minimum standards for train drivers’ cabs.

Lest we forget

I was fortunate to be invited to a service of remembrance at Southwark Cathedral on Wednesday 6 November in memory of the railwaymen of Great Britain and Ireland who died during the Great War of 1914-1918. More than 186,000 railway workers from the United Kingdom fought in the First World War – of whom 20,850 lost their lives in the United Kingdom. More than 186,000 railway workers from the United Kingdom fought in the First World War – of whom 20,850 lost their lives in the United Kingdom.

‘We need the Labour Party now more than ever,’ says GS Mick Whelan. ‘Nobody gave us the salaries and conditions we enjoy today; it has taken us 139 years of industrial negotiation and political struggle, building on the foundations of those who worked on the footplate in the past, to get where we are.’

The Tories, disingenuously, have tried to persuade people that they are the ‘workers’ party’.

Jeremy Corbyn marches with ECS Howard Kaye and DOS Nigel Gibson at Burston

But a party that seeks to alter hard-won t&cs by implementing changes through invitations to tender for future franchises is no friend of the train driver. And successive Tory Transport Secretaries say, when we raise the plight of the freight sector, ‘the market must assert itself’.

‘Labour is offering voters a radical, but sensible, socialist platform on which any of the great Labour Party leaders of the past – such as Keir Hardie, Clement Attlee, and Harold Wilson – would have been happy to stand,’ says Mick. ‘That’s why I urge you to vote Labour on 12 December and return a Labour government to help build a better Britain.’

Labour Party commitments:

- A Labour government will work with ASLEF to develop minimum standards for train drivers’ cabs.
- And the party has pledged to roll back DDO and put a second safety-critical person on every train.

Fat controller steps down

Sir Patrick McLoughlin, 62, Tory MP for Derbyshire Dales, has stood down after 33 years in the Commons. He was Secretary of State for Transport from 2012 to 2016 under David Cameron. Andy Botham, Derby branch, State for Transport from 2012 to 2016 under David Cameron. Andy Botham, Derby branch, East Midlands Trains company council, hit the headlines – the media loved the ballot box battle between the train driver and the Fat Controller – when he stood against the Tory heavyweight in 2015 and 2017.

Claire in the community

Clare Perry, 55, Conservative MP for Devizes since 2010, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport from 2014 to 2016, is also leaving Westminster. Perry – remembered by George Monbiot in The Guardian as ‘a firebrand who wanted to nationalise the banks and overthrow capitalism’ when they were both undergraduates at Brasenose College, Oxford – resigned after a Commons debate about GTR, and Southern, when she admitted, ‘I am often ashamed to be the Rail Minister.’

Last man standing

The RMS 500 Club receives contributions from Percy S Richard but has no contact details. Please, Percy, let Bill Dale know how he can get hold of you by calling 07796 132399.

So here it is, merry Christmas

The EC decided, in lieu of sending Christmas cards, to donate £1,250 to Shelter to help the homeless and £1,250 to a cancer hospice.

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

QUOTE...

‘Fix the Tube and we fix London’s future.’ – Jules Pipe, London’s Deputy Mayor for Planning, Evening Standard

...UNQUOTE

Tweets of the month

Grant Shapps prefers to talk planes not trains during meetings with Network Rail boss Andrew Haines. The fat controller previously ran the Civil Aviation Authority and the Transport Secretary, a private pilot who boasts he owned his own wings, generously gives Haines the benefit of his experiences in the sky during encounters. The minister’s head in the clouds obscures cancelled iron horses below.

What’s happened to the Brexit countdown clocks in Number 10 and Tory HQ? Just asking

Thank you Nigel Farage for confirming two Tory parties are standing and Brexit’s a right-wing pilot between Johnson’s Tory Brexit Party and your Brexit Tory Party

Is this the age of the train? In the year to July 2019, rail passengers between Glasgow and London rose by 57,000 while air travellers declined by 81,000. That’s a shift of about 6% from air to rail based on 2.5m journeys annually.

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If you are selling shoddy stuff you have to be a good salesman

N Sunday 4 July 1948, the day before the creation of the National Health Service, its architect, Aneurin Bevan, who was born at Tredegar, south Wales, left school at 13 to become a miner at Ty Trist colliery, was elected MP for Ebbw Vale in 1929, and was now Minister for Health in Clement Attlee’s great reforming post-war Labour government, gave a passionate speech at a Labour Party rally at Belle Vue in Manchester.

He recalled what it was like to be working-class in Britain – four of his parents’ ten children died in infancy and another at the age of eight because of the lack of public health provision – famously concluding:

‘That is why no amount of cajolery, and no attempts at ethical or social seduction, can eradicate from my heart a deep burning hatred for the Tory Party that inflicted those bitter experiences on me. So far as I am concerned they are lower than vermin. They condemned millions of first-class people to semi-starvation.

‘Now the Tories are pouring out money in propaganda of all sorts and are hoping by this organised sustained mass suggestion to eradicate from our minds all memory of what we went through.

‘But, I warn you, do not listen to what they are saying. Do not listen to the seductions of Lord Woolton. He is a very good salesman. If you are selling shoddy stuff you have to be a good salesman. But I warn you, they have not changed, or, if they have, they are slightly worse than they were.’

CONFERENCES & RALLIES

The Welsh Labour Party conference is at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 March. The Scottish Trades Union Congress is at the Concert Hall, Perth, from Monday 20 to Wednesday 22 April. Workers’ Memorial Day is Tuesday 28 April. ASLEF’s annual assembly of delegates is from Monday 11 to Friday 15 May in Cardiff. The Wales TUC is at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno from Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 May. The Durham Miners’ Gala is on Saturday 11 July. The Tolpuddle Martyrs’ festival, near Dorchester, is from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 July. The Burston strike school rally at Burston, near Diss in Norfolk, is on Sunday 6 September. 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: Steve Harling, with number 161, won the November draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £448.

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

PHILIP NORMAN, whose new biography Wild Thing: The Short, Spellbinding Life of Jimi Hendrix, will join his other books, including Shout! The True Story of the Beatles, Symphony for the Devil: The Rolling Stones Story, and Slowhand: The Life and Music of Eric Clapton, on many a musician’s bookshelf, tells the tale of a wonderful malapropism. It concerns Chris Corbin and Jeremy King, who have run a string of successful restaurants including Le Caprice, the Ivy, J Sheekey, the Wolseley, and Delaunay. Apparently, ‘one in my family’ said to him, ‘You know, it’s one of those Jeremy Corbyn and Stephen King restaurants...’

MICK HOLDER, a stalwart of ASLEF’s health & safety department for seven and a half years until he retired this year, has always enjoyed his music, too. As well as spinning the wheels of steel – he plies his trade as DJ Big Mick, or Jive Bunny, at the Leytonstone Ballroom above the Red Lion on the High Road – he has a secret passion for, er, country & western line dancing. Which is why, when he left ASLEF Towers in June, as well as a new PC, Mick walked off with this framed image of ‘health & safety 2’ doing John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever.

THE FACT SERVICE – a four page news sheet published by the Labour Research Department every week – is usually a worthy but rather po-faced affair. However, Volume 81 Issue 43 revealed a sub-editor with a sense of humour. A piece about executive pay, revealing that 22 top execs received a total of £71.99 million – an average of £3.28 million – in the 2018-19 reporting season, compared with the average annual salary of a full-time UK worker of £29,000, drew attention to Darren Throop, CEO of Entertainment One, who pockets £15.24 million a year (or £293,040 every week). A sharp sub headlined the piece: ‘Peppa Pig CEO with snout in the trough.’

LENNY HENRY, writing in his autobiography Who Am I Again? (Faber & Faber, £20) recalls telling audiences in the 1970s: ‘Enoch Powell says he wants to give me £1,000 to go back to where I came from. Which is great, because it’s only 20p on the bus from here to Dudley. At school, when racist National Front skinheads made monkey noises and tried to pick a fight he’d say: ‘Not this again. You must really fancy me, ’cos you’re always trying to get me to roll around on the ground with you.’

LEE JAMES, ASLEF’s equalities adviser, and Jen Thornton, policy researcher and convicted comms adviser, were clearing out the cupboards at head office when they came across this branded shirt which never saw the light of day. Well, until now. Why? Because Kustom Kit misread our instructions and supplied these otherwise natty polo shirts with a Black & Ethnic Minority badge on the front and, er, ‘Diving Against Intolerance’ on the back. Have to send one to Tom Daley...
We will not forget

TREVOR ROBINSON, Bakerloo branch, and secretary of our Black & Minority Ethnic Committee, reports on the BAME fundraiser for the Justice4Grenfell campaign at the Elgin pub in Ladbroke Grove, which sits in the shadow of Grenfell Tower, on Wednesday 18 September.

T he general secretary, assistant general secretary, president, executive committee members, district organisers, and a delegation of train drivers from Norway, along with members of the ASLEF family, attended an evening hosted by the BAME committee to raise funds for Justice4Grenfell.

We began with 72 seconds of silence for the 72 victims who lost their lives. Then the GS kicked off proceedings by speaking about what it meant to him growing up not far from Grenfell Tower. Yvette and Judy, our guest speakers from Justice4Grenfell, then gave moving accounts about the challenges the bereaved families face day to day. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea is the richest borough in the country, said Judy, and yet still the area surrounding Grenfell Tower is one of the most under resourced: It is also no coincidence that this area is home to predominantly working-class people.

The event raised £2,000 for the Justice4Grenfell campaign. I would like to thank all the branches and district councils, GS, EC and members who purchased tickets and showed support for such a great cause. A moment like this fills us with pride to be part of the ASLEF family. Please continue to support Justice4Grenfell and ensure their voice is not silenced.

QUOTE...

‘Boris Johnson is willing to throw Scotland under his big red bus.’ – Ian Blackford, leader of the SNP in the House of Commons

...UNQUOTE

Red dragon retires

Carmarthen branch recently celebrated the retirement of long-standing member Brother John Boreham, who joined ASLEF on 27 March 1978, and has been a well-respected friend, mentor and colleague to many over the years. John has also been a very influential company council rep within the Welsh railway industry and has fought hard to better the working and living conditions of ASLEF members. From all of us at Carmarthen branch, thank you, John, and best wishes in your retirement! Chris Owen, branch secretary.

Thanks, John, for everything!

The usual suspects

A picture from a police line-up of the recent Ripple Lane jolly boys outing to Clacton.

Cliff Blackwell

Crap on the tracks

A pledge to end the dumping of human waste on railway tracks in England and Wales by the end of this year will not be met, Network Rail and the privatised train companies have admitted.

Mark Carne, NR’s former chief executive, said in 2017 he had secured a government promise to end the ‘disgusting practice’ by 2019, but several TOCs – including East Midlands Railway, whose contract was awarded to Abellio this year – will continue to use trains whose toilets flush directly onto the line.

EMR, which will not phase out all the old rolling stock until 2023, has been given permission to continue dumping raw sewage onto the track from trains running from St Pancras to Nottingham and Sheffield.

FOLDED FASTER THAN A BROMPTON

Nick Timothy, Theresa May’s former joint chief of staff, says his old boss ‘folded faster than a Brompton bicycle’ when confronted by European intransigence. He adds in an article in The Spectator: ‘Boris is pursuing a similar strategy to the one I once devised but is executing it with greater determination and skill.’ Would that be the strategy that saw Theresa lose her majority – and then her job?

JOHNSON’S ELF INSPIRES ROWSON

Cartoonist Martin Rowson, speaking at the launch of his new book The Dance of Death (Self Made Hero, £9.99) at St Giles-in-the-Fields on Wednesday 30 October, says Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson’s little helper, is the ‘best thing’ that’s happened to him this year. ‘I draw him with a nice, shiny, purple head because he’s a d***head. And because he’s called Cummings. It’s nominative determinism.’

OLR CONTRACTS EXIST ADMIT DFT

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris has confirmed, in answer to a House of Commons written question from Shadow Transport Secretary Andy McDonald, that the DfT has technical and financial adviser contracts with Arup/SNC Lavalin and EY in place for the use of OLR contracts to end the ‘disgusting practice’ of staff, says his old boss ‘folded faster than a Brompton bicycle’ when confronted by European intransigence. He adds in an article in The Spectator: ‘Boris is pursuing a similar strategy to the one I once devised but is executing it with greater determination and skill!’ Would that be the strategy that saw Theresa lose her majority – and then her job?

‘Mea culpa’ – Mel

In the obituaries section of the Journal (November), I wrongly stated that Frank Chapman was CrossCountry, and Frank Wainwright was West Coast. It was, in fact, the other way round; Frank Chapman was West Coast, and Frank Wainwright was CrossCountry. My sincere apologies to the families and friends of both drivers.

Mel Thorley, RMS Longsight

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Salt of the earth

ALTLEY 023 branch held its long service and retirement awards evening on Monday 21 October. In service awards there was a total of 915 years’ service to the ASLEF family, ranging from five to 45 years; sadly, not all members were able to attend on the night. We also had five retirement certificates to present to Brothers Vince Cunningham, Norman Fletcher, Tony Howell, Huey Jones and Karl Maguire who, despite leaving the industry, will always be welcome in the ASLEF family.

GS Mick Whelan gave a very informative report on the current state of the industry, with some very interesting insight into the somewhat glaring oversights built into modern rolling stock, such as not being able to see properly through the windscreens! At one point during the awards ceremony it was feared that the GS may have to present some of the awards in the gentlemen’s comfort station, a reflection possibly on the level of seniority in the room (it comes to us all).

Fortunately, this, er, inconvenience was short lived and the awards were presented in person and not in, ahem, lieu.

Jason Hickling. Saltley branch reporter

The Saltley train crew (below) and the GS presents retirement certificates to (left to right) Vince Cunningham, Norman Fletcher, Huey Jones and Karl Maguire

Former US President Barack Obama has challenged the woke culture, telling young people: ‘The world is messy.’ He said that ‘calling out’ people on social media did not bring about change, and that change was complex.

‘I get a sense among certain young people on social media that the way of making change is to be as judgemental as possible about other people. If I tweet or hashtag about how you didn’t do something right, or used the wrong verb, then I can sit back and feel pretty good about myself because, man, did you see how woke I was? I called you out!’

‘If all you’re doing is casting stones, you are probably not going to get that far.’ He added: ‘People who do really good stuff have flaws.’

Barack at the Obama Foundation’s annual summit in Chicago

Obama: Woke me up before you go-go

Automatic braking on London trams

Trams in London are to be fitted with an automatic braking system three years after the crash at Sandilands in November 2016 in which seven people were killed and 61 were injured. The new equipment, the first in the UK, will automatically apply the brakes if a tram exceeds pre-determined speed limits. Automatic braking, which would have prevented the Croydon Tramlink crash, was considered – and rejected – at design stage.

‘They’re not trains, they’re buses on rails’ was the excuse but the real reason was cost.

Women Underground

Tim Dunn – ‘historian, TV presenter, model village expert and that railway chap’ – tweets: ‘Hannah Dadds was London Underground’s first female train driver in 1978. But back in WW2 part of @centralline became the Plessey munitions factory – with a narrow gauge railway. So, is THIS the first known female train driver in LU tunnels? @lmuseum #hiddenlondon expo’

But, Tim, it’s not a Tube train, is it?

Tim spotted at the London Transport Museum’s Hidden London exhibition

QUOTE...
“The fact that CWU members voted 97% in favour of a strike for pay and jobs on a 76% turnout was irrelevant. Legal hithen hired by privatised Royal Mail persuaded a judge to invalidate the poll.’ — Paul Routledge, Daily Mirror...

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
Tony West with Buckton's Boys on the picket line at Stratford in 1982 (far left); with Simon Weller (above left); with John Smith at Tolpuddle in 1991 (top right) and with (a very young) Nigel Roebuck (above)

Giant of the movement

TONY WEST, former AGS, died on holiday in Spain in October at the age of 79. Here we pay tribute to Tony, a giant of the labour movement, known and respected throughout the railway industry.

ONY was a giant of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen despite — in his words — joining the railway ‘as a snotty-nosed engine cleaner’ in 1955 — rising, of course, to become one of the Society’s most respected members. From cleaner to fireman to driver to assistant general secretary.

His election to AGS in 1994 was a close-run thing. In the first ballot Tony polled 2,629 votes ahead of Ray Jackson with 2,092; Fred Orton-Jones 1,312; Keith Norman 1,259 and Stan Godwin 914.

The second ballot — confirmed by two recounts — ended in a ‘million to one’ dead heat when Tony (Stratford) and Ray (Sheffield) both got 3,794 votes. A result that made the national newspapers.

Tony won the re-run with 4,521 votes ahead of Ray with 4,412.

He arrived as AGS during a tumultuous period for ASLEF with the Railways Act, privatisation, votes ahead of Ray with 4,412.

He was held in high regard by ASLEF’s retired members who knew him through the AGM and weekend forums. He was particularly popular at Scarborough where his first question to any new face would be ‘Do you drink?’ followed by a quick march to the bar for a Guinness!

Tony was a man of many talents. Whilst most of you will remember him as a barnstorming trade unionist in his early days I remember a quieter, more considered, man whose desire to help improve people’s lives never faltered.

He could connect with people of all ages, races and genders; sure, his charm helped but, mostly, because he listened and was genuinely interested in who you were and what you thought. He championed equality for all and regularly praised the work of the representative committees, supporting them whenever he could. And he never tired of striving for more. He would ask me to critique the work of the RMS and would always ask ‘What else should we be doing, can we do more?’

Tony was an absolute inspiration; if only we were all a little bit more Tony West. We miss him dearly.

Lee James, equalities adviser.

His trade union have lost a great stalwart. Tony was ASLEF through and through, and always a Stratford man, who represented our members at all levels: LDC, sectional council, DO and AGS. Until his untimely death he served on the Retired Members’ Section committee, the London region of the National Pensioners’ Convention EC, and many working parties.

Bill Dale, Retired Members’ Section.

FIRST met Tony at a packed meeting in the BRSA Club, Stratford, at the end of 1993, and the partial closure of the depot. Tony had played a huge role at Stratford long before my short time there and I remember, as a 23-year-old driver, and after a few too many, attempting to give him some stick and shouting ‘You sold us out’. Tony, in his ever articulate way, dismissed me, and my mate Dave Snoxell, and moved on. In later years, having built a good friendship, I told Tony the story and he chuckled, ‘Well, now you’re the one at the front taking it from those at the back!’ Then there was the 20 year rule which Tony referred to, before you could say ‘Westy’, wagging that big finger and leaving you wondering whether he was being serious or not.

There’s been the odd occasion when, sat in an establishment late in the evening, chewing the fat, Tony would take a comment, point to someone in the group and ask, ‘What do you think about that?’ He had the ability to keep people around the table focused and engaged in discussion; an art in itself.

When AAD was held in District 5 Tony was invited to open it which he did, in style, and the GS gave me the task of ‘looking after’ Tony for the rest of the day. Howard Kaye and I were lucky enough to have lunch with Tony and his family and, as it turned out, Tony ended up ‘looking after’ me for most of the rest of the week.

Tony could command a room and people of all ages and backgrounds would be keen to look, listen, and learn; he was never repetitive and always relevant. A fantastic character, with so many phrases to make you chuckle, whilst showing his passion and belief in the trade union movement.

If Tony were reading this he would probably say, ‘What a load of sentimental old crap,’ but I know there are many of us who are grateful for having spent time with him, and our lives are that much richer as a result. At the very least, next time I have toothache I will know the remedy is one from the top shelf. ‘Gawd bless the old Queen Mother and all who sailed in…’

Our thoughts are with Pat and the family and we all thank you for sharing Tony with us.

Nigel Gibson, District 5 Organiser.
IRST time I met Tony West was in the early ’80s when he was dispatched to Norwich by GS Ray Buckton, to whom I had turned up to listen. I was disappointed the general secretary could not make it, but that encounter with Tony was to influence the rest of my railway and trade union career. I became a local rep and was speaking with my DS on a regular basis, building a relationship, and learning from him over a long period of time. I was later fortunate enough to be elected to the executive committee and, for seven years, spent many hours in his company, working and ‘relaxing’. Tony was a man of the people, a great champion of our industry, its workers, the labour movement and our great trade union. It was an honour and a privilege to work with and know Tony West, and it was a mark of the man to see so many ASLEF members at his funeral. Our movement has lost a giant. My mentor and friend. The best.

Dave Tyson, Norwich branch, former EC president, and a trustee director of the Railways Pension Scheme since 2001

‘AT a packed ‘town hall’ meeting, in a church hall near Euston in the mid-1980s, when British Rail were pushing forward with proposals for easement of manning’, which would ultimately allow for light engines – locomotives running without a train – to be crewed with just a driver. This was not a popular proposal with drivers or drivers’ assistants, whose jobs it threatened. The GS, national officials, and some EC members are at the top table, and a full and frank debate is in full flow. When, from near the back of the hall, up goes Westy’s hand. When, eventually, the chair indicates its his turn, he stands to introduce himself. ‘I’m Tony West, a newly-elected officer and, as an officer of this Society, it isn’t my role to criticise the top table. But, if I wasn’t an officer, I’d chew their F***ing bollocks off!’ He then gave a lengthy speech on all the concerns he had which, as an officer, it wasn’t his role to espouse!

Dicky Fisher, District 6 Organiser

I HILST we monitor the funding position every quarter, the tri-annual valuation is a much more thorough look at the assets and liabilities which we are legally obliged to carry out.

The history is that, in 2009, following the tri-annual valuation, we found we had a deficit of £1.3 billion, largely as a result of the markets collapsing following the sub-prime mortgage scandal. A ten year recovery plan was put in place where the company would pay £6.20 (£3.61 future service and £2.59 deficit) for every £1 member put in, but there were also lump sum payments of varying amounts at various points in order to remove the deficit. At the valuations in 2012 and 2015 the recovery plan was working pretty well and, in fact, just prior to the 2018 valuation we were actually fully-funded on a technical provisions basis. This was the good news. However, for the 2018 valuation more prudence was added into the assumptions (this is good now we have agreed the recovery plan) which resulted in it being £603 million in deficit virtually overnight. The factors are fairly complicated but, in simple terms, it is mainly about the strength of the employer, TfL, (the technical term is the strength of the employer covenant), and the expectations for returns on investments.

On the issues with the strength of the employer, its ability to support the pension fund was damaged by the over-run of Crossrail, the Mayor of London’s fares freeze, and Brexit, as uncertainty is bad for the economy. And if the trustees consider TfL less good for the money, going forward, then we want to strengthen the financial position of the pension fund now, which contributes to the deficit.

On the expectations on returns for investments, this determines the discount rate and is the figure used to calculate how much money you need now to provide a sum of money in the future, taking into account inflation and growth. Previously expectations were fairly optimistic, as markets were buoyant, and economies were growing, but this is not the case now and the expectation is that returns on investments will be much lower than previously envisaged. That out of the way, the positive news is that we have agreed a new recovery plan with TfL that will run for eight years two months to May 2026. They have agreed to increase the £6.20 to £6.66 (£5.38 future service, £1.28 deficit) subject to a minimum of £70 million a year, indexed linked to increases in pensions, in every year for the period of the recovery plan.

We have also agreed contingents funding; in essence, this is a legal guarantee that if we don’t reduce, and ultimately remove, the deficit then TfL will be obliged to increase its contributions from £70 million to £95 million and, potentially, £120 million a year. The expectation is this will not be necessary but it gives the trustees added confidence that the fund is secure going forward.

The trustees are working hard to ensure there are enough pennies in the pot despite economic uncertainty resulting in another deficit

E HAVE been and always will be proud of the way that Tony, my husband, a father and a grandfather, lived his life. We will never let go of the love we shared together. On Monday 11 November we said goodbye to this wonderful man. Our pride soared and our hearts, although broken, felt the overwhelming respect and love Tony’s ASLEF comrades had for him. We will never forget what we saw and heard from you all that day. We saw a huge gathering of ASLEF members who had travelled far and wide to be with us, and Tony. We heard of long journeys travelled and stories about Tony that connected us all to his values, beliefs and friendships.

Thank you, Mick, and everyone, for joining and supporting us. You were a massive part of Tony’s life and will forever be part of our lives and family. With best wishes for your continuing success carrying on the work that Tony was so passionate about.

Pat West and all the family

The ASLEF Journal

Brexit uncertainty bad for economy

GRAHAM DEAN, chair of LU trains functional council, and a trustee of the Transport for London pension fund, reports after the trustees recently signed off the 2018 tri-annual valuation

W The trustees are working hard to ensure there are enough pennies in the pot despite economic uncertainty resulting in another deficit
Accepting people who are different

SHERELLE CADOGAN, Morden branch, reports on ASLEF’s equalities weekend school at the Ibis hotel near Birmingham New Street station on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 October

ATTENDED the ASLEF equalities weekend school and had such a fantastic learning experience. I met reps from all districts and it was great to see my ASLEF colleagues committing to making the union more inclusive and more representative of the communities in which we work.

Sessions included a mental health workshop which highlighted how many of us are affected by mental health issues, and gave us the tools to spot issues and support our colleagues.

Members of the equalities committees gave a powerful presentation focusing on the type of language we use. It highlighted the hurt that can be caused if we are not respectful to each other and underlined what a great campaign Mind the Gag is, reminding us of our pledge to be mindful of what we say.

We also had a trans awareness session from Gendered Intelligence, a charity dedicated to increasing understanding of gender diversity, which gave me an insight into what people in the trans community have to deal with and how they feel. Accepting people who are different to us is so important and can only be a benefit to our union moving forward.

The weekend ended with GS Mick Whelan declaring how important it is to him that every member feels included and, more importantly, represented in ASLEF, and an open discussion about how we can go back to our branches and empower all members to become active participants in the union.

As an equality rep I left much clearer about my role, with the full support of the equalities committee reps, and our general secretary. An inclusive union is a union for the future.

Mindful of migraine

HELEN BALAMI, head of the advocacy service at the Migraine Trust, urges employers to do more to support workers who suffer migraine attacks

Migraine is a complex neurological condition that can impact on all aspects of life. One of the most significant is your working life, particularly for those working in transport, where many do shift work and are exposed to changing weather, both of which are common triggers for a migraine attack.

The transport industry isn’t just an environment that can be difficult for people with migraine; many of the roles cannot be performed when a person has a migraine. That is why it is crucial that the lack of awareness and understanding of migraine in workplaces across the UK is tackled urgently.

While employers can’t always prevent employees from having an attack, they can make a significant difference on how it impacts their work. Workplaces can exacerbate the condition but can also help you manage it.

Employers can be ‘mindful of migraine’. By that, we mean aware of the high numbers of people who get migraine, that it is very common, and there is a strong possibility that someone they employ might suffer. They should also understand it is a complex neurological condition and people can experience migraine very differently.

They should make reasonable adjustments when they have an employee whose migraine is impacting on their day to day activities. An employee’s GP or neurologist, or occupational health practitioner, can advise on whether you are covered under the Equality Act 2010, and identify changes that would be helpful.

Such as flexible breaks which give an employee time to stretch, relax muscles, and manage trigger factors. Time off for medical appointments (it can be helpful to discuss and reach an agreement with an employer). Moving to a different site or team, a reduction of hours, or a new role entirely may help an employee to manage their migraine.

Having regular one-to-one meetings with a manager can help identify work triggers or stress factors and lead to discussions about how the employer can support the employee. A union rep, or colleague, who understands migraine can provide support to an employee which can ease anxieties about attacks at work.

Fluorescent lighting can be a particular problem due to flickering although the new generation of fluorescent lighting should emit only minimal flicker. If you have a query about the quality of light, you should seek an assessment from a lighting consultant.

Before any of these reasonable adjustments can be made, an employer needs to know that an employee gets migraine. This can sometimes be a daunting prospect but talking to an employer will help them understand how migraine affects you. Before approaching a manager or HR, you may want to speak with your GP, neurologist, or occupational health to explore suggestions regarding the support an employer could provide.

While employees sharing with their employers and employers being supportive won’t mean people with migraine never struggle at work again, we believe it’s an important step in helping people with migraine work. For those working in transport, where regular migrants can have serious implications, this help and support is urgently needed.

The Migraine Trust has produced a toolkit, Help at Work, which provides information about ways to manage migraine in the workplace.

It can be downloaded at migrainetrust.org/asking-for-support and our advocacy service can be reached on 0203 9510 150 or visiting migrainetrust.org
I want to be elected

It's been a few years – 49 years, in fact – since a member of ASLEF sat in the House of Commons chamber as a Member of Parliament. But Tom, Julian, Howard and Ed – ASLEF's own fab four – are trying to put that right by getting a train driver into the Palace of Westminster on Thursday 12 December.

ASLEF is a small craft union – we have 20,500 members, as well as 2,500 ex-drivers in our Retired Members’ Section – but, in boxing parlance, we punch well above our weight. Despite the aggressive anti-union legislation passed by successive Tory governments, 96% of the train drivers in England, Scotland and Wales choose to join ASLEF. That gives us real industrial muscle when dealing with the privatised TOCs and FOCs. And ASLEF plays a big role, for a small union, in the Labour Party – formed in 1900 by the trade unions – as well as the labour movement. GS Mick Whelan is on Labour’s national executive committee and is chair of LabourUnions and AGS Simon Weller is on the general council and executive committee of the TUC. The Labour Party, and the labour movement, take notice of what we think, what we say, and what we do. Four years ago, in 2015, three ASLEF members stood – sadly, unsuccessfully – for Parliament. And in 2017 four ASLEF drivers stood for Labour at the general election. This year four ASLEF members are on the ballot paper on 12 December.

Deeply divided

**JULIAN VAUGHAN**
of Northern Line North, and a Tube driver for 16 years, is standing in North East Bedfordshire. In 2017 the Tories held the seat with 39,179 votes; followed by Labour with 18,277; the Lib Dems 3,693; UKIP 1,896; and the Greens 1,215.

Julian, 52, pushed the Labour vote up 12.7% behind the sitting Conservative, of Bedford, which he had held since 2010, in 2017.

‘I know I’ve got a mountain to climb, but you’ve got to be positive, else why bother? If you look at the House of Commons, especially the Conservatives, there are a lot of lawyers and pin-stripe suits. ‘There aren’t many, for want of a better word, ordinary working men and women in Parliament, are there?’ Julian is well-known in the constituency – where he is chair of North East Bedfordshire CLP – for his campaigns on behalf of disabled people and access to transport.

‘I have a strong sense of social justice, and fairness, for all. The current government is failing people in Bedfordshire, and across the country, has created a deeply divided and unequal society, and is ripping apart the social fabric of the UK.’

Credible candidate

**HOWARD KAYE**
, a member of King’s Cross branch, the executive committee member for District 5 since 2012, and a train driver all his working life, is standing in Aldershot, which has elected a Conservative MP ever since the constituency was created in 1918. At the last general election Leo Docherty won with 26,950 votes; Labour came second with 15,477; and the Liberal Democrats were third with 3,637.

Howard has stood for Parliament before – against Jeremy Hunt in South West Surrey in 2015 – and is realistic about his chances. ‘I’d like to win, of course, but standing in a strong Tory seat is partly about getting experience of a Parliamentary campaign, and partly to make sure that Labour puts up a credible candidate in every constituency to give everyone, everywhere, a chance to vote for the party.

‘Because the aggregate vote, across the country, will help legitimise Labour if we fall short of an overall majority but are able to form a government with the support of other parties.’

Ed is out to oust Failing Grayling

**ED MAYNE**, of Feltham Electric, and a driver with South West Trains, is standing in Epsom & Ewell against Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport from 2016 to 2019. At the last election Ed, 34, put on 6,000 votes for Labour in a David and Goliath contest between ‘the train driver and the Transport Secretary’. Grayling polled 35,313 votes; Labour 14,838; the Lib Dems 7,401; and the Greens 1,714. ‘It’s a challenge,’ says Ed, who read History at Mansfield College, Oxford, and was a Labour councillor for Isleworth ward in the London Borough of Hounslow from 2010 to 2018. ‘But it’s a chance to stand up for all those people who have suffered at the hands of the Tories and their transport policies.’

‘Tory plans to exit the EU will have a massive impact on this country’

**ARCHIE MANUEL**, Labour MP for Central Ayrshire, was the last ASLEF Member of Parliament. He was elected to Westminster in 1950 and re-elected in 1951. He lost the seat in 1955 but won it back in 1959 and held it until he stepped down in 1970. John Cryer, Labour MP for Hornchurch from 1997 to 2005 and for Leyton & Wanstead since 2010, worked for ASLEF in Arkwright Road, and Alan Meale, Labour MP for Mansfield from 1987 to 2017, was assistant to GS Ray Buckton from 1979 to 1983; but neither was a train driver.
The year of...

CHRIS PROCTOR has worked for ASLEF, the Communication Workers Union, and the government’s Export Credits Guarantee Department. He had a short-lived career as a stand-up comic – spending a week telling jokes at a working men’s club in south Wales – before opting to write for the page rather than the stage. His byline has subsequently appeared in The Guardian, The Times, the New Statesman and Tribune and he writes the ‘And Finally’ column for the NUJ’s magazine The Journalist.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

On Wednesday 24 July, Grant Shapps became the twelfth Secretary of State for Transport since the year 2000. For the record, we’ve also had John Prescott, Stephen Byers, Alistair Darling, Douglas Alexander, Ruth Kelly, Geoff Hoon, Andrew Adonis, Philip Hammond, Justine Greening, Patrick McLoughlin, and Chris Grayling. That’s a new Transport Secretary, on average, every 19 months for the last 19 years! Little wonder that none of them actually learned what the job is all about – never mind discovering how to do it properly!

THAT’S THE WAY TO DO IT, KEITH

The man leading the re-re-re-review is Keith Williams, a former CEO of British Airways, chair of Halfords, and deputy chair of John Lewis. Williams, it has been claimed, has ‘quite a track record of improving companies’. Well, up to a point, Lord Copper. Up to a point. Since he became chair of Royal Mail in May, the share price has tumbled by more than half.

HOKEY COKEY HERE COMES CHUKA

It was a very active year for smooth-talking South London MP Chuka Umunna. He was constantly on the move, endlessly dashing from party to party. Or, in his case, Party to Party. He kicked off the year in the Labour Party before turning his back on us to join The Independent Group. That changed its name, and he his alliance, to become Change UK. But he abandoned ship, again, in June, to become an independent MP. Until the Liberal Democrats offered him a home and he moved there. As we went to press, he was still a Lib Dem, but it can only be a matter of time before he’s on the move again. Chuka has never seen a party, or a Party, of which he doesn’t like the look…

NOW THAT’S WHAT I CALL A LONG SENTENCE

When the United States of America decides to be strict, it certainly knows how to do it. When they finally laid hands on Joaquin ‘el Chapo’ Guzmán, once the head of the Mexican Sinaloa drug cartel, the courts banged him up for ‘life plus 30 years’. If asked, President Donald Trump is sure to promise that the diminutive Mexican will serve his whole term, even if he niffs a little towards the end of that sentence.

MONEY FOR NOTHING, BUNG

Surely the ‘man of the year’ award must go to Chris Grayling, if only for his remarkable consistency. He started 2019 badly and, utterly focused, never put a foot right for the rest of the year. At the end of 2018 Failing Grayling, then Transport Secretary, felt he had to safeguard the British people supplies in the event of a no-deal Brexit. So he slipped £46.6 million to the French company Brittany Ferries, £42.5 million to the Danish shipping firm DF and £13.8 million to the British firm Seaborne Freight capacity.

Very prudent. However, only two days into this year, it was necessarily a good punt, owing to the fact that he actually own any ships.

The minister looked silly for a moment. But only Why? Because Eurotunnel, understandably miffed a Grayling had bungled in handing out more than £1 action. So he coughed up another £33 million of tax

In March the Labour Party pointed out that, due a staggering £2.7 billion of public money, Chris was...
FOOTIE FEVER
2019 saw a dramatic revival in the fortunes of English football, the beautiful game we gave to the world. The European Championship final was contested by Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool. Reminiscent of NHS staffing, 15 of the 22 footballers taking part were from abroad. Almost 12 million viewers watched the England women's team in the semi-final of their World Cup. Our women had no foreigners in the side and lost comfortably. It's their own fault for not picking Nigel Roebuck's daughter Ellie in goal.

THE PACER
Yes, Pacers were back in the headlines in 2019. These were BR Classes 140, 141, 142, 143 and 144 diesels, built as very temporary stop-gaps in the 1980s to make up for a shortage of rolling stock. In the industry, officially, they were called 'buses on rails' or 'rail buses'. In the mess room they were called... something else.

They were supposed to have a shelf life of 20 years, but you know how time passes quickly when it comes to management promises. At any rate, we were assured they would be a thing of the past in 2019.

Except they're not. They've still been running this year in Manchester, Leeds, Middlesbrough, Sheffield, York, and on Merseyrail. Politicians are suggesting passengers having to use them should be given reduced fares. And what about drivers who have to operate them being given increased wages?

GRANT SHAPPS
You worry if the wonderland is really the best place for the current Transport Secretary. Four years ago Grant Shapps told LBC, ‘Let me get this absolutely clear... I don’t have a second job, and have never had a second job while being an MP. End of story.’ When it then emerged that, in fact, he did have a second job, he muttered that he had, perhaps, um, ‘over-firmly denied’ the suggestion. Yes, that’s right. Not lied. Just, er, ‘over-firmly denied’ the truth! Shapps stepped down as Conservative Party chairman after allegations of bullying within the party, but soon bounced back – as they do.

His other oddity was using the name Grant V Shapps when he stood in the 2001 and 2005 elections. Grant Shapps has no middle name or initial. He just made it up, presumably to make himself look a little more posh and upper crust. It didn’t work. Nor is he very good with figures. When Tory chair he insisted that nearly 1 million disability claimants had dropped presumably to make himself look a little more posh and upper crust. It didn’t work. Nor is he very good with figures. When Tory chair he insisted that nearly 1 million disability claimants had dropped

FARE’S FAIR
The year began with the nation singing incomprehensible Scottish songs and complaining about fare rises: an average of 3.1% for England and Wales but only 2.8% for the Scots, presumably a reward for their allowing us access to their song books. But it wasn’t all bad. It was a relief to discover in April that London Liverpool Street, London King’s Cross and Edinburgh Waverley had become the final stations to cease charging for the use of toilets.

Passengers enduring severe bouts of viral, bacterial and/or parasitic infections will be in the happy position, by frequent use of station facilities, to claw back some of those hefty price rises.

BREXIT
As you can see, this review of the year contains only passing references to Brexit. This is not an oversight. It is an omission made by popular demand.

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A woman’s place is in her union

JENNIFER STEWART, Motherwell branch, reports from the 92nd Scottish Trades Union Congress women’s conference held in Perth on Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 October

WAS asked back in March if I fancied attending this year’s STUC women’s conference. Having never been to a conference before I wasn’t really sure what I was saying ‘Yes’ to but I’m certainly glad I did. Conference brought together 120 women trade unionists from different workplaces right across Scotland to debate a wide range of issues and set a campaigning agenda for 2020.

I listened to women speak passionately about hard subjects such as child poverty, women in poverty, school holiday hunger, and our own motion supporting menopausal women in the workplace. Alison Miller, Polmadie branch, and D2 rep on ASLEF’s Women’s Representatives’ Committee, did a great job getting our motion passed with her passionate speech about the menopause and how we need to start talking about it and getting support in the workplace.

The conference theme was child poverty and how we can eradicate it. Not an easy subject to tackle when the impact of austerity is causing higher levels of poverty. I listened to women from Perth High School and Dunblane High School talk about child poverty and the right for every child to have a free hot meal at school and access to free sanitary care. One girl said she wanted to be a lawyer when she left school but no way would she ever work for a company that paid women less than men. It was very heartening to listen to these young girls speak so passionately.

Graham Menzies from the STUC youth committee spoke about the need for unions to be present in schools and educate the children of this country on what it means to be part of a union. I heard how universal credit is failing miserably the lowest paid workers in our society, how people are scared to claim due to complications in paperwork, and how people are scared they will have money taken away from them.

One of the hardest subjects was homelessness: 58% of women sleeping rough have been intimidated or threatened with violence in the last 12 months and 1:4 female rough sleepers have been sexually assaulted in the last year.

I spoke in support of the RMT’s motion for safer trains for women. It was good to speak on a subject I feel passionate about. Motherwell branch has been taking notes and collecting information on trains that are not staffed correctly and handing this to the Transport Minister at Holyrood. This prompted him to urge Abellio ScotRail to hire more staff to cover more trains. This isn’t good enough. We should be campaigning for a guaranteed person on every train for the safety of all and for guaranteed travel for all disabled passengers.

Attending conference was a great experience and I look forward to participating in another one.
There is to be a reassessment on the risk assessment of working alone and, with all the current society problems, he believes there is a real safety issue for our members. Spy in the current society problems, he believes there is a real safety issue for our members. 

**WILLIAMS RAIL REVIEW COULD SUGGEST NEW BUSINESS MODEL**

Chris Grayling has been replaced as Secretary of State for Transport – something Mick said was ‘long overdue’ – and while his successor Grant Shapps wants all trains to run on time Mick pointed out that Britain’s rail infrastructure is not geared for the number of trains it serves which is why so many trains do not – and cannot – run to time.

The GS opened by saying that we are a strong trade union and that is now acknowledged in many quarters. Andy Hudd, EC vice-president, spoke on transport at the Labour Party conference – as did Mick, who also chaired a session – and we have played a big part in shaping the party’s manifesto commitments on Britain’s railways.

**MORE RAIL LINES INTO ASHFORD SO WHY MOVE A&E TO CANTERBURY?**

Lyn Scudders, a retired NHS nurse, was elected onto Ashford borough council in May – so is fairly new – giving the council seven Labour councillors. She thought she would be addressing ASLEF members who live in Ashford and was surprised – and pleased – to see so many from other parts of the country. She reflected on the support NHS nurses have received from ASLEF in the past for their fight for rights in the Health Service, and how the nurses’ union helped the miners during their dispute.

She said we need more Labour Party members to seek to become councillors and we need more trade unionists in the political field. The NHS is closing the A&E unit in Ashford and moving it to the super hospital at Canterbury. Lyn pointed out that there are five railway lines into Ashford but only two into Canterbury, so why move the A&E? She also called for more defibrillator units to save lives.

Bill Dale, acting treasurer, gave his financial report, saying the RMS’s financial position is healthy, and outlined the year’s balance. He also proposed some RMS 500 Club constitution amendments, which were further amended, and then adopted by the AGM. The constitution will be available from either head office or the treasurer and will be given to all new members of the 500 Club.

**COMMITMENT AND HARD WORK**

Les Muir, secretary, gave a brief report on meetings attended at district councils, branches, marches, and the Durham Miners’ Gala.

Ray Jackson, chair, gave his report, thanking the committee for their commitment and hard work in representing the RMS at different meetings, such as the National Pensioners’ Convention, working parties, branches, district councils, and also organising the two weekend forums we hold every year.

Ray Jackson and Les Muir were re-elected unopposed as, respectively, chair and secretary. There was one vacancy and it was proposed and seconded that Steve ‘Grud’ Gurdler be elected onto the committee, and this was agreed. All other members agreed to be re-elected and this was agreed en bloc.

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**The RMS 500 Club**

A gentle reminder – and request – for all those who pay by cheque. When your renewal is due, it would be helpful – and greatly appreciated – if you would consider changing your payments to a standing order by completing the bank form on page 18 of the ASLEF Journal and advising head office of your change. This will save on administration of reminders being sent and processing the cheques. And, more importantly, your continuous payments will ensure you are always in the draw! Yours fraternally

Bill Dale, RMS acting treasurer
I walk the line

Cambridge branch welcomed our EC member Howard Kaye to our October meeting. Howard was delighted to be re-elected and has made it his goal to attend a couple of our meetings every year. He reported on the AGA pay deal, EJRA, Arriva harmonisation, the RSSB report into the Sandy incident, use of GSMR, Medigold issues, driver fatigue and sleep patterns. Howard then took time to pay tribute to Andy Meeks and present him with a retirement certificate from ASLEF. Andy, who worked for 43 years at Cambridge, took retirement in September and we wish him a long and happy life.

Tribute to Andy

EC5 Howard Kaye presented Andy Meeks with certificate of retirement. The branch also places on record its thanks to Howard for taking the time to attend. Our next meeting will be the AGM on Monday 2 December when a buffet will be provided.

Old and new

It was great to see all the old faces—and new ones this year—and to catch up on old stories at our reunion in October.
Pensions, pay, rest day working, TUPE and uniforms on freight

Paul Barber, Freightliner Heavy Haul business council secretary, reports on the biannual joint meeting of LLC and h&s reps, in Newcastle on Friday 18 October

The meeting, chaired by Colin Thornhill, began with members standing and giving a minute’s applause in remembrance of former AGS Tony West. Nigel Gibson, lead officer for Freightliner, gave an appreciation of Tony, and then an update for both Intermodal and Heavy Haul.

Pay negotiations for both sides of the company are ongoing. On Intermodal there is now a large amount of compulsory overtime, due to an increase in diagram lengths, with the requirement of an effective establishment calculator. A proposal has been sent to Heavy Haul for improvements to the ill-health severance scheme. A cross-cover arrangement is now in place to stop other companies doing Freightliner work; this work should only be done on rest days when all other work has been covered.

Nigel talked at length about pensions. Reps were advised that if they know of any members approaching retirement they should seek independent financial advice. He also reminded us that leaving on ill-health does not guarantee an ill-health pension.

Pete Mason, Intermodal company council secretary, said that after 10 years we are still waiting for a new MFA policy to be agreed. No written proposals have been forthcoming from Freightliner regarding week 53 over payment. Freightliner are proposing to open a new depot at Trafford Park and create a new Heavy Haul shunt depot at Southampton Maritime.

Paul Barber, Heavy Haul business council secretary, explained the new rostering tools Freightliner hope to introduce. FLHH are currently unable to monitor fatigue on their diagrams as they are issued and the new system should change this. It should also ensure fairer rostering, with constant monitoring of flight paths and rest days worked. Discussions are ongoing about better quality uniform that is more lightweight. He also talked about the effect of TUPE on our members and that a consistent approach, from both ASLEF and the employers, is needed.

Mark Wakenshaw, EC4, said that if FOCs use outside companies to run trains then the EC will look at withdrawing rest day working. He added that TUPE legislation is poor, and the EC is trying to be consistent, and that all drivers should be treated the same. He said freight is not ‘the forgotten industry’ and the EC will continue to campaign for improvements.

This was followed with a Q&A session and the meeting closed with Nigel Gibson thanking the chair, Colin Thornhill, for all his work as an ASLEF company council rep, most recently on Heavy Haul, as he steps down after many years of loyal service. Colin always brought his own unique touch to meetings, with an ability to defuse difficult situations with his own brand of humour. He was presented with theatre vouchers from Nigel and present and former company council members.

God’s Wonderful Railway

I had the pleasure of attending Tom Jones’ 90th birthday meal at Worle, Weston-super-Mare, with his family and George Brown, Lenny Kalter and Doug Richards. Tom was an ASLEF activist, member of Bristol branch, served on the LDC, and was assistant branch secretary for many years at Bath Road depot.

Tom reminded us that when he started his railway career, as a cleaner on the Great Western Railway, it was GWR the first time around!

D07 Brian Corbett

We turn back time – and the pages of the Locomotive Journal – to December 1919 with many more members, why we give presents, and a watch guessing competition

This has been a great year

In this Christmas issue of the Locomotive Journal it is our pleasant duty to extend the very cordial and time-honoured greeting to every member. We cannot express wishes for a Happy Christmas face to face, and with a handshake, but we can by means of the Journal convey the message to every member – a Happy Christmas. We have much reason for thankfulness and pleasant recollections. This has been a great year.

Every footplateworker

Membership still climbs upwards by leaps and bounds. Time is bearing sound witness to our attitude and, during 1919, our total has far exceeded the 50,000 target we set out to attain. Indeed, we are much nearer the 60,000 figure. In 1920 we shall continue to sound the clarion note. All in, until every footplateworker is enrolled in our great fraternity.

Election – sweeping triumph

The November municipal elections saw a sweeping triumph for the Labour candidates all over the country. There were nearly 1,000 Labour gains from the old parties, London taking the lion’s share, while every provincial centre reported fine progress. Our branches, north and south, are well represented on the local councils, and one branch numbers three councillors in its ranks.

Watch guessing competition

The watch was duly wound and sealed up, and opened on the Shirebrook branch meeting night. The correct time the watch stopped at was 5 hours 38 minutes 9 seconds, and the nearest guess is Mr C Hooson, Rowsley loco, with 5 hours 50 minutes 1 second. The total amount realized in aid of our late fireman J Radford’s widow was £31 3s 6d.

Curious Christmas customs

Christmas boxes, in the early days of Christianity, were boxes placed in churches for promiscuous charities and opened on Christmas Day. Later on, apprentices began to carry a box round to their master’s customers for small gratuities. Whence arose the present custom of Christmas box giving.
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 ......................................................................
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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
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Please pay

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

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(i) make any reference to Value Added Tax or other indeterminate element
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If the amounts of the periodic payments vary, they should be incorporated in a schedule overleaf
ANDY OLLERENSHAW DAPPER DRIVER WHO LEFT HIS CLOTHES TO THE HOMELESS – THAT’S THE MARK OF A BIG MAN

Newton Heath branch regrets to mark the passing of our brother Andy Ollerenshaw, who started his railway career as a trainee driver at Manchester Victoria in 2002. ‘Andy O’, as he was universally known, served this branch well, both as branch secretary and as secretary of the LDC for three years from 2015 to 2017, where his studied attention to detail maintained a steady ship. He fought tirelessly, despite frustrations and setbacks, for a better depot for his colleagues at a difficult time for Manchester Victoria.

Andy had enjoyed many jobs before starting his career on the railway. He had trained as a chef, worked for Tameside borough council and, with great pride, had worked as fire and safety manager for Lancashire Cricket Club. He also had coaching and umpiring qualifications.

There had even been an opportunity to take this expertise to practice at Lord’s cricket ground, owned by the Marylebone Cricket Club, and known as ‘the home of cricket’, but, ever the boy from Hyde, he didn’t want to head south and leave Manchester City. And, yes, the City needs a capital letter; because he was a lifelong fan which, of course, stretched back to the Maine Road years. His hero from those times was Colin Bell, whom he was able to meet in later years, marking a lifetime ambition.

Not long after qualifying as a driver, Andy met Tina, marrying her in 2005, and becoming a beloved grandad to Tina’s grandchildren, with whom he shared a great mutual affection. All of us will sorely miss him.

Andy Ollerenshaw: loved the red rose of Lancashire Cricket Club

Andy was an avid reader of history, both ancient and modern. He enhanced this through the poetry of the Great War poets, their works and biographies, and by travel – many a holiday with Tina was focused on old theatres of war, such as the Normandy Beaches and the Fields of Flanders where so many British soldiers fought and died.

Andy had fought and beaten lymphoma some years ago but, unfortunately, the cancer returned early in 2018, shortly after he had left Manchester Victoria for a career in freight at Guide Bridge, and he succumbed in May this year.

He was a big man, and liked to be dapper in a good coat. These couldn’t go to waste; so he asked that his wardrobe be used to clothe the homeless in Manchester. That was the mark of the man.

Thanks to Crewe branch for giving us leave to remember Andy.

Dave Vaughan, secretary, drivers’ local level council, Manchester Victoria, and Newton Heath 143 branch chair

KEITH ROPER GRANVILLE’S GIFT OF THE GAB

With great sadness I have to report the passing of a dear friend and ex-workmate, William Keith Roper, aged 95, who was born in 1924 and left us in August.

His first job, after leaving school, was as a delivery boy with Normanton Co-op on a bike bigger than he was, like Granville in Open All Hours! That wasn’t for Keith. So his dad Tim, a driver at Normanton MPD, took him down the depot and got him set on as cleaner. He progressed to passed fireman, and left Normanton in 1964 to become a driver at Wakefield, and that’s when we became great friends.

Keith was a fitness fanatic. He started walking clubs at Normanton and Wakefield and – when Wakefield MPD closed and we all went to Healey Mills – he started another club there. Members said that, from the start to the finish of the walks, he never stopped talking!

He also started a weight lifting club at Normanton. I remember calling to see him at home when the gas man came to read the meter he called out, ‘Can you move the weights, I can’t move them to see the meter?’ and, in a flash, Keith was giving him a lesson, curling them over his shoulder, still talking, and he was in his 80s at the time.

Sadly, Keith’s health started to deteriorate earlier this year, he was in and out of hospital, and so he agreed to move down to Suffolk so his daughter Catherine could care for him.

Keith’s wife Cathy passed away a few years ago, and he always wished for their ashes to be scattered together back in Yorkshire, so a little service was held for close family and friends and both their ashes were scattered on one of their favourite walks.

Walter Covell, ex-Healey Mills

GWILYM JONES CONSUMMATE RAILWAYMAN

Gwil left a gap in lives across the country

Driver Gwilym Jones, ex-Waterloo, Old Oak, Euston and Wimbledon Park, passed away on 22 April. He was just 53 years of age. Gwil was a proud father, a good friend, and a consummate railwayman. His knowledge and enthusiasm were held in high regard. A man of various interests and passions, from the railway to skiing to photography to Formula One motor racing, he lived his life to the full. When Gwil walked into a room, there was never any doubt that he had arrived – he could, and did, fill rooms without saying a word. The shock at his sudden death, when very few colleagues were even aware of the severity of his illness, is a testament to how privately he lived. The sense of loss shared across the railway is a testament to the high esteem in which he was rightly held. Gwil’s death didn’t want to head south and leave Manchester City. And, yes, the City needs a capital letter; because he was a lifelong fan which, of course, stretched back to the Maine Road years. His hero from those times was Colin Bell, whom he was able to meet in later years, marking a lifetime ambition.

Not long after qualifying as a driver, Andy met Tina, marrying her in 2005, and becoming a beloved grandad to Tina’s grandchildren, with whom he shared a great mutual affection. All of us will sorely miss him.
Medallion to Tom reveals a tale or two from history

I recently acquired a medallion which was presented by the EC to Brother T Ellis of Oswestry branch in 1907 for proposing 28 new members to ASLEF. That period – 1906/07 – was a turbulent time for ASLEF, regarding not only the relationship with railway management but also with the ‘other’ rail union. That’s why his efforts were so much appreciated.

Brother David Thomas Ellis was born in 1879 and in 1899 he became a cleaner at the Cambrian Railway shed in Oswestry. He was promoted to fireman in 1903. During the Great War he joined the Army and served with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and, later, as a locomotive driver with the Railway Operating Division. He was demobilised in 1919 and returned to Oswestry as an acting driver. In 1928 he was cautioned and suspended without pay. His recorded ‘crime’ was that he failed to inform the signalman that his engine was ready to leave the shed. This resulted in his standing at the shed signal from 12.45 until 15.00. Surely other engines would have needed to leave the shed during this lengthy period? One can only conclude that there was much more to this story than was told. In 1929 Bro Ellis was diagnosed with a colour vision problem and restricted to daytime shunting duties. He passed away in 1937 aged just 38. I am indebted to Mrs Tess Walker for much of that information.

I transferred to Exeter as a driver in 1989. Around this time a driver, Albert Ellis, was about to retire there. Albert had commenced his own long railway career at Oswestry and I wonder whether he was related to Tom? Although I believe that Ellis is quite a common name in the Oswestry and Wrexham areas.

Anyway, it’s a little piece of railway history and I’d be grateful if any other ASLEF member can fill in any more details.

Denis A Lewis, Kingsteignton, Devon

Drivers on ‘known limits of human performance’

SPADs have been in the headlines again but numbers are just that unless you dig deeper. The RSSB industry SPAD review showed, after detailed research, that train drivers in the UK are achieving an accuracy rate of 99.99996% for stopping at red signals. This was based on 292 SPADs against research that determined for stopping at red signals. This result is not unexpected. But it does raise a question on whether drivers are achieving the same results, or indeed any, when operating at night.

GS Mick Whelan says: ‘Finn is, himself, Irish – a point that was made in that part of the report about Mike Brown leaving TfL to take up a new job at Parliament – and I think it is quite clear that Finn was being dry, and ironic. And while humour is, of course, a matter of personal taste it would be hard to claim that Finn’s remarks are derogatory or discriminatory like those handbills in the windows of rooms for rent in England back in the 1960s and 1970s which read: ‘No Irish, no blacks, no dogs’. It is quite clear to me – and I, too, am of Irish stock – that Finn was poking fun at, and undermining, the attitude you describe of damning the Irish as ‘thick Mick’s’. And there is a difference between laughing at, and laughing with, such a characterisation.

Fuel in the firebox

In the light of recent reports about certain heritage railway lines struggling to find new steam drivers and firemen to keep these lines open, and our steam locomotives still working, is there any chance that ASLEF could help out and start a voluntary course across our network and work with all the TOCs to see who would like to work with steam locos and boilers. I’m sure there are still many steam/boiler instructors out there to teach not only the young but drivers who just missed out on boiler traffic. Myself, having 33 years’ experience on the footplate, would be interested and willing to learn new skills when I retire from the old British Rail so my skills could be used at a heritage railway. Please help, before we lose all steam altogether.

Mark Rimell, Derby

It’s a privilege to serve

I want to thank all the drivers of GTR, especially those at Cambridge, King’s Lynn and Peterborough, who are directly involved in the my re-election. It has been a privilege to represent all the drivers at GTR, and I look forward to working with the challenges that will come during my next term of office. This company, as you know, has been through some very troubled times recently, but your support for the members of this council has been brilliant, and has shown what can be achieved when we show a united front. Your trust in us, as a council, needs to be maintained, and you have my assurance that I will continue to give my all to this position and deal with everything that comes our way. We will continue to strive to obtain the best results.
for you all at Gova Thameslink Railway.

Peter Emmington, company council

Where to place that cross

My annual salary on finishing in 2001 was £24,000. I have now enjoyed 18 years of retirement and, with a modest railway pension, I have lived comfortably. But with drivers’ salaries today being in the £50,000 to £60,000 range that puts them in the 40p income tax bracket. The Tories are proposing to increase the allowance before paying this rate of tax to £80,000. I do hope this doesn’t encourage drivers to vote Tory on 12 December. Remember, Tory promises cannot be trusted. I thank Labour for all the benefits I enjoy as a pensioner; none of the many benefits we gained were given by a Tory government.

John Priseman, RMS

Let them know this month

ASLEF members who have had experience of nursing care – either for themselves or their families – might not be aware of just how many nursing posts are now vacant across England. The Royal College of Nursing, which says the removal of bursaries for nursing students has contributed to this problem, wants the government to get hospital staffing levels back to a safe level. Let them know what you think at the ballot box on 12 December.

P Begley, Bedford

It’s a question of trust

I am a retired engineer and former member of the trade union movement who thinks unions have an essential role to play in society and the behaviour of the present government makes me very angry. Boris Johnson and his cabinet are clearly incompetents, whom nobody should trust.

John Skutsch, Torquay

Salute to the big man

Some people are bigger than others without giving offence. Such a man was Tony West! Both as a senior railway operator and as an officer within the NPC these last 20 years I have valued his friendship, camaraderie, advice and trust. We shall all miss him.

Peter Rayner, vice-president, National Pensioners’ Convention

Mick Whelan says: ‘Peter, that’s very kind and apposite and much appreciated. He was, for many of us, a friend and mentor who led by example.’

Many reasons for SPADs

The causes of signals passed at danger are many and varied. One is, I believe, the worry of keeping the train right time, made worse by the number of delay slips sent out to drivers. I used to say to the newer drivers that it is better to fill out ten of these every day than have an incident. (You do not get many chances). I also told them it was better to hang back and not chase restrictive signals. Do driver managers and driver instructors do the same?

Jeff Veale, RMS Battersea

Recruiting train drivers

With reference to the letter headlined ‘Male? Yes? Pale? Probably. Stale? Certainly not! Be careful when you’re promoting the diversity agenda’ (Journal, October) what is wrong with recruiting the candidate who has the potential to be the best train driver? Simple.

Derek Wyatt, Marylebone

XR get it wrong on Tube

The attack on Tube trains – a form of transport they should be encouraging – was a public relations disaster for Extinction Rebellion.

Andrew Bosi, Friends of Capital Transport

Ex-certificate railwayman

I didn’t receive a retirement certificate from ASLEF when I retired as a train driver at Ramsgate in August 2009. Is it still possible for me to get one? I have been in the Retired Members’ Section of ASLEF since then, and it has been nice keeping up with events and news with the ASLEF Journal.

Reg Wooldridge, RMS

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

I’m searching for a frame

I received my retirement certificate very quickly after my inquiry to see if I was entitled to one. Seems I was, and my letter was in the November Journal with a nice comment from Mr Whelan as well. So, all in all, very impressed! I like the certificate very much, and am now searching for a frame to put it in.

Mick Moloney, Bryden, Boyndie, Banff

Getting the Journal online

I was wondering if there is an option to receive a pdf copy of the ASLEF Journal, rather than a paper one, helping to use less environmental resources as well as saving on the cost of printing and posting it to me.

Daniel White by email

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

A new exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery celebrates the work of the women – including Lizzie Siddal, Jane Morris, and Effie Gray Millais – associated with the boys’ club that was the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. KEITH RICHMOND looks beyond the pictures of the pale women with tumbling red tresses and loose Medieval gowns that launched a thousand posters.

HE Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – the clue is in the name – was something of a boys’ club. This group of English painters, poets and critics, founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, and William Holman Hunt, who were later joined by John Ruskin, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Henry Wallis, and Ford Madox Brown, rejected what they considered the artificial and mannered approach to painting of Sir ‘Sloshua’ Reynolds and the Royal Academy crowd, looking back to artists working before Michelangelo and Raphael such as Giotto, van Eyck and Fra Angelico. The PRB manifesto preached a return to nature, a new realism, and a new moral seriousness, and their work was characterized by bright colours, sharp outlines, a flattened perspective and close attention to detail.

‘I have a talent and with it the constant impulse to employ it for the love of it and the longing to work and no man has the right to say that is to go unheeded’
– Joanna Boyce Wells

Pre-Raphaelite Sisters, a new exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, curated by Jan Marsh and Alison Smith, wants to reclaim the life and work of twelve key PRB women – ‘models, muses, makers, managers, artists’ as well as ‘mothers, daughters, mistresses, wives and lovers’ – from the margins of the history of High Victorian art. ‘We wanted to restore agency to the many women associated with the Pre-Raphaelite story whose contributions have never been fully acknowledged.’

They include Christina Rossetti, a fine poet, whose lines from the Pre-Raphaelite story whose contributions have never been fully acknowledged:’

‘As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and the onlook of despair.’
The Bridge of Sighs by Georgiana Burne-Jones is not the Ponte dei Sospiri in Venice but a drawing of gentlemen and urchins surrounding a Thames waterman who has just recovered the body of a poor, homeless, unhappy woman from the river.

‘They transcended the roles of the harlot, princess or goddess they performed to become lasting celebrities’
– Nicholas Cullinan, director, National Portrait Gallery

Not all the pictures are by the women; some are images of the women. There is a watercolour by Millais of Effie Gray (who married Ruskin, then Millais) posing at Knole, a study for his oil painting The Eve of St Agnes; a picture of Effie by Thomas Richmond which prompted her to say, self-deprecatingly, ‘It is the most lovely piece of oil painting, but much prettier than me’; and a strikingly modern portrait, by Millais, of her sister Sophie. As well as finished paintings there are preparatory sketches, notebooks, a lock of Lizzie Siddal’s famous flame-coloured hair, and a pair of neatly embroidered evening shoes.

‘All things that pass | Are woman’s looking-glass; | They show her how her bloom must fade, | And she herself be laid | With withered roses in the shade’
– Christina Rossetti

This exhibition succeeds, as Jan Marsh hopes, in showing how ‘a dozen women, some already well-known, others as yet unfamiliar, contributed to Pre-Raphaelitism [and] challenges the standard view of a movement of Romantic male genius and beautiful female models.’

But three paintings by Burne-Jones and Rossetti – The Beguiling of Merlin, which immortalised Burne-Jones’s lover Maria Zambaco; The Tree of Forgiveness; and The Day Dream depicting Jane Morris – dominate one long room and are, arguably, the finest pictures in this exhibition.

And that, perhaps, is the problem. Although the idea is to resurrect these women – and their work – the men of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood cast a rather long shadow.

Pre-Raphaelite Sisters is at the National Portrait Gallery in London until 26 January. Admission £20; concessions £19; children under 12 free.
**On Track**

**Tinker, tailor, soldier, spy**

OHN le Carré has always been a better novelist than the literary establishment would like to admit. Because spy fiction is his milieu, many critics look down their collective nose and dismiss him, from high table, as an entertainer. But the world of espionage – concerned, as it is, with loyalty, larceny, and betrayal – has proved the perfect place from which to analyse the state of this island nation, and its diminished role in global affairs since the end of the Second World War, which he has been writing about since he published *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* in 1963.

Le Carré – at heart a romantic, old-fashioned, English patriot – while promoting his new novel, *Agent Running in the Field* (Viking, £20), offered this take on Britain, Brexit, and betrayal. ‘Mob orators of the sort we have, the Boris Johnson sort, do not speak reason. Your task is to fire up people with nostalgia, with anger. It’s almost unbelievable that these people of the establishment – Nigel Farage, for instance – are speaking of betrayal. “I’m betrayed by Parliament, betrayed by government. I’m speaking as a betrayed person, because I’m a man of the people, like you.”

A point he underlines in his new novel: “It is my considered opinion that, for Britain and Europe, and for liberal democracy across the entire world, Britain’s departure from the European Union in the time of Donald Trump, and Britain’s consequent unqualified dependence on the United States, in an era when the US is heading straight down the road to institutional racism and neo-fascism, is an unmitigated clusterf**k bar none.’

He says there is hope, though, ‘if the social contract is restored…you cannot preach a level playing field in this country as long as you have such exclusive institutions as private education, private medicine, private everything.’

*Keith Richmond*

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**Prize Crossword**

Crossword 164 by Tom Williams

Across
1 Liverpudlian 7 Bonus 8 Imps 10 Utter 11 Royal 13 Repeat 15 Thrush 17 Badge 18 Polar 19 Yell 21 Alive 22 Bantamweight

Down:
1 Laboratory 2 Vineyard 3 Results 4 Ulster 5 Lair 6 Alp 9 Settlement 12 Seedling 14 Embrace 16 Helium 18 Plot 20 Era

Congratulations to Chris Greenwood, of New Malden, Surrey, 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*

Solution to Crossword 163

Across: 1 Liverpudlian 7 Bonus 8 Imps 10 Utter 11 Royal 13 Repeat 15 Thrush 17 Badge 18 Polar 19 Yell 21 Alive 22 Bantamweight

Down: 1 Laboratory 2 Vineyard 3 Results 4 Ulster 5 Lair 6 Alp 9 Settlement 12 Seedling 14 Embrace 16 Helium 18 Plot 20 Era

Thanks for all your responses to the 163rd prize crossword in the November 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 December.

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**ASLEF’s legal services**

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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