

# EQUALLY

AUTUMN 2014

DRIVEN



ASLEF'S EQUALITY PUBLICATION



## EQUALITIES IN ACTION



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**More** than just a **union**





## Positive steps for ASLEF's equalities agenda

The interval between editions of Equally Driven has seen us hold our Annual Assembly of Delegates and the 2014 conference was our most diverse to date with an increase in BEM, LGBT and female members attending for their branches and the representative committees. There were several rule change items which were adopted this year which will mean encouraging changes for

equalities within ASLEF such as a 4th yearly joint meeting for representative committees and adding structure and changing the name of the branch equality rep role.

Following on from articles in the last edition of the publication ASLEF submitted an amendment to the FBU pension's motion at TUC congress in September. The amendment reiterated ASLEF's commitment to the belief that same sex survivor pensions should be equalised in law.

Finally I am looking forward to attending the first joint equalities meeting with the representative committee members which is being held in Birmingham in November. I hope we can develop an action plan to take further positive steps for the ASLEF equalities agenda.

**Mick Whelan, ASLEF general secretary**

## Pension rules will reflect new equal marriage legislation

David Jones from district 7 attended AAD for the LGBT Representative Committee. The committee had submitted a motion on ensuring that the TFL, RPS and ASLEF Pension Schemes calculated survivor pensions benefits pre December 2005. At conference this motion was noted as the trustees for these schemes had already altered their scheme rules in light of the equal marriage legislation and gave full benefits to all.

The second motion submitted was on whole body vibration. Old research had shown that this could cause joint and back pain as well as digestive problems for locomotive drivers. The motion called for the Executive Committee to commission a study into its effects and was adopted by the conference.



## More women are getting involved at branch level

AAD is the once yearly event where every branch and equality committee has the opportunity to propose policy changes for ASLEF, this year was also a year for ASLEF rule book changes.

I attended on behalf of the Women's Representative Committee, the last time I attended AAD was 2011 and there were three women delegates, this year there were seven. It is excellent to see women getting involved at branch level, and attending this, the most important conference of the year. The WRC have for several years now offered £50 expenses to any woman member attending as a visitor to an ASLEF event and this year there were several who visited AAD and were eligible to claim. Next year's AAD will be held in the Park Inn Hotel, Southend-on-Sea 12-15 May 2015 and I hope more women will get involved.

The WRC proposed two motions for AAD to debate, one on increasing the number of trauma support reps and another on the rise of fascism in Greece. Both motions were carried by the conference. There were also several rule changes from all the equality committees that will see the number of equality committee meetings increased from three to four, the fourth being a joint meeting between all four committees, the staggering of elections onto the committees and a reinvigoration of the branch equality rep post.

**Alison Miller, WRC member for District 2**



### CONTACT EQUALITIES



Search for 'ASLEF Equalities' or 'ASLEF Women' to join the Facebook groups



Send us your feedback or comments on equality at [equalities@aslef.org.uk](mailto:equalities@aslef.org.uk)



To join the confidential mailing list contact head office on 020 7324 2400 or email your details to the Equality Advisor, [lames@aslef.org.uk](mailto:lames@aslef.org.uk)

# EQUALITIES IN ACTION AT AAD 2014

ASLEF Annual Assembly of Delegates was held in the Old Ship in Brighton. Conference was chaired by Shaun Seymour. Through the week we had various speakers from MP's to political poets. Shadow Transport Secretary Mary Creagh spoke on the Tories mishandling of our railways. Ian Lavery MP gave a storming speech filled with passion, conviction and honesty which had conference rising to its feet with applause.

The BEMRC took one motion to the 2014 AAD which was to negotiate access to prayer rooms in depots for staff. This caused some debate at conference mostly down to the name 'prayer room' as some people thought that quiet room was more appropriate. There were reports from delegates that staff in their depots were using toilets and shower rooms to pray as there were inadequate facilities. The motion was adopted.

The second item put forward was a rule change which called which would allow the equalities committee meetings to be extended from 3 to 4 times per year with the fourth meeting being a joint meeting with all the committees. This was also adopted with very strong support from the floor and top table.

**Trevor Robinson**  
BEM RC Member for  
District 8

## WANTED: BRANCH EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Equal Opportunities reps job had no definitive structure to it, so earlier this year at AAD, a new rule was passed giving this position a proper job description and a new name, Branch Equality Rep.

Every branch is entitled to have a Branch Equality Rep; they don't have to be from any of the equality strands (i.e. BEM, LGBT, Women) but must have an empathy with the equalities agenda.

Branch Equality Reps will be expected to report to the branch on equality issues and keep abreast of any new equality legislation. They will liaise with the Equality Representative Committee members in their district and hopefully in the future, there will be forums where all the Equality Reps will meet with the Representative

Committee Members and possibly the District Organisers.

We have also secured online training in equality and diversity via the ASLEF education project and Stephenson College in Durham. This is a nationally accredited NCFE certificate in Equality and Diversity Level 2 which is equivalent to 5 GCSE's grade A-C.

If you would like to find out more about the position, please contact your branch secretary or any of the Equality Representative members. For more information about the Equality and Diversity Training, please contact Lee James (Equalities Advisor) at ASLEF head office.

**Debbie Reay, Chair of Womens  
Representative Committee**



# ASLEF calls on ITF to break gender stereotypes

### LIZ COCKS reports from the International Transport Federations Womens' Conference in Sofia

I ATTENDED the ITF conference in Sofia Bulgaria with the ASLEF delegation; my remit was to represent our women members. My conference began with a fringe meeting titled 'Making Violence against women a union issue' This is based on an international campaign which started in Canada and is spreading across the world, it was created for men to encourage them to pledge to stop violence against women and not stay silent. I am pleased to say all our

male delegates made this pledge. Having heard the top table state that violence isn't only perpetrated by men, I felt that I would make a statement about the ASLEF policies on domestic violence and motions which have previously been raised at AAD and Women's TUC Conferences by the Women's Representative Committee regarding women as the perpetrators of violence. To find out more about the please go to [whiteribboncampaign.co.uk](http://whiteribboncampaign.co.uk)  
The Women's Conference was very lucky to have both Bulgaria's



**WANTED**

**WOMEN MEMBERS**  
interested in being sponsored to attend conferences as visitors

**GET MORE INVOLVED** learn more about the union and see how conferences work

**UPCOMING CONFERENCES INCLUDE** the unions annual conference, TUC womens conference, labour party and TUC congress

**CONTACT** Wendy Hurst, Secretary of ASLEF's women's committee  
Tel: 02788 153 932 or email [wendy.hurst@ntlworld.com](mailto:wendy.hurst@ntlworld.com)



unable to recruit and increase numbers of women unless the train operating and freight operating companies employ them, there is nothing in any franchise agreements to increase numbers from minority groups. Only under transport for London which is public ownership is there a requirement in place to recruit women into my grade. I called on the ITF to help break gender stereo types.

I was the last speaker from the floor before we moved onto the plan for the next four years and presentations for those leaving the women's committee. There was traditional singing from Botswana and South Africa to close conference.

During the course of the week I had made a daily blog on our women's ASLEF Facebook group and encourage all women members to join that group for future blogs or more in depth look at my week in Sofia with ASLEF and the ITF.

**Liz Cocks**  
WRC Member for District 6

### WOMEN'S COMPETITION BADGE WINNER



Recently the Women's Representative Committee held a competition amongst the female membership to design a new ASLEF Women's badge. The winning design came from Alison Morgan of Leeds Branch. Her design is based on an awareness ribbon and uses the suffragette colours of green for hope, white for purity and violent for dignity. The badges are available to purchase from head office for £2.50 each.

**Alison Morgan, a CrossCountry driver from Leeds Branch**

# Celebrating Black History

On 18th October District 8 hosted an event to celebrate Black History Month. There was strong attendance from members from across the district along with some BEM Representative Committee members. The aim of the evening was to highlight the work of the union and the opportunities to become more involved to the membership.  
The evening was held at

Bamboula Kitchen in Brixton and everyone appreciated the Caribbean food and rum cocktails before the speakers took to the floor. Unfortunately Zita Holbourne from the Public and Commercial Services Union was unable to attend at the last minute due to illness so it fell to Trevor Robinson BEM RC Member and Finn Brennan, District Organiser for district 8 to fill the

void. Trevor spoke about the function of the BEM Representative Committee and Finn on the work of ASLEF and the need for BEM members to become more involved with ASLEF. There were then surprise appearances from Floyd Doyle Chair of the BEM RC and Marz Colombini, EC Member for district 1 who spoke passionately about the threat that UKIP poses.



This was the first Black History Month event the union had held for several years, it was well supported and enjoyed by all those who attended.



## SOUTHAMPTON ANTI-CUTS RALLY

On a wet Saturday in October a march was organised in my hometown of Southampton against the planned cuts to railway staff which are a hangover from the McNulty Report. There were around 40-50 trade unionists most of whom were transport workers but there was also support from the public services unions,

The march started from Southampton railway station continued through the town centre to the Guildhall and local government offices. Speakers were Keith Morrell a Southampton councillor against cuts, Peter Pinkney the President of RMT and representatives from Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and Unite the Union. All were there to condemn the government's austerity cuts to jobs and services, also to condemn the introduction of the McNulty Report which seeks to reduce frontline staff and lower safety standards within the rail industry something that has had a detrimental effect on post rail tragedies. All trade unions and supporters present sent a strong message to the government that any cuts to the railways including jobs, cuts in infrastructure or staff pensions will be vehemently opposed. In attendance from ASLEF were members from Southampton/Northam and Salisbury branches.

**ED D'BELL, BEM RC member, District 1**



## Britain needs a pay rise

On Saturday 18th October I joined many ASLEF members at the TUC organised 'Britain needs a pay rise' march and rally in London.

I had never been to a march before so I didn't quite know what to expect, we've all seen both good and bad demonstrations in the media so I went with an open mind.

I was excited as the District 6 banner was going to be on display for the first time, as well as the ASLEF womens banner. I sat on the side of the embankment and watched as people from various districts of ASLEF arrived and



**ASLEF women at the TUC rally in London**

assembled their branch or district banners.

I joined some of the other Women's Representative Committee members by our banner and felt completely at home in the warmth of the union.

The march itself was a peaceful demonstration unless you were ahead of the

RMT band who were enjoyable from what I heard. It was really pleasing to see families of union officials and members joining us to show those in power that the cuts need to stop.

We reached Hyde Park without incident although the wind tried to cause havoc however the stewards and marshals were excellent in the warnings they issued about wind tunnel effect.

It was only when I was travelling home afterward that I reflected on how silly my fears of attending marches or demonstrations had been and I urge that if you've never been to one that it's safe and well worth attending. Why not make a family day of it and bring the rest of the household along to support.

**Liz Cocks, Womens Representative Committee Member for district 6**

## ASLEF activists converge on Tolpuddle

It was a perfect day on Sunday 20th July as activists and trade unions from every sector nationally converged on Tolpuddle to remember and celebrate where and when the trade union movement was formed. In 1834 George Loveless and five fellow workers were charged with having taken an illegal oath but their real crime in the eyes of the establishment was to have formed a trade union to protest about their level of pay.

ASLEF had a strong presence as always with many members and branches in attendance including my branch Southampton/Northam, Bristol, Weymouth, Bournemouth, Portsmouth & IOW, Womens Representative Committee and

many more attending. There were also many officials of the union including the General Secretary Mick Whelan, Simon Weller National Organiser, Marz Colombini EC Member No.1 and District Organiser No.5 Nigel Gibson to name a few with some staying for the whole weekend.

The union also had a stall near to the entrance which attracted a lot of attention from people gathering information on ASLEF and its campaigns along with collecting some quality freebies.

Again Brother Hussein Ezzedine made the journey from Edinburgh and was at hand to help me carry the BEM banner which attracted lots of attention along the march route from supporters, thanks go to him.

With the help of the GS Mick Whelan and EC member Marz Colombini, food in the order of chicken curry, rice and bhaji's was made by my father and given to everyone for lunch time including members, members families as well as anyone else who felt a bit peckish, This seemed to go down very well and hopefully we will do again next year.

Towards the end of the afternoon Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the TUC made quite a warming speech mentioning Bob Crow highlighting the work he had done for the trade union movement along with condemning the Tories on the work they are doing to reduce our rights, working conditions and



pay something that would be "vehemently opposed" by trade unions.

I must also thank Simon Weller, National Officer for bringing the BEM banner down for that day and to everyone who came and made it an enjoyable occasion, see you all next year!

**ED D'Bell  
BEM RC member District 1**

## Hope not hate and the new campaign against the politics of FEAR



As HOPE not hate celebrates our 10th birthday, there has been a lot of reminiscing: Reflecting on where we have been, what we have achieved and what we want to focus on in the future. In fact last month we launched our Story of HOPE, a decade of the HOPE not hate campaign, which you can get from our website. RUTH SMEETH explains

WITH you, we set up HOPE not hate to provide a counterweight to the politics of hate promoted by the BNP as they sort electoral success. We took a different approach to traditional anti-fascism. Together we targeted vulnerable communities and ran street-by-street campaigns, as well as building a national network. Big demos in the centre of town look impressive and can make us feel better, but ultimately we thought changes were best forged within communities.

The HOPE not hate campaign in Barking & Dagenham in 2010 is one of our proudest achievements and the one of the biggest success stories of anti-fascism since Cable Street. The BNP were the official opposition on the council and had the potential to take control. And Nick Griffin, the leader of the BNP was attempting to oust Margaret Hodge, the MP for Barking. As a collective we mobilised, campaigning for months in the community. Over 700 people came to help and the results spoke for themselves. The BNP lost in every single ward – all 51 and HOPE beat hate.

Our campaign tried to motivate those who opposed the far right to come out and vote against them and their politics of hate and division. The most important aspect of the campaign, was engaging people on issues that they care about, rather than on issues we thought they should care about. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of

campaign literature were distributed, ranging from community stories and local positives to exposés of local fascists and racists. We exposed the more unsavoury details of local BNP candidates and ensured that local people were informed about who they were voting for.

Unfortunately Barking & Dagenham wasn't the last time we had to mobilise together against racists and fascists. Only last year the far-right attempted to utilise the horrific murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby to ramp up their attacks on Muslims and promote their racist hate. In response to this we launched our "We Are The Many" campaign. Over 45,000 people signed a letter proclaiming this slogan, including our General Secretary Mick Whelan. This message of unity remains at the heart of HOPE not hate campaign and guides our plans for the future.

The "We Are The Many" campaign is symbolic of the way in which HOPE not hate seeks to respond to the threat of hate and fear in our communities, both online and street-by-street. When the story of grooming in Rotherham broke, we countered far-right campaigning with over 100,000 of our own leaflets and the distribution of a tabloid newspaper. This was alongside a wider campaign to tackle the issues around grooming and the racist tensions, which often arise alongside it.

HOPE not hate successes have continued thanks to the support of activists like you and the



support of ASLEF. In the 2014 European Elections, Nick Griffin lost his seat as an MEP. This marked the demise of the BNP as a political threat and you can definitely take some of the credit for this loss. For HOPE not hate, whilst we are celebrating it also gives us the opportunity to look to the future.

HOPE not hate was established to be AGAINST something. It is time we stopped merely holding the line against fascism and developed a more proactive approach. Our aim now is to present our own image of Britain and fight FOR it.

We recognise that not all people voting for the BNP were racist and, more importantly, that labelling them as Nazis was counter-productive. It stirred up resentment but didn't change their votes. Those who voted for the BNP were scared and angry and felt ignored by mainstream politicians. Offering them an alternative was more productive than alienating them further.

The challenges we face now demand a more pragmatic approach. UKIP give a new face to right-wing politics, which is not fascist but does contradict our vision of Britain. Their anti-immigration language, hate and fear of the unknown and their exaggeration and lies create a closed and judgemental society.

Our campaign will seek to challenge every form of



extremism against our core values of hope and tolerance. This means not only opposing the far-right. All forms of extremism pose a threat to our core values and will be opposed. As will any individual from any party who promotes politics of hate.

We plan to promote our own vision through community projects. Our "Together" campaign will peacefully and positively unite communities through conversation and shared interest. We will be organising in ten communities across England and Wales to heal divisions for a united society.

"Our Voice for Hope" campaign will encourage voter registration in light of the recent law change. We promote inclusion for all and a voice for all. Communities need the confidence that they can organise to solve their own problems.

But once again we're asking for your help – get your branch to sign up to Trade Union Friends of HOPE not hate by emailing Jean at [tradeunions@hopenothate.org.uk](mailto:tradeunions@hopenothate.org.uk)

**Ruth Smeeth, Deputy Director Hope not Hate**

## ASLEF takes pride in joining Liverpool's LGBT festival

On 2nd August ASLEF members and supporters from around the country made their way to Liverpool to take part in the city's Pride celebrations.

The LGBT festival, now in its fifth year, is held in memory of Michael Causer, the gay Liverpoolian teenager who was murdered at a house party in 2008. The event is supported by his family and friends and throughout the day tributes were made to him.

The celebrations started with a rather damp march from St George's Hall through the city centre to the waterfront. This was the biggest turnout that ASLEF has had at a pride event, the banner attracted a lot of attention or perhaps that was the amount of noise from the vuvuzelas and whistles!



Once at the waterfront there was an array of stalls with ASLEF contributing to the North West TUC's effort. There was also plenty of musical entertainment from the likes of Katy B and Heather Small. Unfortunately during the Kylie tribute we were hit by an apocalyptic rainstorm which left us running for cover and brought the day to an abrupt halt.

A decision was made to move support of pride events around the country and I have to say it was a wise one. Having attended London and Brighton before I found the Liverpool event to be far less commercialised and more community focused. It was a symbol for what I believe pride should be about, a celebration and expression of LGBT rights in



this country yet also a chance to remember those who have been lost during the continuing journey.

**Lee James, ASLEF Equalities Advisor**

## Gender stereotyping of toys - what harm can it do?

**B** LUE for Boys and Pink for Girls, what harm can it do? Loads! It's never too early to promote equality and gender stereotypes perpetuate inequality and reinforce differences between men and women, rather than individuals being people first and equals. And it does start early in society, Boots selling baby reigns, blue for boys who are 'train drivers' and pink for girls who are 'cupcakes' or Kinder Eggs, now being sold on a gender basis. Why?

Children learn from the world around them and do not exclude or devalue each other or set limits upon themselves until they learn this from adults. It matters if boys are treated differently from girls because it is setting up a pattern for life. Gender assumptions may mean identifying with certain toys, activities and role models which can limit children. For example, action, construction and technology toys are mainly marketed at boys; social role

play and arts and crafts toys are mainly marketed at girls. This is a recent phenomenon brought about by marketing companies to boost sales, particularly at Christmas time. Marketing toys in this way causes problems because play is crucial to how children develop and learn about the world, boys need the chance to practise social skills and girls to be active and learn spatial and problem-solving skills.

In the ASLEF report *On Track with Diversity* which looks at the reasons behind the lack of diversity in the railway it was identified that "almost certainly the stereotype of the train driver is a man, an



image which is prevalent from early childhood. This image is undoubtedly reinforced by parents and marketing images of boys playing with train sets and trains represented in animation as "boys" such as Thomas the Tank Engine.

It is vital that children grow up happy, healthy and reach their potential we should not tell our daughters and sons their gender defines the roles they will play in society or limits their dreams and ambitions. We should be telling them they can be who they want to be, so the next time you go toy shopping don't be a stereotype.

**Alison Miller, WRC Member for District 2**





## INAUGURAL JOINT EQUALITIES MEETING

Following a rule change at this year's AAD, the equalities committee held their first joint meeting on 25th November in Birmingham. The event was well attended with members from across the country representing the women's, LGBT, BEM and retired members committees converging to discuss how best to progress the unions equalities agenda.

The morning session was spent discussing

the current equalities structure and policies focusing on what worked and what could be improved.

During the afternoon the meeting was joined by the General Secretary, National Organiser and District Organisers Nigel Gibson and Brian Corbett. They joined sessions looking at the recruitment and organisation of branch equality reps and the

barriers to accepting equality as part of the unions remit.

This was a very productive day with all committee members contributing to produce an action plan to take forward into 2015. Thanks should be given to District 6 and Birmingham New Street Branch who both contributed to the room hire and refreshments.

# WANTED

## WOMEN MEMBERS

interested in being sponsored to attend conferences as visitors

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GET MORE INVOLVED

learn more about the union and see how conferences work

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES INCLUDE the unions annual conference, TUC womens conference, labour party and TUC congress

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CONTACT Wendy Hurst, Secretary of ASLEF's women's committee  
Tel: 07788 153 932 or email [wendy.hurst3@ntlworld.com](mailto:wendy.hurst3@ntlworld.com)

REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
DISTRICT 1		
WRC	Kirstie Wood	
LGBT	Sean Lambert	
BEM	Ed D'Bell	
DISTRICT 2		
WRC	Alison Miller	
LGBT	out for nomination	
BEM	Paul Patmore	
DISTRICT 3		
WRC	Julie Clegg-Haver	
LGBT	Darran Brown	
BEM	Dale Clarke	
DISTRICT 4		
WRC	Nicky Sapey	
LGBT	Susan Greenwell	
BEM	Surjeet Puee	
DISTRICT 5		
WRC	Wendy Hurst	
LGBT	Jackie Lee	
BEM	Floyd Doyle	
DISTRICT 6		
WRC	Liz Cocks	
LGBT	Angie Geddes-Smith	
BEM	Mahesh Shah	
DISTRICT 7		
WRC	Collette Gibson	
LGBT	David Jones	
BEM	Ronald Gordon-Hill	
DISTRICT 8		
WRC	Debbie Reay	
LGBT	Ben Wallington	
BEM	Trevor Robinson	