

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

# GREYPOWER

Retired Members Section newsletter AUTUMN 2006



## International Brigade honoured at Wortley Hall

BY PJ SMITH - RMS NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

THE Splendid Wortley Hall near Sheffield was the venue for the 2006 Retired Members Forum on the 30th of June to 2nd of July.

35 of us gathered to enjoy the weekend, we kicked off on the Saturday at with an introduction by Ray Jackson, RMS National Chair and Tony West, RMS National Secretary.

One of the members made a presentation of a painting of a locomotive (I won't say which for the fear of hate mail from vicars). Ray thanked him and said it would hang in the ASLEF room at Wortley.

Ray continued by giving a full update on the actions taken by the RMS Committee; our association with other unions; and the work we have done with the National Pensioners Convention in pursuing rights for pensioners

i.e. a proper basic state pension, no means testing, proper health care, proper care be it in the home or residential, and free national travel.

A video was shown called "What do you see", which highlighted the dreadful treatment of the elderly by so called caring people.

Throughout the weekend we had a number of speakers.

Andy Reed, the National Organiser, gave a frank and comprehensive report on 'ASLEF the way forward' with a proposed revamp of our publicity materials and the need for everyone to promote ASLEF - including lead officers, Company Council Reps and branch officers. We all need to do more.

Andy raised the unethical actions of a sister union in poaching our members, unfortunately

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### 50 year anniversary of Caribbean Direct recruitment

Transport for London (TfL) is celebrating the 50th anniversary of London Transport's Direct Recruitment scheme in the Caribbean - and it is looking for stories about the experiences of people who began a new life as well as a new job in Britain.

The intention is to publish a selection of contributions on the TfL and London Transport Museum websites, and there is a possibility of producing a book later in the year.

If you have any relevant stories, please write to Roma Thomas at TfL at Level 10, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL or phone her on 020 7126 4202. We'd also be pleased if you could copy anything you sent to TfL to the ASLEF Journal so we can also consider publication.

### Prostate Cancer

What is it?

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INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE HONOURED AT WORLEY HALL



RMS National Committee members with Jack Jones

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some are falling for the cheap and nasty over quality, others are not subscribing to either and are like parasites feeding on the gains acquired by others.

He gave a report on the sections within ASLEF, Black and Ethnic Minorities, Gay and Lesbian, and the Womens Section and the need to ensure that equality prevails.

He covered the monitoring of drivers and the need to get rid of the 'points system' in all Train Operating Companies and the need for a common policy on pensions.

Jack Jones the President of the TGWU Retired Members Association and the founding member of the NPC, addressed the meeting and covered all aspects of the NPC and the need to keep the pressure up on the Government to gain our rights and dignity. In closing we sang Jack's battle cry "Keep right on to the end of the road", and we thanked Jack's son Mick for ensuring he was able to travel safely to the forum.

We had the pleasure of being addressed by Mick Clapham, MP for Barnsley and Penistone, who gave a comprehensive report on the state of the Labour Party and on the NHS. Private Care Trusts are not the answer - there



Tony West RMS National Secretary

have been no new hospitals in the north of England. He also spoke about worker consultation; the nuclear deterrent and how the Government are intent on replacing Trident; Iraq and the need to stop it turning into civil war; the need to address the energy problems for the future (clean coal technology).

On the Saturday afternoon we adjourned to enjoy the South Yorkshire Festival, which had an added bonus this year as it was an anniversary of the Spanish Civil War. A tree was planted in the grounds of Wortley Hall to commemorate the vital role of the International Brigade. We had the Ideal person present to head the commemoration, and that was Jack Jones who fought with the international brigade.

Sunday we started with an address by Pauline Cawood the ASLEF National Secretary of the Womens Consultative Committee who gave her history and her role in and of the Women's section nationally and internationally.

Finally, we had the pleasure of the company of Bill and Winifred Tobutt. Bill is the General Secretary of the TGWU Retired Members Association and he gave a comprehensive report on the workings and campaigns of their association.

We closed by making a presentation to the staff at Wortley Hall and thanked them for the splendid way they had looked after us.

In closing I would like to thank Sharon Allen for her sterling work in organising a great weekend, I was also pleased to see many new faces and hope to see many more next time, come along - if you don't you won't know what you are missing!

PJ was awarded a lifetime Honourary membership of ASLEF whilst he was at the weekend; the presentation was made by Andy Reed, National Organiser, who outlined the tremendous contribution made by PJ to ASLEF over the years.

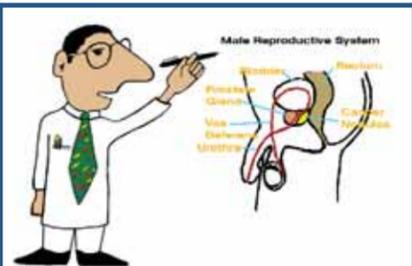
# Prostate Cancer - What Is It?

FOLLOWING years of neglect, prostate cancer - the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men in the UK - is now experiencing unprecedented public, political and media interest.

The prostate gland is a part of the body that few people know much about.

Not surprisingly, lots of people think the prostate has something to do with regulating the flow of urine, because if there is a problem in the prostate, urination can become painful or difficult. The prostate is actually part of the male reproductive system.

Prostate Cancer is cancer that begins in the prostate. Cells in the prostate start to divide and grow out of the



## What do you know?

An ICM poll commissioned by The Prostate Cancer Charity asked 1000 adults to 'spot the odd one out' in a list of five possible risk factors for prostate cancer.

The major risk factors for prostate cancer are increasing age, especially past 50; having a family history; having a high fat refined "westernised" diet and being of African or African Caribbean origin.

The ICM poll found that:

One in 4 people over 55 thought increasing age was NOT a major risk factor for prostate cancer.

Almost one in 5 people failed to recognise that family history might be an important risk factor for prostate cancer.

One in 8 people thought diet was not a major risk factor for prostate cancer.

1 in 10 men admitted they didn't know what any risk factors were for prostate cancer.

normal pattern. The cells grow into lumpy bundles of cells called tumours. Tumours disrupt the normal function of the prostate, and cells that come free from the tumour can travel elsewhere in the body, and begin to grow tumours there.

**SYMPTOMS**  
All prostate problems can make the gland enlarged or become inflamed. This may make urinating more difficult. It can affect your quality of life and also your health.

The kind of symptoms you might have from any prostate problem are:

- A frequent need to urinate, especially at night
- A need to rush to the toilet, so that you may even wet yourself at times
- Difficulty starting to pee
- Straining or taking a long time to finish
- A weak flow
- A feeling that your bladder has not emptied properly
- Pain on peeing
- Pain on ejaculating
- Pain in the genitals

Prostate cancer is the most serious prostate problem. Apart from problems urinating, other symptoms may include:

- lower back pain
- difficulty in getting or keeping an erection
- pain in the hips or pelvis
- blood in the urine

Some prostate problems are more serious than others. If you

are concerned about your symptoms you should make an appointment to see your GP. They may give you a number of tests in order to make a diagnosis.

**TREATMENT**  
Prostate cancer may be localised (only affecting the prostate), or advanced (the cancer has moved outside the prostate).

If your doctors believe the cancer just affects the gland, they will discuss different kinds of treatment with you. These could be

- Active Monitoring (sometimes called watchful waiting) - where the state of the cancer is closely observed and treatment started only when, or if, necessary
- External Beam Radiotherapy - where radiation is used to kill cancer cells
- Surgery - where the prostate is removed
- Brachytherapy - where radioactive seeds are implanted into the prostate

There are also rarer forms of treatment, which are less commonly available, but may become more so in future:

Cryotherapy - freezing the prostate  
If the cancer is locally advanced or advanced, you may be offered hormone therapy, either on its own or with another treatment.

Hormone Therapy

For more information on this subject you can check out [www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk) or see your GP. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned in this article you should check with your GP to put your mind at rest. Many of the symptoms could be due to an enlarged prostate that may be due to a range of conditions other than prostate cancer. The website has a range of free publications to give you more information that can be downloaded including:

- The Prostate Gland Owner's Manual
- The Tool Kit





Frank Cooper, NPC Chair

## NPC: Fighting for pensions

THE NPC is an umbrella organisation whose main objective is to promote the welfare and interests of pensioners, retired and older people who live within the UK.

Its structures are similar to those of a trade union; with an elected General Secretary and President, an executive committee and a number of sub-committees including women's, BEM and the newly formed trade union liaison committee. It divides itself into regions and holds a biennial conference which is motion based, to determine the policy of the organisation and develop campaigning issues.

The NPC was formed in 1979. It was the brain child of Jack Jones the former General Secretary of the T&GWU. Its primary objective was 'to promote national awareness of the problems faced by older people and with the support of the trade union movement, to press government to take action to resolve them'. One and half million pensioners out of the eleven million pensioners living in the UK are members through affiliated bodies, mostly trade unions.

Prior to 1908 it was trade unionists that were at the forefront of the struggle for a state pension. Following the Old Age Pension Act of 1908 trade unions and parliamentary activists continued to campaign for adequate state pensions, and trade unions in particular began to focus on occupational pensions. They realised that although the state pension was seen to be the 'bedrock', until government made it meaningful it needed to be supplemented.

Pensioners in the UK are considered, to be 'poor'; with one quarter of the 11

million pensioners living below the Government's official poverty line. The NPC make the point that "the state does not guarantee its people an income that enables them to enjoy retirement". In fact the NPC state that 50% of people reaching retirement age face poverty and the means-test, unable to afford many of the necessities of life.

The impact of an aging population and its effects on the state pension have been presented in quite an alarmist way. A recent survey commissioned by the BBC showed that the over 60's population will only increase by around 8 % in 2050, while it will treble in China and almost double in Japan, Australia and Italy, with Germany increasing its over 60 population from 25% to 35% in the same period.

However, the same survey shows that people receiving occupational pensions will reduce from 15% in 2006 to around 8% in 2050. The survey concluded that 'as a result of the link between the state pension and earnings being abolished with the resulting value of the basic state pension falling, people that rely on the state pension will be condemned to live in relative poverty'.

The NPC argued in its paper 'The Priorities of Pension Reform' that increases in productivity created by greater use of new technology has meant more jobs, especially for women, therefore, the nation's wealth as defined by the gross domestic product continues to increase. In fact if productivity grows by just 1.76 % per year (which is lower than recent trends) production will double by 2045. In current terms it means that the 6.3% of GDP that is needed for the NI fund in 2006 will only rise to 7.8% by

2050.

Therefore in the NPC's view 'the Turner Report' is based on a false premise.

Turner recommends that the number of years of NI contributions required to receive a full basic state pension should be reduced from 44 years for men and 39 years for women to 30 years. Turner also recommends granting credits for missed contributions for women through greater use of the Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP). However, there is nothing in the Turner proposals to make these recommendations apply retrospectively.

The National Insurance (NI) Fund was established in 1948 at the end of the Second World War (when the nation was bankrupt) to provide unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and retirement pensions. There is not, nor has there ever been a financial crisis in the NI Fund. The NPC maintains that it is the most efficient method of paying the state pension scheme. The Government Actuary recently predicted that the fund will have a surplus of £34.6 billion in 2006 rising to £60 billion by 2010.

A problem not taken into account by Turner, but of some concern to the NPC, is that the Treasury recently confirmed that the Government is borrowing from the current NI funds to finance expenditure unconnected to the fund.

The Government white paper only gives vague promises to restore the link to earnings in 2012, and at that stage it means just a £1.40 increase to the basic state pension. A single pensioner has lost £33.00 per week under the Tory Government and a further £19.50 under Labour. The NPC claim, that if Labour had honoured its pre-1997 election pledge and restored the link immediately it came into power, the basic state pension would be £91.75 instead of just £84.75. The NPC maintain that to lift all the 11 million pensioners to the figure paid as the Pensioner's Credit and to restore the link would cost £10 billion a year. We think this is a price worth paying.

To find out how you can affiliate to the NPC, contact them via their website [www.natpencon.org.uk](http://www.natpencon.org.uk) or ring them on 0207 553 6510

### How to contact us

**Ray Jackson** (National Chair) Mobile: 07789 366587 Email: [rajbrava@aol.com](mailto:rajbrava@aol.com)

**Tony West** (National Secretary) Mobile: 07763 468284 Email: [aswesty@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aswesty@yahoo.co.uk)