



# FREIGHT

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

## Safe work procedures on ballast sites



Within the freight sector we spend a lot of time discussing the industry's growth, terms and conditions and pay. Rightly so. They're the things that affect our working lives. Achieving a growing rail freight industry that means more jobs and securing better pay will always be priorities. But the biggest priority for trade unions always has been, and always must be, ensuring to the best of our ability that members come home from a day's work in the same condition that they left in.

For this reason we've expressed our growing concern over the frequent occurrences of multiple freight operators supplying drivers and locomotives on the same ballast site. Different operators have varying methods of working and different standards of route knowledge. This is a cause of great concern.

We have made many representations in writing and in person to Network Rail's Chief Executive Mark Carne. Network Rail has agreed to set up a meeting with ASLEF at director level. We will of course let you know of any updates that result from this.

Until then, for those of you who have specific methods of working and route knowledge and have requested guidance for times when they have safety concerns, our position is as follows. When faced with other operators who have different methods of working and who may be working top and tailed trains within the possession without route knowledge, use your company "safe work" procedures, refuse to work and retire to a position of safety.

**Mick Whelan, general secretary**

## Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Radlett gets final approval but council appeal again

After a decade of planning and five years since the public enquiry, the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) at Radlett near St Albans has had its final approval by Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and

Local Government.

The site is considered essential in allowing rail's market share of freight transport to increase in the South East. It had been thought that the decision would clear the way for the redevelopment of the site, however St



**An artist's impression of the Strategic rail freight interchange**

Albans Council have sought leave to challenge the decision once again delaying



any work.

The case is expected to go the High Court next year.



## Report shows Rail Freight delivers £1.5 billion a year benefit to Britain

A report by KPMG for the Rail Delivery Group has highlighted the huge benefits delivered by rail freight, including savings of £2.7m every single day for UK businesses by using rail to shift goods. This adds up to £1 billion a year.

The other £500 million comes from the economic, environmental and social benefits due to rail freight reducing the number of lorries on our roads. The group estimate that more than 7.6million road journeys were saved by transporting goods by rail. This is the equivalent of 7,000 HGVs driving from London to Edinburgh every day.

It is believed that the industry delivers over £30 billion worth of goods a year including over half the fuel delivered to power stations for the generation of electricity. The report also shows that each tonne transferred by rail rather than by road cuts CO2 emissions by 76%.

Network Rail forecasts suggest that rail freight volumes could more than double over the next 30 years meaning the benefits of rail freight could go up to £4 billion a year.

General Secretary Mick Whelan said, "We very often hear about the environmental and safety benefits of rail freight. However sometimes we forget that it makes business sense too. This report shows that rail freight has huge benefits for UK businesses and the wider economy. It is yet another demonstration of why we must continue to invest in the industry."

## ASLEF reaches agreement with Labour Party over rail freight policy

ASLEF ensured that the Labour Party will go into the next election with support for the rail freight industry a key part of its transport policy. At the Labour Party National Policy Forum in Milton Keynes this July, ASLEF proposed the following commitment:

"For HS2 to truly achieve its full potential in terms of reducing transport carbon emissions, it is essential that rail freight is considered when looking at the

many new paths which will become available on the East Coast and West Coast Mainlines. The last Labour government recognised the environmental and economic benefits of getting more freight on to rail and this work must continue. Labour supports continued investment in the Strategic Freight Network to electrify key routes as well as ensuring gauge clearance to allow higher capacity and longer trains

on paths to key ports and diversionary routes. It also believes that access charges for rail freight must be set at a reasonable rate to ensure that competition with other modes is fair."

This was adopted by the forum. General Secretary Mick Whelan commented, "Rail Freight is hugely important not only for our membership but for the country as a whole. It's cleaner,

greener and safer, not to mention the congestion it helps relieve from our roads. That's why it's so important that we use our voice in the Labour Party to make sure it stays at the top of the agenda."

Mick added, "getting these policies agreed to by the Labour Party is just the first step. Ensuring we have a Labour government in May that can deliver them is the next challenge."

## EU Directive threatens future growth of Rail Freight

**R**AIL Freight has been a huge success story over the last decade. However its future growth is at risk as the approaching implementation of the Non-Road Mobile Machinery Directive restricts the new locomotives available to buy for UK operators from 1 January 2015.

This will not affect engines purchased before this date which is why there has been a sudden influx of new locomotives in recent months such as the class 68s for DRS and the class 66s for GB Railfreight. The Non-Road Mobile Machinery Directive imposes further restrictions on the emissions from locomotives entering the country after 31st December this year. When the legislation first came in force in 1997 it didn't cover locomotives but this changed with an amendment in 2004.

The regulations state that levels of different chemicals in the exhaust fumes from an engine must be below the limits set at each stage that comes into force. The first stage had been due to come in on 1st January 2012, however UNIFE (the Association of the European Rail Industry) and the UK Government called for flexibility for the UK due to its dependence on diesel traction. The UK was afforded a three year extension was



It is more challenging to fit compliant engines in locomotives in the UK

comes to an end at the end of this year. Whilst passenger services are also covered by these regulations, it is not affected in the same way as new orders have been for electric traction.

The major problem is the availability of IIIB-compliant (the new required standard) locomotives in the UK. At present only one exists, the 88. There is a catch, however, as 88s are intended to do most of the leg work using electric power with diesel only covering the

“final mile”. There are doubts about whether 88s would have the power to run freight services on diesel alone without being extremely inefficient.

Due to the smaller gauge in the UK, it becomes even more challenging to fit compliant engines in locomotives. There is of course, also the possibility of a new stricter proposal in the future.

Maggie Simpson of the Rail Freight Group said, “In order to resolve this, you need to design and test a new locomotive. This costs and so manufacturers are reluctant to do it without a decent order size, and of course the costs will be passed on through the rental charge. So there is a real risk of a shortfall in locomotive provision as the market grows.”

This move by Europe which could stunt the growth of rail freight seems counterproductive when one considers that a central objective of European transport policy is to shift more good on to rail. Rail diesel accounts for less than 3% of all transport emissions chemicals and the emissions from rail diesel have already fallen by about 35% because of improved technology between 1990 and 2008.

General Secretary Mick Whelan commented “I hope the industry finds a way to deal with this and a new locomotive is built to comply. It seems ridiculous that rail freight, a safer, cleaner and greener alternative to road haulage is being potential restricted because of these regulations. I'm all in favour of cleaning up our locomotives, but not to the detriment of the rail freight industry. All this will do is create more pollution by pushing freight on to the road. This can't be right. Let's hope technology or common sense prevails.”

## DB Schenker pulls first 50ft containers in the UK

On 31st August history was made when DB Schenker pulled the first 50 feet containers to travel by rail in the UK, offering an enhanced capacity for the domestic market.

The service was the first of a new flow which will transport goods seven-days-a

week for a large number of high-profile retailers and manufacturers. The service which is for WH Malcolm will run between Daventry and Grangemouth. This is in addition to the Daventry to Mossend service that it has been running since early April.



DB Schenker expects to move more than 40,000 containers as part of the deal.

### CEREDIGION COUNCIL ENDORSES CAMBRIAN FREIGHT LINE PLAN

**Ceredigion council has backed plans to re-open Bow Street station outside Aberystwyth as a transportation hub for rail freight.**

**Currently the Cambrian line carries no freight despite the infrastructure to allow goods to be transported being available. Freight services on the Cambrian line could reduce heavy traffic from lorries on the A44 and the A487.**

**Councillor Alun Williams commented, “There is now cross-party agreement that Ceredigion requires a fully integrated transport infrastructure that includes a railway service for both freight and passengers in order for the county to thrive economically.”**



**Rail freight, which has grown by 80% in the past 20 years and generates more than £1.5bn a year in economic benefits to UK PLC, is a success story. But we all have to lobby to ensure that there is the right rail network, charging system and government policy if rail freight is to realise its forecasted potential to double traffic by 2033. Here is a round-up of current issues.**

### TERMINALS

Two key interchange proposals gained planning consent in July; as we all know, without more terminals it will be impossible to significantly increase consumer rail freight which is due to quadruple over the next 30 years.

Permission was granted to expand the Daventry Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), to cater for 32 trains in and out of the facility per day, with 8 million sq ft of rail served distribution space. In total there will be 9000 jobs there and boast Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury as users. SRFIs are so important because they reduce the costs of transshipment thereby making rail more cost effective compared to road with which it has to compete.

Radlett SRFI received planning permission from the Secretary of State Eric Pickles twelve years after the first planning application. The prognosis is not so rosy here as the terminal is still heavily opposed by the local Conservative MP Anne Main and a well organised local campaign group who has contested each stage in the courts with the latest attempt to get judicial review on procedural points. If the developers succeed, this project, which is fully supported by the freight industry, will set a key planning precedent.

Another element in this terminal jigsaw is ensuring that planning policy is robust enough to enable planning inspectors to grant planning permission for such distribution hubs. Therefore, we have been lobbying the Government to strengthen the wording in the Government's National Networks National Policy Statement to demonstrate that getting planning permission for SRFIs is an integral part of increasing rail freight.

As well as working with the Department for Transport, we have been making the economic case with the Treasury who can see the financial benefits to UK PLC. In particular, we have been highlighting that because there is a shortage of suitable sites with good road/rail connections near conurbations, the vast majority of appropriate sites will need to be on greenbelt or greenfield sites. This point needs to be recognised in government planning policy, otherwise planning permission will not be granted in such sensitive locations.

### HGVs SUBSIDISED BY £5BILLION ANNUALLY

We are campaigning for a level playing field across freight modes so that rail can play a fuller role in freight distribution. Our recent research, which used existing Government criteria, found that HGVs pay less than half of the costs associated with their activities in terms of road congestion, road collisions, road damage and pollution. Crucially, the scale of subsidy to road makes a compelling case for supporting rail freight which imposes much lower costs on society and the economy, equivalently. As it is,





changes in freight transport policy in the forthcoming years and work with key politicians, the cyclists, the environmental lobby and business stakeholders to limit the spread of mega trucks. Crucially, the UK Government says it will not allow them on UK roads, even though it thinks member states should have the right to decide themselves, so we have to make sure that it sticks to this position. The UK Government position on cross border mega trucks has largely been dictated by two related factors which make it want flexibility on lorry dimensions. Firstly, it wants to retain its right to allow cross border traffic between the UK and Ireland of HGVs, which are higher than current EU limits. Secondly, it wants to be able to convert its trial of two metre longer semi-trailers into a permanent arrangement.

This is how the various countries lined up, with Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Malta, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic and France opposing cross border traffic. And in favour of allowing individual countries to decide; Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, UK and Germany.

### PROTECT CAPACITY FOR RAIL FREIGHT ON THE NETWORK

As the network becomes more congested, freight operators and customers are concerned that even the limited capacity for freight growth will be eroded. Even where there is investment to support freight, there is no way of protecting newly created capacity for the future. So we believe that the Government should ask Network Rail and ORR to develop a better mechanism for safeguarding capacity for freight.

### CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT NETWORK IN CP6 AND BEYOND

It is crucial that the Government commits to ongoing support for expanding the SFN, even though rail investment may come under pressure, to cater for the potential fourfold growth in intermodal traffic by 2033 .

### SILO MENTALITY OF GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT PLANNING

The DfT is not taking a holistic approach to transport corridor planning as it is currently planning to spend billions of tax-payers money on major road expansion without acknowledging the existing rail freight network and the planned and funded enhancements. For example, it is mad that it is analysing how to upgrade the roads between Southampton and Felixstowe to the West Midlands without including details of the parallel rail routes. So we have highlighted that this approach will lead to a distorted and inaccurate picture of what upgrades are required on the strategic road network which could waste taxpayers' money.

**Your continued support and lobbying is much appreciated.**  
**Philippa Edmunds,**  
**Freight on Rail Manager**

We will be using this data in our negotiations on rail freight charges with all Government departments and the regulator.

### CROSS BORDER MEGA TRUCKS

As you are aware the debate, which is finally entering the last stage, known as trilogue, has become very polarised in Europe with two diametrically opposed camps. A compromise has been agreed to allow existing cross border traffic to continue but not to extend it to new member states. Because this is such a politically charged topic, the sense now is that politicians will not want to open it up again for further negotiation at this final hurdle.

On our side, we still have the Austrian Socialist MEP as rapporteur on the file, a new Labour MEP, Lucy Anderson who is an ex-union lawyer and a new Green Chair of the Transport Committee. Additionally, the new Transport Commissioner is a socialist representing Slovakia which opposed cross border traffic.

However, realistically, it will be difficult to stop the spread of cross mega trucks, because individual countries can have mega trucks and already mega trucks are crossing borders between Finland, Sweden and Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium.

As Vice President of Transport and Environment, an EU wide NGO, based in Brussels, I am well placed to continue monitoring all the

the grants are designed to recognise the wider advantages of rail are currently only supporting less than fifteen per cent of rail traffic.

The report highlights a number of areas where the Government's understanding of the costs and impacts of lorries is flawed or outdated.

- Road damage from the heaviest lorries is estimated to be 150,000 times higher than for a typical car –they are responsible for the major part of the £12 billion road maintenance backlog.
- The cost of road collisions involving HGVs are undervalued as HGVs are now five times more likely than cars to be involved in fatal accidents on local roads.
- The impact on climate change is also undervalued, with the carbon charge based on outdated figures. Heavy lorries continue to create dangerous particulates despite EU engine improvement. The full impacts of congestion caused by HGVs is not properly measured.

## FREIGHTLINER INTERMODAL REPORT

Since the last Freight Journal was issued, we have agreed a 3 year pay deal and implemented the Harmonisation of Local agreements which also included the 13 week roster cycle. As a Council we all agreed on this as it will give all drivers Quality time off, and every driver will have leave in June/July/August. As with any new system there were a few problems but we feel this is the best system. One of the problems is the company not having the full complement of drivers at some Depots, but this will change when Graduates start filtering through. Some have said go back to the 17 week system, but that brings the problem of the odd week at Christmas/New Year where all drivers are rostered ad hoc. At this time we have no intention of moving away from the current 13 week system.

The Depot at Garston has been up and running since the start of the year and the company are now looking at smaller Depots at other Locations throughout the country. Once these have been spoken about at Business Council Level, we shall be talking with all Local Level Reps about them. One major problem we have at the moment is the New London Gateway Port. Until all traffic flows are sorted it will leave uncertainty at Tilbury. Again this is something that we shall be talking to Tilbury reps about.

As mentioned in the last Journal, some Reps had taken part in a trial using sound cancelling headphones. All those who took part agreed on one set, and at our last Business Council meeting we stated that we would like the company to proceed with supplying these to all Intermodal drivers. The company are now awaiting a final report from Interfleet, who I believe we shall be giving us presentation soon. Once this is done we can report in more detail.

The proposals for HS2 are cause for some worry at Crewe branch, not just for freight but for passenger trains as well. Plans presented at branch show the station being moved south



towards the A500 and the route of HS2 running through Basford Hall Yard. When Freightliner have been asked what will happen to the trains that currently use Basford Hall, they do not know. Our members at Crewe cannot sit back and let this happen and would urge you all to write to your local MP and tell them you are against these plans.

I do not know when this will be issued but we are planning a Freight Company Forum in Glasgow/Motherwell in November. The Independence vote will have taken place and I for one hope Scotland will still part of the United Kingdom.

Away from the Freight side and District 3 has just held its Election for Executive Committee Member, who will take up the role in Jan 2015. May I offer my congratulations to Andy Hourigan on his success and commiserations to Gary Boyle. It is time for us all to work together, take this district forward and make it stronger.

**Peter Mason, Business Council secretary, Freightliner Intermodal**

## GBRf report

Eurotunnel are in the process of setting up a European works council. I have been lucky enough to be asked to be a part of this body to represent ASLEF. The body is made up of trade unions from the British side and French side of the business. ASLEF and Unite from the British side and from the French side the C.F.D.T, C.F.E.C.G.C, C.G.T, and C.G.F.O.

There are four trade union representatives from the UK and seven trade union representatives from France. Two meetings have already taken place with one more pending on the 18th November 2014. This is to finalise the foundation of the special negotiating body.

The right to be represented by an EWC was first introduced by the European Works Council Directive in 1994. This was extended to cover the UK in 1997.

The Directive requires companies to set up a European Works Council when requested by employees or their

## DIRECT RAIL SERVICES COMPANY COUNCIL REPORT

The 2014/2015 pay award was successfully negotiated by the ASLEF team with the pay element of 2.9% being accepted by the Executive Committee. This has now been implemented and negotiations in respect of the other elements are continuing.

With many drivers having been trained, the Class 68 "UK Light" locomotive is starting to be integrated into the regular fleet of available DRS locomotives. The locomotive has been seen hauling a variety of loads from 2000 ton NDS services to passenger coaching stock. The locomotive recently hauled its debut revenue earning passenger service assisting Scotrail with additional passenger demand for the recent golf open tournament in Scotland.

Following on from the introduction of the class 68 DRS is working closely with Vossloh to develop the Class 88 Bi Mode locomotive. The ASLEF business council will ensure that we have full involvement in the class 88 project.

DRS is currently recruiting to ensure that the business can fulfil current and future business commitments. I must congratulate the latest cohort of Trainee drivers who as I write are about to pass out as train drivers with another intake of about to start. Along side this recruitment of trainees, DRS is also continuing to recruit qualified train drivers.

This level of recruitment is a positive sign that the rail freight sector is enjoying healthy levels of growth that are sustainable in the long term.

**Robert Smith, DRS Company Council Secretary**





representatives, and then to inform and consult it regularly on "transnational issues" affecting employees. At least 100 employees, or representatives of 100 employees (eg a trade union), from two or more Member States must make the request to set up a European Works Council. When a valid request has been made, the company must first set up a "Special Negotiating Body" (SNB) comprising of representatives, hence the last 2 meetings with the final one approaching.

The company council from GBRf presented the EC with documents outlining the fundamental principles for the European works council:

Agreement on definition of the scope of Groupe Eurotunnel SE to establish the SE council. Agreement on the composition and operation of the Groupe Eurotunnel SE works council.

Allocation of staff representatives seats on the Groupe Eurotunnel SE works council.

The EC has given their permission for the company council to sign these documents off in the name of ASLEF/ Barry Hare GBRf company council/European works council.

It's a new and exciting challenge for me on the EWC. It's been a learning curve to say the least with French labour laws so different to the UK.

Barry Hare, ASLEF Company council GBRf.



## FREIGHTLINER HEAVY HAUL REPORT

After many years of trying to get a payment for rest days worked outside of the normal contract hours, this was successfully done by the BC in July of this year via a referendum of ASLEF members. The referendum was unanimous and although it appears to have been ages since it was accepted, you should be receiving payment in your 4 weekly pay if you have worked a rest day since its inception on the 7th of September. The first pay date is October 2014.

The company should have now issued all its drivers with the Apple iPads and we see this as a positive step forward although it appears a small minority have a negative view to the pads. I am sure in a few months' time those views will have waned. If you have any issues or problems with the pads then inform your line managers or PMs who will be only too glad to assist (or so I am told).

The driver protection scheme is something I have been very proud to have been associated with since setting it all up some years ago. I urge all drivers either existing, new starters or driver grads to join it (it is open to all drivers not just ASLEF members). We have seen a marked increase in the number of drivers falling by the wayside and the scheme has been a lifeline to those who have needed it. We are also looking at the possibility of increasing the contributions as they have been stagnant since it first began. This is so that any future benefactors could possibly get a better pay out from the scheme.

A few major items have been discussed at recent BC meetings and these are:

1. Van and Taxi driving policy. These will be issued shortly by the company. In the meantime if you have any issues on either, then report it straight away to the control, not after the event, after all safety is our number one concern and it always starts with you.
2. A report was given to us by a senior member of Interfleet staff, concerning class 66 cab noise, and all I can say is be glad you weren't there to try and take it all on board. It was very complicated to digest, and a lot of data was thrown about and graphs were perused, but in simple terms there are problems with the 66 cab noise and both HH and ASLEF are determined to address the issues concerned.
3. The loss of the Bardon contract has been a concern for certain depots but we have been given assurances by the management that no drivers' jobs will be lost because of this (I have been with the company for 12 years and not seen one driver made redundant.) Other contracts will supplement those depots.
4. Op stops have been raised recently by some of our members who it appears are not familiar with the terminology so let me explain it. An Op stop will be shown in a diagram to break up continuous driving on some of our longer jobs (although they are not perfect it is a lot better than what we had or should I say didn't have.) If it says Op stop then you take it, this will be a place of convenience ie a siding, loop or port terminal etc where you can get up out of the driver seat to stretch your legs or (anything else you wish to stretch.) It will be for a minimum of 10 minutes. It is not a PNB and the locations where the Op stop is diagrammed should have been sanctioned by the local health and safety rep. Again if you have any issues with these Op stops then report it immediately to the control, H&S rep or LLC rep.

May I just take this opportunity although it may appear premature to wish you all a very merry Xmas and happy new year on behalf of all the BC and we hope to see a lot more of you in the coming year.

**Daren Morgan, BC chairman, FLHH**

## DB SCHENKER REPORT

It has been over six months since the changes to NDFTC were agreed. Every Driver within DBS was given a booklet of the changes outlining clearly what could be now done under the changes to rostering etc., something that should have been done in the past.

One of the big issues out of the changes was the introduction of it becoming compulsory to drive company vehicles if you had a full license. There have been a few hiccups, but in the main it has gone smoothly with every LDC negotiating time in the diagrams for the preparation of these company vehicles and the use of satnav's where they are required.

As you will be aware ASLEF has now signed off a new training package with DBS for a Train Driving Course that we believe is an industry leader for the training of new drivers and those converting from passenger to freight. It

is modular based so can be updated with any required changes very quickly.

We are currently engaging local reps from Warrington, Dollands Moor, Knottingley and Newport to work with central resources to remove the mistakes from STP diagrams before they go out. This has been a long running issue which is constantly raised from local level right up to national level.

Council are currently working with HR to produce a joint training course for local reps and managers so that they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and how the machinery works. When this is completed it will be rolled out nationally. It is important that issues should be resolved locally.

Can I just briefly remind you all that if you have an issue with your T&C's that you contact your local rep or company councillor for your depot/area.

**Michael Finn,  
TCCC Secretary**



There is no doubt in my mind that we as a trade union have now grasped the reality that the rail freight industry is in real privatised world. As we see contracts move from one operator to another, our members have to deal with the obvious uncertainty. More recently we have seen the Bardon Aggregates and Caledonian Sleepers lost and won between operators.

We recognise that the company allegiance and their commercial / contract directors will always look to maximise profits for their shareholders by attaining as much work as possible. They are not concerned about the impact this may have on workers or their families. It's about delivering for the shareholders. Whilst on the face of it some may see this approach as positive if you're on the 'winning side', the fact is that too often fellow members are being affected elsewhere.

Some people believe that the TUPE regulations will be our saviour and the employers cannot deviate or get away from that legislation. The reality is somewhat different, and our job is to work with those employers who listen and challenge those that don't. Our priority is job security not brand loyalty.

I believe the conference item from Edinburgh No.1 which was adopted as policy will give us the opportunity to develop a forward thinking freight strategy. ASLEF must take that forward on behalf of our freight members. We need to look at how we can best support our colleagues across the industry and have a consistent approach to the generic challenges we face.

Organising our membership is not easy when in majority of freight companies we no longer have the representation levels, facilities or release time that were reflective of the former British Rail. I have the utmost respect for all our reps who work so hard, with so much of their own time also consumed by the role. We must make sure that we give our support and constructive feedback where necessary. We need to make sure they have the information available to them which is all too often lacking when it comes to challenging the companies.

**Nigel Gibson, District Organiser, District 5**

