

ASLEF

JOURNAL

The magazine of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen



APRIL 2021

Free to members

Flower of Scotland



**Special report: Kevin Lindsay,
Jim Baxter, and Anas Sarwar
on the railway in Scotland**

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GS Mick Whelan

We're on the road back – to a new industrial normal



'I thank you for your support, in re-electing me general secretary'

I AM incredibly humbled to be re-elected, once more, as your general secretary. We have, collectively, met many challenges over the years, and we shall have to be unified, and ready to meet all the post-pandemic challenges, but I want to thank you all for your support.

We continue to be hopeful that the continued roll out of the vaccination process will take us, as a society, and as an industry, on the path to normality. But it will be a new normal, which will be radically different, economically and industrially, to what we have known.

We have a government which misleads Parliament on investment – which has been cut, not increased – and the commitment to rail undermined by announcements in relation to short-haul airlines and billions of pounds dedicated to roads.

Simply, we will not see a return of footfall in the short- or medium-term. The recent RPI increase in fares will not help and, as we have said, publicly sends out the wrong message. The companies being in emergency measures and/or furlough due to no or little income from the fare box leaves the industry in a state of flux.

Rightly, we are all dismayed at the government's 1% pay rise for all those they regarded, not so long ago, as NHS heroes, and the public outcry is not likely to stretch to the government edict that you, as key workers, cannot expect any government-funded pay rises for last year and this. We have pointed out that they have no role in our free collective bargaining and will continue to press the point where we can. It cannot be forgotten that we are – as we would and should be as if nationalised – being fully funded by the government at circa £22 million a day, some £10 billion by June, unlike other industries.

Future full timetables are not going to happen, going forward, until footfall returns, which might take years and will be seen by many as counter-intuitive, as limiting capacity may make us less attractive. Uncertainty reigns and, obviously, the previous model, which had failed and collapsed, cannot be sustained with the massive shortfall in income, and the industry will have to consider change to survive to grow again.

The question is how this can be done protecting jobs and futures. This, and not knowing who we may, or may not, be dealing with in the post-Williams world, against a background of economic uncertainty, with increased unemployment and changes to commuter working, which will not be replaced by leisure traffic, especially with the naturally expected reduction in disposable income.

The companies are expressly working to the behest of the government and DfT and are reliant on them for income and funding and there is little point in highlighting how much money they have made in the past. It is up to us to work and – if necessary – fight for the best future possible, for ourselves and for our industry. Please be safe.

Yours fraternally,

Mick Whelan, general secretary, ASLEF

Castlefield corridor – consultation ‘a sham’

A SLEF is turning up the heat in the battle over the Castlefield corridor. The Manchester recovery task force consultation exercise by the Department for Transport, Network Rail, and Transport for the North – into chaos in the Castlefield corridor – has enormous implications for passengers and train crew.

DO3 Andy Hourigan and EC3 John Metcalfe have serious reservations about suggestions for what is described, rather optimistically and euphemistically, as ‘capacity enhancement’: proposed much-reduced timetables leave no wriggle room if more people, post-pandemic, return to the

railway; savagely slashing direct services to Manchester airport means passengers will have to change more frequently, and no account has been taken of disability access issues, or the lack of station staff to assist; building the Ordall chord without improving capacity from Oxford Road to Piccadilly was pointless, and there is nothing about much-needed improvements in infrastructure; local (NTL) services are delayed beyond normal signalling protocol to give priority to TPE services; a claim that ‘defensive driving techniques’ are one cause of congestion attacks the fundamental safety culture of the railway of which we are, justifiably, proud; and the lack of



involvement of the Liverpool city region combined authority is remarkable given how interdependent transport links between the two cities are.

Wigan 107 branch committee, meeting on Sunday 7 March, passed a resolution in respect of the consultation, calling on the GS and EC to campaign ‘for the reintroduction of funding for infrastructure projects in the



EC3 John Metcalfe launches our campaign in the *Journal* (left); Lisa Nandy tells Grant Shapps she is ‘gobsmacked’ by the proposals (far left); and DO3 Andy Hourigan is working to resolve the issues

north of England, especially the corridor between Ordsall Lane and Manchester Piccadilly.’

And Lisa Nandy, Labour MP for Wigan, has written to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps calling for ‘this sham consultation’ to be dropped.

Hat-trick for Mick

Mick Whelan, Willesden branch, has been re-elected, unopposed, as general secretary for a third term. Mick has spent 37 years on the railway, and 37 years as an active trade unionist. He began in the industry as a guard, on British Rail’s

Midland region, in 1984. He was, first, a member, and then a rep, for the NUR. When Mick became a freight driver in 1988 he joined ASLEF, the train drivers’ union, and became a local rep, then company council secretary Railfreight Distribution, and

company council secretary EWSI, before he was elected District 6 Organiser in 2000.

Mick was elected GS in 2011 and, since then, has worked hard to engage with the other rail unions, and the rest of the labour movement, the Labour Party, and other stakeholders in the rail industry. He became chair of LabourUnions, which co-ordinates the activities of the 12 trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, in 2016; and, in



ASLEF’s GS was recently re-elected unopposed, as he was five years ago

September 2017, he was elected to the national executive of the Labour Party. Mick’s third five year term begins on 5 December 2021 and runs until 4 December 2026.

ZOOM! IT’S VIRTUALLY AAD
ASLEF’s annual assembly of delegates – which was to have been held in Cardiff last year – was cancelled because of the coronavirus crisis. This year AAD will be held, as a virtual rules conference, by Zoom, from Monday 17 to Friday 21 May.

QUOTE...

‘Vaccination express arrives in the nick of time – now please inoculate us from train metaphors’ – Madeline Grant, *Daily Telegraph*

...UNQUOTE

Monarch of the Glen

Bro Glen Elvin passed away on Saturday 20 February, aged 55, after being admitted to hospital after testing positive for covid-19 only three weeks earlier. Glen joined ASLEF in December 1985 when he started on the footplate with British Rail at Ayr. After privatisation, and the reduction in freight traffic, the depot was shut and Glen transferred to England to retain his driving job, along with his twin brother Miller who had also joined the footplate, and ASLEF, at Ayr. The twins moved to various depots and branches together, including spells with DB Cargo’s mobile driver grade at many locations. Eventually they returned to Scotland to work out of DBC’s Scottish hub and transferred into Motherwell branch. His funeral was held on Tuesday 9 March. The members of Motherwell branch wish to pass on our condolences to all Glen’s family and friends, especially Miller, at this extremely sad time.

Andy Jones Motherwell 137 branch sec

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

-  You cannot run a railway, let alone a complicated integrated transport operator like @tfl, on hand to mouth piecemeal funding. The government is playing a party political game at the expense of London’s recovery from the pandemic. @FinnBrennan
-  PM plans new charity backed by rich donors to pay for lavish revamp of private flat. @MailOnline
-  Congratulations to Boris Johnson for the first act of charity he wasn’t forced into by Marcus Rashford. @JimMFelton
-  As it’s revealed 8,000 test & trace staff face the axe, Dido Harding reveals they were actually ‘let go’ in August but the system only notified them this morning. @havegotnews
-  £37 billion to their pals for test & trace that doesn’t even work. £3.50 a week for nurses. This government’s priorities could not be clearer. @davidschneider
-  GB News is owned by a company called All Perspectives. It’s a limited company so its full name is All Perspectives Limited. I laughed so much I’ve given myself a headache. @MrNishKumar
-  I was born a female. I identify as a female. But according to Tesco’s sticky toffee pudding I’m a family of four. @KazzJenkins

Angie, Angie, ain't it time we said goodbye?

AFTER almost 20 years Angela Geddes-Smith has decided to step down as secretary of Birmingham New Street 141 branch. She's worked very hard to keep the branch running smoothly, which takes enormous personal commitment, and made it look easy, which it isn't, as 141 branch has several different locations, and the coronavirus crisis made things especially challenging – conducting branch meetings by Zoom and reminding people to mute their mics! Nothing ever phased Angela and

her cool, calm, collected and friendly nature made for an excellent branch secretary. Everyone in 141 branch would like to thank you, Angela, for all your hard work and

commitment. It has been an honour and a pleasure to have you as our branch secretary. Enjoy your free time now, you've earned it!

We would also like to wish our new secretary, David Kingscott, all the best in his new role.

Debbie Insull 141 branch reporter



New branch secretary, David, presents a socially distanced Angie with flowers as a small thank you for all her hard work

Power of six

Dave Calfe, Euston branch, and a train driver for more than 30 years, has been re-elected unopposed as ASLEF's executive committee member for District 6.

His four year term will begin on 1 January 2021 and end on 31 December 2025.

This is his fifth term of office –

Dave was first elected to the EC in 2006. He is the second longest-serving member of our executive, after Terry Wilkinson, and was elected president in January 2019.

'I would like to thank all the branches and members in District 6 for my re-election to the executive



ASLEF EC president Dave Calfe

committee,' said Dave. 'And I look forward to representing you during my forthcoming term.'

FREE RADICALS

The People's History Museum has written to the EC, thanking us for our donation (see John Metcalfe's report on page 8) and adding that, because of its size, we have the chance to 'adopt a radical'. Fortunately there are lots, John smiles, from which to choose...

QUOTE...

'Music is the map: the veins along which memories can flow and pump the heart' – **Anna Doble, digital editor, BBC World Service**

...UNQUOTE

500 CLUB: Peter Foster, with number 033, won the March draw, scooping the Retired Members' Section jackpot of £494.

Off the Rails



MICK JONES of The Clash who, fresh from recording *Sandinista!* co-produced Ian Hunter's album *Short Back'n'Sides*, cheerfully recalls life on the iron road as a teenage fan of Mott the Hoople: 'In the early '70s there was a group of us, from Strand Grammar in Brixton Hill, and Mott was our band. We'd scan the gigs in *Melody Maker* and go to Mott's shows wherever we could. The furthest I went was one Saturday gig in Liverpool. We'd try and bunk the trains as one of our group's dad worked for the railway. He had a concession card and, boy, did we work that card, hiding in toilets and passing it between ourselves. As the train came into the station, we'd all jump off as it slowed down and leap over the fence alongside.'



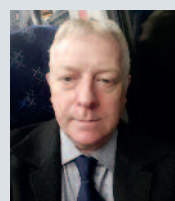
IAIN PATTINSON, master of the *double entendre*, scriptwriter on *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, 'the antidote to panel games', and, according to the show's original host, Humphrey Lyttelton, 'first class purveyor of blue chip filth', loved pricking pomposity. Once, when he checked into a particularly smart provincial hotel before a recording of the Radio 4 show, the front desk was clearly unimpressed that a shabbily dressed writer was staying as a paying guest. After picking up his keys, Iain asked if Tim Brooke-Taylor had arrived. 'Yes, sir, room 420,' said the snooty receptionist, indicating a telephone. Iain dialled the number and announced, in a very loud voice that rang around the lobby, 'Mr Brooke-Taylor? Your prostitute is in reception.'



THAT DREADFUL mistake by TransPennine Express – announcing the death of the Duke of Edinburgh when he was only being moved from Bart's, where he had a heart op performed by NHS surgeons, back to King Edward VII's, a private hospital 'where your journey back to wealth [or health] begins' brings to mind a poster put up on the wall of the newsroom at *The Sun* by its editor Kelvin 'The Pig' MacKenzie. It read: 'Make it Fast. Make it First.' Under which one hack, well versed in the ways of Kelvin, added: 'And make it up.'



THE COVER of last month's *Journal* caused a little consternation in one or two places. It was that cover line – Hen wlad fy nhadau – that caused the problems. DO8 Finn Brennan muttered, 'I think my copy must have got mangled at the printers, Mick. The front cover is just a jumble of letters that don't make any sense to an ignoramus such as me.' And Chris Proctor, once of this parish, wickedly whispered that the words were what Dylan Thomas offered after a long (and liquid) lunch with Louis MacNeice...



JOHN HAY, chair of the ASLEF drivers' company council at CrossCountry, sent a cover note with his report (which you can read on the centre pages) for this, our special Scotland edition. 'As requested, Kev. Sorry it's not very positive. Or particularly Scottish. John.'

The best job on the railway but driving trains has risks



JOHN METCALFE, executive committee member for District 3, reports on our work with the RSSB looking at the risks to our health, safety and wellbeing of working alone on the permanent way

SINCE early 2020 I have been part of a Rail Safety and Standards Board project team looking at the risks to rail workers from working alone. Astonishingly, the industry did not have a definition of who or what defines lone working, nor did it have any clear policy on how to best protect those workers. And, as drivers, most employers did not recognise that, as a grade, we work alone. Just because we sometimes have a guard, or revenue staff, on board, mix with passengers or speak to control, or a supervisor, does not mean that, for long periods of time, we are not lone workers and carry all the risks that brings.

The good news is that, from now, guidance exists to employers and staff and drivers are very clearly defined as lone workers and that should bring with it additional workplace protection. Basically, a lone worker on rail is defined as 'someone who works physically alone for a number of hours, with low levels of contact with other colleagues.'

Driving trains – the best job on the railway – does have its benefits; we have a great



Drivers as a grade work for long periods alone

degree of autonomy, we enjoy our own company, and the responsibility for making judgements and decisions based on our professionalism and pride in the job.

But the project has identified the risks, too. Some are obvious – such as the risk of personal and verbal abuse from the public, and walking to and from work. Less well recognised are the psychological risks from being isolated; and working variable and night turns can impact heavily on us, and increase a feeling of loneliness, fatigue, and stress. Add to that the sedentary nature of train driving, and irregular mealtimes, and the role can pose both physical and psychological risks.

The RSSB project has produced three guidance documents. One general, for the employer; one for line managers; and one for you as a lone worker.

The employers' policies make it clear that they have a responsibility to create a safe working environment, taking into consideration your status as a lone worker, and provides a structure and the actions needed to achieve this. Your company needs to know what risks exist to your emotional, physical, and behavioural wellbeing, what may make those risks worse, and what to do to mitigate against them.

The guidance for you, as a lone worker, includes nine top tips to restrict the effects of lone working, resources and links for further advice, and describes what the employer should be providing for you.

These guidance policies have been accepted by ASLEF's executive committee and your negotiating teams have been instructed to place them within the bargaining machinery, which should bring long-lasting benefits for drivers into the future.

Driving a train certainly is the best job on the railway, and now it is up to the employers to match our professionalism and commitment to the role, with a working environment, and protections, that keeps us safe from the risks of both physical and psychological harm and is properly fit for the 21st century.

QUOTE...

'The Conservatives have not fixed the foundations of the economy, merely papered over the cracks' – Keir Starmer, Labour Party leader

...UNQUOTE

Desperate Dann retires

In these trying times I would like, through the *Journal*, to inform all the friends and colleagues I've had the privilege to know and work with that my time has come! I want to thank you for the fun, laughter and – sometimes – tears I have had down the years.

I started my railway career in March 1978 as a box boy at Orpington signal box, moving in February 1979 to Hither Green as a second man. In April 1984 I moved to Selhurst as a driver; in July 1985 to Tattenham Corner; in April 1991 I went back to Hither Green; and then in December 2002 to King's Cross until 31 March 2021 when I retire having completed just over 43 years on the railway.

It has been an absolute pleasure! Now it's time to enjoy life with Rose and my family. **Desperate Dann signing off**



Cheers, Trevor, for the laughter, the great fun, and the (occasional) tears



Congratulazioni, Marz

Marz Colombini, Waterloo Nine Elms branch, has been re-elected unopposed as the executive committee member for District 1. His



EC1 Marz Colombini

four year term of office will start on 1 January 2022 and end on 31 December 2025.

It's his fourth term on our union's eight-strong policy-making body; Marz was first elected to the EC in June 2009.

C2C ERMA EXTENDED

The c2c emergency recovery measures agreement, in place since September, but which was due to finish on 1 April, the intended start date for a new direct award contract, has been extended by the DfT until 30 May 'to allow both teams more time to complete ongoing discussions on the business plan and details of the direct award agreement'.

Franchise system fell at first hurdle

GS Mick Whelan spoke out after Keith Williams revealed some of the recommendations in his long-awaited report into Britain's rail industry at the National Rail Recovery Conference on Thursday 25 February.

'The Tories have, finally, admitted that privatisation – or, at least, the franchise system introduced by John Major in 1994 – has failed. But the Williams report – which was finished in November 2019 but put on the back burner by this government – does not address the fundamental problem that rail is a natural monopoly – a monopoly we



GS Mick Whelan: 'The Tories' failed franchise system needs fundamental change'

believe should be run as a public service, and not for private profit.

'Because it's not just the Tories who, belatedly, recognise that privatisation has failed. Passengers are up in arms about sky high fares and, before the pandemic,

overcrowded services. Businesses say the system doesn't deliver. And the train operating companies are just clinging to the wreckage to plunder a profit.

'The failed franchise model fell at the first hurdle during the coronavirus crisis and that's why the government has been forced to tinker with the system. But we believe the system needs fundamental change. We need to bring Britain's railways into the 21st century and do what other successful countries – such as Germany – do. They understand that the railway is a public service that should be publicly-owned, and publicly-run, in the public sector.

'We should bring the wheels and the steel back together in a vertically-integrated national network run for the benefit of passengers, taxpayers, businesses, and staff.'

Making his Mark

After more than 40 years' service on the railway Mark O'Neill has decided to retire. Mark was just 16 when he joined the railway in September 1980 as an apprentice fitter for Freightliner at Lawley Street, Birmingham. In 1985 he transferred to Dudley, until it closed in 1987, when he returned to Brum. In 1989 Mark went to work at Railfreight Distribution HQ in

Paddington, commuting daily by train for two years before returning to Lawley Street as a supervisor in 1991. Mark had several roles at Freightliner until 2003 when he joined Central Trains as a trainee driver, where he remained for the rest of his career. Enjoy retirement, Mark!

Debbie Insull
Birmingham New Street 141 branch reporter



Enjoy retirement, Mark!

Seventh heaven

Terry Wilkinson, East Ham branch, has been re-elected unopposed as the executive committee member for District 8. His four year term of office runs from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025. It is Terry's seventh term on our EC – he was first elected in



EC8 Terry Wilkinson

September 1999, taking up position in January 2000.

Pictures of matchstick men

Look closely at this picture of a picket line at Stratford during the 1982 strike and, as well as the 'Buckton's Boys' board – Ray Buckton was ASLEF's GS at the time – you might spot, on the denim jacket of the local rep second from the left, a patch (or badge) promoting, er, Status Quo. Dicky Fisher, now DO6, for that is him as a young man, smiles wearily: 'I have to explain to everyone who sees that photo, that the badge had absolutely nothing to do with an iconic 1970s rock band. It references



Richard as a young rebel, denim clad rocker and Buckton Boy (top) and now today (right) as our District 6 Organiser sporting collar, tie, and suit

maintaining the status quo of an eight hour working day.'

Down, down, deeper and down, as the Quo army sing...



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Power to the people

EC3 JOHN METCALFE explains why ASLEF's executive committee has donated £1,000 to the People's History Museum in Manchester

I WAS delighted to back our decision to support the excellent People's History Museum at our February session. The museum is home to the national centre for the collection, conservation, interpretation, and study of material relating to the working people of Britain.

With the world's largest collection – 400 – of colourful trade union banners, and 7,000

badges, the museum is a fantastic and unique place to visit. It has collections covering popular radicalism, the rise of trade unionism in the 19th century, and women's suffrage, extensive resources on the dockers' and miners' strikes, and much, much more. On top of all that it has fascinating and diverse political, industrial, and historical collections. It is more than a museum, it's a place of education with its labour history and archive studies centre.

The museum, like many others, has been badly hit by the covid restrictions, and we can be proud, as a trade union, that we are doing our bit to help maintain this wonderful place. When normality



returns to our lives, if you are in Manchester, then please pay the museum a visit. You will not be disappointed.

● The People's History Museum – opened by Prime Minister Harold Wilson as the National Museum of Labour History in 1975 – is on the Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3ER. Tel: 0161 838 9190. Website: phm.org.uk



The People's History Museum describes itself as 'the national museum of democracy, telling the story of its development in Britain: past, present, and future'

We will not forget

FAMILY, friends, and colleagues attended a very different memorial day at Newcastle on Sunday 28 February to remember those we lost in the train crash at Great Heck 20 years ago. Gary Arrowsmith (Gateshead & Newcastle branch secretary), Paul Basham (LNER company council) and I attended on behalf of ASLEF. The service was much smaller than usual, due to covid rules on the station, but it was live streamed on the internet and, during the service, a live stream from the Heck memorial garden was introduced when prayers and a blessing for those who died were offered. After the service those at the memorial garden turned to look toward the railway



Paul (left) and Mark pay tribute at Newcastle Central to those who died, and were injured, in the Selby crash. Photo: Gary Arrowsmith

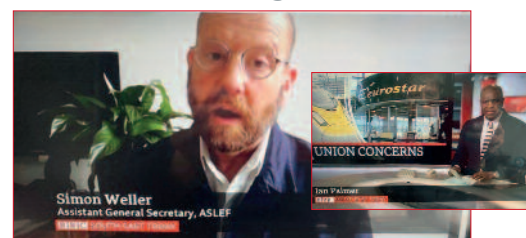
a few hundred metres away as an LNER Azuma and a Freightliner engine passed the site of the crash, sounding their horns. The stream then came back to the station for the wreath laying.

EC4 Mark Wakenshaw

TOTON OLD BOYS' REUNION

In anticipation of the lifting of all covid-19 restrictions, the 2021 Toton Old Boys' Reunion will be held at the Sportsman pub, Derby Road, Long Eaton, Derbyshire, NG10 4HA, from 19.30 on Friday 29 October. All welcome! Details from Reg Sargeant: email reginald.sargeant@gmail.com

Catch a falling Eurostar



Simon Weller on BBC South East Today

AGS Simon Weller explained the importance of Eurostar when he was interviewed by Ian Palmer on BBC South East Today, the regional early evening news programme for the south-east of England, on Saturday 20 February. 'Union concerns about Eurostar' was the lead item as Simon called on the government to step up and support the service.

On the previous day, DO6 Dicky Fisher, together with Paul Nowak, deputy general secretary of the TUC, Mick Lynch of the RMT, and Rob Jenks of the TSSA, met Treasury officials to press the Chancellor to help after the company admitted it is 'fighting for survival'. We are now working with the TUC to put together a formal paper to the Treasury.

'We are calling on the UK government to intervene to prevent Eurostar going to the wall,' said GS Mick Whelan. 'Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak, and Grant Shapps must act to save this service – for passengers, for the men and women who work on Eurostar, and for Britain and our connection with the continent.'

ScotRail is to be nationalised

ASLEF has welcomed the announcement by the Scottish government on Wednesday 17 March that, when Abellio's franchise ends on 31 March 2022, the Operator of Last Resort, a public body accountable to the government, will assume responsibility for running ScotRail. 'We welcome the beginning of the end of the failed franchise system here in Scotland,' said Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF's organiser in Scotland. 'However, never again should the people's railway ever be in the hands of the privateers. This move starts the end of franchising, and the end of a failed Tory experiment. It's now for all of us in the industry to build a railway that's accessible, affordable, and safe for the people of Scotland.' GS Mick Whelan said: 'The railways in Wales and Scotland have both been brought back into public control. England should be next – Westminster take note!'

RETIRED MEMBERS' SECTION

The coronavirus crisis means that head office is unable to send out letters reminding RMS members, who pay annually by cheque, that your membership is up for renewal. So if you know your renewal is due, please post a cheque, made payable to ASLEF, to head office in St John Street. An annual subscription is just £15. Thank you!

QUOTE...

'Working from home is not a new normal. It's an aberration that we're going to correct as soon as possible' – David Solomon, chairman and chief executive, Goldman Sachs

...UNQUOTE

The ASLEF RMS 500 Club

Colleagues

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

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

Numbers in the draw cost £4 each per month. 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 Peter J Smith, Treasurer, RMS 500 Club, 6 Devonia Gardens, London, N18 1AF.**

The Retired Members' Section committee would like to thank you for your support and wish you luck in the draw!

Yours fraternally, Peter J Smith, treasurer, ASLEF Retired Members' Section 500 Club

ASLEF RMS 500 Club application form

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

email.....

Each number costs £4. You can purchase as many numbers as you like. I confirm that I wish to purchase _____ numbers as part of the 500 Club.

(A) I have set up my standing order (£48 per annum or £4 per month)

(B) I enclose a cheque for advance payment (£48 per annum).

Delete (A) or (B) accordingly.

Signed.....

Date.....

Please return this coupon to:
**Peter Smith, Treasurer, RMS 500 Club,
6 Devonia Gardens, London, N18 1AF
and the standing order mandate
(right) to your bank (or via your
internet bank)**

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

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Address _____

Please pay

BANK	BRANCH TITLE (NOT ADDRESS)	SORTING CODE NO.
Unity Trust Bank	Birmingham	60-83-01

For the credit of

BENEFICIARY'S NAME	ACCOUNT NUMBER
ASLEF RMS 500 CLUB ACCOUNT	2 0 2 0 1 1 9 3

The sum of

AMOUNT IN FIGURES	AMOUNT IN WORDS
£	

Commencing

DATE AND AMOUNT OF FIRST PAYMENT	DUE DATE AND FREQUENCY
£	1 ST OF EVERY MONTH

*Until
Quoting the
reference

DATE AND AMOUNT OF LAST PAYMENT
£

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

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

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED	ACCOUNT NUMBER

Signature(s) _____

Date _____

Note: The Bank will not undertake to:

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

* Delete if not applicable

If the amounts of the periodic payments vary, they should be incorporated in a schedule overleaf

Hey bus driver – keep the change



Does this bus stop at 82nd street? As more and more people, post-pandemic, join the Great Exodus from Britain's cities to the picturesque villages of this green and pleasant land, CHRIS PROCTOR urges caution. Living in Little Dumpling, he says, might look like a good idea. But rural bus services are nigh-on non-existent since privatisation...

TAKE extra care if you're crossing a road leading out of a city. There's a strong likelihood that you'll be knocked over by a removal van. There are hundreds of them buzzing round the bypasses. All part of the 'leave the city' movement that hasn't been so popular since New Age travellers set out to music festivals at Glastonbury and Stonehenge in the 1960s.

It's been brought on by the virus. Half the population have decided they can work at home and, seduced by memories of a day trip to a hayrick, are desperate to move to the sticks. Where they will live in natural bliss in vibrant communities with friendly locals – of both the human and public house variety. They will sit at the side of empty roads scanning a little William Wordsworth as they wait for their children to exit a sparsely populated school. Birdies will tweet rather than sirens wail.

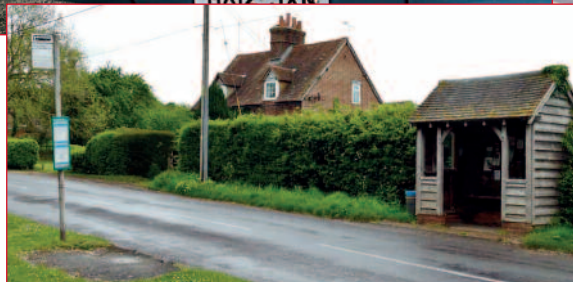
MOVERS MAY BE JUMPING THE GUN

Since the virus began, people leaving London have spent £27.6 billion snapping up 73,950 homes outside the capital. In the last three months country house prices in the West Midlands rose by 3.7% and in Surrey by 3.1%. Last January saw 67% more homes on the market in Edinburgh than the previous year.

Some of these location changers may be jumping the gun. We have no idea how much home working will be feasible in the long term. Most jobs aren't eligible: you need to turn up if you're a nurse, a shop worker, or a train driver. Also, most people don't have a spare room that they can use as an office; and you can only work at home in jobs you are trained for and know well.

And, despite the allure of the countryside, there are problems living in Little Dumpling. One is public transport. There isn't any. Public transport, post-privatisation, halts at Britain's city limits.

The Campaign for Better Transport reports that more than 3,000 local bus routes have disappeared over the last ten years. Local authority funding for buses fell by more than 40%, and central government grants by 19%. Rural buses are as endangered as Cosnard's net-winged Beetle.



The Thatcher government's privatisation of Britain's buses in 1986 killed off many rural services – but made a fortune for her friend, the homophobic Stagecoach boss Brian Souter

If there is to be a trend towards home working and rural living, someone needs to be out there planning it. Otherwise there's a disaster on the horizon. You can't just populate an area without updating its infrastructure: and that means improving public transport links as well as providing schools and encouraging local shops.

RETURN TO LITTLE DUMPLING PLEASE

I remember 20 years ago taking a tram out of Amsterdam to the end of a route where a new suburb was being built at Ijburg. When we alighted at the terminus, there was... nothing. Work on homes hadn't begun. The central tram authority, the Gemeentelijk Vervoerbedrijf, saw the need to provide facilities before the newcomers arrived. Our approach to a move out of town is more of the 'cross your fingers and hope' variety.

Everyone needs two or three cars they can't afford: one for ferrying children, one for hypermarket duties, and one to rust in the station car park. And, when you have a car, you are obliged to use it. To justify the purchase you have to drive around inflicting traffic jams and increasing pollution.

The Great Exodus, if it continues, shouldn't make too much difference to existing rail commuting routes because, even if people come into the office less frequently, they will journey further when they do. No, the problems start when our rail job is done and the infrequent office workers return to Little Dumpling to find a transport desert.

There are solutions: but, sadly, they would all involve the government spending money on public services. After the virus the Tories will claim there is no money left for anything except, perhaps, tax relief for the very rich and assistance grants for the fabulously wealthy. There will certainly be nothing left over for social services or public transport.

If there was, we could be talking about

imaginative 'total transport' solutions for rural areas. We could be considering integrating taxis into the area's payment system, employing canal barges, or re-opening the lines closed by Dr Beeching. If the countryside, and its refugees, are not to be left in transport poverty, we have to busy ourselves creating integrated transport systems that link all transport forms and timetables.

The problems stem from Margaret Thatcher's privatisation. Commercial bus companies are not interested in providing a public service; only in running well-used routes where they can make lots of money. Everyone else, and that includes the suits stranded at the railway station, can go and whistle. Because bus companies are no longer public services, you know...

WHAT'S THAT, DAD? A BUS, DARLING

Also, bus companies are subsidised by local authorities, which might not see many votes in spending extra money to pander to 'in-comers'. And the new ruralists won't be in sufficient numbers to be influential. I foresee excursions of home-working rural-types to city centres at the weekend, in search of calm, fresh air, and solitude. Offspring will point in wonder at the large vehicles that pass them in the street.

'What is that, daddy?'

'It's called a bus.'

'Well, I wish we had one of them here in Surrey, daddy.'

CHRIS PROCTOR has written for *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Morning Star*, *New Statesman* and *Tribune* as well as spending eight years 'before the mast' in the policy department of ASLEF, where he helped the GS – first Keith Norman and then Mick Whelan – to put together the *Journal* each month.

The railway and the covid-19 pandemic



KEVIN LINDSAY, ASLEF's organiser in Scotland, who contracted the coronavirus, opens our special four page report by reflecting on this strangest of years

ALL of us who have been fortunate to live through the pandemic will look back on 2020 as probably the strangest year of our lives. More than 120,000 people in Britain have lost their lives from the coronavirus, and countless others have been, and still are, suffering from the effects of covid-19 but, remarkably, throughout this period we've kept the railway running. It's been an amazing effort from everyone involved.

Every ASLEF rep has contributed; the general secretary and assistant general secretary have been involved at national level at the RICF; the EC has been coming up with ASLEF policy and producing the bulletins; DOs and CC reps getting company agreements; LLCs acting on implementing these agreements; and our health & safety reps have done an incredible job trying to



make all workplaces as safe as possible.

As a union we've been very proactive throughout the pandemic. The challenges have been difficult but I believe we have done well not to see widescale redundancies. Here in Scotland we have an agreement with ScotRail for no compulsory redundancies and have had no member furloughed. Our members also got a 3% increase in salary as part of a two-year productivity deal and we've secured an enhanced rest day working payment. No other grades or trade unions have managed to secure any of this.

The challenge going forward is how we get our lives back to some normality. We need the four governments of the UK to plan not just to get us out of lockdown, but for a comprehensive economic recovery.

That recovery cannot be just about one sector. We need all parts of Scotland's economy, and that of the rest of the UK, to be given support and help to rebuild. Without offices, shops, restaurants, bars, and other

sectors of the economy reopening very few people will travel on trains.

And we need people on trains to protect not just employment but also the environment. The pandemic has shown us that governments can support workers and workplaces. We should be eliminating the working poor and delivering a real living wage. As we've seen throughout this pandemic some of our key frontline workers are also some of the poorest paid. Shop workers, delivery drivers, fast food outlets, and restaurants have worked throughout the pandemic but the majority of these people are on minimum wage. Our NHS staff have been called heroes but have suffered years of pay freezes or below inflation increases. We should put people before profit; this is a moment for the governments at Westminster and Holyrood to reflect on their policies.

We don't need private companies to run our public services. Mail, rail, and the utilities should all return to public ownership. The railway has been heavily subsidised throughout this pandemic but our political masters continue to allow private companies to run our railways through management contracts, making large profits. This has to stop. Every penny out that ends up in the pockets of shareholders is lost to the taxpayer. It's time for our services to be returned to public ownership and run for the people by the people.

The world turned on its head



JIM BAXTER, the EC member for Scotland, argues that, coming out of covid, we have to build a railway fit for purpose – and fit to serve our society

WELL, no one saw that coming, did they? When I wrote my article this time last year, I never for a minute thought I would be spending the next 11 months, as far as union duties go, working from home. The world has been turned on its head and I do not think anyone foresaw the drastic changes to our private lives and, of course, our work lives. The saddest part of the pandemic was the loss of members to covid-19.

As we went into lockdown in March the covid-19 decision-making process went into full swing. We had

to make sure the railway continued to function so that key and essential workers could get to and from their places of work and also that essential goods could continue to be moved around the country.

This meant that non-essential training was stopped and, in the case of ScotRail, all new driver training stopped. We worked industrially and politically to keep these trainees fully employed, not furloughed, in the hope that, as soon as it was safe to do so, we could get them back into the workplace, and back training, and that is still the aim. ASLEF has also created an online training and learning policy that supports employers and trainees in delivering training in a remote manner.

The tragedy that befell Aberdeen members, in August, with the crash at Carmont and the loss of three

lives – ASLEF member Brett McCullough, conductor Donald Dinnie, and passenger Christopher Stuchbury – was felt throughout the industry. The work that all our representatives did at this time was remarkable; each and every one of them went way beyond what is expected. I wish to thank Kevin Lindsay, our district organiser, the ScotRail company council, and our local reps – Stewart Sinclair, Brian Wood, and Cliff Wright – who worked through their own grief to make sure their members and other staff were okay and had the support they required.

What does the future hold for the rail industry in Scotland? Clearly, we cannot expect any big political decisions to be made prior to the Holyrood elections in May. So as far as the ScotRail franchise is concerned we

remain in limbo, for the time being. The freight industry is back to pre-covid figures; but that is nowhere near good enough, and we need to continue to push for more freight on rail. We also have the issue of infrastructure and making sure it is fit for a modern railway. We've had the landslide at Carmont, the bridge parapet collapse near Montrose, two landslips near Largs, and continued concern with the West Highland line. We must make sure that the investment that is needed is in place to keep our railway infrastructure safe.

And as a union we need to be prepared, and organised, to deal with whatever changes the future holds. Prepared to work with all within the industry to make sure the railway we build coming out of covid is fit for purpose and fit to serve our society. But we also need to be organised well enough not to accept change, for change's sake, and not at the expense of our members.

A year like no other

S COTRAIL company council would like everyone to reflect on all those we have lost – family, friends and colleagues – as the worldwide pandemic has impacted on everyone's daily life since the first lockdown back last March. Everyone has made adjustments and, from the very first reduction in services, to the latest restrictions in place since December, we would like to thank all the reps for all the hard work they have put into trying to keep some normality to our daily grind with roster and diagram changes.

We have tried to put in place the best mitigation we possibly could to protect members, and have worked closely with our DO, EC member, and LLCs to try and deliver a safe working environment, with social distancing, reduced numbers in bothys, longer walking times, reduced spares, SB in house, and lots more. We have tried to kick start training, putting in place PCR testing,

temp testing, and training bubbles to try and get our trainees back into the workplace safely. Unfortunately, this has proved very difficult, with the constant lockdowns, and restrictions put in place; training is still suspended, and only essential training is being done to keep services running. Currently the service is vastly reduced at 67%.

Tragedy came to Scotland in August with the needless loss of life of Bros Brett McCullough, Donald Dinnie, and passenger Christopher Stuchbury. Six others were injured, and our condolences go to all the families. The investigation into the accident is ongoing, with several organisations involved including Network Rail, the BTP, the ORR, the RAIB, ASLEF, and ScotRail. It is a painstaking process with every detail pored over with a fine toothcomb. The findings will be published later this year and we sincerely hope nothing like this will happen again.

ScotRail company council



It's going to be tough

T WELVE months since the first lockdown there may be light at the end of the tunnel with the roll out of the vaccine. Our thoughts go out to the families of those lost to this terrible virus.

The business situation has been dire with CrossCountry running 60% of the services with only 10% of the ticket revenue. Driver safety has been the highest priority. With the assistance of the RICF guidance we have made temporary changes to how we work, with the emphasis on having the lowest number of drivers possible in the workplace.

The company bucked the trend with a three year direct award which, in a small way, would have allowed us to move forward, but for the DfT stepping in with revenue support and blocking any progress for the grade that would add to the wage bill. In fact, the 2020 pay claim has still not been settled as we wait on dates. When we eventually get to meet it's going to be tough to extract a way forward from a DfT-backed employer. Looking for something positive, our trainee driver programme, after being subject to covid-19 delays, has resumed with cohorts 5 and 6 due to start shortly on their driver apprenticeship courses.

John Hay CrossCountry company council chair

Overcome obstacles

T HIS has been a tough year; covid has dominated the changes to our lives but we have continued to overcome many obstacles to ensure that ASLEF members have been safe whilst keeping services running. Initially, this was a battle with the company, which tried to dismiss rep input but, eventually, we negotiated agreement to ensure covid-19 measures were

satisfactory. DRS completed a successful rail head treatment programme, although from the outset this could have been a lot different. After accepting a bubble agreement, a number of managers wanted to send drivers out on RHTT without precautions. After protracted negotiations with the DRS directorship, the company council and lead officer Andy Hourigan reached an

Drivers' job security comes first

L ET'S hope we're moving towards some sort of normality, with better expectations for this year, after suffering the way we have in dealing with covid this last year. The lockdown restrictions, and associated safety measures in our workplace, haven't been easy to negotiate and agree, but the way in which our members on LNER, and all over the UK, have coped has to be applauded. We continue to function, with weekly meetings taking place on a virtual basis, which in turn allows company council, and your h&s reps, to monitor the safety set up, and ensures that LNER maintains these safety measures.

Unfortunately, because of covid, we face a problem that we've never faced as drivers, or reps, since privatisation. Train operating companies have profited with the foot count revenues provided by passengers; this allowed us all to share in some way some of the profit TOCs made through negotiated pay rises. This is no longer the case due to covid restrictions and the massive reduction of passengers travelling by rail.

First, and foremost, train driver job security has to be maintained. LNER has advised us that there will be further recruitment this year, throughout the route, which can only be welcomed by all of us as drivers. We will, of course, continue to do the best we can, moving forward, and will continue to address all of the above.

Rab Wicksted LNER company council rep, Edinburgh

Light at the end of the tunnel

I WOULD like to pass on our condolences, on behalf of our drivers at Avanti, to ScotRail colleagues regarding the terrible accident at Stonehaven.

This past year was without precedent; covid-19 has impacted our lives every day, and led to significant reductions in the travelling public which, in turn, has affected our business. But with the steady distribution of the vaccine, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Our company has entered into an emergency measures agreement with the DfT, which has been challenging. In regard to delivery of service, in line with government guidelines, we have introduced training bubbles, telephone medicals, and roster changes at short notice.

On a more positive note, we have managed to keep all drivers at work, rather than being furloughed. There have been a number of commitments made. For instance, the opening of new drivers' depots at Crewe and Holyhead, and the company is introducing a new Hitachi train fleet. The drivers' council, and our lead officer, will be involved. Funding has been made available to upgrade the training school and drivers' accommodation at Polmadie and the company has pledged to hire a minimum of 60 new drivers. Overall, this year has been tough. However, moving forward, we hope to get back to normality and not only get the railway back to what it once was, but improved.

Archie Barr Avanti West Coast CC rep, Polmadie



Keeping you safe from harm

FIRST I want to offer our condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Glen Elvin, Scotland hub driver, and Motherwell branch member, who passed away recently far too young. Another victim of this terrible pandemic. RIP Glen.

Training of new recruits continues at DBC in Scotland, made possible by training bubbles and covid testing which has moved on from the pin prick method to lateral flow testing. Drivers are now permitted to undertake the tests themselves, at home, prior to taking duty, thus avoiding potential virus transmission in the workplace. The relevant time to do this is still diagrammed.

A busy period is ahead, with spring bringing the start of weed spray season in addition to our normal contracted work. Ongoing training is vital to keep this work covered.

At national level, we have a few issues and, for the first time in years, have several items sitting at avoidance of dispute level due to a lack of resolution over extended periods. We have also been engaged in talks about the way we represent you. On review, there is no way the changes presented so far could be acceptable as it would vastly diminish our ability to represent the membership at all levels. Our aim is always to keep you, our members, in secure employment, earning a fair and decent salary, with terms and conditions that improve year on year, whilst keeping you safe from harm in the workplace. We hope a resolution can be found and we can continue working collaboratively with the company, as we have done since the ill-fated Project Charles era. Since then we have navigated our way through the company's financial difficulties, driver shortages, training issues, and pension funding problems. This has never been more important than trying to work our way, collaboratively, through the global pandemic.

Rest assured, your company council and lead officer are working hard to resolve these matters and working towards a more secure future for all. We will keep you informed via local reps and branch meetings. Whilst not the biggest fan of the online meeting format, Zoom branches have been well attended and the engagement from members has been superb. I am optimistic that we are on the home straight now, with the vaccine, and an end to lockdowns, so, by summer, we will be able to meet in person again. Stay positive.

James Glew DB Cargo company council secretary

agreement, initially on trial, with the blessing of the EC, to run RHTT services whilst operating in a safe manner by forming a bubble. After the tragic incident at Stonehaven, DRS was heavily involved in providing drivers and locomotives for the recovery and, later, to route prove once the line had been repaired.

We agreed to use a blood prick test to form a bubble to aid training. This will soon be replaced with a new procedure using a

lateral flow antigen test. As agreed, this will only be used by members who wish to do so. The company council has also been busy agreeing a new health & safety guide for reps. And there is now an agreement for every depot within DRS to elect an h&s rep.

In December, our negotiators agreed an establishment model based on ASLEF best practice. This will ensure that the appropriate number of train crew will be at all locations within DRS.

The agreement also allows the company council to monitor the numbers of drivers at all depots to ensure that the correct numbers of staff are at all locations so they cover the duties required.

The company council and our lead officer will shortly be entering negotiations with DRS on the 2021 pay submission. We sent correspondence to all DRS reps asking what they would like to see in an award, and received great feedback. DRS reps

insist that ASLEF members have continually managed to keep services moving during this pandemic and demand recognition of that during the forthcoming talks. Finally, I would like to wish our company council secretary Kevin Bell best wishes for his recovery from illness. He is sorely missed and, I hope, will be writing the DRS report this time next year, fully recovered, and back in the driving cab.

Rab Lang DRS company council

Ready for the challenge

JUST over 18 years in the railway, 16 in the fleet driver grade, the last two on company council, and I can safely say the last year has been like no other. Two years ago my first company council meeting was very different, with more than a dozen folk round a table, now it's Microsoft Teams calls and the same faces with kitchens, living rooms, and home offices...

I've been pursuing, for a number of years, the implementation of a team leader grade for the yard co-ordinator at all fleet locations which was finally recognized as a specialist role with a high level of responsibility for both train movements and the people involved.

Along with my h&s colleagues the last couple of years have been spent trying to acquire a shunting vehicle at Haymarket as we are, and have been for the last three years, an HST depot, without a shunting vehicle!

Pay talks for 2020/21 were recently allowed to commence, another difficult challenge, but challenges in the railway are quite often difficult. Hopefully a time for some well-deserved recognition of how difficult the last 12 months have been for all fleet drivers when we have been coming to work from day 1 of covid restrictions. Also some recognition of how we have transferred our long-honed skills of shunting Sprinters and 170 Turbostars into shunting HST Class 43 and empty coaches. I will continue to campaign for our members in fleet over the next few years, to improve our conditions in the workplace, with the challenge looming of new franchise holders, whether a private company or Transport Scotland.

The next challenge for all of us is the recovery of the railway, and the country's economy at large, in which the railway will play a big role. ASLEF will continue to be at the forefront of members' interests across the fleet driver grade.

Looking at the last two years, who really knows what the immediate and long-term future holds for the railway?

Maybe that's part of the attraction; you never know what's at the other end of the tunnel. But one thing's for sure; ASLEF is always ready for the next challenge.

Andrew Foster Fleet drivers company council rep

By staying apart we have come together like never before



ANAS SARWAR, who has just been elected as the new leader of the Scottish Labour Party, sets out his plans for a people's railway in Scotland

IT IS the greatest honour of my life to be elected leader of Scottish Labour. Our party was founded on the strength of the Scottish people – and that is where its future lies, too. But I know we have a lot of work to do to win back trust. If we're brutally honest, our members and trades union supporters – and the people of Scotland – haven't had the party they deserve. I will work day and night to change that, so we can rebuild the country I love.

The Labour Party is in my blood. In the 1940s my grandfather came to Lossiemouth with nothing, searching for a better future. He always intended to return home but, instead, fell in love with Scotland and brought his family here. He would never have imagined that his grandson would, one day, become the first person from an Asian background to lead a major political party in the UK. That doesn't say something about me – it says something great about Scotland and its people.

Our country has been through a collective trauma over the past year. And yet, by staying apart, we have come together like never before. So I made it clear throughout the leadership campaign that we can't come



Anas and his wife Furheen, an NHS dentist, have three children; he says 'I won't let a generation of young people go forgotten'

through this and go back to the old arguments. In the coming weeks, I'll be setting out my vision for Scotland.

Unlike the SNP and the Tories, I won't focus on division; I will make the case for a covid recovery Parliament. That will include an NHS restart plan so that we never again have to choose between treating a virus or treating cancer. We will set out a catch-up plan for our children because I won't let a generation of young people go forgotten. And we will set out a real vision for jobs – for now, and for the future, too.

I want to see a people's railway where the Scottish government takes control of the fragmented ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchises and puts in place a publicly-owned railway, run for the people of Scotland, not to make a profit for shareholders. Better

conditions for workers and a safer railway are top priorities. Side by side with our unions, I will lead a renewed campaign for public ownership and put our case for a People's ScotRail to the voters.

A Labour government is vital to transforming our railways across the country. And I will work towards this by collaborating with trades unions, experts, key workers and business leaders across Scotland to build a platform that looks to the future.

The task ahead of us is tough but, together, there is nothing we cannot achieve. I'm determined that the Scottish Labour Party I lead will always be on your side. I will be a leader who focuses on what unites our country – not on what divides it.

And, together, we will build a better future for Scotland.

ANAS SARWAR was born in Glasgow in 1983. He was educated at Hutcheson's Grammar School and the University of Glasgow and joined Scottish Labour at 16. He worked as an NHS dentist in Paisley before being elected MP for Glasgow Central in 2010. He lost his seat to the SNP in 2015 and, a year later, was elected MSP for the Glasgow region. Anas was deputy leader of the Scottish Labour Party from 2011 to 2014, under Johann Lamont, and stood for the leadership, against Richard Leonard, in 2017. He was elected leader on Saturday 27 February.

Rail should be the first choice



JOHN FINNIE, Scottish Green Party MSP for the Highlands & Islands, on the party's

ambitious – but necessary – plans for a publicly-owned railway in Scotland

SCOTLAND'S railways have been neglected for decades by successive governments of every political stripe. That's not something of which ASLEF members need reminding – you see it at work every day – but, in the

face of an increasingly serious climate emergency, the sheer scale of that neglect bears repeating.

Huge stretches of track remain more or less the same as when they were laid in the Victorian era; ever-rising ticket prices create profit for private businesses; and nowhere near enough has been invested in resilience measures for the kinds of extreme weather we're going to see as climate change continues to take hold.

That's why the Scottish Greens recently published our *Rail for All* proposals setting out our vision for the

future of Scotland's railway. Our £22 billion plan is fully costed and would significantly improve inter-city services while upgrading rural and regional services, with new train stations across the country.

Are these plans ambitious? Absolutely, but they're also achievable. More than that, they're necessary. If we're to dig ourselves out of the climate emergency, then the current model of expensive trains for private profit simply must go. Our plan would bring ScotRail back into public ownership, but also merge it with

Network Rail in Scotland creating a single body overseen by Scottish ministers and, ultimately, accountable to the public. This would go some way to repairing the terrible damage done by privatisation.

Rail should be the first and natural choice for most people when they travel, but we can't get to that point by tinkering round the edges, passing our trains from one franchise to the next. Instead we need to build a railway that truly belongs to Scotland with good quality unionised jobs, affordable ticket prices, and a reliable service for everyone. At this point, anything less is simply not good enough.

This is England



GREGOR GALL, who was **Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Stirling, and then at the University of Bradford, and is now an affiliate research associate at the University of Glasgow, and editor of the *Scottish Left Review*, analyses the Prime Minister's state aid to industry and predicts what covid capitalism has in store for us post-pandemic**

WITH extensive economic and social state intervention for more than a year, it would be easy for anyone with left-wing political inclinations to think that the neo-liberal, free market, Thatcherite economic model has had its day. That's certainly what many people hope. But, unfortunately, it's not true. The leopard of capitalism has not, fundamentally, changed its spots.

Indeed, it's a bit like expecting that Boris Johnson would be a more considerate and compassionate human being after recovering from his near-death covid illness (or becoming a father for the umpteenth time with a woman who loves whales and dolphins).

It's not just because the considerable state intervention is temporary, whether in terms of lockdown movement restrictions, emergency business funding, or the job furlough scheme. It's really a case of state intervention to prop up the capitalist model to get it through the pandemic and then returning to the old economic order.

The one significant change, though, is that, having left the European Union on 31 December 2020, capitalism in Britain is, potentially, freer now to behave badly than it was pre-pandemic.

ATTACK ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is an obvious recent historical parallel. In Britain, after the global financial crisis of 2008, huge sums of public money were used to support the banking system. This led to wild talk of 'nationalisation' and even 'socialism for the bosses'.

Not only did public money not bring about popular control of banks like RBS and Lloyds TSB but government shares were returned to private ownership as quickly as possible. And public sector workers were made to pay for the disastrous actions of the boss class by brutal attacks on their wages and conditions in the David Cameron/George Osborne Conservative Age of Austerity.

If we can talk of a particular period of covid capitalism we are, nonetheless, still talking about an economic and social system where power and wealth lies in the hands of a tiny minority. The state has been colonised by their friends, advisers, and fervent admirers so the

state supports the interests of this tiny group of people.

This is to be able to see the wood rather than the trees because you would think, at times, that Boris Johnson's government was anti-business and even anti-capitalist given the howls and shrieks coming from some companies, whether exporters to mainland Europe or those in the tourism, hospitality, and leisure sectors.

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

Going further back provides us with an even more illuminating illustration of the power, adaptability, and resilience of capitalists. After the Second World War, British capitalism was on its knees. In 1947, it was bailed out by the Anglo-American Loan Agreement – effectively Marshall Aid – from the United States. In return for a low interest loan, finally paid off in 2006, UK markets at home and abroad were opened up to US companies.

But British capitalism, as an economic system, was also bailed out by domestic state intervention. The great reforming post-war Labour governments led by Prime Minister Clement Attlee, nationalised the commanding heights of the economy – the railways, coal, steel, gas, water, electricity, and so on – along with creating the NHS and Britain's welfare state to look after people from the cradle to the grave.

While there was an obvious benefit to workers as Labour attacked the five evils of want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness, the effect of public ownership was to modernise and stabilise key sectors of the economy for the benefit of private sector bosses, too.

State intervention – and state control – laid the foundations of the post-war consensus where Labour and Tories, in and out of office, agreed a balance between private and state activity. In amongst this, there were price controls on food and rent. Indeed, the consensus led to a new political term in the 1950s called 'Butskellism' as Conservative Chancellor Rab Butler and Labour Chancellor Hugh Gaitskell pursued similar economic and fiscal policies.

Yet capitalism endured. The protection of



Will the public money – yours and mine – poured into companies over the last year change the nature of the UK economic model?

property rights meant that those who had wealth, in turn, had power. Despite rent controls, much rented private housing was inadequate. So bad, in fact, that the notorious behaviour of one London slum landlord, Peter Rachman, gave rise to the term Rachmanism for flagrantly ripping off tenants. He pioneered avoiding rent controls and subdividing houses many times over into flats.

These limited incursions into the free reign of capitalists were not permanent features of society in Britain as Anthony Crosland, then a Labour MP, and later Foreign Secretary, predicted in his influential book, *The Future of Socialism*, in 1956. We all know about the spectacular success of Thatcher and the Tories in dismantling the limited controls on capital put in place by the Labour governments of Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson.

THEY COME AS PIRATES TO PLUNDER

When, in years to come, we look back at covid capitalism, we will not have seen a return to something akin to the constraints that existed under Attlee or Wilson. This will not have been a return to the halcyon days of social democracy, and a mixed economy, or the dream of democratic socialism. Capitalism may, at times, take on different complexions but, fundamentally, it is defined by the freedom of a minority of capitalists to pursue great profit at the expense of the majority – the rest of us. They come as pirates to plunder. From the 1800s onwards, when modern capitalism first emerged in Britain, the period from 1945-1979 was, sadly, the exception, not the norm.

If any differences emerge between pre- and post-pandemic capitalism, they are more likely to be about the terms of trading for capitalists of different nations in terms of customs and tariffs. Social inequalities will continue to grow and workers' rights will be kept in check. Because on that capitalists, even when competing, always agree.

DENNIS BEER GIANT OF ASLEF

DENNIS Powsland Beer was an ASLEF giant who served at many levels in a distinguished and glittering union career.

He was born in Cornwall on 24 March 1927 to George and Dorothy and had three siblings – Terry, his older brother; Pearl, his younger sister; and Barbara, his twin, older than Dennis by 20 minutes.

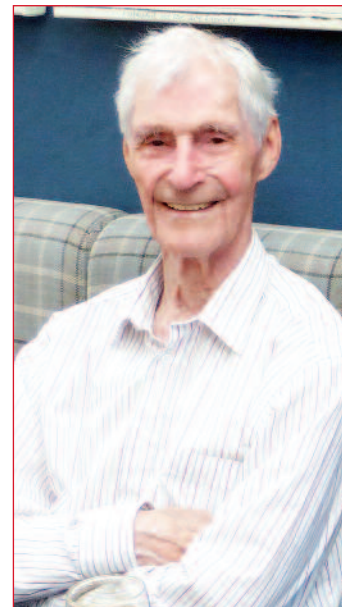
He tried various jobs; his first, at 13, in a shoe shop. On his first day he went to work in shorts and was treated mercilessly. So when he got his first wage packet he went out and bought a pair of long trousers; but this got him into trouble with his mum, since he was expected to give her all his wages! During one interview, after finishing his third job, he was called a 'delinquent' for 'job hopping'. But, when he found the right job, working on the railway, he stayed until he retired.

Dennis had many interests in his younger days; he was a member of a jazz band and got his first taste of travel when he went to Germany with the group, just before the outbreak of the Second World War, to perform. He met his wife, Jean, at a dance at the Capital cinema in St Austell. When he got home he told his mum he had met 'the perfect girl' and would marry her when he was 28, which he did, in 1955.

After training in Swindon, his first job on the railway was on a quiet local line in Cornwall. Things



Dennis Powsland Beer on the footplate as a young man and (right) in more recent days. Photos courtesy Terry Nicholls



were quite relaxed in those days and he had time to cook breakfast on a shovel over the steam engine's fire, collect pheasants for dinner, and carry canes for runner beans. Unfortunately the canes, hanging out on either side of the engine, were too long to go through a tunnel and that was the end of the canes!

Dennis and Jean were living in Tywardreath, a village near St Austell, where their two sons were born – Peter in 1958 and David in 1960 – but when the local depot closed, in 1965, Dennis moved to Bristol where he was one of the first drivers to operate the new high speed trains in the 1970s.

Dennis and Jean took advantage of free rail travel abroad with trips to Switzerland, Italy, and Austria. Their biggest adventure, though, was a six week

holiday to New Zealand after Dennis retired. He was relatively new to driving a four wheeled car, having driven a three wheeled Reliant Robin on his motorcycle licence for many years, but this didn't put him off driving around both north and south islands!

Dennis loved helping people; not only as a trade union rep, but on Bristol city council, and his local parish council, as well as serving as a school governor. For ASLEF he became a full-time representative and had many roles. He was a giant of Bristol branch, serving as branch secretary from 1968 to 1975, then on British Rail drivers' sectional council until he retired in 1992. He sat on several Bristol council committees, including planning and the airport, and, despite the huge amount of reading material he had to wade through, his commitment never wavered.

He was a lifelong member of the Labour Party and a highlight

was working with Tony Benn when he was MP for Bristol South-East. Tony, who famously eschewed alcohol, came to Dennis and Jean's home for a nice cup of tea!

When Jean developed dementia Dennis cared for her for five years. He was in his late 80s but, despite it taking its toll on his own health, his love for Jean never wavered, and they were both excited to receive a card of congratulations from the Queen. It was framed and took pride of place on their living room wall.

Dennis will now join Jean at Cock Ridge, a favourite spot for walks with their dog, George, a Jack Russell, who used to lie down and watch Dennis and Jean have a stroll and then take them home.

He will always be fondly remembered as a kind and caring husband and father.

David Beer (son) and Bernard Kennedy Bristol 036 branch secretary

ALAN TAYLOR A GENTLEMAN

One of life's gentlemen, retired Ashford driver Alan 'Brush' Taylor, sadly advanced to the top link on Saturday 13 February aged 81. Alan spent his entire railway career at Ashford in Kent. He was very friendly and nothing was too much trouble for him. An extremely popular and well-loved guy, his casual approach to life earned him the title 'No Rush Brush.' He always found time to stop and talk to anyone with a problem, put their world to



Alan 'No Rush Brush' Taylor

rights, leaving them with a wink and a cheeky grin. You will be missed, Brush.

Robert Kilkie Ashford 009 branch reporter

DARREN HORNSEY KIND AND RESPECTED

Barnham branch was saddened to learn of the passing of Darren Hornsey on Monday 8 February suffering from covid-19. Our friend and work colleague left us far too early at the age of 51. Ever present at branch meetings Darren was always polite, kind, and respected. Darren's driving career started back in 2000 at Barnham, where he stayed. Popular, and always on hand to chat to all grades, whether he was changing ends or on a PNB. The mess room will never feel the same, Darren, you will be sorely missed. RIP.

Jeff Turner Barnham 029 branch secretary



Darren Hornsey: well respected

SONIA WAY SUCH A POSITIVE PERSON

IT IS with great sadness that I report the passing of ex-Bristol Bath Road, Res, and EWS retired driver Sonia Way on Friday 23 October 2020. Sonia, who had been ill for some time with liver and kidney problems, passed away in the Bristol Royal Infirmary from a blood clot on her brain. She was only 50.

Sonia started on the railway at Bath Road depot as an ATE in 1987. She was quickly promoted to guard. She passed the aptitude test for driver and became a train(wo)man D in November 1989 which was when she joined ASLEF. She passed out

and became the first woman driver at Bristol branch in 1992. This was a very difficult time to be a woman driver at Bath Road depot. Many senior drivers, at that time, disapproved of women working on the railway. Period. And many were quite vocal about their views!

Sonia was an active member of Bristol branch and served as assistant branch secretary in the early 1990s. She also attended ASLEF's national school.

When Bath Road split, she became a driver at the Res depot at Barton Hill in Bristol, driving class one Royal Mail services between Bristol, London,



Sonia Way: taken much too soon

Plymouth, and Swansea. She retired from the railway under the EWS ill health scheme in 2007.

Sonia came from a railway family. Her grandfather 'Jock' Thompson and her mother Rita

Way were both guards at Bath Road and were both popular members of the train crew for many years.

Sonia, too, was a very popular person in the Bristol railway community. Many people who knew and worked with her paid tribute on social media, saying she was such a positive and engaging person. She will be much missed by her father Colin, brother Chris, family, and friends; and by work mates who remember her as a great laugh, and a good person with whom to work.

Rest in Peace, Sonia, taken from us much too soon.

Bernard Kennedy Bristol 036 branch secretary

ALEX BARRIE

A PASSION FOR FOOTBALL AND THE RAILWAY

Sadly, I must inform you of the passing of a friend and colleague, retired Motherwell branch member Alex 'Big Baz' Barrie, who passed away, in his sleep, on Saturday 13 February, three days short of his 63rd birthday.

Alex, born on 16 February 1958, was a well-known character within our branch, who spent his whole railway career at Motherwell, first at the shed, and then the station. He joined the railway on Monday 20 August 1979 as a second man. Unlike many others at the time Alex chose to stay rather than move to another depot to get his driver's position. This paid off in 1984 when he was sent to Polmadie to start his MP12 course. After passing his driver's rules in November, he became a passed man at the shed before getting his driver's position on 16 February 1987, his 29th birthday. He went on to drive both diesel and electric hauled freight trains and local, suburban, electric multiple unit passenger trains.

In the mid-1990s, as rail privatisation bit, and everyone at Motherwell was given the choice of where they wanted to work in the new and fragmented railway, Alex, with 38



Up for cup: Alex with Hugh Bradley (left) and with some of his Railway Staff Associate Cup-winning team

others, made the choice to leave the freight industry, and Motherwell shed, behind and make his way half a mile up the road to Motherwell railway station and ScotRail where he remained until taking early retirement on 31 August 2017.

Many colleagues will remember him as the manager of the successful Motherwell



shed football team and, latterly, the Motherwell station team. Alex was himself a very accomplished player, signing professional forms with Nottingham Forest before choosing the railway as his career path. As the manager of the Motherwell shed team, at a time when football in the railway was taken very seriously, and running trains wasn't allowed to get in the way of an important match, Alex led his team to cup victory. On 1 June 1989, his team beat the clear favourites, Glasgow Central, 2-1 to lift the Railway Staff Associate Cup. He also led the team to the semi-finals of the British Staff Associate Cup and to the final of the Scottish Staff Associate Cup in 1991.

Alex retired early from the railway to spend more time with Agnes and their family and, in particular, his wee granddaughter. Unfortunately, he never got to spend as many years with them as he had hoped.

Alex will be greatly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.
EC2 Jim Baxter on behalf of Motherwell 137 branch

FRANKIE MUNN A GOOD OLD BOY

I have to report the passing of another Ripple Lane Pathfinder, Frankie Munn, who began his career at Stratford in the early 1970s, working his way up to become a driver, doing a job he really enjoyed. He came to Ripple Lane, where he remained until it closed, and then went back to 30A for a short spell before finally working for Freightliner Intermodal at Tilbury, and Freightliner Heavy Haul at Dagenham, where he retired.

Whichever depot he was working at he was always a very popular driver. Everybody enjoyed working with him, having a laugh and a bit of banter, which went hand in hand in those happier times on the railway.

Frank had been admitted to the Queen's Hospital, Romford, recently for another ongoing medical condition but, sadly, it is believed that he contracted the coronavirus and died on Wednesday 18 November 2020. Our condolences to Jenny and his family and friends who will miss the pleasure of his excellent company. RIP Frank (a good old boy).

Cliff Blackwell Retired Members' Section

RAY 'TINY' EVANS

'IF YOU WEREN'T STOOD HERE TALKING TO ME I'D SWEAR YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT'

IT IS with a very sad heart that I must report the sudden death of retired Newport driver Raymond Henry Evans, affectionately known as 'Tiny'. He was a lovely man who always had a smile on his face and a cheery greeting for everyone he met and, of course, that fabulous laugh!

Born in 1943 at Llanbradach, near Caerphilly, he started his railway career at Severn Tunnel Junction as an engine cleaner in 1958, became a passed fireman in 1959, and then fireman in 1960. He got his driving job in 1984. With the closure of Severn Tunnel Junction in 1987 he moved to Gloucester, and then, in 1994, with the loss of freight work it was another move to Newport, where he stayed until retirement in 2003, working his last shift – a 20.00 hours shed turn – with his son John as the TCS that night.

Tiny was a keen rugby fan, and a former player, who played to a good standard for Caldicot RFC and then Lydney RFC in his younger days, and in later years was a keen follower of Newport RFC. His other passion in life, apart from his family, was pigeon racing, a hobby he started in 1965 and continued until his untimely departure.

Tiny was a good railwayman who loved to play practical jokes, with some absolute

corkers in his career, like the time he tied some detonators to a piece of string, climbed up onto the roof of the cabin, and dangled them down the chimney. When he climbed down, the area manager had turned up, and when the string had burnt away the detonators dropped down into the stove, blowing it up, and sending all the men running out of the cabin. The area manager looked at Tiny and said, 'If you weren't stood here talking to me now I would swear you had something to do with that.'

When colleagues retire you often lose touch, but there were so many railway reunions, retirement dos, and Lost Boys' get togethers, and Tiny would always come along for the banter. Everyone – even fellow drivers from other depots who hadn't met him before – always went away having enjoyed his excellent company and knowing they had made a new friend.

Our return journeys were always a lively affair as Tiny would always start singing. Coming home from Exeter once he had the whole carriage joining in and, on a Liverpool trip, near disaster when he nearly spent the £10 note he always had folded up in his wallet, which was an ongoing joke with the boys.

It is so sad to say goodbye to an old friend



Ray 'Tiny' Evans: rugby fan and practical joker

in these strange times, as the funeral would have been filled to the roof with people who liked and loved Raymond 'Tiny' Evans. Another great loss to the railway family, and I'm sure we will raise a glass in his memory when we can.

Russell Morris on behalf of Newport 140 branch

STEVEN 'CLEM' PALMER

BURLY CENTRE FORWARD FOR THE BATH ROAD SUNDAY FOOTBALL TEAM

Steven Palmer, known as Clem, the first black driver at Bristol Bath Road, sadly died on Monday 19 October 2020 from covid-related issues. He was only 59 years old.

Clem's funeral took place on Wednesday 11 November at Holy Trinity Church, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. The usual covid-19 restrictions applied and only a small number of mourners, including family and close friends, were allowed into the church. But outside the church a large number of Clem's friends and work colleagues attended to pay their last respects.

Clem was born, grew up, and went to school in Trowbridge. He started on the railway as a driver's assistant at Westbury depot in August 1979, which is where he joined ASLEF. He transferred to Bristol Bath Road in 1985 and was promoted to driver in 1989. He continued working through the links at

Bath Road until the depot was split in 1994/95. Clem elected to work for Great Western Trains, which became First Great Western. In the last period of his career he elected to work as a shed/ferry driver at St Phillip's Marsh depot, where he was working until he passed.

Clem was a loveable rogue and a very popular member of the railway community. He had the ability to light up a mess room anywhere in District 7, from Paddington to Penzance and over to Swansea. In his younger days Clem was a decent footballer, playing up front as a burly No 9. He played regularly for the Bath Road Sunday football team, Locomotive 82A – when we could get him out of bed! – and will be much missed by his partner Sandra, family, friends, and many, many workmates.
Bernard Kennedy Bristol 036 branch secretary



Clem – who could light up a mess room from Paddington to Penzance and Swansea – about to drive his HST and (top) with friends and colleagues Ken Millard, Barry Fellows, and Colin Salvage

JOE EDWARDS **BIG BOY TOMS AND SUPER DS**



Joe Edwards (1930-2021); running in an ex-works Stanier 8F for the lads at Bescot; climbing a gradient with ease; and those big boy toms



A S January came to a close, so did the 90 year innings of our highly respected banner-carrying brother Joe Edwards.

Born on 29 July 1930, and raised in Eccles, Lancashire, Joe enrolled as an engineering apprentice, but that was interrupted by national service in the Manchester Regiment where he served with another budding comedian, a certain Bernard Manning, 15 days his junior. One of their tasks was to guard Spandau Prison in Berlin inside which were three notorious figures from World War Two – Admiral Karl Dönitz, serving 10 years; Albert Speer, 20 years; and Rudolf Hess, life sentence.

Having both served their own two year stretch, in May 1950 Bernard and Joe took their comedy back to Manchester; the former to the working men's club circuit, his own nightclub, and *The Comedians* television show on ITV, the latter to the mess room at 10C Patcroft MPD, four miles from the temple it served, Exchange station.

The depot, a former LNWR shed, had 73 steam engines for Joe's cloths to dirty, including 36 Black Fives, and 16 Super Ds, the ageing 0-8-0s to be found at all Wessy sheds. Also, a pristine stud of Stanier 5X. Those magic names conjure up, for many of us, the smell of warm oil and shiny green paint... *Manitoba, British Columbia, Australia, Bermuda, Collingwood, and Madden.*

Patcroft became 26F, then 9H, and closed from 00.01 Monday 1 July 1968. Joe had toured north, west, and east, and soon found himself heading south from Longsight depot, ironically another former Super D garage. He fiercely defended, in retrospect, the Wessy against the Eastern men who had adored their Tynys. And, like all the lads at the holiday camp, he submitted the occasional tale to add to depot folklore.

We had a job on Tuesday and Thursday, 9K13, 9.44 am Chadd vans to Crewe complete with four-wheeled tub at the back. If there were no repaired vehicles to return, 9H03 would take the brake van back on its own. Joe and trainman John Hagan chatted until the peg came off, then John retired to the van, Joe shuffled the Class 47 out of the yard, through Crewe station, and turned right for Manchester. Easily done, Joe forgot about his van and opened up the Brush Type 4 and settled her at 60mph across The Salt for three miles, then at 75mph from Sandbach for eight miles.

Meanwhile, back in the van, John had both his arms and legs locked around the handbrake wheel in the centre until they were put inside at Chelford to allow a train to pass. It must have come as a shock to Joe when he heard the ballast crunching and saw John, ashen-faced, looking up. John said later that had he been on a date with Kylie Minogue, 'I wouldn't have gripped her any tighter!'

Privatisation and Joe would not have made a good cocktail and so, at week ending 19

March 1994, he took an EVR package at 63, after 43 years' service. We all used to look forward to seeing him at the annual reunion but, like the Magic Dragon, one October, he came no more.

For a day out at Gardeners' World at the NEC my wife and I boarded at Stockport. No sooner had we sat down than we heard a booming voice from the other end of the coach. It was Joe. 'Was he that loud in the mess room?' Louder. Much louder! Well, he had to compete with MTV. He would then produce a sandwich with a giant slice from one of his *solanum lycopersicum* (tomato plants) showing on all four sides.

I had only known Joe for six weeks when we were paired on the 15.33 to Stoke. The job included a two hour break upstairs in Stoke mess room. Being a Saturday, it was perfect to catch *Sports Report* at 5pm whilst we enjoyed our tea. United were playing Arsenal away next day, so we went back in time, discovering the games we had shared, and both purred whilst discussing socialism. Joe told me of his love for the Super D, and how he and his driver would relieve a pair on a brick train from Bletchley with the 0-8-0 wheezing, but raring to go. Joe summed up their inability to stop by smiling, 'It's not the goin' of 'em, it's the whoain' of 'em.'

In his latter years Joe took to tweeting and amassed 57k followers, including John le Carre, on Twitter. He leaves a loving wife, Irene, four children, and grandchildren. I would have swapped for the baddest egg turn to be Joe's mate; can a brother say fairer than that?

Mel Thorley Retired Members' Section

NORMAN POUNDS **KEEN CYCLIST**

Norman Pounds was born in 1923 and began his career at Plaistow in East London, working as a cleaner during World War Two, progressing to fireman, and driver, and rubbing shoulders with rock'n'roll singer Joe Brown who, at the time, was a fireman there. It is thought he transferred to a very small, and obscure, depot at Upminster before arriving at Tilbury Riverside mixed traction depot when electrification came in the 1960s, which is where I met him, and where he learnt the new diesels and electric traction. Norman, a keen cyclist, took early retirement in 1988. He died recently aged 98.

Cliff Blackwell Retired Members' Section

Join the conversation! Send your letters by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to the ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN



Punishment for passengers

On Monday 1 March we saw the usual annual punishment for rail passengers, only slightly delayed, with an inflation-busting hike in fares of 2.6% in England and Wales. In fact, the Tory government is screwing the public with an extra 1% over and above inflation. As part of the government's announcement of a gradual easing of lockdown, they should be encouraging the public to start using trains again but, instead, they're gradually pricing the railways out of existence. It doesn't make sense to kick the rail industry when it's down. Even without the extra 1%, it would still be an inflation-busting increase, because the government continues to base fare rises on RPI, which is a higher measure of inflation than CPI, yet CPI is widely regarded as a more realistic figure.

We really need to get the economy moving again and to get people travelling back to work, but pricing passengers off the railways isn't going to achieve this. Why are they charging us extra to do the right thing? There are many other jobs which are indirectly supported by rail users in city centres, too. The potential knock-on effects are huge if we don't get this right. This latest price increase won't generate much extra cash for the government, but it may have the effect of deterring passengers so much that it actually ends up costing the taxpayer more in the long term.
Bruce Williamson Railfuture

Tired of FL's fatigue index

I am writing concerning the very confusing issue of the fatigue index being used in the freight industry. When I was working for DB Schenker we fought tooth and nail to get a fatigue index brought in that was workable and ASLEF did come up with something that was acceptable to its membership and DB Schenker. Fast forward five years and I find myself working for Freightliner Heavy Haul under a completely different, and much poorer, fatigue index. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but I seem to remember ASLEF using the slogan, 'Driving down the hours'. With differences between the now DB Cargo fatigue index and the Freightliner fatigue index that you could drive a bus through, I have to question how is ASLEF 'Driving down the hours' for its FLHH members? Surely any new negotiations within the freight industry should be based on the highest negotiated standard

Joe and Tommy on the plate, their caps are worn in racing style, their elbows jutting from the cab

It was good to see the letter from Neil Castle (*Journal*, March) regarding the appeal to mark the grave of Joe Duddington properly. As a fan of the prog rock group Big Big Train (appropriately named, I'm sure you'll agree), the band and its fans, known as Passengers, are fully supporting the appeal.

This is because of their song, *East Coast Racer*, concerning the exploits of Driver Duddington, Fireman Tommy Bray, and all the other railway workers who contributed to that epic run with the



Big Big Train: Andy Poole, Danny Manners, David Longdon, Rikard Sjöblom, Nick D'Virgilio, Dave Gregory, Rachel Hall and Greg Spawton

Mallard. Talking of epics, *East Coast Racer* is a modern prog rock classic easily found on the

internet if you wish to check it out!
Don Church driver, Exeter

of fatigue index, and not the poor, second class index that we currently have in FLHH, irrespective of the workloads involved?

Stuart Parry Cardiff Wentloog

GS Mick Whelan says: 'We always aspire to get best practice into every negotiation, and do not just push this industrially, but politically, too, and with all rail industry stakeholders. It is a shame that there is no regulation, only recommendations, on drivers' hours in the 21st century.'

The diary of a train driver

Re Bro Warburton and the ASLEF diary (*Journal*, March). As Longsight's branch secretary for the past number of years, looking after 150 members, I can assure him that the diary is still very much in demand and, every year, I have to order surplus diaries for my members. Thankfully, the electronic monitoring world has not taken over this area just yet!

Jim Hopkins Longsight

Jobs for the chums of Dom

The covid crisis has allowed the government, through people such as Dominic Cummings, to award contracts to its friends, as a direct award, without putting contracts out to tender. I ask all members to look up The Good Law Project and make their own minds up as to whether to help fund this project. I would ask the same of our general secretary, and to consider whether ASLEF should donate to the fund, or allow individual branches to do so. The amounts for these awards are staggering, and the money is ours, the UK's taxpayers.

Phil Stodart Penzance RMS

Thank you, colleagues

I would like to thank all branches in District 8 for their support in my re-election to the EC. I would also like to congratulate the general secretary and EC members for District 1 and District 6 on being re-elected.

EC8 Terry Wilkinson

Through the *Journal* I want to put on record my thanks to the members and branches across District 1 for re-electing me to serve as your representative on ASLEF's executive committee. Your support and votes in the election is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

EC1 Marz Colombini

Final journeys

My husband Jeffrey Ameson (Birmingham New Street) passed away on Saturday 13 February. Jeff started his career as a railwayman at the age of 15 in 1960. We used to go to Tyseley once a month and on rail trips with loads of his railway friends.

Doreen Ameson Dudley West Midlands

Russell Maton, Farnham branch secretary for many years, passed away on Sunday 7 March. It is a loss that has hit us very hard as he was a much loved member of our branch and depot.
Susie Cooper Farnham 252 branch

Rail workers in Myanmar

The military in Myanmar is trying to force rail workers to work against their will. If the situation develops quickly, and not necessarily in a positive sense, we should do all we can to assist our fellow rail workers in Myanmar.

Pete McNally retired ASLEF member

KAREN CRAGG THURSO'S NORTHERN STAR

Karen Cragg passed away, after her battle with cancer, on 7 December. She was 50. I thought a poem more fitting to this wonderful Thurso lass. 'Kindness is being someone who makes everyone feel like somebody!' This was Karen and we will all miss her dearly.

*Our friend and dear colleague
Karen Cragg passed away.
A train driver based at Wick,
Brave in every single way.*

December 7, 2020

*Is when Karen's journey came to an end.
A terrible loss for her family
Heartbreaking to lose our colleague and friend.*

*Karen's battle with cancer
Has left a void in our hearts;
Such a beautiful person
Caring, intelligent, and smart.*

*Although we take some comfort
Knowing Karen is in no more pain,
That northernmost depot of Wick
Will never be the same.*

*Clerical officer, then onto the footplate,
Karen was railway through and through,
Passing on driving knowledge and wisdom
She was the one we looked up to.*

*More than 30 years of service,
Friends and colleagues from afar,
Karen's smile will be remembered by everyone.
She is Thurso's northern star.*

Steve R Gordon

Birkenhead remembers

Birkenhead Central had a touching send off for popular driver **Bobby Brown**, 57, and as the cortège made its way past the depot, his family were proud to see so many colleagues applauding Bob on his final journey. He was a talented artist always happy to help anyone out. **William Thompson**, 84, worked his way up through the ranks and retired as a minder driver, after 50 years' service, having nurtured many a trainee. He loved the railway, especially steam trains. Bill also loved a good meal, was a founder member of the Littlewoods breakfast club, first in the queue, and always opting for the nine item brekky!

RLN Pendleton, 81, was not only a driver but also a scout for Everton FC for more than 30 years. Bob was credited with discovering a nine-year-old Wayne Rooney as well as bringing players such as Leon Osman, Leighton Baines, and Tony Hibbert to the club. In 2016, his dedication to the Toffees was rewarded when an Academy pitch was named after him. Retired drivers **John Edward** (Jack Titch) **Owen**, 84; **Kenneth Harrison**, 88; and ex-driver **Alan Waters**, 52, have also gone to the top link in the sky. Rest in peace, gentlemen. **AR Morgan** chair Birkenhead 022 branch



Karen Cragg: a wonderful Thurso lass

BRYAN 'BONKY' BOLLONS THE ORIGINAL TANGO MAN HERE IN POSH

Peterborough branch has to report the passing of our retired Bro Bryan Bollons. Affectionately known throughout the southern end of the ECML as 'Bonky', and instantly recognisable by his many layers of h-viz, he was not easy to miss. Bryan began his footplate career in 1950 as a cleaner at Spalding shed in the days when you could depart to all points of the compass from this busy Lincolnshire junction. But, as was often the case with the wholesale closures of the 1950s and '60s, his next departure was a trip via redundancy to Peterborough, New England. Never wanting to move away, he decided to stick it out and wait for a driving job at Peterborough. There was a depot myth that his son Kevan became a driver at King's Cross before Bryan was appointed at Peterborough but this is false; Bonky was appointed at Peterborough one month before his son! He was a keen gardener, dedicated socialist, and loyal member of our trade union.

We will all miss his friendship, his encyclopaedic knowledge of the railways of Lincolnshire, and his almost comical ability to bring branch meetings to the point of collapse with comments that severely tested the composure of our chair. RIP Bryan, friend and comrade.

Simon Bell ex-branch secretary,
Peterborough 161

JA KITCHEN TRUE BROTHER

We have sadly lost retired driver Arthur Kitchen at the age of 64. He began his railway career, as platform staff, at Bolton station, moving onto passenger guard duties, and moving in the grade to Manchester Victoria. When driving vacancies occurred he moved from the back to the front of the train and was a popular addition to the grade. He was a true brother and colleague and our thoughts are with Arthur's wife and family.

JM Black Newton Heath



RAILWAY SERVICE Throughout the pandemic railway workers have played their part in keeping this country moving. Retired Barnham driver Bob Dorkings and Par driver Paul Edwards have produced a covid service badge in nine versions: BR red; BR blue; BR black; Eastern Region blue; Midland Region maroon; North-Eastern Region orange; Southern Region green; Scottish Region light blue; and Western Region brown. Each badge costs £5 (plus £2.50 p&p) from rdorkings@yahoo.com or paul.edwards1962@sky.com



KEYWORKER badge to recognise the hard work of all railway and other keyworkers this year. £5 plus £1 p&p from Fiona Lumsden (MTR Elizabeth line and Paddington branch). Please email georgi44@hotmail.com



DARLINGTON 125th anniversary badge 1895-2020. All badges individually numbered. £6.50 inc p&p. Please contact branch secretary John Clark by email at johnclark162@gmail.com



NORWOOD depot special pin badges including Cowden 25th anniversary. £3 each or £5 the pair (inc p&p). Proceeds to Norwood Drivers' Social Club. Email Stuart Boxall at stuboxall@gmail.com



THE KING'S CROSS STORY by Peter Darley (The History Press, £20) as featured on the centre pages of the January *Journal*. Buy it direct from the Camden Railway Heritage Trust at a discounted price of £15 inc p&p; email Darleyp@aol.com or phone 020 7586 6632 for details. 'All income from sales goes to the trust,' says Peter.



GROVE PARK branch 50th anniversary badge. £6.50 inc p&p. Contact branch secretary Ray Garland 07931 612615 or rgarland1@sky.com



HANDMADE miniature driver's keys to wear as a charm or round the neck. Solid silver and solid 9ct gold weighing approximately 7 grams. Just over 2cm in length and just under 2cm width. Gold £300, silver £100 + £7 p&p recorded delivery. Contact Brad McCarthy on 07929 350146.



AIRDRIE has produced a badge to commemorate its reopening as a separate branch. £6.50 inc p&p. Please contact branch chair Ivan Wilson (07949 862393) for details.



CASH paid for original pre 90s railway photographic slides or negatives. Please contact GBRf Tonbridge driver (and railwayana collector) John Waddington at johnwaddo@yahoo.com



PERTH branch badge to commemorate 110 years (1908-2018). £6 plus £1 p&p. Cheques payable to Perth branch ASLEF No 134 General. Please contact branch secretary Grant Murchie for details on 07412 453454 or grantmu32@btinternet.com

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I changed my name in search of fame to find the Midas touch



'Buffin lost his childlike dreams, and Mick lost his guitar, and Verden grew a line or two, and Overend's just a rock'n'roll star'. KEITH RICHMOND enjoys an honest and engaging account of the fun, frustrations, fears, and tears of the music business



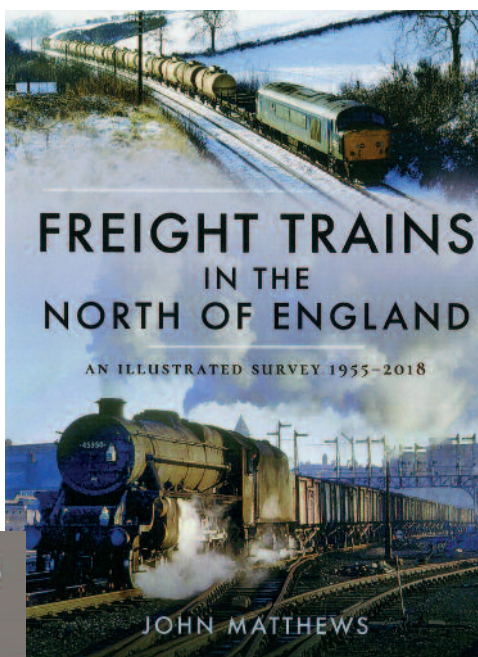
IAN Hunter was, for five years, the pianist, rhythm guitarist, lead singer and main man of Mott the Hoople – he wrote *All the Way from Memphis*, *Roll Away the Stone*, *Honoloochie Boogie* and *The Golden Age of Rock'n'Roll* – but, before he joined Mick Ralphs, Verden Allen, Overend Watts, and Dale Griffin, he played bass in German dives with Freddie 'Fingers' Lee and, after a breakdown, he left Mott for a long, if less lucrative, but never less than entertaining, solo career.

It is his misfortune, as a songwriter, that *All the Young Dudes*, the song for which he is best known, is the one he didn't write; David Bowie gave it to Mott, after they turned down *Suffragette City*, to give them a hit single and stop them giving up.

Hunter has made a series of fine albums with guitarists such as Mick Ronson and Earl Slick; bass player Jaco Pastorius of Weather Report; drummer Dennis Elliott of Foreigner; Roy Bittan, Garry Tallent and Max Weinberg of the E Street Band; and, for the last twenty years, his Rant Band.

'I was famous for a fortnight and that was enough' – Ian Hunter

The first volume of *Rock'n'Roll Sweepstakes* by Campbell Devine told the ballad of Mott from their teenage daydreams to their last hit – and the 'Goodbye' coda of *Saturday Gigs* – while this second volume (Omnibus Press, £20) picks up the story from Hunter's first solo single – and the 'Hello' intro to *Once Bitten Twice Shy* – to the Mott reunions at the Hammersmith



On the write lines: Ian Hunter, Hugo Grylls, John Matthews, and Annabel Lyon

Apollo in 2009, the O2 Arena in 2013, the Shepherd's Bush Empire in 2019, and his most recent album, *Fingers Crossed*.

Hunter is refreshingly honest, self-aware, and self-deprecating, in a business where many – perhaps most – are dishonest, deluded, and arrogant. 'That was another sure-fire hit that missed' is how he dryly recalls his single *Justice of the Peace* from the album *Overnight Angels*, and this is how he remembers Don Arden: 'After our first meeting he called to say, "Fire the road crew" and, after our second, "Fire the group". I don't think Don really wanted me. By the end of 1977 I had no manager, I had no band, and I had no money.'

'And music meets not always now the ear: | Those days are gone, but beauty still is here' – Childe Harold's Pilgrimage by Byron (quoted on the sleeve of When I'm President by Ian Hunter)

Talking about Barry Manilow's cover of *Ships* – about Hunter's difficult relationship with his dad – he says: 'Financially, that was great, because it was a top ten single, on a top ten album, on the *Greatest Hits* LP, and a live album – it goes on forever. Manilow rang and asked if I could write different lines for the bridges. I asked why and he said, "Because my audience is comprised of idiots". It helped him, and it helped me, because I was skint at the time.'

While the book could have done with a good copy editor – the prose tends to the clunky, clichéd, and repetitive – and Devine is a fan, not a critic, it's worth the price of admission for an insight into the realities of the not always glamorous world of rock'n'roll.

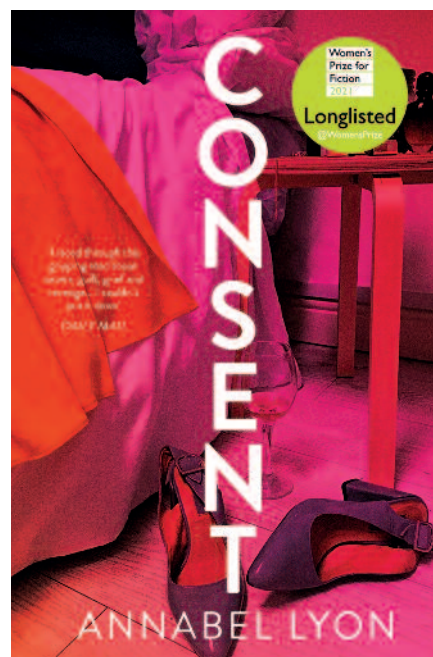
Consent by Annabel Lyon (Atlantic Books, £14.99) is a smart, savvy, contemporary novel about two sets of sisters – high-flying, cosmopolitan, cynical Sara and her simple,

naïve, and overly trusting, sister Mattie; bookish introvert Saskia and her sassy, outgoing, sexually adventurous twin Jenny – whose lives are locked together on the pivot of one man. The pace is quick, the prose elegant and spare, as Lyon, who teaches at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, examines Sara's and Saskia's feelings of guilt, resentment, regret – and the concept of sexual consent – after Mattie dies in a fall and Jenny's life support is switched off after a car crash.

There are dozens of books about writers and writing, but *Book Ends* by Hugo Grylls (WriteSideLeft, £8.99) is unique: it's a scurrilous – and very funny – novel that lifts the lid on the world of publishing. All the guilty parties are named and shamed: the editors, the sales reps, inept management, fusty booksellers, slick literary agents, and – last and, naturally, least – absurdly optimistic authors. Hugo – a *nom de guerre*, as he wants to continue working on Grub Street – is an author and publisher who knows the players, the best and worst, the weather-makers and broken reeds, and they're all here in this hilarious satire.

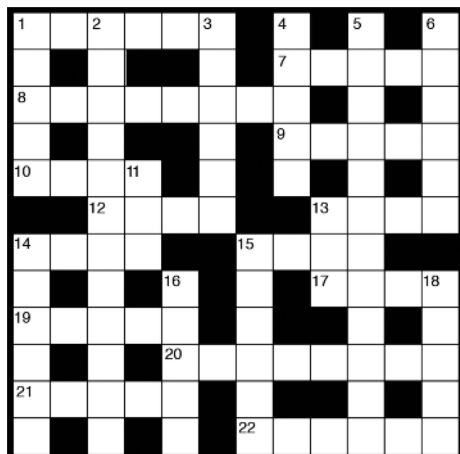
'Well done ASLEF! Keep up the good work and the constant fight for decent pay and conditions' – John Matthews

Freight Trains in the North of England: An Illustrated Survey 1955-2018 by John Matthews (Pen & Sword, £25) is a loving tribute, with more than 200 black and white and colour pictures, to what John cheerfully describes as the 'dirty, unloved, goods train'. Freight might be the 'Ugly Sister' of the rail industry, but John, a TGWU shop steward for more than 20 years, thinks – cf that lyric in Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Starlight Express* – 'freight is great' and gives those steam, diesel, and electric locos 'in picturesque northern landscapes' and 'forgotten industrial backdrops' their place in the sun.



Prize Crossword

Prize crossword 180 by Tom Williams



Solution to Prize Crossword 179

Across: 1 Part company 7 Bulb 8 Turnips 9 Bat 10 Swarm 11 Change 13 Squeak 16 Latch 18 New 19 Insipid 20 Iron 21 Money spider
Down: 1 Paunch 2 Ribbon 3 Cattle 4 Marks 5 Agitate 6 Yashmak 11 Calcium 12 Artisan 13 Send up 14 Unwind 15 Armour 17 Happy

Congratulations to **Rorie Smith of Ilminster, Somerset**, 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

If you successfully complete this month's Prize Crossword please send the solution by post to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN (or take a photo on your mobile phone of the grid and send the image to journal@aslef.org.uk) by Friday 16 April

Across

- 1 Male goose
- 7 Rove in search of prey
- 8 Citrus drink
- 9 Woodturning machine
- 10 Hotpot or casserole
- 12 Showers and drizzle
- 13 Remain in a certain place
- 14 Faucets
- 15 Be off with you!
- 17 Self-satisfied
- 19 Aquatic mammal hunted for oil
- 20 Calm and peaceful
- 21 Helmet plume
- 22 Fourscore

Down

- 1 Force 8 winds
- 2 Car registration plaques (6,6)
- 3 Motive
- 4 Magical formula
- 5 Method of artificial respiration (5-2-5)
- 6 Drowsy
- 11 Used to be
- 13 An appeal for help (1,1,1)
- 14 To beat with something flat
- 15 Wild and untamed
- 16 Pier
- 18 Gee!

On Track

Pubs, streets and theatres



'Covid-19 is like Captain America – he went in the ice and when he came out he found the world had changed'

PUBLISHERS are preparing for a panoply of books about the pandemic and life and love in lockdown; ditto directors, when theatres reopen. But James Graham, one of our leading political playwrights, thinks the past twelve months have made writing not easier, but harder. 'I've found it incredibly hard in terms of creative output. I don't want to moan – I'm not on the NHS frontline – but it's not conducive to creativity.'

James, 39, was born at Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire, educated at Ashfield comprehensive and Hull University, and is the author of *This House*, a brilliant evocation of politics in Parliament in the 1970s, at the National; *The Angry Brigade* at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth; *Ink* at the Almeida about Rupert Murdoch and the launch of *The Sun*; *Quiz* at the Minerva Theatre, Colchester, about the coughing scandal on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*; and *Brexit: The Uncivil War* for Channel 4 with Benedict Cumberbatch as Dominic Cummings.

He hasn't been idle, writing two plays about the pandemic: *Viral*, a short drama about three sixth formers unable to take their A-levels, for BBC4; and *Bubble*, a 'covid romcom' about isolation in lockdown and the claustrophobia caused by the coronavirus, streamed online as part of the Nottingham Playhouse's Unlocked festival.

'If we, albeit arrogantly, think of ourselves as having to tap into the soul of the nation, I can't really do that from the filter bubble of social media, and the quiet of my home. I want to be out there – in pubs, on streets, and in theatres – taking the temperature. I don't think we yet know what this pandemic means politically, socially, or philosophically...'

Keith Richmond

ASLEF's legal services

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