

# tssa

## JOURNAL

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**We are...**  
**fighting for a better railway**



### **INSIDE**

- HS2
- FareFail campaign
- Recognition win at Amey
- Building a safer Network Rail

**March 2012**



**Transport Salaried Staffs'  
Association**

General Secretary: **Manuel Cortes**

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## 4–9 News & campaigns

- ◆ Green light for HS2
- ◆ TSSA Conference
- ◆ FareFail campaign success
- ◆ Recognition win at Amey
- ◆ Sack Boris this May

## 10–11 Comment

- ◆ The bonus culture
- ◆ General Secretary's comment

## 16–17 Health & Safety

- ◆ Building a safer Network Rail
- ◆ Stress Management at work

## 18–19 High Speed 2

- ◆ Here's to a high speed future

## 20–21 Christian Wolmar

- ◆ Track and train alliances



12–15 Support the public campaigning for a better railway





## 22–23 Paul Salveson

◆ European regional rail

## 25 Help & advice

## 26–27 Equalities & members news

## 28 Letters



18-19 HS2 will see a rebuilt Birmingham Curzon Street Station

As 2012 was getting under way, the UK Government seemed to be facing in two opposite directions on transport spending and its impact on the economy.



On the one hand we have the decision to go ahead with HS2, which will inject billions into the economy during its construction and will act as a real driver of growth in the long term.

On the other, is the acceptance that passengers should continue to endure ever-higher fares due to the structural inefficiencies of the most fractured rail system in the world. This dampens demand for rail travel and reduces the positive impact on jobs and growth that having a better connected country would bring.

Heavy construction work on HS2 won't begin until 2017 but there is much that the Government could be doing almost immediately to invest in the existing network. Not only would this provide long-term benefits, but most crucially, it would give a big boost to the construction and engineering industries. Spending such as this is proven to pay for itself many times over by getting the wider economy moving again.

Britain's economy has hardly grown since George Osborne's crippling spending review, but as Paul Krugman, the Nobel prize winning economist said recently, 'A slump is a good time to invest in infrastructure: funding is cheap, and many of the resources you would use would otherwise be unemployed.'

The arguments against spending to generate growth were always weak, but now the same credit ratings agencies – said to have been on the verge of declaring Britain bankrupt due to supposed over-spending – are now highlighting the idiocy of the Tory's reliance on cuts as a cure-all. In a stinging rebuke of George Osborne's economic policy, the US agency Standard & Poor's recently wrote, 'We believe that a reform process based on a pillar of fiscal austerity alone risks becoming self-defeating.'

For the sake of all our jobs and the public services we rely on, let's hope someone is listening!

Ben Soffa, editor

# Green light for HS2 to release billions in investment

**THE DECISION TO** go ahead with the long hoped-for high speed rail network for Britain has been strongly welcomed by the TSSA. If implemented to timetable, the plans will see the first trains running between London and Birmingham in 14 years time, extending to Manchester and Leeds seven years later. TSSA has called for the network to include lines running further north from the outset, noting the decades of catch-up required compared to many

European countries.

TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes said, 'This £32 billion project will help end the North-South economic divide which has blighted the country for so long, as well as create tens of thousands of new jobs over the next 15 years.'

One consequence of the expansion of Euston station to handle the new trains – almost twice the length of the Pendolinos currently in service – will be that the



HS2 Ltd

How the new Euston may look after expansion to 24 platforms

TSSA's Walkden House may disappear under some of the ten new platforms to be constructed.

However, this is far from certain and the Association

will continue developing plans to cover all eventualities. ◀◀

● *For a full report on HS2 see pages 18 and 19.*

## McNulty Report cuts being implemented by stealth

**EVEN BEFORE THE** Government has responded to the rail 'value for money' report produced by Sir Roy McNulty, new franchise bids are being encouraged by the Department for Transport which would operate a McNulty-style service.

Bid documents for the new Great Western franchise, which will run for 15 years from April 2013, acknowledge that the framework that tenders will be assessed under are those set by McNulty. This would mean 29 ticket offices would close at Category E stations, whilst another 17 larger Category D stations would see the opening hours of their ticket offices severely reduced.



BY-SA-2 mattbuck4950

With many of the major franchises up for renewal over the next two years, including the East and West Coast Main Lines, the terms included in the Great Western documents look set to become a model for other bid processes.

The Government has repeatedly delayed publishing its response to the McNulty report, with the latest expectation being that it will put a 'Command Paper' before Parliament during March. Despite this lack of a formal process, let alone any democratic scrutiny, the recommendations appear to be being locked into the working assumptions of multi-billion pound franchises.

TSSA's Together For Transport are already organising around this process, building an alliance of passenger groups and unions to fight the McNulty-inspired cuts in the Great Western region. ◀◀

**i** To get involved in this work or to discuss the equivalent in your area see [www.togetherfortransport.org](http://www.togetherfortransport.org).

## Report: UK has most expensive and inefficient system in Europe

**THE IMPACT OF** privatisation and fragmentation is clear to see in a new report from think-tank Just Economics, which found UK rail services to be less affordable, less comfortable, slower, more inefficient and more expensive than in comparable European countries.

Quantifying the huge benefits of investment in rail, the report concludes, 'Our under-performing railways carry a considerable cost both for passengers and for the public purse. Our calculations show that a more affordable, more comfortable and faster railway would generate a staggering £324 billion in social value (£9.2 billion a year) between now and 2050.' ◀◀

**i** See the full report at [www.justeconomics.co.uk](http://www.justeconomics.co.uk).

# Campaign alliance formed with London Black Cab drivers



**IN THE AFTERMATH** of the successful campaign to protect jobs at Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Department, TSSA has entered into a campaigning alliance with three major London Black Cab driver associations.

Showing how core industrial organisation can open the way to public-facing community organising opportunities, the historic alliance brings together TSSA licensing workers with cab drivers around a series of shared and public concerns.

Last November TfL announced the imminent privatisation of their licensing

and inspections department, prompting a rapid response by TSSA members from across TfL.

The plans would have moved most posts to the Midlands or lost them entirely, including job losses amongst the small team of inspectors who were scheduled to remain in London.

These staff are key to enforcing the London Mayor's Safer Travel at Night Scheme, that seeks to stop sexual assaults by unlicensed private hire drivers. In 2009/10 there were 143 sexual assaults in unlicensed private hire cabs, yet since the launch of the

scheme over 6000 unlicensed cab drivers have been arrested, reducing the danger to women passengers.

Working with the LTDA, LCDC and the Unite cab branch, TSSA was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on TfL that the proposed outsourcing was withdrawn the evening before it was due to be approved at the TfL Board. The company, however, announced that it would review staffing in the department, so maintaining the potential for job losses and consequent safety fears.

Recognising that a threat to public safety remained, TSSA

and the three black cab driver associations have now signed a statement of principles that seeks to promote and enhance public safety by ensuring that the LTPH Department is properly staffed and the number of key inspectors increased.

In signing the alliance statement, Manuel Cortes said: 'This is an historic moment that brings together representatives of the workers and the taxi trade in the shared interests of both. Together we are stronger and have already proved what we can do in our mutual self interest.' ◀◀

## Ken Livingstone Mayoral campaign: our role in kicking the Tories out

**THE ELECTIONS FOR** London Mayor are now just two months away. Your help in getting rid of Tory Mayor Boris Johnson – the man who describes his second salary of £250,000 from the Telegraph as 'chickenfeed' whilst putting up Londoners' transport fares – is more important now than ever. A Labour-run City Hall would give a fair hearing to our concerns, whereas the Tory Mayor has not met with transport union leaders even once during his term of office.

There are a number of ways members – whether you're an individual Labour member or not – can get involved to help out Ken Livingstone in the run up to polling day on 3 May.

Ken's campaign are running phone banks to speak to voters four nights a week, Monday to Thursday from 6pm and 8pm at 39 Victoria Street, London,



SW1H 0HA. Training is given and no previous experience or special knowledge is needed.

There are also ways to get involved all over London, with leafleting and door-to-door canvassing taking place every weekend. If you want to get in touch with your local Labour Party to go out and help Ken, you can call 020 7783 1170 or email [ken@kenlivingstone.com](mailto:ken@kenlivingstone.com).

You can also get in touch online through our interactive volunteer

website [www.yourken.org](http://www.yourken.org). All of Ken's campaigning events are listed on here and there are blogs and articles about what is going on in the campaign as well.

If you can't help out on the doorstep or on the phones, the best thing you can do is to make sure you and all your family are registered to vote. If you think you might not be able to make it to the polling station on Election Day, register for a postal vote. You can find out how to receive a postal voting form or to register to vote (ahead of the 18 April deadline) via [www.londonelects.org.uk](http://www.londonelects.org.uk).

Your help in this election is vital in getting rid of a Tory Mayor who consistently attacks our union and get Ken Livingstone back in to City Hall to make London a fairer, safer city for us all. ◀◀





Cardiff City Hall – venue for the dinner dance

## TSSA Conference: your chance to shape our future

**WITH HUGE SIGNIFICANT** decisions as to the union's future needing to be taken over the next few years, the Annual Delegate Conference this May will be more important than ever.

Delegate registration is now open, with the conference due to take place between the 13th and 16th of May in Cardiff. Accommodation and food is provided for delegates for the duration of the event.

Conference will debate a full range of motions, from transport policy and how we organise, to our response to government cuts and campaigns for international justice.

In addition to policy debates, Conference is a great place to meet fellow TSSA activists, with social events every evening. This year's socials will include a Welsh Night on the shores of Cardiff Bay and the annual Dinner Dance at Cardiff City Hall.

All members can stand for election via their branch. No prior experience is needed, with a comprehensive training session run at the conference for new delegates. Branches with over 200 members can send a second delegate, and wherever possible at least one delegate must be a woman. If you need contact details for your branch please call the Helpdesk (numbers on page 2). Non-delegate members can attend by contacting the conference organiser for a visitor's pass. ◀◀

**i** The preliminary agenda is available at [www.tssa.org.uk/conference](http://www.tssa.org.uk/conference). Any queries should be raised with conference organiser Pat Pavlou via [pavloup@tssa.org.uk](mailto:pavloup@tssa.org.uk).

## New Executive member for London and South East

**STEVE LEGGETT WAS** recently elected on to the TSSA Executive Committee. Speaking to the Journal, he said: 'I am very proud to be representing fellow members on the Executive Committee. To say that it is an interesting and crucial time is an understatement. We have no shortage of things to deal with: McNulty, declining membership and a Con-Dem government looking to cut us to the bone.'

I really feel we are now in a new era, however it is clear that some sort of change is unavoidable. It is important to strengthen and expand links with existing members. I hope to attend as many branch meetings in my Division as possible.

I think it would be good for the EC to visit as many different areas making ourselves much more accessible. Many members do not really know what the EC does and we can be seen as remote.



It's paramount to engage and recruit new members, particularly the younger generation. We need to embrace new ways of communicating, my branch has just set up a Facebook group to assist new branch officials.

My branch has recently got involved with a local cuts group and local trade councils. The way ahead for the union movement is with community organising: TSSA leads the way on this with an excellent community organising team.' ◀◀



invite you to a  
film showing of

## Ride to Freedom: The Rosa Parks Story

to commemorate International Women's Day.

**Tuesday 6 March 6-9pm,  
Walkden House**

Food and drink will be provided

This 2002 film, directed by Julie Dash and starring Angela Bassett, tells the famous story of Rosa Parks - an unassuming seamstress who decided she didn't want to sit in the segregated back seats of the Montgomery bus reserved for Black people, and initiated a fight for a new era in American civil rights.

All TSSA members welcome.



## Tackling unfair and unequal pay in Network Rail

**MANAGERS IN NETWORK** Rail are being asked to complete a survey to identify possible equal pay claims – generally where women have been paid less than an appropriate male comparator, doing equal work.

Survey data collected last year showed how chaotic the current pay and grading system is, resulting in huge pay differences between people doing the same job, and women managers being paid on average £4,500 less than their male colleagues. TSSA is committed to securing fair and equal pay for all management grades working for Network Rail.

‘We’ve drawn up a long list of jobs where we believe the lack of equal pay is a major concern. We’re now targeting staff in those jobs asking for further information to assess possible claims’ said campaign co-ordinator Jerry Wines. ‘From the responses so far, we know that pay rates can vary by tens of thousands of pounds. It’s incredible that Network Rail has allowed a situation to develop where one person can be paid nearly twice as much as a colleague doing the same job.’

The Equality Act 2010 gives women and men a right to equal pay for equal work, unless there are real reasons for any pay difference. Successful tribunal claims can result in a pay increase and back pay being awarded for up to six years. The data we have indicates this could be extremely expensive for Network Rail.

Four jobs are being targeted in the first phase; Commercial Manager, Performance & Assurance Engineer, Project Planner, and Scheme Project Manager. If you work in one of these roles and have not yet completed the survey, please contact Jerry Wines ([winesj@tssa.org.uk](mailto:winesj@tssa.org.uk)) for further information. ◀

Elly Baker  
Senior Regional Organiser



Amy Scaife

## FareFail campaign recruits thousands

**JANUARY 2012 BROUGHT** not just arctic winds and sub-zero temperatures, but another round of massive rail fare increases. This year the TSSA community organising team was at the forefront of the commuter fight-back against Europe’s highest rail fares, with passengers co-ordinated via the twitter ‘hashtag’ #FareFail.

With anger palpable in the run up to Christmas, and the Government making concessions over fare rises, the campaign was in full flow in the first week of the year as commuters returned to work – many worse off by hundreds of pounds.

Together for Transport and TSSA came together with Climate Rush, the Campaign for Better Transport, and Bring Back British Rail to unleash an exciting campaign that combined online activity with leafleting and direct action.

The strategy sought to encourage commuters to use the time they spent travelling to work to take part in an online action via their phones. Nearly 3,000 commuters answered our call to ‘tweet, text or call’ the Treasury and George Osborne to let them know just how angry they were, and how much their own rail fare or season ticket had gone up. To help with this, a special website was launched, giving details of how to get involved: [www.farefail.org](http://www.farefail.org).

At the same time ‘real world’ media stunts saw the campaign splashed

across the pages of newspapers including the Daily Mail, which even included instructions about how to get involved. A media stunt at St Pancras saw a huge #FareFail banner hung within the station whilst a Jazz band of ‘Fat Controllers’ played railway-themed tunes. The BBC, Sky, Channel 4 and many others covered the protest.

The #FareFail coalition prompted a symbolic protest from commuters coming into Charing Cross on Thursday 5 January, with passengers encouraged to hand in ‘fake’ #FareFail tickets distributed in the days before.

The campaign showed how with a few committed organisers and some innovative methods, we can make contact and ally ourselves with thousands of passengers – in this case on fares, but with a model that can be used in defence of facilities and services. You don’t have to take our word for it – public relations magazine ‘PR Week’ named #FareFail as its ‘Campaign of the Week’. ◀

Sam Tarry  
TSSA Community Organiser



Amy Scaife

# TSSA wins recognition at Amey Consulting

**A YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN** led by TSSA reps has resulted in another 500 staff at Amey winning the right to collectively negotiate their pay and conditions.

Nearly 150 new members joined the Union in the last three months of the campaign as reps held staff meetings at Amey's sites from Bristol to Perth.

'When I signed up as a Learning Rep I never thought I'd be stood up speaking in front of 30 of my colleagues', says Paul Messenger. 'I wanted to explain how we have no voice without a union, so I started talking very quietly from a corner of the room. They all complained they couldn't hear what I was saying. 'That's like us talking to management unless we all get together in TSSA', I said. People understood straight away – so we collected in the joining forms there and then!'

Not all the meetings went as smoothly. 'We got some hard questions from staff. They wanted to know that we would be more effective as a union – we faced up to the questions and people respected that. We took responsibility for past mistakes and asked them to take responsibility as well – to join in and help make the change. That's what our union is all about.'

'Think big', says Bridge Examiner and Company Council Rep, Colin Savage, 'If you plan small, you'll get small results. If you think big, you can achieve great things. We



**We used text messages, surveys, newsletters, emails, internet, phone calls, but the most important thing was speaking to people face to face.**

have a vision of where we want to be. Collective bargaining gives us a voice – it's the first step – but our goal is to achieve greater fairness and a more enjoyable working life for everyone at Amey'.

Successive TUPE transfers, new contracts and resistance from the employer had created a situation where TSSA was only negotiating for 30 per cent of staff. Those outside collective bargaining had personal contracts and were seeing their pay and conditions eroded. Those within the recognised group saw their bargaining power weakened by the division in the workforce.

When our Reps got together to discuss the issues, they all felt the same – we needed to build a unified, unionised workforce and create a level playing field for all.

'I knew we would win from

the first time I met the other reps' adds Colin. 'I had not long become a rep and I thought 'they know their stuff'. We arrived as individuals and left as a team.'

'I feel like we are a family now', says Birmingham-based Rep, Patricia Massop. 'Even when times were tough, the guys kept me going. Now, I don't always have to contact my Regional Organiser for help and advice, we work as a team of reps to support each other.'

Patricia points to the 48 hour strike for pay and recognition as a pivotal moment in the campaign. 'The strike was something I never thought I'd do. I never thought people would back it. But we organised picket lines and it showed me that members were prepared to do something.'

Colin feels that the key to success was the mapping and research that was done. 'Not

just doing it as a paper exercise, but actually using it to help build the campaign. We weren't scared to try anything. We used text messages, surveys, newsletters, emails, internet, phone calls, but the most important thing was speaking to people face to face. Our research told us who to talk to, where they were based, and what issues affected them.'

The campaign has been about giving staff a real voice; listening to members and taking their issues seriously. Scottish-based Examiner, Graham Whiteford talks about how much it means to him and his colleagues to be part of a real union organisation: 'As examiners, we are always out at different sites. Sometimes it feels like we're on our own. All the guys are really happy that TSSA has linked us up with the other examiners across Britain. Now we can work together to ensure we are treated with the respect we deserve.'

Patricia sums up her experience: 'My advice to anyone is don't let management walk all over you; do something! Even if it doesn't work, at least you've tried to make a difference.' ◀◀

**📍** *If you are facing a similar situation to our members at Amey, or if you want to help build a better future where you work, contact TSSA's Organising Team for advice and support in getting started: [organising@tssa.org.uk](mailto:organising@tssa.org.uk).*



# Sack Boris this May

**MEMBERS IN LONDON** have been in full campaigning mode as we head in to the London Mayoral and Assembly elections at the start of May. A big part of TSSA's strategy has been to work with independent groups that campaign on transport issues. With fares and service levels being one of the defining battlegrounds of the election, there has been a huge level of interest.

Londoners have endured years of above inflation fare rises under Boris – only slightly lessened this election year after cash was provided by George Osborne after TSSA and others highlighted the planned rise. In the most eye-catching pledge of the campaign so far, Ken Livingstone has promised to cut fares by 7 per cent by October or resign. This issue, alongside some clever campaigning by Labour, has put Boris and Ken neck-and-neck for the biggest directly

elected regional government position in Europe.

As part of TSSA's community campaigning and coalition-building strategy the union has been working with 'Common People' to support the 'Sack Boris' campaign. This is a grassroots, non-party group which has one simple aim: getting Boris Johnson out of City Hall in 2012.

'Sack Boris' have been active online for some time, offering the now infamous 'Sack Boris' Oyster card holders. Rumour has it that this is one of this season's hottest fashion items for the discerning progressive Londoner. TSSA funded the production of a further 50,000 of the wallets, each of which come with a hard hitting insert, giving details of the cost rises under Boris – most patently, the whopping 50 per cent rise in bus fares.

With the help of hundreds of members and community activists we have already

handed out the wallets at over 50 tube and train stations across the capital. The response has been astonishing, with many taking away handfuls to give to friends, family and work-colleagues.

A clear sign of the impact we've been having has been the response from none other than Boris Johnson himself, who at the Mayor's annual media reception denounced the TSSA's Oyster Wallet campaign as 'all lies'. ◀◀

Sam Tarry

TSSA Community Organiser



Victor Meldrew: not a fan of the fare increases



This May, help us 'Sack Boris'. Get your own batch of Oyster Wallets to hand out by emailing [campaigns@tssa.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@tssa.org.uk) or for more info see [www.sackboris2012.com](http://www.sackboris2012.com). To register to vote visit [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

## TSSA launches traineeship investigation

**TSSA MEMBERS ARE** trainees, coaches and mentors in a huge range of vocational schemes, including being apprentices and management trainees in their employers across the UK and Ireland.

These schemes are vital for progression planning; ensuring that younger people coming in to our sectors develop skills and knowledge alongside the current workforce, as well as benefiting from cutting edge accredited study away from the workplace.

TSSA is launching an investigation of the schemes currently running. We want to know if the unions are/were involved, what members and reps think of them and what quality assurances are on offer around training, support and jobs. We also want to hear from TSSA members who currently mentor or coach on any of the schemes to find out what support, training and thanks they get for carrying out these important roles.

With huge numbers of jobs under threat at the same time as governments are looking at ways of reducing unemployment figures, it is even more urgent that we know what schemes are running, recognise best practice and identify what actions we should be calling for with individual employers and across travel and transport generally.

You will find two different hard copy surveys in this edition of the Journal and we ask that you fill in the appropriate survey and return it to TSSA by Monday 16 April. Alternatively, if you would prefer to fill in a specific electronic survey either for apprentices and management trainees or for negotiating reps and/or members active as coaches or mentors or simply wish to contribute to the fact-finding phase and strategic discussion, please visit: Management trainees: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/TSSAmanagementtraineesurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TSSAmanagementtraineesurvey). Apprentices: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/TSSAsurveyforapprentices](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TSSAsurveyforapprentices). ◀◀

# All change for the gravy train

**Neil Davies**, TSSA's Policy Adviser questions whether we're starting to curb the culture of corporate excess

**WE'VE BEEN BANGING** on about bosses' bonuses and the growing culture of corporate greed for what seems like forever! Yet when there was more or less full employment and most people got a decent pay rise it was perhaps something most of us could live with, albeit somewhat reluctantly. We didn't like it, but standards of living were improving and nobody with the power to do anything about it seemed interested – things just drifted. Now, with soaring levels of unemployment, public spending cuts and falling standards of living impacting on most of society, the 'us' and 'them' nature of the crisis has been brought into sharp focus. We most certainly are not all in this together!

Over the past few months there does appear to have been a sea change of opinion. Criticism of corporate greed has become louder, with some politicians now prepared to reflect public anger and demand action.

At the end of January Royal Bank of Scotland chief executive Stephen Hester was due to get a bonus in shares of £963k on top of his £1.2m a year salary – 46 times the salary of an average employee in the UK. Following sustained pressure, it was Labour's decision to put Hester's bonus to a Commons vote that gave the RBS chief executive no option but to decline his

bonus. The government resolutely refused to intervene – in a limp response after the event Chancellor George Osborne said it was a 'sensible and welcome' decision.

Then, closer to home, Network Rail's directors came under similar pressure to turn down their massive bonuses. At least this time the Transport Secretary, Justine Greening, threatened to turn up at the company's members meeting to cast her vote against the bonuses, but wrongly asserted that she lacked the power of veto. Chief Executive Sir David Higgins had been expected to collect a bonus of 60 per cent on top of his £560,000 salary. In the end NR's bosses succumbed to the pressure, contributing the funds to safety improvement at level crossings.

Victory in these battles were encouraging, but the war on fat cat pay is far from being won. Even though Network Rail bosses turned down their immediate bonuses, they did not mention that if Higgins and fellow directors continue with the long-term pay and bonus scheme it could be worth £15.6 million over the next three years.

Dealing with quasi-public organisations like RBS and Network Rail hasn't been at all easy. Think how much harder it's going to be to play hardball with the hard-headed, hard-hearted players in the private sector. Surely the government



have got the message and got tough on the company executives milking the current system for all its worth? Unfortunately not – its over-hyped response in January to the High Pay Commission's dozen proposals to overhaul executive pay was seen by many as a wasted opportunity lacking in substance. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said 'It's very disappointing to see that ministers have spectacularly failed to make any significant changes to the status quo. Whilst the Business Secretary has announced a few welcome tinkers to the current boardroom pay regime, he has shied away from the big decisions on all of the major

proposed reforms, from worker representation to company pay ratios and open advertising for posts on remuneration committees.'

With top executive pay running ever further away from average employees (from 47:1 in 2000 to 102:1 in 2011) the TUC have made a compelling case for worker representation on remuneration committees – something supported by Ed Miliband and Labour.

Whether or not attitudes have changed for good only time will tell – but the mega-bucks pay culture that has built up over many years must be stopped and become as unacceptable as drink driving. ◀◀

## If you can't beat them tax them!

Ending corporation tax relief for pay and bonuses worth more than 10 times average annual earnings (£26,200) could raise around £1.7bn a year if applied to the banking and financial services sector. A recent TUC report shows that over a third of employees earning over £250,000 a year work in banking and finance. The report estimates that around 81,000 people have incomes of over £262,000 (10 times average annual earnings) that come primarily from employment, including 29,000 people in banking and finance. The report finds that total pay on earnings above £262,000 – which the TUC believes should no longer be a deductible expense for corporation tax purposes – is around £6.8bn a year. Ending corporation tax relief on these earnings in the banking and finance sector alone would raise £1.7bn a year. ◀◀



Manuel  
Cortes

## Hope in dark times

The scale of cuts being implemented by the Tory-led Government will have devastating and long-lasting effects on our society. No one will escape unscathed. People are already struggling to pay their bills as energy prices soar and real wages fall. In addition, our public services and welfare state are being battered. Sadly, poverty is already on the rise. In the 21st Century, we surely deserve better than this.

We are however, incredibly fortunate. Even after the worst recession in living memory we remain an incredibly rich nation. Yet, our society is almost Dickensian: wealth stubbornly remains unequally divided. It is the tale of the 'haves' and 'have nots'. If, as Cameron repeatedly tells us, we are all in this together, why are we not hitting the pockets of rich individuals and corporations to create a fairer society?

The post-war economic consensus saw redistribution of wealth as something worth pursuing. In the UK, we had more years of Tory Governments than Labour during this period. However, redistribution continued irrespective of whoever was in power. Progressive taxation became the order of the day. Fairer taxes did not usher an era of austerity or low growth. On the contrary, it paved the way for the longest period of sustained economic growth in our entire history. Most importantly, everyone benefited from a share of newly created wealth. The gap between rich and poor fell significantly. Unfortunately, Thatcher and Reagan destroyed this consensus.

This resulted in economic textbooks being re-written even though the foundations of the new neoliberal consensus looked at best shaky. Historical data, based on real economic outcomes, strongly disproves its theoretical underpinnings. However, ideologically driven politicians weren't in the mood to let the truth get in the way of their blinkered prejudices. Make no mistake: we are paying a very heavy price for this.

Thankfully, I detect that the wind of change is on its way. Rising inequality and poverty will not lead us out of our economic mess. That is why at this year's World Economic Forum – a club that

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on this issue.'

is the preserve of the rich and powerful – discussed income inequality for the first time. In the US, multi-millionaire Mitt Romney's admission that he pays a lower tax rate than his domestic servant has rightly caused outrage. Closer to home, François Hollande, the Socialist candidate who looks increasingly likely to replace Sarkozy as France's next President, has put fair taxes at the top of his agenda. It is clear that calls for a fairer distribution of wealth are growing louder by the minute. If anything, it is politicians and political parties, who lag behind public opinion on this issue.

You may be wondering what role you can play in helping create a new economic consensus. The first thing is to speak-up when you see something that is unfair. A good example of this is how public transport users are being exploited. The Government and greedy private operators treat them like cash cows. Railway, bus and the tube passengers are having to pay way above inflation fare increases year-on-year whilst services face cuts. The message seems crystal clear; pay much more for far less!

It is unlikely that on our own we would be able to defeat cuts to public transport. To have a better chance of winning, we need to fully involve the communities that we serve. The very passengers who are having to pay through the nose for decreasing levels of service need to be at the forefront of our campaigns. We have taken our first tentative steps towards achieving this by setting-up a Community Organising Team.

Working with our communities will provide a platform to get our message across to a far wider audience. That is why we are actively seeking to involve other unions in our initiative. We also need you and your families on-board. You are our greatest asset. This will remain a growing area of activity for the foreseeable future.

The Government's cuts agenda is creating many threats. However, it also provides a massive opportunity. If unions lead effective campaigns against these cuts, it could place us at the helm of a mass movement whose prime demand would be a fairer world.

Clearly, that is something well worth fighting for! ◀

community





# We're fighting for a better railway ...

Rail workers face tough times. Last year Sir Roy McNulty released his report 'Realising the Potential of GB Rail – Report on the Rail Value for Money Study'. This proposes drastic cuts to staff at stations, staff on trains and pushes for more power to be given to the Train Operating Companies (TOCs). It also calls for an even greater fragmentation of the industry. Shortly afterwards, Train Operating Companies, Freight Operating Companies and Network Rail joined together in an unprecedented move to form the 'Rail Delivery Group' and developed an 'Initial Industry Plan',

which outlines how the TOCs and others are going to implement recommendations from the McNulty Report and other changes that will benefit their shareholders. Meanwhile, the Government has not yet even released their views on the content of the McNulty Report – having postponed it several times, this is now due in March.

Our key question is whether the proposed changes would make our railway better or worse? Whether it's the McNulty Report, the Rail Delivery Group's own Initial Industry Plan or the long-awaited response from government, if

we don't intensify our fight for a better railway, we can only expect to see a further deterioration of our system, with cuts and destructive changes going unchallenged.

TSSA's TOC National Council has taken on the challenge to fight against cuts to staff, increases to fares, decreases in services for the public and the further fragmentation of the railway. To explain the issues they feel are most important for TSSA members and the community, our TOC National Council representatives share their own stories and why we need to fight the cuts and fight for a better railway.

## Staff our stations

Staff play a vital role in customer service and safety at stations. Proposed cuts to staff at stations and the closure of ticket offices will result in a significant decrease in the level of service for the public. As many as 675 station ticket offices are under threat of closure, with staff being replaced by ticket vending machines (TVM). A TUC report estimates that tens of thousands of front line staff on stations and trains will lose their jobs under the McNulty recommendations, making rail travel less safe, less accessible, whilst at the same time yet more expensive as fares dramatically increase.

TOC National Council Representative Steven Neagle tells us how station platform staff make a difference to safety:



*'I've stood on the platform on several occasions where I've witnessed staff stopping people from committing suicide in front of trains. I've done it myself and if staff are not there on the platforms to stop that – if they take away those staff – then that's putting people at risk. If they do actually start removing station staff then there's not going to be anyone there to stop that. You'll also see an increase in timid people standing on platforms not wanting to be there – they are going to stop travelling which is going to impact the railways in the long term.'*

We need to fight cuts to station staff and as part of this, we want to know what you – and the wider community – think makes a good station! If we talk to our family, friends and other members of our communities for their views about reductions to station staff this helps us add their voices to our fight for a better

railway. Read our 'Get Active' section on page 15 to find out about our postcard survey on what people want in their local stations. Or check out our campaign information online at [www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail](http://www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail).

Reduction in station staff will impact even more greatly on vulnerable rail users and those who need special assistance. Members have been raising concerns over the recently introduced need for some travellers to call a premium rate number in order to get the support they need for their journey. This will impact the ability for disabled people to travel, as will cuts to station staff.



*'I have a big link with customers who go on our trains. I sell them tickets I also dispatch their trains and work on the gate line and deal with their ticket problems. I think that in the future with the McNulty report we are going to find that staff are going to be reduced from platforms and customers will have to talk to a machine – they won't get any level of service from a machine – they will just be issued a ticket and they'll have to find their own way on the platforms and onto the trains.'*

*'We have what's called an Assisted Passenger System, where people that need assistance onto a train contact our customer centre and they arrange for a member of staff to be there to help passengers get on the train and also arrange for them to be collected when they arrive. With staffing being reduced in the future there will be no staff that will be able to help the disabled people onto the train, to advise whereabouts on the train they are and to contact the next station to help them off.'*

Michael Litchfield  
TOC National Council Representative



*'I'm a travel advisor. I've been on the railway now for 21 years and I've seen a great deal of change in them 21 years – especially through privatisation. I have a lot of interaction with deaf customers because I'm the only person at the station that can do sign language. When I'm there and there are deaf customers around, some do wait for me, sometimes the staff actually come and fetch me because they know I can sign so it makes it easier for them. I recently had a letter of praise from a deaf customer for signing, which I thought was really nice and it just proves that if McNulty does come into force they're going to lose people like me who are there to help people and there will be nobody there to help the deaf or disabled when we have gone.'*

Martin Hill, TOC National Council and Learning Representative

## Fares

More passengers are using our trains than at any time since the 1920s. However, as services and jobs are being cut and the ConDem Government reduces financial support for our railway, they expect passengers to pay ever-increasing fares, resulting in increases of inflation + 3 per cent over the next three years.

As Together for Transport, a community organising campaign established by the TSSA say on their website, 'Many people are already feeling the effect of higher prices, coupled with wages that fail to keep up with inflation. Obscene increases that amount to a 'Rail Tax' will only drive people away – and back to their climate busting cars.'

This is a sentiment reflected in twitter messages from the public in the Together for Transport campaign #FareFail which saw 3,000 angry messages directed at the Treasury for their role in increasing ticket prices.





Fares increases are a key issue for the public as well as for members – all the more galling whilst TOCs are making tens of millions of pounds of taxpayer-subsidised profits on the back of our fares. E-mix member and TOC National Council Representative Manjit Gill explains why it's important to involve our communities in our campaign to fight against fare increases and for a better railway:

*'The importance is to raise awareness with passengers and the wider community of our campaign to lower transport costs, which as they increase, restricts movement of people looking for jobs, families meeting each other and holiday-makers using their leisure times to visit the country.'*

Manjit and his local action group took part in the Together for Transport's 'Great Train Fares Robbery' action in November, distributing 5000 postcards about fare increases to passengers and the general public.

*'They have gone to TSSA members, family members, two trades councils, five Gurdwara [Sikh temple] leaders, student groups from all universities, colleges and also to local taxi drivers who have done great work distributing the cards to customers and the general public. There's been a great reaction... the public are angry at the continued rail and transport charge rises and they are happy to join our campaign.'*



## Safe to work, safe to travel

A safer railway is a better railway. Cuts that will affect the safety of rail travel have been recommended to the government, most notably the reduction of station and on-train staff and the increase in Driver Only Operation (DOO) trains. This means it will be increasingly common for there to be no train guards or platform staff to help passengers board a train or to dispatch trains safely. Stations may become less safe for waiting passengers, who will have no-one to turn to if there is a safety issue.



*'I'm the first point of contact with passengers on trains and there's been many a time where there's been service disruptions and I've had to deal with passengers on platforms. They are quite happy they can talk to somebody – rather than not speak to anyone or speak to a machine on the wall. When you see somebody face to face it makes it much easier – and if anything has gone wrong you can step in, intervene and help. Any face is better than no face at all!'*

Bob Hughes

TSSA TOC Company Representative

TOC National Council representative Gerry Higgins has been working in the railway for 29 years and is currently a Resource Manager in the Control Room. Gerry's story highlights how teamwork between train and station staff helps save lives:

*'During the festivities of Christmas and New Year I had a conductor phoning me from a train saying that they had a drunk passenger and he was putting her off at a station that was unstaffed. A drunk female... I switched on the TV cameras for the station... I advised Network Rail about this very drunk female and put a caution on the line just to be seeing where she was at the station. We observed her coming down the stairs on the platform and she stumbled and fell on the track, knocked herself out.'*



*Now if that wasn't for the teamwork and the conductor phoning myself, me then contacting Network Rail – actually even getting the TV cameras switched back on, a train could have gone in there and come over the person. Instead the ambulance was called, the trains were halted, the passengers at the station were told to leave her until the ambulance arrived. The person was fit and well and eventually she got up and into an ambulance and got taken to hospital. I thought that was a good story for teamwork.'*

Many British Transport Police are also TSSA members and play a crucial role in providing safe travel. They work together with station staff, to ensure safety at stations and on trains.

*'Passengers get a perception of safety if they see someone in uniform, BTP or station staff. A visible presence of a person in authority is always reassuring. We work with station staff as a compliment to their hard work – we are not there to replace them. Staff on stations are primarily our first point of contact, usually they see an issue and are the first to liaise with us. Station staff can see an issue before it's raised, see a situation with the eyes of experience, they can see an issue they know is going to escalate before anyone else is aware of it.'*

Johanne Fisher

BTP Local Safety Representative





## A quality public service

Transport is an essential public service for our community. Yet our railway remains privatised and both the proposed changes and those already being implemented by TOCs will further privatise and fragment the system. TSSA supports public ownership of our railways as we believe a publically owned and operated railway is a better railway, one that is a service for the people, not a profit maker for shareholders. With the Tory-led Government imposing cuts across the public sector, slashing and capping benefits and privatising NHS services, it is no surprise that increasing fares and decreasing services to rail passengers is also on their agenda.

As an active member of the International Transport Federation, TSSA supports the global campaign for Quality Public Services as it recognises access to affordable transport as a fundamental need for all. We are also active in the fight against the Tory/LibDem Government cuts, by supporting public service workers in their fight to keep their jobs and protect and develop the communities of our members.

You can find out more about the Quality Public Services Campaign on [www.qpsactionnow.org](http://www.qpsactionnow.org) and [www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/QPSActionDay2011.cfm](http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/QPSActionDay2011.cfm).

**ⓘ Not a rep? Not part of the Company Council? Take part in any of the actions listed in the panel.**

**For more information talk to your local representatives or contact Nadine on [raen@tssa.org.uk](mailto:raen@tssa.org.uk).**

## Get active in our fight for a better railway

The union is only as strong as its members are willing to make it – so that means we need you! Your TOC National Council have put together a range of campaign activities so that everyone can get involved in the fight for a better railway.

There are many ways you can get involved in our campaign. Here are a few of the campaign activities you can get active in now:

### Postcard survey – ‘A perfect station’

Our aim is to gather opinions from our friends, family, community and the general station-using public, as to what they think makes a good station. This will help us campaign for better services, to protect face to face staff at stations and to build a better railway.



### What do I need to do?

1. Think about who you will ask to complete a postcard, order some from [raen@tssa.org.uk](mailto:raen@tssa.org.uk) or online at [www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail](http://www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail).
2. Approach the people you know, friends, family, your faith community or others, ask them to complete the postcard survey.
3. Collect the postcard back and hand them in to your TSSA rep or organiser, or post them back to TSSA (just put them in the postbox – they are Freepost).

### Film Action Group

Do you have a good story to tell like the ones in this article? Do you want to take part in producing short films on the issues affecting our railways? Our TOC National Council has formed a Film Action Group who are producing a series of short films to highlight the impact of McNulty Report and the proposed cuts to the railways will have on our communities. If you would like to get involved, contact Ricky on [jonesr@tssa.org.uk](mailto:jonesr@tssa.org.uk).

### Other ideas

What you can do to get active in the fight for a better railway:

- Come to a TSSA campaign training event
- Ask your workmates to come to a TSSA meeting
- Sign the petition to save our stations on [www.togetherfortransport.org/content/staff-our-stations-sign-petition](http://www.togetherfortransport.org/content/staff-our-stations-sign-petition)
- Tweet your thoughts on fare increases on #farefail
- Form a Local Action Group, a team of your workmates, friends or family who want to get active in our campaign activities
- Meet with your local MP or councillors
- Write to your local newspaper
- Hold a community meeting to discuss transport issues in your local area

If you want to get involved but are not sure how or need some support, email Nadine [raen@tssa.org.uk](mailto:raen@tssa.org.uk).

### Your Company Council can:

- Raise the issues in this article at your next meeting with the company
- Ask your TOC for an official position on the McNulty report
- Request information from your TOC including numbers of staff at each of their stations, potential job losses if there are ticket office closures, financial accounts, etc.
- Check if any of the issues in this article affect your TOC members
- Log your issues online at [www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail](http://www.tssa.org.uk/better-rail)
- Conduct a workplace survey
- Hold a workplace meeting
- Attend a TSSA campaign training event
- Map your stations
- Talk to other workers about this article, staffing cuts, fare increases, safety concerns, cuts in services to the public.



# Working together towards a safer railway: the work of the TSSA Lead Health and Safety Reps

**WE ARE A** team of three TSSA members who represent the wider membership within Network Rail as part of a joint union-management partnership, working together to actively involve everyone in the safety culture change at Network Rail.

We have been encouraged by what Network Rail have done in creating this partnership; it is commendable and to our knowledge unique. However we are still some way off from achieving a culture which encourages everyone to raise safety issues without fear.

As we put across the concerns of members, differences of opinions with the company will be inevitable. Awkward questions will necessarily be asked as we go forward together. However, having those discussions and asking those awkward questions is what will help make a positive contribution to the safety culture and behavioural change in Network Rail at all levels.

We are united in the belief that every employee has a fundamental right to work in an environment where health and safety risks are properly monitored and controlled.

### What do we do?

We recruit new Area and Local Safety Reps; engage with safety reps and offer guidance and assistance when required.

We help with the creation of Area and Local safety meetings where issues can be raised openly and then bring the concerns and comments of those we represent to the attention of people higher up in the organisation.

Another part of our work is to encourage safety reps to use the excellent training available through the TSSA Education Programme and otherwise, to better understand the rules and regulations and know how to apply that knowledge with confidence.

We also take on work regarding health issues, liaise with Network Rail on various new Health and Safety initiatives, assist on accident investigations and work at National levels with the Company and other trade union officials.

We need to be resolute in our commitment to health, safety and welfare, whether office based, front line staff or senior management.



Network Rail

### Get in touch

There are three TSSA Lead Health and Safety Reps covering the whole of England, Scotland and Wales. We are your reps so please do get in touch to discuss anything related to the issues we work on.



**Ian Henry** covers Anglia, Kent, Sussex and Wessex, representing all Maintenance and Ops staff.

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M: 07713 300947



**Martin Leadbetter** is responsible for the West Coast Main Line, Wales and West of England

E: [Martin.leadbetter2@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:Martin.leadbetter2@networkrail.co.uk)

M: 07771832100



**Des More** covers Scotland, North East England, the East Midlands and Thames Valley.

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All three Lead Health and Safety Reps assist members who work in the various support functions such as commercial, finance, investment projects and asset management. ◀◀



Network Rail

**Caroline Wake**, deputy chief inspector of railway operations at the Office of Rail Regulation says workers and employers both have a role to play in de-stressing railway jobs.

## Working together towards better stress management



**STRESS IS RECOGNISED** by trade unions and employers as a key health concern within the rail industry.

While employment in the rail sector can be fulfilling and rewarding, it can also be challenging and excessive work demands or other pressures may lead to cases of stress.

Work-related stress can lead to ill-health as well as poor productivity and an increase in human error in the workplace. A recent TUC survey ranked stress as the most frequently identified hazard across the transport sector, and data from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) shows that 9.8 million days were lost to work-related stress in 2009/10.

ORR recognises that many rail companies have good arrangements in place to manage stress at an individual level after traumatic events – such as fatalities or assaults – and to support affected individuals back into work.

Whilst initiatives aimed at individuals, such as personal stress resilience training, employee assistance schemes and counselling can be extremely useful components of a stress management strategy they are not the whole picture. If rail

companies only focus on tackling the problem at an individual level after the harm has occurred, the root causes of stress may not be identified and managed effectively.

As part of ORR's occupational health programme we are working to promote the wider adoption of an organisational, preventive approach to stress management. We are seeking a shift in approach – from a reliance on the reactive management of stress at an individual level (although this will still clearly be needed for affected individuals) to more emphasis on the proactive management of stress by looking at job design and the organisation as a whole.

We recommend use of the HSE Management Standards approach, which provides a step-by-step process for the risk assessment of work-related stress at an organisational level. This approach requires managers and employees to work together to improve six main areas of work (demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change) that, if managed properly, can help to reduce work-related stress.

We recognise the important role that employees' representatives

play in understanding and tackling stress at the organisational level. Employees' representatives can help explore, and agree, practical solutions in the workplace, and communicate the agreed improvement targets and actions to the workforce.

As a starting point for thinking about what you can do to prevent work-related stress, we suggest that Safety Reps complete the short online exercises on HSE's website – address below – to help them better understand the role they can play in applying the HSE Management Standards approach. There are five short exercises looking at the signs and symptoms of stress, exploring what workforce representatives can do to help reduce and prevent stress. Once completed, the answers can be used as a basis for discussion on how workers and managers might work effectively together to prevent work-related stress at an organisational level.

In the railway industry there are real challenges in overcoming an entrenched culture where stress is still seen, by some, as a weakness. A closer focus on the organisation rather than the

individual will help encourage the participation of the entire workforce. Employees need to know where they can go for help or raise concerns and employee representatives can play a positive role in achieving this.

The use of the HSE Management Standards approach has shown a positive effect on workers' health – as well as boosting productivity – and it will also help employers to meet their legal duties. By working with rail trade unions, rail industry groups and individual businesses to promote the wider adoption of a preventive approach to stress management, ORR aims to move the industry towards best practice in stress management. We hope that we can count on your support. ◀◀



**Find out more:**

● **More information on ORR's occupational health programme for 2010-14 can be found at:** [www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2497](http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2497).

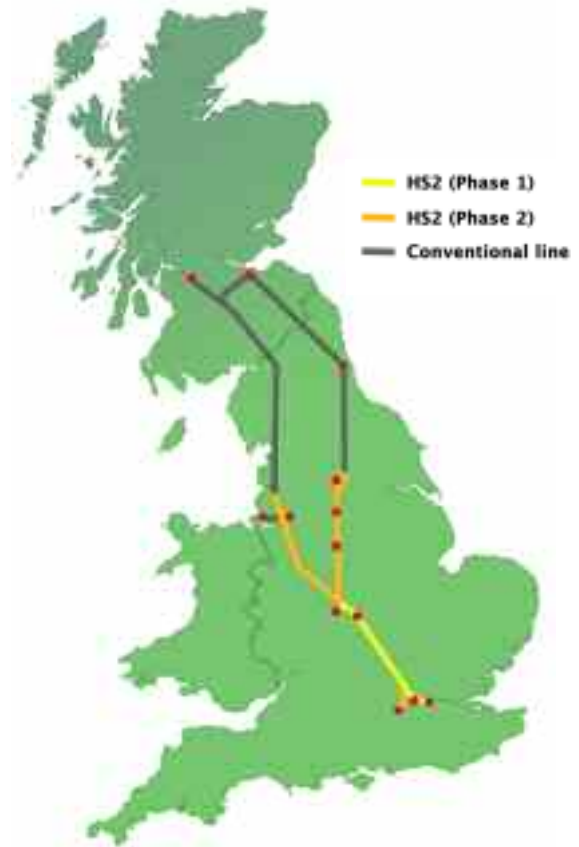
● **HSE Management Standards approach can be found at:** [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm).

● **Safety Reps online exercise:** [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/roles/tradeunions.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/roles/tradeunions.htm).



# Here's to a high speed future

[Manuel Cortes](#) looks forward to the long-overdue creation of a High Speed rail network in Britain.



As we move towards the construction of a new high-speed rail network in Britain, we have a huge deal to learn from the experiences of others. High-speed rail services have been operating for over forty-five years in Japan and for over three decades in Europe. This provides a wealth of information on the benefits we can expect from our investment. In the 19th century, the development of the railways formed the backbone of the Industrial Revolution. It provided the means by which goods and people could be moved at speeds and numbers that bewildered generations brought-up on horses and carts. In today's context, investment in high-speed rail should be a catalyst to spark the economic revival that our country so badly needs.

Not that long ago, the railways were almost written-off. We had decades of government investment favouring roads. Undoubtedly, this took its toll. We got used to line and service closures. However, in the last decade or so, it appears that the penny has finally dropped. We have seen a period of badly needed – and very welcome – sustained investment in our railways. Yet, the capacity of the current network is almost at breaking point. Put

simply, without expansion, we will very soon hit the buffers as projected increases in demand will completely overwhelm our existing infrastructure.

Let's face it – we can't deal with the twin challenges of ever increasing road congestion and the need to slash CO<sub>2</sub> emissions without further developing our railways. And as we are going to have to invest to expand capacity, let's do it in a way that delivers a network fit for the 21st Century. Sadly, we have been on the slow track for far too long. Most of our European counterparts have already developed high-speed networks and are reaping great economic and environmental benefits from doing so.

Many European countries have been able to dramatically reduce the volume of internal flights as well as significantly reduce inter-city car travel through the development of high-speed rail services. A similar shift in the UK would ease congestion at our airports and on our roads, reducing the need for investment in environmentally damaging schemes. Unfortunately, the government's current plans are not ambitious enough. Our high-speed network must link all our major cities from Land's End to John O'Groats. It can't end in Birmingham, Leeds or

Manchester for that matter. We need a comprehensive nationwide network. It also makes no sense to delay its construction until the next Parliament. We should be starting now. The tens of thousands of jobs that the construction phase will provide would be a major kick-start for our badly depressed economy. Even the first section of line between London and Birmingham is forecast to deliver benefits of over £20 billion at today's prices. We really need to get on with it!

From an environmental standpoint, short-haul flights are a growing menace to the wellbeing of our planet. High-speed rail can all but eradicate them. In several European corridors, such as between Paris and Lyon and between Cologne and Frankfurt short-haul flights have almost been completely replaced by the train. The number of air passengers between London and Paris has been cut by more than half since the Channel Tunnel rail link was opened. In Spain, high-speed rail services between Madrid and Seville reduced car journeys from 60 per cent to 34 per cent of trips and the launch of the service between Madrid and Barcelona has seen a severe reduction in the number of flights on what was once one of the world's busiest air routes. There is no

reason why flights between Scotland and England could not be almost completely wiped-out by high-speed rail services.

High-speed rail is also more energy efficient in the fuel it uses, curbing our ever increasing thirst for oil (with its air pollution and global warming impact) and replacing it with electricity which can be generated from green sources. Japan's Shinkansen system uses just one quarter of the energy required to move a passenger by air and one sixth of that needed for road travel. This means that a typical Monday morning business trip between London and Paris on a Eurostar train is far more energy efficient than doing the same journey by car or plane.

You can of course produce electricity from sustainable sources with near zero carbon emissions. This greatly enhances the already extremely good environmental credentials of high-speed rail. In this field, Sweden leads the way. Its inter-city trains are powered entirely with renewable energy, cutting emissions of global warming pollutants by an astounding 99 percent. There is no reason why we can't replicate this in Britain.

High-speed rail will also create jobs and boost local economies. Construction of high-speed rail lines creates thousands of jobs which last for several years. For example, around 8,000 people were involved in construction of the high-speed rail link between London and the Channel Tunnel. A study of the Frankfurt-Cologne high-speed rail line estimated that areas surrounding the two cities experienced a 2.7 per cent increase in overall economic activity compared with the rest of the region.

Several cities have used the advent of high-speed rail as a catalyst for urban regeneration. Lille used its new high speed rail station as the core of a multi-use development that now accommodates 6,000 jobs. Our very own redeveloped St Pancras station is the centrepiece of a major project that will add 1,800 residential units, as well as hotels and offices in the heart of London. High-speed rail also encourages people to travel. There has been an overall increase in travel between its destinations in Spain and France, bringing wider social and economic benefits to those making journeys.

HS2 in dates and numbers

Late 2013	Introduction of parliamentary bill to construct Phase 1
Early 2014	Consultation on preferred route for Phase 2
Late 2014	Government's announcement of route for Phase 2
2015	Target date for passing of parliamentary bill
2017-2025	Construction period
2024-2026	Commissioning and testing
2026	Phase 1 line opens to passengers
Around 2033	Phase 2 line reaches Manchester and Leeds



Playing catch-up: The first Japanese Shinkansen line opened in 1964, constructed whilst Britain was still building steam locomotives.

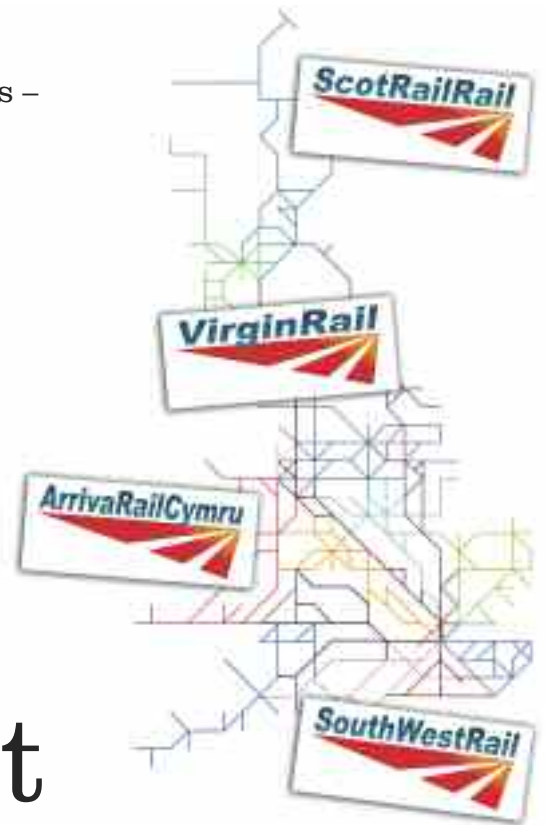
My fears about this project have nothing whatsoever to do with high-speed rail and everything to do with Westminster. Firstly, ministers must not be allowed to use expenditure on high-speed rail as an excuse to cut railway investment elsewhere. I very much hope that in the near future, most UK long distance inter-city travel will occur on high-speed rail. However, we will continue to need a comprehensive well-funded conventional network for suburban and other short distance travel and equally importantly, for freight. Freeing our existing network of long distance inter-city trains means that we should have the capacity to take lorries off our roads and significantly expand the amount of freight we move by rail. Secondly, as the public purse will fund this project, we should not allow privateers to run services

and cream-off profits on the back of taxpayers investment. High-speed rail needs to be publicly owned and accountable. Finally, high-speed travel can't become the preserve of business executives. We should follow the example of other European countries and ensure that everyone benefits from this vital investment. This means having affordable fares rather than the sky-high ones that currently plague our railways. This will allow all of us to fully embrace the massive opportunities that high-speed rail has to offer. ◀◀

	High Speed rail	Classic rail
Capacity (seats)	1100	500
Vehicle length (m)	400	245

Christian Wolmar looks into the changing relationships between Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies – which has the potential to bring huge changes to the industry.

# Alliances: integration or dismemberment



**'The Times they are a-changin', but no one quite knows how. The 'Command Paper' which was supposed to set out ministerial thinking on the structure of Network Rail and was due out before Christmas is still, at the time of writing in mid-February, weeks away according to the latest pronouncement from Justine Greening, the now not so new Transport Secretary.**

The delay is clearly the result of fundamental divisions within the Coalition about how far to go in changing or even breaking up Network Rail. The need for change is broadly accepted, but precisely how far reform should go is a source of friction within government and concern within the industry.

There is widespread recognition that Network Rail became far too centralised when it was run by the previous Chief Executive, Iain Coucher, who left in October 2010. While it is easy to criticise that centralisation, it is undeniable that under Coucher, Network Rail corrected many of the ills of Railtrack and, as a result, managed to reduce costs. Ensuring, for example, common standards and practices across an industry that at times still retained legacies from British Rail days – when local managers ruled with an

iron rod over their territories – was no bad thing. But as a former senior Network Rail source explained to me, 'Coucher went too far and prevented local managers from having any initiative.'

So, anticipating, correctly, the recommendations of the McNulty report into the industry's finances published last year, and without waiting for the government's thinking on the future structure of the company, Network Rail has begun the process of devolving responsibilities to its route directors. They will have much more freedom in the way that they spend their budgets and allocated resources, but will still be required to maintain central standards and use common purchasing procedures for materials such as ballast and rails.

While this is fairly uncontroversial, the next stage in Network Rail's reform programme, the creation of alliances with train operators, is far more controversial because it is seen as a possible way of breaking up the organisation. This has already started. While cooperation over train operations in joint control centres has been going on for some time, this new move is focused on the maintenance and renewal of the railway. Network Rail has already formed an alliance with South

West Trains whereby decisions on renewals and enhancements will be taken jointly by the train operator and Network Rail. Indeed, in some cases Network Rail staff will report to SWT managers.

So, for example, if a section of line needs to be renewed, managers from both organisations will decide jointly both the scope and the timing of the work. As an inside source put it, 'it is much more than just trying to sort out compensation arrangements. It's about working together to save costs and improve performance'.

In truth, no one quite knows how these alliances will pan out. Although work on new agreements covering Anglia, Scotland, c2c, Northern and South Eastern has been announced by Network Rail, none will go as far as the SWT arrangement. Moreover, the Office of Rail Regulation is concerned that other operators might be disadvantaged if relationship between a dominant train operator and Network Rail become too cosy.

There are worries that this process may not be workable and doubts about whether any savings will result in a cheaper railway, or simply end up in the hands of private companies. Some managers feel that Network Rail has done well to reduce costs in the past decade



## The creation of alliances with train operators, is far more controversial because it is seen as a possible way of breaking up the organisation

and that there are not many more savings that can be made without compromising performance – or worse, though this is mostly never discussed – safety. There may well be some savings to be made through devolution, but there are doubts over whether working closely with train operators is really the way forward, given that there is bound to be an issue about how to divvy up the savings. The Department for Transport, for example, is concerned that the savings don't all end up with the train operators, as private companies, rather than Network Rail, which is largely state-funded. And what if there are disputes – how will they be resolved? At times, the interests of the two companies can become diametrically opposed since it is always easier to carry out track work when there are no trains running. No end of alliances and promises to 'work together' can get round that fundamental issue.

The biggest concern of the unions, however, is that this is a prelude to the break up of Network Rail. There are indeed some MPs on the right of the Tory party who see Network Rail as an inefficient monopoly and would like to see the organisation split into several companies and the work quite possibly contracted out to firms like Serco. Having free standing vertically integrated routes operating independently of Network Rail's HQ opens the way up to such a break-up.

While the idea of creating a series of mini Network Rails may appeal to ideologically-motivated politicians, there are numerous practical difficulties. There is scope, here, to create yet more interfaces in an industry where their prevalence was highlighted by McNulty as being at the root of much of the excessive cost. There are, too, economies of scale which suggest that breaking up Network Rail would simply add to these



Duncan Harris, CC-BY-SA 2

inefficiencies. Big equipment such as, for example, the New Measurement Train, could not be purchased by a mini Network Rail operating on its own.

While such equipment could possibly be hired, there are bigger questions over labour and here the unions and the management of Network Rail are largely in agreement. The last thing either side wants is for fly-by-night contractors to be hired to carry out safety critical work on the railway. Certainly this is the basis of much scepticism among the unions about

the move, which they see not as a way of saving money but of allowing in less skilled workers on the cheap. While everyone is agreed that costs should come down, that should not be at the expense of losing the skilled workforce that is vital to keeping the railways running safely. Ms Greening's Command Paper is, therefore, being awaited with some trepidation. ◀◀

Agree? Disagree? Get in touch with your views: [journal@tssa.org.uk](mailto:journal@tssa.org.uk)

futuretssa

## Spring training weekend Friday 20-Sunday 22 April, Manchester

### Topics include:

- Looking at and learning from TSSA community organising campaigns
- Increasing our influence in the workplace
- Improving your public speaking

Accommodation and meals will be provided. Reasonable travel expenses will be met by TSSA, but we ask that you book the cheapest advance tickets possible.

Please arrange release with your line manager and contact your TSSA rep if there is a problem.

All TSSA members under 35 welcome.

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tssa

Paul Salveson explores the successes regional governments across Europe have had in creating massively popular, highly integrated rail systems, and asks 'what are the lessons for us?'



# Regional rail revival: the European dimension

**At a time when we are being told that booking offices should close, railway staff are over-paid and our railways cost much more to run than our continental counterparts, it's worth taking a look at how regional rail is delivered in other European countries.**

The first thing that strikes you is the remarkable revival that regional rail has undergone in many countries. There has been major investment in stations, rolling stock and information systems coupled with a close integration with local bus services. A common feature of most if not all of these successes is the strong involvement of local or regional authorities. In some cases they actually own the railway, whilst in others they have responsibility for franchising services and ensuring high levels of inter-modal co-ordination. Let's do a quick 'Cook's Tour' to see what's happening.

Germany was the first major country to reform its local and regional passenger services. Whilst having some experience of local, publicly-owned railways stretching back to the 19th century, the

early 1990s saw the launch of a pilot scheme in northern Germany with two 'failing' branch lines transferred to a local authority-managed railway called the Dürener Kreisbahn. It was taken out of the control of Deutsche Bahn (DB), whose only interest in it had been to shut it down as quickly as possible. Over the next few years a positive dynamic of improved frequencies, investment in new rolling stock, station modernisation and re-signalling took place. From a handful of trains a day hauled by over-powered diesels, modern 'Regiosprinter' trains operated a half-hourly service to rural communities in the area. Unlike many 'new generation' local railways, the operation is vertically integrated with operations and infrastructure under unified control. Ridership leapt from a couple of hundred a day to thousands, with growth of over 500 per cent. The railway is now owned jointly by the county council and a private company.

The success of the Düren project encouraged the German Federal Government to go ahead with a more

general regionalisation of services. Germany has a well-established system of regional government, based on the 16 'Länder' (states) which cover large areas. The Länder were given powers to take over franchising of local services. This led to a flowering of innovation in local rail services and some outstanding successes. In many parts of the country neglected branch lines suddenly found they were getting much-needed investment, with new management, station refurbishment and new rolling stock. The German rolling stock manufacturers found themselves with orders for hundreds of new trains, mostly diesel railcars which have provided a huge leap in ride quality, passenger comfort and reduced running costs. Many other small networks of lines have been franchised, with DB Regio and other larger groups tending to win most of the contracts. Some of the routes are owned by consortia of local authorities which have invested heavily in upgrading infrastructure. One of the most interesting developments is DB's policy of creating what are in essence 'vertically

integrated' operations for rural self-contained networks.

The Netherlands decided to follow Germany's example and the Dutch Government initiated a programme to devolve local rail services to county authorities. One of the first was the network around Arnhem which was taken over by a joint venture of NS (Netherlands Railways) and French operator Keolis called 'Syntus', combining rail and bus operations in one locally-managed business. Services were re-structured to remove competing routes, creating a 'fishbone' pattern, with the railway providing the core and buses feeding in to local station hubs. However, Arriva – an increasingly important player in regional rail franchises across Europe – has won the contract to operate most of the Syntus routes from December 2012. It's symptomatic of the changing scene that when DB recently bought British-based Arriva plc, the new owner was forced to sell its 'Arriva Germany' subsidiary and Italian Railways (Trenitalia) snapped it up.

France has an extensive regional rail network (marketed as 'TER') which is facing major change. Since 2002, regional councils have specified the contracts for regional passenger services and SNCF is the sole provider. The recent 'Grignon Report', produced by a right-wing MP for the French Government, proposes further liberalisation to allow other operators to bid for contracts – a suggestion strongly opposed by the rail unions. Denmark has also seen major controversy over franchising of passenger rail. The partnership between state operator DSB and UK-based First Group has fallen apart and DSB has decided not to bid for any more foreign contracts.

The situation in Spain is of particular interest, where strong regional governments have been established for the Basque Country and Catalonia. The Basque Government took over the near-derelict metre-gauge network in 2000 and began to invest in the 'Euskotren' (ET) system which links Hendaye (just over the French border) with San Sebastian, Bilbao and other centres. The results are impressive. New rolling stock has been introduced and much of the core route between Bilbao and San Sebastian is being doubled to allow for increased



**The Usedom Seaside Railway crosses from island to mainland on Germany's north coast. The system brings together all the benefits of a locally-managed railway, covering train and track, but under the umbrella of a national operation.**

frequencies. The railway is 'vertically integrated' with a single unified management covering operations and infrastructure. Feeder bus services to local rail hubs are mostly provided by ET's coach fleet. Fares are astonishingly low and trains, unsurprisingly, are busy throughout the day. Euskotren is a very different business to most transport operators: its mission statement stresses social and economic objectives, social responsibility, protecting the environment and meeting the needs of both passengers and workers.

What does all this tell us? Firstly, that 'regionalisation' brings results. By having a strong focus on local markets and local needs, regional authorities can develop a rail network which is accountable to the communities it serves, integrated with local bus services and is affordable and accessible. The second observation is that regional franchising is not necessarily the only, or best, option. The experience in the Netherlands, where the achievements of a good operator risk being undermined by the uncertainties of a new franchisee, serve as a warning. There is a growing tendency for foreign, state-owned companies to put in seemingly attractive bids which risk undermining transparency and accountability. A further 'negative' is the fragmentation of ticketing on many networks with different operators.

Does the experience offer anything to trades unionists and rail campaigners in the UK? It shows that there are other, possibly more successful, models than the traditional state-owned railway. Democratic control, and even better ownership, by elected regional government has led to huge improvements which in turn have resulted in new employment opportunities as services and routes expand. For my money, the Basque model has most to offer. Quite how they have got round various EU restrictions on vertical integration and rolling stock procurement I'm not sure – but if they can do it, so can we! In England, with the partial exception of London, we don't have regional governments to take on a lead role in rail. We do, however, have the passenger transport executives which are accountable to the Integrated Transport Authorities, in the big conurbations. They could provide the basis for a consortium of local authorities and PTE/ ITAs in taking over networks such as Northern. ScotRail is already accountable to the Scottish Parliament via Transport Scotland and I suspect the Welsh Government will soon take control of its railway network (including some parts that lie in England!). In the short-term we may be stuck with franchising for these networks, but in the longer term a better approach is for new regional authorities to take direct ownership of the regional railways, or establish an arms-length social enterprise/co-operative, with public sector and worker representation, to run regional rail services on the community's behalf. ◀◀



**A Euskotren train – a service of the Basque government – leaves Hendaye, just over the border in France.**



# Member compensated after wet floor foul-up



CC-BY-2 Jekert Gwapo

"This was always about getting the company to change a bad system. It was never about the money," says Jacqueline, an engineer with a rail maintenance firm. Jacqueline had been walking through a public area of a station when she slipped in on an unmarked wet floor area and badly fractured her wrist. "A passenger had spilled a carton of juice on the floor about 10 minutes before I arrived. The midday cleaning supervisor had already mopped up the spillage and asked a colleague to retrieve a warning sign for her to put up. Although the weather was dry, there had been a few incidents throughout the station and she had used all the warning signs on her cart. The colleague then got diverted with other tasks and the cleaning supervisor was asked to attend to something else by the station manager. She told him she couldn't leave without putting up the sign, but he called

back saying his problem was more urgent and she had to attend straight away." The cleaning supervisor asked another member of the station staff to warn passers-by of the wet floor until a warning sign could be set up. "I think the cleaning supervisor was trying very hard to do the right thing, but the station manager is known for being a bit stropky. If she hadn't gone the second time he called ... well, let's just say she felt the smart thing to do was whatever he wanted." The other member of staff who had been asked to watch the area had seen Jacqueline approach. Just as she was nearing him, a passenger diverted his attention with an enquiry and Jacqueline walked straight into the still damp area, slipping and falling to the floor. "Because of the nature of my job, when I go to stations I don't travel light. I have documents with me, a laptop, my mobile, all the safety gear

including two different types of footwear in case I need to get out on the tracks or into the substations. I was laden with my bag and the paraphernalia and when I slipped I went down like a ton of bricks. I tried to put my hand out to cushion the fall and that's how I got a displaced fracture in my wrist," says Jacqueline. "The cleaning supervisor was mortified when she heard about my fall, and she came to me straight away to say sorry. But honestly, she was not to blame. The station manager should have given the spillage priority. What if this had happened to a passenger or some other member of the public? The cleaning supervisor was trying to do the right thing." After noticing a report in TSSA's Journal magazine, Jacqueline decided to make a call. "My job revolves around maintaining every last detail of lineside equipment so that the network can work as

smoothly as possible. Yet I fell and got hurt because someone who should know better decided to over-ride a safety measure. I guess he'll think twice before trying that again." Jacqueline was put in touch with John at Morrish Solicitors, TSSA's legal experts in accident and injury claims. John contacted the employer, alleging they had failed to take reasonably practicable measures to maintain a safe work environment, had breached regulations and their duty of care to an employee. "As well as the fracture, my right thumb already had arthritis which was exacerbated by the accident. I didn't need to take much time off work, but I did have to move to light duties, which I was not happy about." After initial negotiations, the employer accepted liability for the accident and agreed to pay damages for her injuries and financial loss. Shortly before the case was due in

court Jacqueline accepted a damages offer of £9250 plus payment for physiotherapy and damage to her property. "What I really wanted was for the station manager to say to me 'Sorry, that was my fault'. He never has, of course, but the Regional Director has since put new systems in place so that front line staff can put safety first without feeling they are risking their livelihoods." Based on a real-life story. Some details have been altered to protect the identity of the victim. Morrish Solicitors offers free personal injury legal advice for TSSA members and their family members. Whether the injury occurred at work or completely unrelated to work, Morrish Solicitors provides expert legal advice you can trust. Call 0800 093 0353.

● Morrish Solicitors is a Limited Liability Partnership and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

## Accidents do not happen - they are caused!



As a member of the TSSA, should either you or your immediate family suffer injury through someone else's negligence, you will be entitled to FREE legal advice and representation from our specialist personal injury lawyers Morrish Solicitors LLP.

No money will be deducted from any compensation recovered and no charge will be made to you or your family for the advice and representation you receive.

If you'd like to find out more, call us today and we will look after you.

**TSSA Personal Injury Services**  
**Free to Members & their families**

**0800 093 0353**



If you have a question about your workplace rights, call our employment law specialists on 0800 3282673 in the UK or 1800 805272 in the Republic of Ireland or email [helpdesk@tssa.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@tssa.org.uk)  
Hours: Monday to Thursday 8am–6pm Friday 8am–5pm

## Off your Face(book)?

**Q.** I was made redundant and asked to sign a compromise agreement, which I did. After our leaving party I put some less than complimentary comments about the company on Facebook. They say this was gross misconduct, withdrew the Compromise Agreement and dismissed me without notice. I thought once I had signed it they had to honour it.

**A.** Compromise agreements last forever unless one of the signatories breaks it or it can be shown that one of the parties was misled into signing it. Before you signed it you were advised by a solicitor, who will have gone through each clause with you to make sure you understood what you were signing. One of those clauses was that you did not bring the company into disrepute. Having done so on Facebook you breached the terms of the agreement – and no doubt saved the company a lot of money. Our lawyers are of the opinion that sacking you falls within the ‘Band of Reasonable Responses’ test, so we could not support a claim for unfair dismissal.



I say this time and again and offer no apologies for repeating myself – be very careful what you put on social networking sites. Employers can and do read them. And don’t hit the send button unless you are sober.

## Career breaks and redundancy

**Q.** Late last year I returned from a six month career break. Our shop is due to be shut down and I am being made redundant. The company says I don’t qualify for redundancy pay as I’ve not been there two years, but I was with them for fifteen years before I went off to South America. Doesn’t that count?

**A.** Unfortunately no. Generally speaking, and certainly with the travel agent you work for, ‘career break’ is a bit of a misnomer. In fact what you did was resign, with the promise that you might have a job when you return (but with no guarantees – check the company handbook). Your career break was a break in service, and so you are now unfortunately a new entrant again.

## Relocation or redundancy?

**Q.** My role has been moved to a depot forty miles away and increased from one to three posts, but it is exactly the same job. I was expecting to transfer, as the new location would be a lot more convenient for me, but the company has said I am redundant and have offered me a compromise agreement. What should I do?

**A.** A redundancy occurs where the work ceases, reduces or moves to a new location, so you are indeed redundant. However, the company has a duty to mitigate the effects of redundancy where possible and should consider offering you a suitable alternative job. As you regard the new location as suitable you should be identified with one of the jobs there, especially as they are expecting you to train the two people they have already appointed. If the redundancy is genuine, why are they offering a compromise agreement? They usually only need that if they are worried you might have a case to take to a tribunal. Submit a grievance over unfair selection for redundancy. You will need to exhaust the internal grievance before we can think about going to a tribunal.

## Railway Employees Privilege Ticket Association

**2012 REPTA membership** is available now for all transport industry staff and families, active and retired. Many free, discounted and special rates are available to members as described in our information packed Yearbook.

**£4.50 per year including p&p. Additional cards for family members £3. New for 2012: Family membership – two adults and all children up to age 18 for £9 including P&P. Send cheques/postal orders payable to ‘REPTA’ to: Colin Rolle, 4 Brackmills Close, Forest Town, Mansfield, NG19 0PB or join on line. See: [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk). New: Discount cinema tickets. You can also book rail travel with Raileasy via [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk).**



UK

Republic of Ireland

0800 3282673/1800 805272



Korina Abbott

## Women fighting back against the cuts

**ARE A NEW** generation of women picking up the mantle of feminism where previous generations left off? In November the popular UK Feminista conference 'FEM 11' attracted over 1000 campaigners and the Fawcett Society hit the headlines with their challenge to the Tory-led government's budget which disproportionately penalises women. In the midst of austerity, growing numbers are recognising that the most pressing challenges faced by millions of women are not those of gendered language or the 'male gaze', but are much more basic.

The measures in the 2010 budget cut nearly £8bn from tax credits and welfare, an estimated 70 per cent of which was proposed to come from women's pockets. How is this imbalance possible?

Despite warnings from organisations including Fawcett, many of the cuts are only now becoming apparent as councils and organisations have their budget reductions realised.

More than two thirds of jobs lost in local government throughout 2010 and the first half of 2011 belonged to women, whilst in the latest unemployment figures

women accounted for two thirds of the increase. By November 124 Sure Start children's centres had already been closed under the Tory-led government. Not only are women facing economic uncertainty but services they depend upon to support their ability to work are being cut. This has the effect of pushing women back into the kitchen, something that people – quite rightly – are angry about.

Fare increases also disproportionately affect women: a recent TUC report, The gender impact of the cuts – a year on, notes women's greater reliance on public transport, with 63 per cent of women having a driving licence compared to 81 per cent of men.

The TUC's Equality Duty toolkit – available on their website – acts as a great campaigning guide for those opposing cuts to local services, even when outside of the public sector.

Trade Unions have been at the forefront of organising for women's rights for decades. The TSSA has a self-organised group for women members called Women In Focus: to get involved please contact Sharon Simmonds on [wif@tssa.org.uk](mailto:wif@tssa.org.uk). ◀

## Book review: How to be a woman, by Caitlin Moran



**CAITLIN MORAN SAYS** she originally approached a publishing agent with a plan to write a light-hearted 'stocking-filler' book...and then came out with an idea for a feminist manifesto based on her life. The result reflects what goes on in the back of a lot of women's minds – that it's not that big a deal to be feminist and whilst many negative connotations have been attached to the word, feminism really just means women being treated fairly.

In the spirit of Moran's biographical style, I remember hearing a 17 year old Moran on the radio describing being a feminist as 'not walking around with a 'Kick Me' sign on your back' and this stuck with me. She cites Germaine Greer as a huge influence on her as a young person, but it is mainly the events in her life that are used as touchstones in the book. With chapters like 'I Encounter Some Sexism!' and 'I Start Bleeding!' (as well as 'Abortion' – without the exclamation mark) Moran uses an Everywoman approach to highlight common problems.

The best parts of the book are the throw away comedic descriptions of situations she has been in, which make the book extremely readable. The weaker parts are when she attempts to sum up ways to tackle sexism with simple statements, such as 'I have a rule of thumb: Are the men doing it? Are the men worrying about this as well? Is this making Jeremy Clarkson feel insecure?' But it's not really the point: Moran avoids trying to solve all women's problems, instead she wants to pull us back from the assumption that feminists are dungaree-wearing man-haters with bad haircuts and to encourage women to normalise the idea of feminism as something that affects our daily lives. For that reason this book is very useful. ◀

Kerry Abel, TSSA Equalities and Diversity Organiser

## SPECTRUM RELAUNCH

**Saturday 3 March, 10.30am**

TSSA Head office, Walkden House  
All TSSA LGBT members welcome

Spectrum is the group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered TSSA members. The group aims to:

- Support members on LGBT issues, such as homophobia and transphobia
- Educate TSSA and its branches and activists about the issues facing LGBT members
- Provide a forum for LGBT members to meet and socialise.

This is an informal meeting to re-launch the group for 2012 and plan our campaigning activities. On the agenda will be Pride Season and World Pride 2012 in London and discussing how to protect LGBT representation in any future union, and we plan to have a representative from the RMT LGBT.

All interested members are welcome, reasonable travel expenses will be paid and refreshments provided.

For more info contact: [lgbtspectrum@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lgbtspectrum@yahoo.co.uk)





## Gold Medallions presented



Dave Chalkley (right) with Andy Bain

**COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS** of Dave Chalkley, from both his former bus branches and the London Transport Divisional Council, met late last year to see former president, Andy Bain present Dave with the TSSA Gold Medallion and Honorary Life Membership.

Dave had taken early retirement from TSSA's head office in 2010, but his former bus colleagues wanted to recognise his hard work from the earlier part of his career. His efforts for his fellow workers spanned right through from the time he joined London Transport in the early 1970s through to privatisation in 1994, after which Dave lost his job. He subsequently went on to serve colleagues as a member of the Association's full time staff. As Steve Floyd, vice chair of London Bus Operators branch says, 'Our loss was head office's gain. At Dave's request, we had to wait until the end of the 2011 cricket season before making the presentation!'



John Spademan (right) with Richard Magner

John Spademan, a member of the Network Rail Infrastructure South East branch was presented with a Golden Medallion in recognition of his decades of service to representing his fellow workers. Amongst many positions, John had served as a Company Council and local rep for over 17 years and a health and safety rep for more than 15 years. ◀◀

## Ted Wheeler, 1936 – 2011

**TED** was born in Bethnal Green in 1936 with his family moving to Enfield a year later. After leaving school at 15 he joined the Labour Party almost straight away and, as a 17 year-old working at Standard Telephones, became an active member of the Electrical Trades Union. After becoming disillusioned with Labour he joined the International Socialists (which later became the SWP) gaining the nickname 'Red Ted', of which he was very proud.

Ted joined the Signal Design Department of London Transport in 1965. He was active as a TSSA staff rep, branch organiser and conference delegate for many years, eventually receiving the Gold Medallion in recognition of his efforts.

His varied interests beyond politics included working his allotment plots, the arts and geology. He was



Ted Wheeler (centre) with Amarjit Singh

researching the geology of Egypt up until five days before he passed away from cancer last year.

Ted shared over 50 years of marriage with Doreen and is survived by her, two daughters and four grandchildren.

During his life Ted was always kind and thoughtful, offering help and advice to any who needed it. Always dressed smartly, he had a great sense of humour and always laughed a lot – believing that that was what life was for. He will be greatly missed by many. ◀◀

**Amarjit Singh, TSSA Underground Infrastructure Branch**

## Education and organising programme

**TSSA'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME** give opportunities for reps, members and branch officers to further develop the skills as informed and confident advocates for their fellow members.

The following courses will take place in the coming months. For more information about any of these, or to find out more about TSSA's education programme in general, contact Adele Potten-Price on 020 7529 8323 / [education@tssa.org.uk](mailto:education@tssa.org.uk).

Course	Date	Location	Level
Negotiation skills for women	7-9 March	London	2
Induction for new reps	13-14 March	York	1
Employment contracts and the law	22-23 March	London	3
Industrial reps introduction	28-30 March	York	2
Stress, bullying and disability legislation	16-17 April	London	2
Senior Reps Negotiation Skills	17-20 April	York	4
Induction for new reps	24-25 April	London	1
UINs & Safety Committees	26-27 April	London	3
How to manage the message	1-3 May	London	3
Pensions	8-9 May	London	4
Leadership and management skills	28-29 May	London	4
Thinking about becoming more active in the union?	29-May	York	Specialist
Thinking about becoming more active in the union?	31-May	London	Specialist
TUPE	11-12 June	London	4
Organising Against the Cuts	13-14 June	London	Specialist
Social Media	13-14 June	London	Specialist
Equality Legislation	25-27 June	London	3

This is your chance to share your views with thousands of other TSSA members. The deadline for the next issue is 9 April. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. Email [journal@tssa.org.uk](mailto:journal@tssa.org.uk) or write to TSSA Journal, Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London, NW1 2EJ.

## Comes with a health warning

The simple office accident which resulted in long-term health problems described in the last Journal reminded me of a similar incident. A few years ago I was in the Colchester Contracts office to assist an overloaded colleague. Whilst adjusting an old-style Track Gauge (as usual, whilst in conversation), I felt a sharp and deep penetration into the tip of my right index finger. Misaligned, the oily split-pin securing the thumbscrew had gone right in. Yeowww – and a big laugh to the BB Rail supervisors from across the way! Track Gauges go where all sorts of ‘nasties’ reside. You name it...but I guess I must have just been lucky!

Sadly to recall though is the story of a former colleague who returned for the ‘last day’ celebrations at the Paddington CCE Office, before it was moved to Swindon. Having lived with an amputee, I

immediately noticed she had an artificial limb and asked her how this had happened. A road accident, surely?

The awful truth was that one summer (open-toe sandal weather), this young woman had been told by her manager to go and investigate a report of flooding in the ‘Ladies’. From the inch-deep water and doubtless a skin abrasion, an infection got into a toe, then her foot, then the ankle. Several operations resulted in the loss of her leg above the knee to fully remove the infection. The tragedy was that her manager could instead have called the plumber.

**Colin Thompson**  
Anglia Number 1 Branch

## A ‘thank you’

I would like to thank everyone for their overwhelming support over the last few months. It is to be regretted that a General Secretary who has brought so much to TSSA should feel the need to leave in such a way but I wish him much success in whatever path he now

chooses to follow. If anyone has any remaining questions please contact me directly at [yeoh@tssa.org.uk](mailto:yeoh@tssa.org.uk), call me on 07894 587 844 or write to me at my address in the diary and I will reply to you.

Once again, thank you!

**Harriet Yeo**  
President TSSA

**A door we have not properly opened**  
In mid-January TSSA Health and Safety reps met to explore how we can better organise and represent our members in this important aspect of their work.

When we asked ourselves what the three biggest health and safety concerns were, the conversation focused on bullying, harassment, and the stress caused by understaffing and job cuts.

We would be interested to know your views on these and other worries about health and safety.

In an effort to build our effectiveness in this area we considered

several ways to take things forward:

- Creating a database of Safety Reps and safety professionals in membership
- Improve the supply of safety information eg via Reps Bulletins and on the website
- Ensure TSSA participation in various safety events such as Workers Memorial Day
- Form a group of experts to inform and advise the Executive Committee
- Plan meetings and seminars for safety reps to share experiences and organise
- Work with other trade unions where problems are shared
- We also felt that it was important to cover welfare and occupational health issues.

This group, with probably a few more members, will meet again soon to take this forward and we would welcome ideas and suggestions from members.

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