

April 2014

# tssa JOURNAL

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# Standing in unity: Remembering Bob Crow





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TSSA Journal is published

by TSSA, Walkden House

10 Melton Street

London NW1 2EJ

Design and production:

Wild Strawberry Communications

[www.wildstrawberry.uk.com](http://www.wildstrawberry.uk.com)

Cover image: © Stefano Cagnoni/  
[reportdigital.co.uk](http://reportdigital.co.uk)

Views published in the Journal are not necessarily those of TSSA.

TSSA Journal is printed by TU Ink on Leipa Ultra Silk comprised of 100 per cent post-consumer waste. The polythene wrapper is oxo-degradable.

Vol 110/issue 1233



Action for Rail



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Keep East Coast Public actions took place from Kings Cross to Waverly on the day Lib Dems were travelling to their conference in York.



Campaigners gather at TSSA's York office.

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Andrew Wiard

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Pay more get less: tens of thousands of this joint TSSA / Labour Party leaflet were given out to highlight the cut in London Underground station staff.

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Welcome to the April edition of the TSSA *Journal*. The past month has seen our union lose two of our strongest allies. The sudden death of Bob Crow, coupled with the passing of Tony Benn, has robbed the labour movement of two of its most powerful voices. We send our condolences to all those who struggled alongside Bob and Tony, who we remember on page 5.



Our industrial action at London Underground dominated news headlines and forced management to suspend the implementation of their ill thought through plans. The detailed negotiations are still ongoing, due to reach a conclusion in early April. The Mayor and LU management would do well to remember that our programme of industrial action is merely suspended and a failure to propose a substantially improved plan would bring that option back to the fore. See pages 12-13 for all the details.

As our general secretary discusses on page 14, the executive committee has been consulting on changes that will impact on almost all areas of the Association, the *Journal* included. As the media has increasingly moved online and up-to-the-minute news has become the norm, the role of a printed magazine is changing. The ongoing consultation is likely to recommend a significant reduction in the number of printed issues of the *Journal*, compensated for with a growth in what we offer online. This is far from an end of the *Journal*, which as page 11 shows, has gone through many changes of format and style through the last 110 years, but redeploying the resources used to produce the printed magazine will allow us to communicate more effectively week-in, week-out. Organising in defence of our rights at work has to be our priority and that agenda is now most effectively served by the more responsive, timely methods of communication we can employ online. The *Journal* will be back with you later in the year, but until then, enjoy this issue and look out for the expanded communications we'll be providing online.

Ben Soffa, editor



# East Coast message for Lib Dems

**TSSA MEMBERS WERE** out in force on 7 and 8 March to support the campaign to 'Keep East Coast Public' and to oppose the coalition government's attacks on essential public services.

As Liberal Democrats were travelling to their spring conference in York, TSSA members, sister unions and community allies demonstrated from London Kings Cross through to Edinburgh Waverly against the coalition government's planned re-privatisation of East Coast.

In addition to raising awareness of commuters at East Coast stations, a mass action was organised to greet Lib Dems as they arrived for their conference. A recent poll by Survation found that 68 per cent of people who voted Lib Dem at the last election want to keep East Coast in public ownership, yet Lib Dems ministers continue to support this ideologically-driven Tory policy.

East Coast has been in public ownership since 2009, after two successive private operators walked away for financial reasons. Customer satisfaction is now at record levels and the operator gives

the highest returns to the taxpayer of any train firm whilst receiving the lowest public subsidy. Last year East Coast paid £208m in premium and dividend payments to the Treasury with turnover increasing by 4.2 per cent – a success by any measure. Virgin Trains' West Coast service received seven times more taxpayer subsidy than East Coast did last year!

TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes said: "Nick Clegg should be ashamed of himself for supporting the Conservatives' crackpot idea for re-privatising the East Coast line on purely ideological grounds. As a publicly-run line, it has paid over £800m to the Treasury and costs less to run than all the other private rail firms who rely on public subsidies to make profits. This decision is the economics of the madhouse and the Lib Dem conference should send that message to its leader, loud and clear."

### A Better Way to jobs and growth

The following day TSSA members from around the country joined the TUC's



Campaigners welcome Lib Dems to York with a message for each of their MPs.

'A Better Way' demonstration outside Lib Dem conference in York.

TSSA, alongside other trade unions, political and social groups, was there to tell the Lib-Dems that there is a better way to grow our economy and protect our society than the coalition's austerity policies.

It was also International Women's Day, so it was appropriate that all the speakers on the day were women.

Women have been disproportionately hit by the Tory-led government's austerity cuts. The Women's Budget Group has found that among lone parents, pensioners and families with young children, it is women

within each group who are hit the hardest. In the private sector, for every 100 jobs created only 37 are going to women. In the public sector, two thirds of all jobs are carried out by women. Despite claims of a national economic recovery, in Yorkshire alone, unemployment amongst women has risen by 9,000.

In the run up to the event the regional TSSA office was a hive of activity. The local Trades Council, People's Assembly and various other community groups all used the office to plan for the day. Placards were made and on the day a collection was held for the York Food Bank. Donations totalling more than 300kg of food were made. ◀◀



Marching through the gates of York with our message for Nick Clegg.

### Get involved

**i** TSSA will be organising and participating in further Keep East Coast Public campaign actions in the run up to the planned announcement of the new franchise operator in October this year. For further information please contact Jerry Wines [winesj@tssa.org.uk](mailto:winesj@tssa.org.uk).

Upcoming events opposing austerity include 'The People United' protest and festival on 21 June organised by The People's Assembly and the TUC's major 'Britain needs a pay rise' demonstrations on 18 October, both in London.

## Bob Crow, 1961 – 2014

IT IS WITH great sadness that we mark the passing of RMT general secretary Bob Crow, who died suddenly, aged 52.

Bob Crow was born in Shadwell, East London in 1961 and grew up in Hainault. After leaving school at 16, he joined London Transport, initially as a member of a tree-clearing team. In 1983 he became a local rep, soon rising to become national officer for track workers in what was then the National Union of Railwaymen. After the merger which formed the RMT, Bob was elected to represent London Underground members on the National Executive in 1991 and was then assistant general secretary until he succeeded Jimmy Knapp as general secretary in 2002.

Bob is survived by his partner, Nicky Hoarau, a son and three daughters. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and all our brothers and sisters in the RMT at this difficult time.

TSSA's former general secretary Gerry Doherty remembers the Bob Crow he knew: "The first time I met Bob Crow he had hair, that's how long I've known him. The news of his all too early, sudden demise came as a shock but not, to be honest, as a huge surprise. I remember, a number of years ago he and I were returning to London on a late night train from some engagement or other when he confided to me that he regarded the job of general secretary as being 'a young person's game' given the amount of



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travelling and the stress involved. He confided that it was his intention to leave the job before it took its toll on his health. Sadly, he never got there."

"Since his untimely passing, I've been asked more than once, 'What was he really like?'. My immediate response is that he was nothing like the image the right-wing press liked to paint. Sure he was abrasive at times, loud-mouthed, maybe, but absolutely committed to the cause and more than able and willing to debate his corner with the very best of them."

"He and I didn't see eye to eye entirely

on politics but neither were we hundreds of miles apart. We both shared the political goals of a safer, more equal, better world, where respect, tolerance and a shared humanity meant more than power, money and position. We just didn't agree on the means of achieving such a utopia."

"Don't 'rest in peace', brother. Wherever you are, agitate, aggravate and organise! When will we see your like again!" ◀◀

① **Donations in memory of Bob may be made to the British Heart Foundation at <http://lastinghope.bhf.org.uk/bobcrow>.**



## Tony Benn, 1925 – 2014

**TONY BENN, A STRONG** friend of TSSA and leading advocate of the public ownership of our railways, has passed away aged 88. The span of his parliamentary career, from 1950 through to his retirement 'to devote more time to politics' 51 years later, saw him involved in almost every labour movement struggle of the latter half of the 20th century.

After leaving parliament, he inspired people of all generations to struggle for a more just and democratic society and world. As he told *TSSA Journal* after addressing TSSA conference in 2008, "Democracy transferred power from the wallet to the ballot. But privatisation is transferring power back from the polling station to the marketplace." He will be sadly missed. ◀◀

Tony Benn speaking at  
TSSA's May 2008 conference



# London Midland staff take a stand

**DUTY TRAIN CREW** Managers (DTCMs) at London Midland have taken two weekends of strike action after the company failed to adequately respond to a productivity claim TSSA members submitted last May.

Staff at London Midland have delivered additional productivity, yet months of negotiations failed to produce a satisfactory offer. London Midland's offer was rejected by members, who voted in favour of taking industrial action.

DTCMs have undertaken additional duties over and above their core roles, but the time has come where they are saying "enough is enough". All this additional work is expected of them, but with no additional recompense.

Only last year London Midland awarded significant sums to drivers for added flexibility, but despite this being exactly what our members have been providing, the company seem to consider this to be worth nothing.

TSSA's senior regional organiser, Tracy Wines, told the *TSSA Journal*, "Our members feel extremely let down by London Midland and can see they are being treated far less favourably than other grades within the business.

DTCMs are now working to rule and have taken strike action over two weekends. This will continue until such time as London Midland are prepared to come to the table to talk to us."



Members picket London Midland's offices

She continued, "The strength of feeling amongst our members is incredible and only goes to show how united they are as a group and how determined they are to win a fair outcome."

Disgracefully, members

have been subjected to intimidation and harassment whilst taking strike action and working to rule. Tracy adds, "If only London Midland would put as much effort into resolving this dispute as they do bullying their staff!" ◀◀

## TSSA and Morrish form groundbreaking legal partnership

**AFTER MORE THAN** a decade of close collaboration, TSSA has formed an even deeper link with Morrish Solicitors LLP, becoming a partner in the firm.

Using a recent regulatory change that allows law firms to adopt an 'Alternative Business Structure', the deal means TSSA will be able to offset a significant proportion of the legal costs incurred fighting on behalf of members.

Paul Scholey, senior partner at Morrish, said, "We have worked with TSSA and the Solicitors' Regulation Authority for 12 months to establish what we believe is the world's first union-based alternative business structure. It brings us closer to one of our most significant clients, whilst TSSA benefits from a direct financial relationship with one of its major providers."

Frank Ward, TSSA's assistant general secretary in charge of legal cases, said, "We have a long and happy relationship with Morrish and this is the natural next step. Now that non-lawyer investment in law firms is permissible, this arrangement lets us better integrate the legal services we provide to members – but without any of the regulatory issues that would be presented by creating an in-house legal team. We are looking forward to developing our legal services for members together with our now even closer partners, Morrish." ◀◀



## Railway Employees' and Public Transport Association

Available to all in the transport industries, TSSA members, family and retired staff. REPTA offers many free, discounted and special rates, listed in our 74 page Yearbook.

New for 2014: Discounted 'Taste Card' and reduced admission to Alnwick Gardens, together with additional health check offers. Free Personal Accident cover for travel on public transport and online bookings continue.

**£4.50 per year. Additional cards for family members £3. Join online at [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk) or send a cheque/PO to REPTA, 4 Brackmills Close, Mansfield NG19 0PB. Tel: 01623 646789. Include name, address, email and date of birth for each and code TSSA.**



Railway Employees & Public Transport Association

# TfL pay for performance: unfit for purpose

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON'S** plans to change their performance related pay system will mean a pay freeze for most staff and huge pension cuts for all.

TfL claim that staff in pay bands 1-3 (including all but the most senior managers) are overpaid in relation to 'the market' rate consultants have drawn up for them. They want to lower the pay bands and cap the pay of those above the top threshold - nearly half of all staff fall into this category. In real terms, this means a pay freeze with little prospect of a thaw in the immediate future.

In our view, the market sample they have chosen is totally inappropriate, including unrelated employers, those outside London and ignores the unique work being carried out by TfL staff. TSSA's position is that TfL is a unique organisation set up to provide world class, sustainable and integrated transport services for a world class city. This mission is underpinned by the recruitment and retention of a world class workforce, dedicated to delivering a quality public service.

Now the Olympics have passed, TfL claim that staff are not performing well enough. They say that reducing pensionable pay rises and replacing them with non-consolidated discretionary bonus payments will improve performance. They have declined to supply a rationale for this – all serious business and academic studies show that decent levels of base pay and proper pensions are essential to a high-performing culture. TfL already have the ability to reward people they think have performed well – if they have not done so, that is down to their choices. TfL management cannot justify their position.

TfL claim they will save around £224 million by implementing their plans. But they have also said that cost is not the key driver and have refused to provide a breakdown of the projected savings. They say they have no savings target –



© robf / Dollar Photo Club

**TfL is a unique organisation set up to provide world class transport for a world class city. Management's 'market sample' pay rates are totally inappropriate.**

probably because much of the cost reductions are within the pension scheme – something they have refused to discuss.

Most insidiously, TfL's plans, if implemented, would mean TSSA's influence over future pay agreements will be greatly reduced. We would no longer be able to ensure that our members receive a decent pay rise, even if the economic situation improves. Peter Robinson, Head of Reward at TfL, has claimed that the trade unions have out-negotiated TfL for years and we have forced TfL into pay increases higher than those paid by 'the market'.

TSSA has never asked for excessive pay increases and TSSA members have never taken industrial action over pay at TfL. Similarly, we assume that, as a responsible employer, TfL has never agreed to base pay increases that have been unaffordable.

However, if TfL has genuine financial difficulties, we expect them to explain these and reach an agreement with us on a sensible and measured response. TfL

management has taken the opposite approach: to try and impose drastic cuts, peg wages to external comparators and escape their pension commitments.

We want to see a joint review of the salary structure with a view to reducing pay anomalies. We want to see base pay and performance awards negotiated with TSSA. Rather than salaries being pegged to spurious 'market' comparators, we think TfL should retain control over its own pay awards. Maybe, they just need to review their own ability to negotiate!

We are ready to enter serious discussions with TfL. Why are they determined to press ahead with what will be unworkable and divisive proposals? It is clear there is a political agenda at work.

Unless the situation changes drastically, we will have no choice but to ballot members for industrial action for the first time ever at TfL. Let us hope that is not necessary but, let no-one be in any doubt, we will not stand by and allow our members' pay and pensions to be decimated by short-term thinking and ideologically driven political agendas. ◀

Andi Fox, TSSA executive member for Yorkshire also represents the union on Labour's national executive.

## TSSA members attend 'political school'

**WITH THE GENERAL** election just over a year away, and local and European elections weeks away, TSSA has been stepping up the level of political activity. TSSA exists to give our members power – in the workplace, and in the world around us.

Over the past year, TSSA has worked with Unions Together to train members who want to represent their

community and national level. The event was organised by Unions Together, the grouping of the 15 trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party. TSSA and Unions Together campaign for the Labour Party because we believe that working people are better off with a Labour government. And we campaign within the Labour Party because we want to

May, with some thinking longer term about standing for Parliament.

Mary Sithole, TSSA rep on C2C who attended the September political school found the experience really empowering: "As a mum who balances looking after my children with my work commitments, and representing TSSA members in the workplace, the course

my confidence, gave me a deeper knowledge of how to campaign in my community and workplace, and made me realise how trade unionists are getting organised to make our voice heard in the Labour Party – so I'm proud to be standing against a vicious Tory council in Croydon this May, for TSSA and Labour".

Given the success of these political schools, some TSSA members are going forward for further more intense training in standing for office and taking on community leadership roles. TSSA is only as strong as our members, and this work is vital to building our members' power and skills, and applying that pressure to impact in our industries and beyond.

Following the political school, and the ramping up of our political strategy of both campaigns and policy lobbying until the general election 2015, TSSA is identifying a growing number of members willing to get involved in their local communities, and indeed those who are themselves standing for election. ◀◀

**i** If you or another TSSA member is standing for election, or are interested in attending a TSSA political school please do contact Sam Tarry on [tarrys@tssa.org.uk](mailto:tarrys@tssa.org.uk) or on 07850 793971.



Reps and staff meet shadow rail minister Lilian Greenwood MP at the political school.

own community. Putting frontline workers back at the heart of local decision-making – whether as local councillors, or even as MPs. Politics cannot be left to the politicians!

In January over 20 members of TSSA, together with union officers, came together at a 'political school' to learn more about creating political impact at both a

ensure that Labour stands up for the needs of our members.

The political school in January was the second such event over the past year, in addition to the 'Organising to Win' political conference which over 100 members attended. At least three of the participants from the earlier school have gone on to stand in local council elections in

really opened my eyes to the importance of building our union's power at every level. I learnt new skills, and felt more confident giving speeches after the training."

Chris Clark, recently elected to TSSA's Executive Committee representing London Transport, took part in the January political school: "The event really helped boost



# Join the TOC Campaign Action Team

**THE CHAIR OF** TSSA's TOC Council, Malcolm Phillips, is looking to recruit a national network of campaigners who can support activities across the country. Malcolm told the Journal, "From the London Underground dispute to the East Coast campaign, or the big campaign we'll be running ahead of the general election, we're looking for people willing to get involved in leafleting, talking to the public and other activities."

"We've already got a good core of members signed up, but we want to have people covering all TOCs and all parts of the country. We want to provide an extra back-up when there's a



Malcolm Phillips is seeking activists across Britain.

campaign going on, doing things locally to support its demands – for instance the plan to close Underground ticket offices doesn't just impact on Londoners, so we could be supporting that campaign at stations where

people are travelling to London, providing extra capacity." <<

**i** *The network is open to all – members, friends or allies. To find out more, email [mal.phillips55@gmail.com](mailto:mal.phillips55@gmail.com).*

## Bargaining information from LRD Payline

**LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT'S** Payline service gives TSSA members access to information on more than 2,000 collective agreements with employers of all sizes in both the private and public sectors, for use in formulating pay claims.

In addition to information about pay settlements and pay rates, Payline has information about working hours, holidays and special leave, overtime rates, pensions, shift pay, regional allowances, maternity, paternity, other family friendly policies (flexible working, career breaks), union facilities and other subjects. <<

**i** *To receive a password call 020 7902 9811 or email [pay@lrd.org.uk](mailto:pay@lrd.org.uk), mentioning that you are a TSSA member.*

## Get involved in the Retired Members' Group

**TSSA'S RETIRED MEMBERS' Group (RMG)** is open to all retired, superannuated and honorary life members of the Association. The RMG meets quarterly, with the nationally elected committee meeting six times per year.

The RMG, working through the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), has seen our policy statement on the harmonisation of travel concessions for retired people throughout Europe accepted by the TUC and the European Federation for Retired and Elderly Persons (FERPA). This policy statement will now go for discussion, and hopefully adoption, by the European Parliament. We have also given written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee concerning access to rural travel.

The RMG plays a full part in the NPC transport committee and members are active in their regional NPC. RMG members are active in a range of TSSA campaign activities as well as in local campaigns with colleagues from Action for Rail. <<

**i** *If you want to become active in the RMG, email [retired@tssa.org.uk](mailto:retired@tssa.org.uk) or write to RMG, TSSA, 6 Royal Scot Road, Derby DE24 8AJ. If you have an email address but it is not registered with the Association, it would help us greatly if you could update your membership record by logging into the TSSA website and providing this. If you have problems logging on, call the Helpdesk on 0800 328 2673 (UK) / 1800 805272 (RoI).*

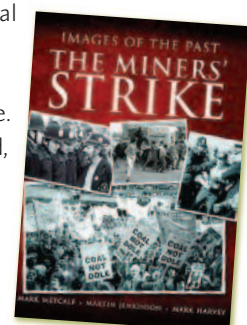
## On the TSSA bookshelf

**'Railpolitik: Bringing Railways Back to the Community'** by TSSA member Paul Salveson calls for an alternative ownership system for the rail networks, neither privatised or a return to a centralised British Rail. Lawrence & Wishart, £14.99.



**'Plundering London Underground: New Labour, Private Capital and Public Service 1997-2010'** by former RMT executive member Janine Booth tells the story of the attempt to part-privatise the Underground. Merlin Press, £13.95.

**'Images of the Past: The Miners' Strike'** by Mark Harvey, Martin Jenkinson & Mark Metcalf, shows life at the sharp end of the strike on its 30th anniversary. The largely pictorial record shows many aspects of the struggle. Pen and Sword, £14.99.



## Sign up for MyTSSA

**MYTSSA IS THE** secure personalised area of the TSSA website which will increasingly be used to help you communicate with the Association and organise locally.

As more and more information goes live, you will be able to see news from your branch, division and other groups, join discussions, as well as update your membership details and get in touch with your reps.

The system also provides enhanced access for officers to publish news, events and pages, plus the ability to generate and submit reports. Dozens of branch financial

secretaries are already submitting their financial returns in this way.

In the coming months, further MyTSSA features will be made available to reps, strengthening the organising possibilities within workplaces and employers. The 'groups' features will also allow ad-hoc and campaign-focused groups to communicate, organise and share resources online.

Registering is a very simple process, just requiring your membership number. You can find your membership number on your membership card or on the mailing sheet that came with this Journal, just below your



address. Alternatively, you can call the Helpdesk to receive your membership number on 0800 328 2673 (UK) / 1 800 805272 (RoI). ◀◀

**i** You can register for MyTSSA via the 'login' link at the top of each page on the website at [www.tssa.org.uk](http://www.tssa.org.uk).



## Follow TSSA conference online

**TSSA'S ANNUAL DELEGATE** conference, which sets the union's direction and holds the executive to account will take place between 10 and 12 May in Leeds. Once again we'll be 'live blogging' the event on the TSSA website, with text and photo updates throughout each day of debate. You'll also be able to download the daily edition of *TSSA Journal* produced during conference. ◀◀

**i** For details see [www.tssa.org.uk/conference](http://www.tssa.org.uk/conference).

## Education courses available

**TO JOIN ONE** of TSSA's education courses book online at [www.tssa.org.uk/education](http://www.tssa.org.uk/education) or call the Helpdesk on 0800 328 2673 (UK) or 1 800 805272 (RoI). To discuss which courses may be useful to you, contact TSSA's education officer, Adèle Potten-Price via [potten-pricea@tssa.org.uk](mailto:potten-pricea@tssa.org.uk).

LEVEL	COURSE TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	LOCATION
1	Neurodiversity Awareness Training	Wednesday 30 April	Wednesday 30 April	London
3	Union Learning Reps Advanced	Tuesday 6 May Monday 19 May	Thursday 8 May Tuesday 20 May	London
2	Industrial Relations Reps Introduction	Monday 12 May	Friday 16 May	York
2	Health and Safety Reps Introduction	Tuesday 27 May	Friday 30 May	York
1	Induction – for all new reps	Tuesday 3 June	Wednesday 4 June	London
4	Senior Reps Skills	Monday 23 June	Friday 27 June	Derby
1	Neurodiversity Awareness Training	Wednesday 2 July	Wednesday 2 July	York
1	Induction – for all new reps	Tuesday 8 July	Wednesday 9 July	York
1	Neurodiversity Awareness Training	Wednesday 17 September	Wednesday 17 September	London



# TSSA Journal: Past, present and future

**THE NAME, STYLE,** price and format of the Journal have changed many times over the past 110 years, reflecting the changing technologies and needs of the Association. Another change is now approaching, as discussed by the general secretary on page 14. Prioritising online communication means we will be able to better respond to events, moving beyond the limitations of a bimonthly print schedule. Consequently, the number of printed editions of the Journal will be reduced, with their frequency to be decided as part of the Executive Committee's overall review of our operations. Therefore, this seems like an opportune moment to look back into the Journal's archive.



## 110 years ago: January 1904

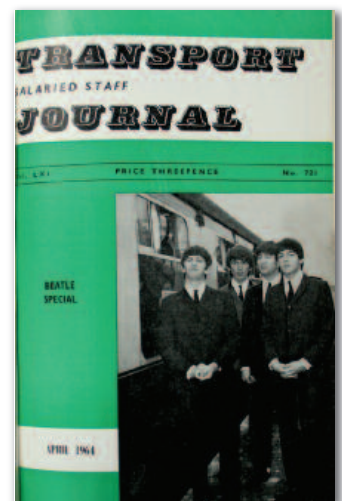
Vol 1. No. 1, of The Railway Clerk was published on January 1st 1904, priced at 1d. Describing itself as 'A magazine for account clerks, station masters, booking clerks, goods agents, telegraphists, goods clerks, and all branches of the railway clerical service'.

The opening article was a portrait of Association president, Sir Fortescue Flannery, JP MP, who was not a railwayman, but a marine engineer, born in 1851. Further articles in the concise 12 page publication document the origins of the RCA (back to 1897), 'Our railway bookshelf' and an open letter to non-members inviting them to join.

## 50 years ago: April 1964

The Beatle (sic) Special amounts to merely a cover and a single page of the 44 in this edition, now 3d. The link? The Beatles had recently recorded their first film, A Hard Day's Night, which is partially set on a train.

Continuing the Merseyside theme, a photo feature on Cilla Black 'should pacify those of our readers who have been asking why we've given Liverpool's bright young Miss the cold shoulder'. There is no mention of railways or workplace issues, but there is an almost full page photo of Cilla! The opening article is on the importance of voting in local elections, whilst another article discusses the introduction of containerised freight trains.



## 20 years ago: April 1994

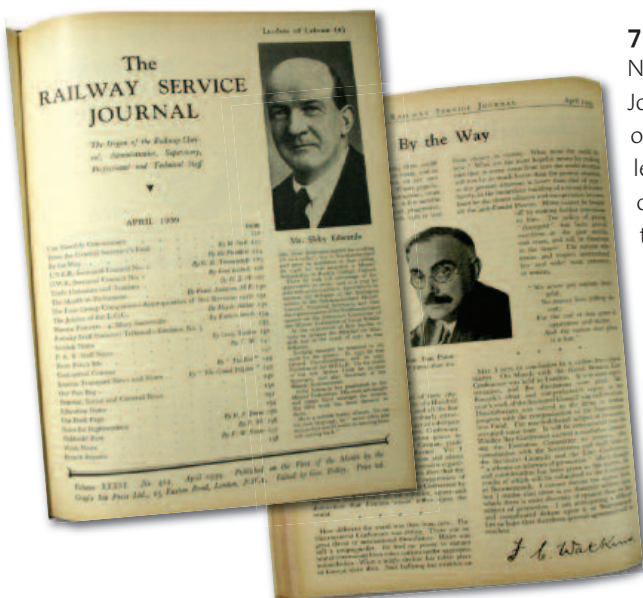
As privatisation gets underway, the 'Save Our Railways' campaign looks to highlight the impact of the sell-off. London buses are also soon to go out to tender, whilst the Sheffield Supertram has just opened. The tabloid-format Journal is now priced at 50p, with three pages now in colour.



## 75 years ago: April 1939

Now costing 2d, the substantial 44 page Journal opens, as was usual, with the 'Leaders of Labour' portrait, here featuring miners' leader Ebby Edwards. The first major article opposes fare increases in London, a familiar theme but with a scale thankfully not seen in recent years: the proposal was for a 50 per cent rise!

The president's column reflects on the German invasion of Czechoslovakia the previous month and takes a firm line against appeasement. The following page, a report from the LNER sectional council, features the problem that management would not pay overtime for those attending ARP classes.



# London Underground

The London Underground dispute has seen TSSA members take strike action to defend jobs and maintain the services used by millions of passengers a year. Whilst the action is currently suspended for talks, we look at what we've achieved and what comes next.



## Action Stations!

London Underground's refusal to meaningfully negotiate on huge changes in the way that stations are staffed pushed TSSA and RMT members to take strike action in the first week of February. In a significant misjudgment, the Mayor seemed to relish the prospect of a strike, not crediting the public with being able to see this was a dispute about maintaining services and safety, not about 'greedy workers'.

Support for the strike amongst members was solid, with the impact exceeding expectations. Despite TfL's propaganda of a 'normal service' and the suggestion of an 'army of volunteers', the results were clear for all

to see. While the Mayor's cheerleaders in the media sought to tell their usual story of unions 'holding the city to ransom', the public largely accepted that the dispute was caused by Boris Johnson reneging on his direct promises to Londoners. 'No ticket offices will be closed, alright? They're not going to be closed. The answer to the number of ticket office closures is: nil', Boris Johnson had told the London Assembly. Much of the public therefore understood why tube workers were

angry and determined to take action, especially when they saw the Mayor refuse to meet Manuel Cortes and Bob Crow when they attempted to talk to him at City Hall.

Dozens of TSSA picket lines were held across the capital, with a 'battle bus' of activists, including TSSA's president and general secretary visiting many of them. Leafleting of the public reinforced the message that this was a dispute about the service they receive, not the wages we are paid.

Before the strike, LU were implementing, not talking. We shifted them overnight to talking, not implementing.



## LU would do well to remember the industrial action remains merely suspended, not cancelled, and can be resumed at any point

### Movement at talks as LU acknowledge public mood

Talks resumed at ACAS immediately after the first two day strike, with the clock ticking to follow-up action the next week. The employer's attitude had rapidly shifted from one of belligerence and threats to one where at least serious discussion could take place. Before the strike, staff posts were already in the process of being lost as severance applications were taken forward and online 'learning tools' were being promoted for the new roles, the content of which was still theoretically being consulted on. As regional organiser Wayne Geoghegan says, "Before the strike, LU were implementing, not talking. We shifted them overnight to talking, not implementing." This allowed space for the serious discussions which could have taken place in the months before, were it not for the obstructiveness of the employer.

In return, TSSA and RMT suspended the industrial action, with reps now negotiating day in, day out, over a seven week programme of talks. Progress is described as 'slow', with a report due to be given to ACAS in early April. Reps are working hard to try and reach a satisfactory deal, but LU would do well to remember the industrial action remains merely suspended, not cancelled, and can be resumed at any point. The ballot mandate is live and reps will be assessing what progress has been made at the conclusion of the consultation period.

### London Assembly: 'Consult the public first'

Shortly after the strike, the London Assembly passed an advisory motion by 15 votes to nine saying the Mayor "must instruct Transport for London to conduct a full public consultation on the Fit for the Future programme. This should include producing a plan for each station affected, including details of what the staffing provision there will be and how services will change."

Backing TSSA's call, the Assembly motion also said, "We believe that the Mayor and Transport for London should

develop and adopt a 'Passengers Charter' which clearly sets out the minimum service level they can expect to receive from TfL."

Labour member Val Shawcross, who proposed the motion, said, "It's the consumer and democratic right of Londoners to have a say about transport changes that will directly affect them, which is why we believe there should be a station by station consultation with input from the public."

There's been no sign of this happening yet, but in the absence of an official consultation, we plan to work with Assembly members to initiate one ourselves.

### Lies, damn lies and statistics

The Mayor, TfL and assorted Tories from the Prime Minister down have sought to claim that ticket offices are barely used by the public – and used and abused a number of statistics to try and make this point.

TfL were widely quoted as saying "just 3 per cent of Tube journeys involve a visit to a ticket office". What they were less keen to publicise is that about 1 in 5 ticket sales at a station take place at a ticket office. For example, in May 2013 ticket offices sold 2.8 million tickets, whilst machines sold 9.4 million – so 23 per cent of passengers opted for a ticket office.

On average, 93,000 passengers a day –

or 34 million a year – make a ticket office transaction, with more still visiting for advice – a vast number to withdraw a service from.

42 per cent of ticket office users at gateway stations surveyed by TfL were visitors to the UK and 34 per cent very infrequent LU customers. Shifting these customers, unfamiliar with the network, on to ticket machines is liable to inconvenience many regular customers by significantly slowing down queues at major stations.

### The struggle continues

The strong stand that members have taken has of course not merely been motivated by the proposed cut in total staffing levels, but by many of the specifics of the new grades and the interactions between them. Significant safety concerns are also a key concern. There have been scores of points across seven distinct strands upon which our negotiators have been seeking to make headway.

When the current round of negotiations close in early April, we hope to have seen significant and satisfactory progress, however we also have to prepare for this not to be the case. Your reps will be taking important decisions on how to respond to best protect your interests going forward – feel free to get in touch to feed in your thoughts. A union is at its strongest and its members best protected when we speak and act as one. Get involved, recruit any colleagues thinking of joining and prepare for some big decisions in April. ☘

**In May 2013 ticket offices sold 2.8 million tickets whilst machines sold 9.4 million – so 23 per cent of passengers opted for a ticket office.**

Shadow minister for London Sadiq Khan, together with Labour London Assembly members campaigning against the cuts earlier in the year.



Andrew Wiard



Manuel  
Cortes

## Building our future as a union

As you are probably aware, our Executive Committee (EC) is undertaking a root and branch review of everything that our union does. As I explained in my last article, the overriding priority of this exercise is to maintain our union's ability to continue to represent you both individually and collectively, to build our membership where possible and to campaign with you to influence external decision makers – be it politicians or employers – whilst seeking to eliminate the deficit that a declining membership has created. This will safeguard our union's future in the short to medium term.

I am therefore extremely pleased to tell you that our EC has received a significant number of responses to their consultation document on how these crucial changes may be progressed. They will now reflect on these submissions before a final document is circulated for discussion at our conference in May. I want to thank each and every one of you who has participated in this very important process – your ongoing input is vital if we are to get this right. The reality is that our union can no longer afford to keep doing things as we have always done them. Put simply, change is not an option – it is a pressing necessity!

For example, following the recent introduction of online joining, the majority of new members now join our ranks via the web. In addition, when it comes to financial transactions, our union now largely conducts these electronically. I am sure many of you will know from your own experiences that this is becoming the norm as cheques are almost a thing of the past. We are increasingly shifting away from paper-based administration. Thankfully, new technology also provides a raft of communication tools that help keep you up-to-date with what our union is doing. Email, Twitter, Facebook and our website give us the ability to communicate almost instantaneous both with you and the wider world. Frankly, only a few decades ago, none of us could have dreamt of having such a vast array of fast, reliable means with which to keep you informed.

Our union can no longer afford to keep doing things as we have always done them.

Change is not an option – it is a pressing necessity!

Don't let others choose for you – make sure you vote in the upcoming elections.

You know, our union is having to grapple with some real challenges when considering how best to allocate the scarce resources at its disposal. Given this, our EC will soon be putting in place a new communication strategy that will seek the best means for keeping in touch with you as cost effectively as possible. The intention is to focus our message – and also how it is delivered to you – to ensure that it best serves your needs.

We aim to put in place a greater range of publications. This will result in more diverse and frequent communications – workplace and company specific newsletters, campaigning materials, SOGs newsletters, activist-specific publications, etc – the vast majority of which you will receive through electronic means. I am acutely aware that not all of you have access to email and/or the web. I can assure you that you will not be left behind. As required, we will continue posting hard copies to keep you informed of what is going on. However, the above means that we will no longer need to print our Journal as often as we currently do. As we deploy more effective means of keeping you informed, we will be reducing the printed editions.

Lastly, between the 22 and 25 May Europe goes to the polls – there are also local elections in England and Ireland. You know, voting really matters. You can read on the following page an excellent article by our union's president, Mick Carney, highlighting the decisions that the European Union makes which have a direct impact on your livelihoods. The reality is that whether you agree or disagree with the concept of the EU, as things stand, the facts on the ground tell us that whoever becomes your MEP will have an input into what policies are pursued. Similarly, in local elections, those in power will make crucial decisions about vital services. That is why you need your voice to be heard. Don't let others choose for you – make sure you vote in these elections! ◀◀



TSSA president [Mick Carney](#) reports on the campaign against the European Commission's plan to require rail 'liberalisation'.

# Fighting our corner in Europe

**THE GENERAL SECRETARY** and I recently visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg, joining with our partners in the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) to protest against the set of proposals known as the 'Fourth Railway Package'. Thanks to some excellent work by our union's political officer, Sam Tarry, we were given the opportunity to lobby the British Labour Party's European Parliamentary group and Brian Simpson MEP, the chair of the parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee.

## So what is the Fourth Railway Package?

In a nutshell, it's about liberalisation of the rail industries of all member states to ensure 'competitiveness'. This all sounds alarmingly similar to the language used by the Tories back in the early 90s to justify the highly unpopular privatisation of Britain's railways. Some of what is proposed we would not necessarily be against: it makes some sense to have a single technical specification across Europe. It is right that it would open the markets to far more cross-border trains. But as ever the devil lies in the detail. The European Commission, who drew up the plans, sit firmly on the right politically. As people on the right the world over know, 'liberalisation' creates opportunities for quick capital gain. Privatisation. And, as ever, the need for 'efficiencies' to be made and corners cut to make money. In this country we have seen the tragic consequences of cutting corners at both Hatfield and Potters Bar.

## Why are the European Transport Workers' Federation opposed?

The ETF are well aware of the failings of the British model. Fragmentation has led to a massive hike in the subsidies paid out to often failing rail companies. Fares have increased massively over the years, with even Tory supporters of privatisation describing our railways as a 'rich man's toy'. A replication of much of this would be the result of the details of the report.



Keith Richmond / ASLEF

**TSSA and ASLEF joined workers from across the EU on a protest organised by the European Transport Workers' Federation.**

## And our objections?

The TSSA objections are simple. We see this further liberalisation as a dangerous proposal. It is simply incredible that after seeing the mistakes the British made, some want to force the European market down the same route. But the most important aspect for us is the proposed separation of wheel and rail. The train operator and the track operator would have to be owned independently of one another. To put it simply, our long standing policy of renationalisation would no longer be possible.

A further clause in there would have made strike action far more difficult. This was actively opposed by Labour MEPs and subsequently dropped at the main vote.

Sections of the proposals were defeated at the vote, as, to put it simply, if the French and Germans are opposed to something, it doesn't happen. But much of the plan remains on the table. A shift in the political make-up of the European Parliament is expected after the May elections, but the Fourth Railway Package remains a dangerous proposal. Bad for the railways and bad for our members.

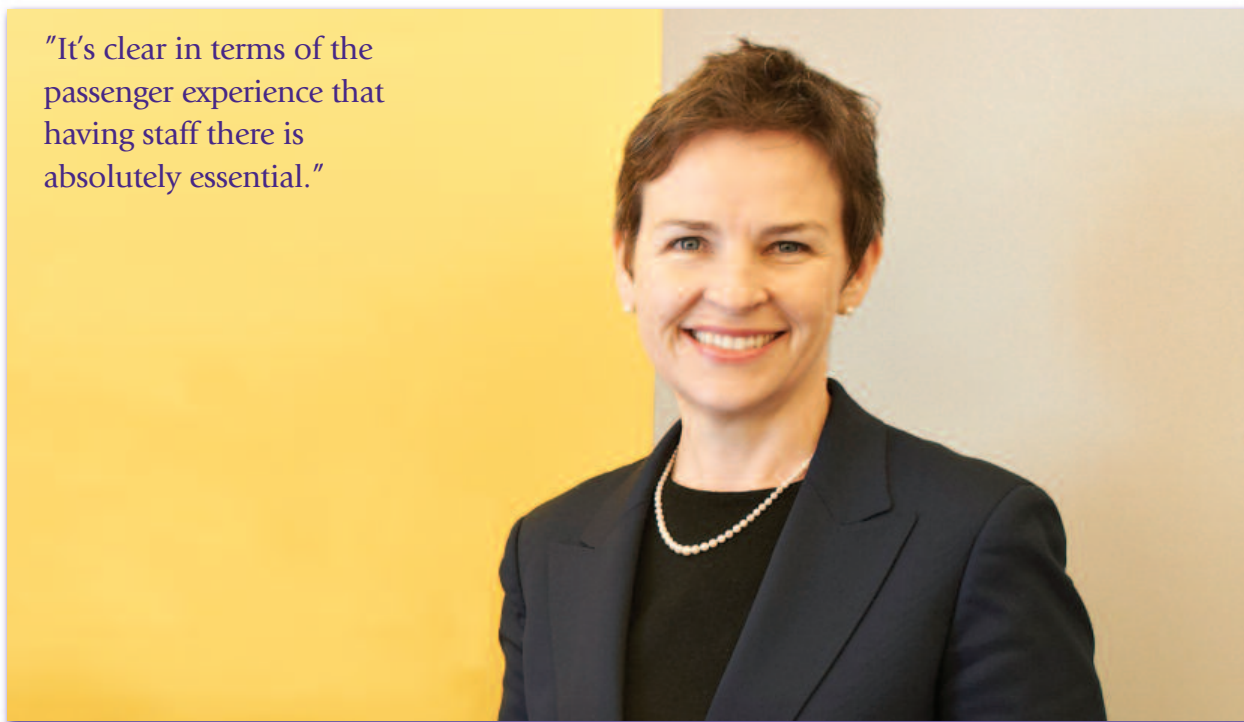
The meeting with the Labour MEPs

was fascinating. I learned much about the intricacies of the process, the various deals which need to be done and the factions that exist. For all its faults, Europe does offer a lot of legislation that protects workers' rights. Legislation the Tories would be only too happy to overturn if they could. There are European Parliament elections coming up on 22 May and I would encourage you all to participate. In Yorkshire at the last election 7,000 votes went to a well-meaning left-wing anti-EU party (so not UKIP then). These were enough to let Andrew Brons, a fascist, get elected by just 3,000 votes. These bastards must never gain a foothold in power and must never be awarded any undeserved credibility. They are Nazis pure and simple – use your vote to stop them.

At the start of March I also attended the FutureTSSA meeting in York and I must say I was very impressed. There was a good level of debate and discussion, plus a willingness to get involved in the union as a whole. Any members under 35 who wish to get further involved should contact the secretary Al Stoten on [alexanderstoten@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alexanderstoten@yahoo.co.uk). ◀◀

Five months in to her new role, *TSSA Journal* caught up with Labour's shadow transport secretary, Mary Creagh, to quiz her on her vision for the future of our railway.

"It's clear in terms of the passenger experience that having staff there is absolutely essential."



## Mary Creagh: the next transport secretary

Meeting Mary in her busy Westminster office, the walls covered with maps of the proposed HS2 route, it's clear that she is well on the way to developing an in-depth knowledge of her brief. The MP for Wakefield has much to do in the 13 months before she could be walking into the Department for Transport as part of a Labour government, but is clearly relishing the challenge. A proud user of East Coast ('our railway') and Northern, Mary speaks with real passion – not just about the railways, but across the areas of her brief, from buses to aviation.

"It's a fantastic job! It's also very challenging – the Department for Transport has a £13bn budget. There's a big part of this job related to national infrastructure and national economic life, but it's also about keeping the cost of living down and making sure that services are there for the people who need them."

### Staff cuts?

But despite the growing recognition of the need to grow capacity on the railway, the McNulty Report suggested huge cuts to staff – is this really the way forward?

"There's a series of questions about why the railways in the UK are more expensive to run – is that because of fragmentation, because it's not integrated between track and train? The row over the Mayor of London's closure of ticket offices has thrown things into very sharp relief. I know from my own station in Wakefield that people want staff to be there, people want to be able to buy a ticket, they don't want to be queuing and they certainly don't want to be fined when they get off because the ticket office was shut or the machine wasn't working. It's clear in terms of the passenger experience that having staff there is absolutely essential. Also, if we're going to have a railway accessible to

disabled people, we need to have the staff to help with that. Also, to ensure we have a safe railway, guards on trains are absolutely vital. Technological changes should be there, but the important thing is to make sure that stations are staffed, welcoming, friendly, and that people can get the help they need."

### Moving on from franchising failures

In 13 months time we may have a Labour government faced with a steady stream of franchising decisions. Leaving the system 'as is' would lock in private franchising for another generation. Doesn't the country deserve something better?

"What East Coast shows is that you *can* have a directly operated railway. Who knew! It challenged the orthodoxy that there was in the Labour Party that a directly operated railway was somehow illegal or not allowed under European law.



At the time, we had to say it would be done for a certain period of time, but it has shown that a directly operated railway can run a railway. That's a good thing!

"I want to see a directly operated railway continue in some shape or form. The East Coast franchise competition is underway – I've worked with TSSA and sister unions to try and stop that – but we have said that we will have a directly operated railway after the next election. Even if East Coast is re-franchised, we will find a way to have that. Having that direct public sector comparator and allowing them to bid for franchises is really important, both for getting a good deal for the franchises, but also having a backstop if any of them go bad.

"Franchising has not done well under this government. The last five years have been a pretty rocky ride for it, but if you examine the finances of the railway, and look at the railways we have to subsidise, like Northern, a vital community railway, somehow the money has to come in to run them. Is it best if it's a direct operator? DOR's given £200m back in 2012/13 to the government – that's a big chunk of money and we have to make sure big chunks of money come in. Whether that's through franchising or a directly operated railway, we're still looking at that."

## HS2 integrated into the network

Developing a high speed rail network for Britain is clearly a project that would need to outlive not just the present government, but the political careers of many currently in Parliament. Labour's support is vital and whilst at the time of the interview we were still awaiting Sir David Higgins' review, she was clear that this is a much-needed project with the capacity to transform our railways.

"It's clear that we need HS2 to tackle the capacity issues we face. We have to do something to tackle the congestion that means that people are every day enduring cramped and miserable conditions on their way into Birmingham, Euston, Leeds and Manchester. But it's also clear the project has not been well served by this government – costs have spiraled.

"We need to make sure, particularly with Phase 2 of the project, that we don't create winners and losers and we need to

look at how that big investment fits in with the next 15 years of railway spending. We need an integrated plan, including public transport, active travel – walking and cycling – and our bus network. There's no blank cheque for this project. We'll be making sure we get a railway that works for the 21st century and that helps us get jobs and growth across the whole of the country and not just building a recovery in the South East."

## A vision for rail

Mary is also clear that rail's multi-billion pound draw from public spending, ministers should be setting a clear direction of travel for the industry: 'I'm yet to hear a Conservative Secretary of

**"We'll be making sure we get a railway [HS2] that helps us get jobs and growth across the whole of the country and not just building a recovery in the South East."**

State set out their vision for what the railways should be. In my last five months in office, I've been thinking very deeply about accessibility, cost, the need for better timetabling, better information for passenger, fewer cancelled trains and being much cleverer about how we manage our rail assets."

Now that Network Rail is to be a full public-sector body, what needs to change there? "Governance is the issue. A board with 30 members is, in my mind, too big. The accountability of the board – where does that rest?

"We also want to look at how you bring down the costs of rolling stock – that's another post-privatisation problem. There's been some limits shown to the privatised model – what can we learn from that?"

There are still many questions to be resolved – and much campaigning work we need to do to ensure Labour comes to the right conclusions, but as Mary says, "We're going to need TSSA's members to help to keep us running the railway in the public interest." ◀◀



Mary Creagh with East Coast staff at the newly-rebuilt Wakefield Westgate station.

## Manuel Cortes comments

In Mary Creagh, we have a shadow minister serious about preparing Labour for government, but it's also very clear that much work remains to be done to push Labour to adopt our vision of a publicly owned railway. We need to play our part, both inside the Labour Party and beyond, working with our partners in Action for Rail, to fight for a system of public ownership that puts people – passengers and workers – ahead of profit.

Last autumn's Labour Party conference overwhelmingly endorsed a TSSA motion calling for public ownership to be extended as each franchise expires. We'll be pushing a similar demand through Labour's manifesto process over the coming months. Labour members should contact our political officer to help with this, whilst everyone should help put these demands via the joint-union Action for Rail campaign.

A never-ending cycle of re-organisations has seen functions moved in and out of direct government control every few years. Here, [Christian Wolmar](#) asks whether these changes address the real problems our railways face?



# A quagmire of quangos

The railways seem to be reorganised as often as the National Health Service. There are changes afoot yet again. In a move that caused laughter amongst the older hands who remember the Office of Rail Passenger Franchising (ORPAF), the Department for Transport has just announced that in the autumn a new body called the Office of Rail Passenger Services will be created.

It would be comic if it were not such a sad waste of people's time and taxpayers' money. 20 years after the start of the privatisation process it seems we have now gone full circle. When the railways were first franchised, ORPAF, which was an effective and quite lean body, managed to let all the franchises in the space of around 18 months. So even though I think the whole franchise process is daft and a huge waste of money, at least it was done efficiently. Then Labour created the Strategic Rail Authority in 2001, which became a hugely bloated organisation and as the joke went, should have been called just

'Rail' as it had neither strategy nor authority. Therefore when Labour reviewed the structure of the industry, the SRA was abolished – which actually was a mistake since it should have been reformed – and its functions spread between different players.

Responsibility for franchises then passed to the Department for Transport, which managed the operators and was often accused of micromanagement, though in fact it often failed to keep proper tabs on what was going on. Then came the fiasco over the allocation of the West Coast contract in 2012 which led to two rapid reviews on franchising. Though the system was clearly flawed, neither review looked at alternatives but instead were limited to suggestions about making the existing system better.

Therefore we now have a system of letting short term franchises to the

incumbents without competition. How this can be presented as an improvement, given that 'competition' was supposed to be the main benefit of the whole system, beggars belief. A wider ranging review was undertaken and now the government intends to create a Rail Executive which will be responsible for major projects, strategy and sorting out franchises – although the latter will pass to the new ORPF in the autumn.

All this is supposed to be with the aim of improving the efficiency of the industry. Remember that three years ago a hard-hitting report was produced for the government by Sir Roy McNulty, which advocated a stiff target of cutting costs by 30 per cent by 2020. Again, while it blamed the fragmentation of the industry for the increase in costs, it failed to make the obvious suggestion that the industry should be brought back together again.

[Suggestions of the mass closure of ticket offices \(apart from on London Underground\) seem to have been quietly forgotten.](#)



Instead McNulty suggested further fragmentation and a series of cuts. This prompted fears at the time – and indeed subsequently – that there would be major cutbacks and widespread redundancies in the industry. In fact, there has been very little sign of such cuts and the McNulty report seems to have been largely consigned to the proverbial dustbin.

This is well demonstrated by the fate of the Rail Delivery Group. The creation of a group linking different parts of the industry in order to deliver savings was a key part of the McNulty recommendations. The RDG was duly formed soon after the publication of the report, but after a flurry of early activity it seems to have become little more than an internal talking shop with no powers to actually make any decisions. This must have come to ministers' attention, as late last

private money into the industry have no say in the RDG. There is, therefore, considerable anger within the industry about this structure and therefore the RDG – and with it the McNulty report – seem to have become an irrelevance.

Are all the fears about major cuts in the industry unfounded? It seems so. Certainly Network Rail will continue to make savings under the new Control Period which is just starting, but these are related to the oversight by the Office of Rail Regulation, rather than McNulty. And the investment programme promised for the next five years, with a £37bn budget, represents a considerable increase on the previous Control Period that ended in March, which had a spend of around £31bn.

Let me end on a neat irony. The Rail Executive is being created with the idea

point of view of the Department, is that it will be able to hire people on salaries matching those of the people they negotiate franchises with. At the moment the train operators are often able to run rings round the civil servants because they can afford to hire the best brains – indeed, many of whom are former Department officials.

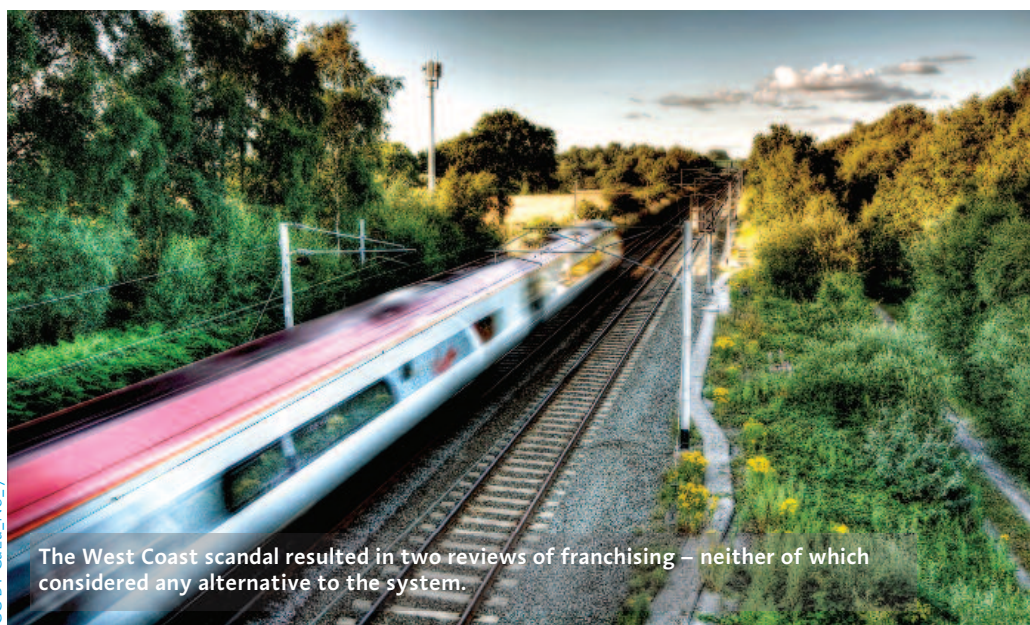
On the other hand, Network Rail is effectively being nationalised in September when its massive £30bn plus debt becomes part of general government borrowing. Ministers have already made clear that they intend to use their greater leverage over Network Rail to rein back on the huge bonuses which it pays to its executives. So we have one part of the railway governance structure being opened up so that higher salaries can be paid, while another part is coming under greater government control in order to ensure that executives do not earn what ministers consider are excessive amounts. You could not make it up. ◀◀

It would be comic if it were not such a sad waste of people's time and taxpayers' money, that 20 years after privatisation, we have now gone full circle on rail regulation.

year it was decided that the RDG should merge with the Association of Train Operating Companies.

This was a very strange marriage which seems to have weakened both organisations. The very name RDG is completely incomprehensible to the general public and the remit of the organisation is very confusing. It lacks the powers to make railway companies do anything and, oddly, it does not even have the aim of implementing McNulty's recommendations. Suggestions of the mass closure of ticket offices (apart from on London Underground which of course is completely separate) seem to have been quietly forgotten and the railway companies realise that with increasing numbers of passengers, staff cuts would affect performance and therefore their income.

Its membership, too, is limited to organisations which have a turnover of more than £100m. Even then it only includes passenger and freight operators plus Network Rail – a total of a dozen firms. It excludes engineering and rolling stock companies, which means that the very people who are actually investing



McNulty blamed fragmentation for the increase in costs... but then suggested further fragmentation and a series of cuts.

of eventually hiving it off from the Department – and confusingly it will be called the Rail Delivery Authority – with the intention of creating some sort of separate body, like the Highways Agency. One advantage of this, from the

**i** *Christian Wolmar is Britain's leading transport commentator.*

*To see more of his writings or to invite him to your branch meeting, visit [www.christianwolmar.co.uk](http://www.christianwolmar.co.uk).*

Many traditional Labour Clubs have disappeared in recent years, but this needn't be the end of such spaces. **Paul Salveson** reports on a venue bucking the trend and successfully reaching out to new layers of trades unionists and community activists, supported by TSSA.



# A place for our movement to call home: The Red and Green Club

**The early labour movement understood the importance of having your own place. Whether it was the radical clubs of London, the socialist rooms in the industrial North and the Clarion clubs of central Scotland and Lancashire, they were a key part of building a new politics in the years leading up to the First World War. It's one of the great tragedies of the modern labour movement that so few survive. Many 'labour clubs' long since became nothing more than cheap drinking dens and most have succumbed to competition from the even cheaper booze at supermarkets.**

Thanks to help from TSSA, at least one club is prospering. One of the oldest surviving socialist clubs in Britain, at Milnsbridge in the Colne Valley near Huddersfield, is at the heart of a revival of a new radical politics. After coming close to collapse, the club is developing as a popular venue for trades unionists and socialists as well as providing a much-needed venue for local bands, poets and writers. It has been re-christened 'The Red and Green Club'.

Its history is fascinating. The original Milnsbridge Socialist Club was once surrounded by a thriving textile industry; the town had dozens of mills employing thousands of workers, many

of whom flocked to the new socialist organisations that sprang up in the 1890s. The club opened in 1892 and hosted speakers including suffragette Christabel Pankhurst, Independent Labour Party pioneer Kathryn Bruce Glasier, socialist MP Victor Grayson and Philip Snowden – Labour's first Chancellor of the Exchequer and the area's MP up to 1931. The club even had its own socialist brass band, which used to perform at trade union and socialist demonstrations and on the annual May Day procession. A photograph of the band still adorns the club's concert room. Milnsbridge was one of many socialist clubs in the Colne Valley. Their programme included social events, regular speakers and discussions and provided a base for Clarion cyclists and choirs – all essential infrastructure for the hugely successful socialist movement. Britain's first socialist county councillor, George Garside, was

**The old club faced familiar problems: changing habits, an inability to appeal to a broader market, rising debts. The future looked bleak.**

elected in Colne Valley and Grayson's 1907 victory sent shock waves through the establishment.

But heritage on its own is no guarantee of salvation. Milnsbridge Socialist Club faced all the same problems that social clubs have had to deal with in the last few years: changing habits, an inability to appeal to a broader market, rising debts. It closed its doors last June and the future looked bleak. However, a group of local socialists, greens and community activists have got together to save the club and create a new and more inclusive venue for a wider area – one that can attract much greater community involvement. A co-operative has been formed (technically, an industrial and provident society) to buy the building which the club, now 'The Red and Green Club', is currently renting. That gives the new co-operative a breathing space to raise £100,000 to buy the building and raise further funds for renovation and access improvements.

That's no easy task and the co-op has launched an appeal to the labour and socialist movement, with some good early results. TSSA has already made a substantial donation (£2,500) to get the club up and running and has agreed an





'Old Man Pie' playing at a recent gig – in front of a banner supporting local rail improvements.



The club has seen strong local support for its events since launching last summer.

even bigger investment in the co-operative which will own the club. Other unions are showing serious interest in matching TSSA's support. The co-op has already benefited from free advice from the national co-operative movement, through The Co-operative Hub. TSSA's initial contribution allowed the club to commission a much-needed building survey and business plan. Fortunately, no major structural problems were found but the cost of doing everything the members want – including full disabled access and opening a canal-side café and bar in the basement – comes to a hefty £300,000. The club isn't deterred by this and is looking at a staged approach, once ownership of the building is secured. "This project will take years to complete," said secretary John Goodwin. "Buying the building is just the start. We want to develop an asset that people – and organisations like TSSA – will want to invest in, not just make donations to".

The first public event organised by the new club was an afternoon 'People's Party' on Bank Holiday Monday, last August. Committee member Sohail Khan, who was dressed up as a robot for the event says, "There was live music, free food and stalls from a dozen community and socialist organisations – over 200 people took part and I entertained the kids with my slightly surreal costume. It was fantastic!" A few weeks later a social with the local trades council attracted a capacity audience to help build support for the TUC march during the Tory Party Conference in Manchester. Since then, the club has gone from strength to strength, with at

least two events happening each week. And it's all done by volunteers.

Unison member Eddie Hughes is events co-ordinator. "Plans over the next few months include world music events, poetry sessions, and film nights. The club is running a series of political discussions, open to anyone interested," he said. During March it hosted an event on the 30th anniversary of The Miners' Strike, with members bringing along

**Having a base makes such a difference, giving people space to come together on a wide range of common concerns, not least the future of the NHS.**

their memories of local solidarity and ephemera including badges, banners and newspapers. The club was the starting point for a 'Suffragette Walk' on International Women's Day on 8 March organised by the club-based 'Radical Valleys' history group. The Colne Valley was a hotbed of suffragette activity, with hundreds of women textile workers involved in marches, picnics and social events to demand the vote. The club has a small display of women's suffrage memorabilia in its Concert Room.

The club describes itself as a place for the left and the wider community in the Colne Valley. "We are not tied to any one political party," said club activist and Green Party member Charlie Fairbank. "We are working positively with friends in the Labour Party as well

as non-aligned socialists". Local GP Hester Dunlop, of Colne Valley Labour Party, echoed Charlie's comments. "It's long overdue for the left to work together positively. Having a base makes such a difference, giving people space to come together on a wide range of common concerns, not least the future of the NHS." The club is being used as the regular meeting place for the area's 'Keep Our NHS Public' campaign.

Creating a lively, inclusive and financially viable centre for the left is no easy challenge. But it's vital to the job of rebuilding a radical and democratic politics. "It's partly about having somewhere friendly and accessible to meet," said Hester. "But it's also about networking with people from other political groups and working together and running joint campaigns".

The next few months will decide the future of this exciting venture. The support from TSSA has been the single most important outside contribution to the club's renaissance. "We are looking forward to hosting a visit of TSSA activists during the union's annual conference in Leeds – they can be assured of getting a warm Yorkshire welcome!" said Hester. ◀◀

**i** The Red and Green Club has a Facebook page 'The Red and Green Club Milnsbridge' which TSSA Journal readers are invited to 'like'. TSSA members who are not Conference delegates are welcome to join the gathering at the club, which will be held over the second weekend in May. For more information email [paul@paulsalveson.com](mailto:paul@paulsalveson.com).

scottish independence

# Scotland: The choice is yours

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This year, on Thursday 18 September, four million voters in Scotland will be asked to decide whether their nation should remain in the UK or become an independent country. *TSSA Journal* asked both official referendum campaigns to answer the question that will appear on the ballot paper: 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'

## Yes

says John Duffy

## Yes

**We know that Scotland, as one of the wealthiest countries in the world, can more than afford to be independent. This then leads us to consider how Scotland can be regenerated for the good of everyone – with better services, social support, infrastructure and the other things a civilised society needs. Trade unions and their members will be central to shaping this future after 'Yes', and the railway industry can play a pivotal part in the regeneration of the economy and the nation.**

The No campaign is fond of scare stories about borders in an independent Scotland. In reality there will be no border between Scotland and England and trains will flow north and south in the same way that trains cross the borders between France and Spain, Denmark and Germany and all of the other EU 'borders' every day of the week. Their tactics border on the ridiculous.

A Yes vote is not break-up, but a breakthrough, to put decisions in the hands of the people of Scotland. The gains of doing this range from securing a better deal at work, through expanding childcare and other important services, to bringing power closer to people. Many of these general gains can be found at [yesscotland.net](http://yesscotland.net), and it is worth exploring both sides of the argument to see which prospect offers a better future for you

and your family. There are also particular gains relating to the workplaces and sectors where TSSA members work. This article will explore just a few of these relating to the rail industry in particular.

### Yes to a Public Rail Franchise

The particular policy and approach to the passenger franchise is of course determined by the present Scottish Government, but Westminster's Railways Act 1993 requires that passenger rail services should only be provided through a franchise system.

The current Scottish Government sought derogation from section 25 of the Railways Act 1993, but this was rejected by the Department of Transport. There is no sign that either a Labour or Tory government at Westminster will rescind the Railways Act and open up the possibility of public ownership. A Yes vote will transfer these decisions to Scotland, where there is already an appetite for more public ownership, shared by both the SNP and the Scottish Labour Party.

### Developing Scotland's Railways

Any focus on the rail network should also consider freight. Ten projects since 2007 are estimated to have taken 52 million lorry miles off of Scotland's roads. However most within the industry know that too often freight contracts have

resulted in one rail operator losing out to another rail operator, rather than generating a modal shift from road to rail. Scotland has a clear pro-rail approach, as is shown by recent developments of the network, and there is huge potential for further expansion of the network.

Given the ideological standpoints of all of the main Westminster parties it is unlikely that there will be any desire from UK governments to amend the railway industry or franchising system any time soon. By contrast, in Scotland there is a desire to expand the industry and to use large scale construction and development projects to kick-start the economy. One of the primary benefits of a Yes vote would be the ability for whichever Scottish Government we elect – whether Labour, SNP or other parties – to determine how industries such as the railways would function.

The "reconnection of the rail and wheel" into a single public industry is a real possibility if Scotland has a fully empowered parliament – and the strategy could be best determined by those close to the industry, with trade unions like TSSA being at the very heart of that. Only a Yes vote brings these powers to Scotland and will allow working people to choose a better direction for Scotland.

**John Duffy is a member of the FBU and of 'Trade Unionists for Yes'**



## No

says Kevin Lindsay



### The right to question

At present, TSSA members in Scotland are being bombarded by facts and figures from the separatist campaign, but like many trade unionists, all they are wanting is a fairer society to live in. As trade unionists we hold our managements to account on a daily basis. We stick up for our members and challenge management on the direction they are headed. Raising difficult questions doesn't make you a bully – it's what responsible trade unionists do. But if we challenge the separatists we are told we are being negative, playing down Scotland or bullying the Scottish people. This is nonsense. We are being asked to take a gamble, not only our future, but the future of generations of Scots. Therefore it's only right we ask the important questions.

### Railways

The nationalists have chosen to further fragment the railways by splitting off the Caledonian Sleeper into a separate franchise and are in the process of hawking it off for the next 15 years. They are also looking to lease the day services for up to 10 years. Yet in their much fabled White Paper they claim they will bring the railways into public ownership. The Scottish government have the power to run the Scottish franchise on a 'not for profit' basis but they don't have the political will to do so. As we have seen with ferries, privatisation is the preferred option for the SNP.

### Pensions

There remain huge questions to answer on pensions. Our members have big concerns about funding for pension funds based elsewhere in the UK. This would effect not just rail workers, but those in all industries on both side of the border. So far the nationalists have failed to give credible answers.

### European Union

On EU membership, the separatists used to argue that they had legal advice to prove we would gain automatic entry. It

turned out that no such legal advice ever existed. For our members, the conditions of our EU membership are key – would we have to join the Euro? Would we lose the UK rebate? Telling us that everybody else will fall into line with what Alex Salmond says simply isn't credible.

### Currency

As we have seen in recent weeks, for some of the largest employers in Scotland, currency is the most fundamental issue. This is the case for many of the companies employing our members. Alex Salmond needs to tell us what would replace the Pound. Would we rush to adopt the Euro or would we set up an unproven separate currency? What's the Plan B? The jobs of too many of our members depend on this issue. It can't be left to a wing and a prayer.

### Best of both

Today, as part of the UK, we have the best of both worlds. Our Scottish Parliament takes key decisions about issues affecting our members every day, including transport, jobs and skills, and we benefit from the strength and security of being part of the larger UK. It makes no sense to put this at risk.

Being part of the UK opens up the UK market to Scots businesses and creates jobs and prosperity. 830,000 people born in Scotland now live elsewhere in the UK and 450,000 people born in England, Wales or Northern Ireland live in Scotland. We are four nations intertwined as part of the UK. As part of the UK, Scotland can prosper and grow. We are stronger and better together. ◀◀

Kevin Lindsay is ASLEF's district organiser in Scotland

A future international border? A choice to be made on 18 September.

Welcome to  
Scotland  
Fàilte gu Alba

© Miles Gilmour / Dollar Photo Club

# Stand up to racism and fascism

A PAN-EUROPEAN DAY of action took place on 22 March to coincide with UN Anti-racism Day, writes Kerry Abel, TSSA learning organiser.

With racist and fascist parties looking to use the run-up to the European Parliament elections in late May, now is an important time for anti-racists to push back against those who would divide our communities.

UN Anti-racism Day commemorates the victims of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, when 69 peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were killed by the South African police. In South Africa, the day is a public holiday that celebrates those who lost their lives in the country's fight for democracy and equal rights.

Following the death of Nelson Mandela, it is fitting that we too should cherish, as Mandela said, 'the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and equal opportunities'.

With eyes on the European



elections in May, most countries are seeing parties of the right, centre and even the traditional left allowing racism and xenophobia to enter into political and media debates. Across Europe, we've increasingly seen Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and the scapegoating of minorities – immigrants, Roma, Black and Asian communities – become the norm.

Earlier this month it emerged that the Home Office has been sitting on a report that disproves one of the big claims made about migration – that it costs jobs for 'British' workers. In fact the latest information shows that nearly nine out of every 10 new jobs created go to British workers and just 13 per cent to people from outside Britain. Despite this, there is the

increasing tendency of mainstream political parties to tail-end the right-wing, populist UKIP. As Desmond Tutu pointed out recently, many politicians are vying with each other to ramp up calls for draconian 'anti-immigration' policies and promote a 'Little Englander' mentality, most recently seen in the hostility whipped up towards the mostly non-existent arrival of Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers.

In particular, it has become increasingly 'acceptable' to promote fear and hatred of Muslim people and Islam as a religion. This racism creates a climate of Islamophobia, leading directly to attacks on the Muslim population, including murder and violent attacks on mosques.

Let's celebrate diversity by expressing our cultures and identities. Let's demonstrate our confidence in a future free of scapegoating, racism and hatred. ◀◀

 For more information see [www.standuptoracism.org.uk](http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk).

## Member remembered

It is with great sadness that TSSA members and Northern Rail staff learnt of the death of Garry Keyworth on 12 February. Garry passed away at the age of 44 after battling cancer for some years, writes Northern Rail rep Paul Moore.

Garry was a well respected TSSA rep and a member for more than 25 years. He joined the union in 1988 when he was employed as a clerical officer at Gatwick Express, covering rosters and accounts.

After 14 years in the south of England, Garry returned to his native Yorkshire to work for Arriva Trains – and subsequently Northern Rail – as a retail supervisor at Barnsley Station. He soon took over the role of the Health and Safety rep for station staff within South Yorkshire and continued to be a valuable rep at Northern for many years up until his death.

Garry was well liked and respected by all customers, colleagues and fellow trade unionists and was always the first port of call if they had an issue they could not resolve with regards to customer enquiries or health and safety issues.

As well as his work on the railways and within the trade union movement, Garry also served as a keen local cricket umpire in the South Yorkshire League. He will be sadly missed by his colleagues within Northern Rail and comrades within TSSA.





## Looking ahead to TSSA conference 2014

**OUR 2014 GATHERING** in Leeds is probably our most vital conference. It will also be different to past events, and will affect every member, and will affect every member, writes Standing Orders Committee chair Joel Kosminsky.

Standing Orders Committee (SOC) will start on Saturday 10 May at 1pm, to validate motions, amendments and composites, before conference proper starts at 3.30pm. For this year's restricted timetable, we need delegates' cooperation, and will be as flexible as we can. For this year only, we accept advance written notice of late arrival for fair reason. We urge you to discuss with other branches and write in advance to tell us of sticking or withdrawing motions and amendments, accepting amendments, and who will propose and second. Anyone delayed en route should also advise the Marriott Hotel on 0113 236 6366, select 'option 4'.

This year, conference working days are longer, with discussion of the Association's future in the main body of each day. We have three 'closed sessions' to discuss the strategic plan, administrative business, and amendments to the strategic plan. This particularly affects emergency motions. SOC's deadline for these is 10am Sunday; we cannot guarantee debating time for them if accepted.

This may be the most important Association conference in living memory. Keep the spirit of trades unionism alive, think and act positively. I wish you an enjoyable conference. ◀◀

## Recognition for TSSA members

### David Brady wins national dyslexia award

TSSA learning rep and Neurodiversity champion David Brady has been presented with the British Dyslexia Association's Outstanding Achievement Award.

David, a revenue protection inspector with First Capital Connect, was only diagnosed with dyslexia in adulthood and had just been using coping mechanisms to get through his work. Having gained adjustments from his employer, he wanted to get involved to help others in his situation.

He joined the TSSA and soon became a union learning rep. He then became an accredited neurodiversity screener, able to test colleagues for conditions.

David has also given a presentation on neurodiversity issues to senior management and HR staff at FCC as well as recruiting 20 members to the TSSA, of whom two are becoming reps.

Unbeknown to David, lead rep John Bacon had nominated him as part of a scheme run by the British Dyslexia Association, which subsequently awarded him the Outstanding Achievement Award for 2013.

David, supported by his wife Sally, was proud to receive the award and has pledged to continue raising awareness of neurodiversity issues within his employer and to helping those affected receive the support they need.



### Former president Brenda Hanks made life member

TSSA's former president Brenda Hanks was presented with honorary life membership by Lord Rosser, the general secretary she served with, at a meeting of the Midlands Retired branch late last year.



Former BREL employee Brenda was an officer of Derby Number 1 branch from 1969, serving as the Midlands rep on TSSA's executive from 1982. She relinquished that seat when she became the first woman to be elected as a national officer of the union, becoming treasurer in 1987 and president in 1992, a post she held until her retirement in 1997.

During the presentation Brenda was able to wear the gold medallion she was awarded with – also by Richard Rosser – during the final TSSA conference which she chaired, in 1997.

### Gold medallion for Ena Luke at Belfast branch

Belfast branch celebrated the award of the gold medallion for meritorious service to Ena Luke at a dinner held after the January 2014 branch meeting.

Ena, a TSSA stalwart for many years, has served as an Irish committee member, divisional council officer, branch secretary and branch chair. She was also the lead representative on her company council and served on numerous other transport bodies.

Executive Committee member for Ireland Gerry Kennedy reports, "During her employment with Ulsterbus and later Translink she represented members' rights vehemently. Her tenacious character and strong heart saw many wins for our members. She gained the respect of her union colleagues, staff and management alike. Ena goes to great lengths to ensure equality in the workplace and still mentors new, as well as more experienced reps, myself included." ◀◀



# Member's husband gets legal support

"I was delighted that my TSSA membership meant my husband got full compensation for his accident."

Lara had been a member of TSSA for over eight years when her husband fell from height off faulty equipment at work. "My husband, Keith, was inspecting the factory production line as part of his routine checks. There's a section where he needs to be lifted above the production line, so he uses a mini hydraulic cherry picker."

Unbeknownst to Keith, earlier in the month someone had authorised the cherry picker to be used for exterior work even though the machine was meant for indoor use only. The entire machine had been exposed to the wet, affecting its controls. "On the way up, he noticed the controls seemed a little slow to respond. But on his way down, it became apparent that something was badly wrong. At first the controls were slow and sticky. And then they completely jammed. Wouldn't move." Keith could not get the



CC BY NC polandeze

cherry picker to go down and the platform was not in a position where he could safely get to the floor. A colleague brought a ladder for Keith to climb down.

"Unfortunately the ladder was not properly stabilised and the colleague didn't check the floor properly. When Keith was halfway down, the ladder slipped." Keith fell heavily to the floor and broke his tibia. "Keith had been a union member before, but when he was promoted into the

management team, he planned to change unions but just never got around to it. I was so pleased when I learned that TSSA supported accident claims for family members, because both Keith and I thought it was ridiculous that the factory could put him in danger like that." Lara called TSSA's injury hotline on 0800 093 0353.

"Fiona at Morrish was excellent. She got in touch with the factory's insurers and told them the firm

had poorly maintained equipment and had failed to provide a safe work environment. At first they tried to deny liability, but the problem with the controls had been noted the week before the accident by one of the plant engineers. The engineer had also noted how the cherry-picker hadn't been used in accordance with the manufacturer's specification." Keith had needed a week off work for his leg and

returned to light duties for the first 3 months. On admitting liability, the insurer's made an offer for £5000, which Fiona advised Keith and Lara to turn down.

"Their second offer was for £7000 but they wanted us to say it was partly Keith's fault because he should have stopped the cherry picker as soon as he knew something was wrong. Fiona pressed really hard saying there was no way Keith was responsible because there was no way he could have known the cherry picker was used outside.

Eventually Fiona got them to offer £10,000 which we accepted."

"I was well chuffed to be able to help my husband when he was injured. Thanks TSSA!"

● Based on a real life case. Certain details have been altered to protect the identity of the victim. 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**



ACCIDENTS AT WORK   ACCIDENTS OUTSIDE WORK   ASSAULTS   ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS   SLIPS OR TRIPS   OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE



# Elections: new Executive Committee members

Nominations recently closed for several seats on TSSA's Executive Committee. Chris Clark has been elected unopposed for the London Transport seat. Steve Leggett has been re-elected unopposed for the London South East place. Gerry Kennedy has been re-elected unopposed to represent Ireland on the Executive Committee. The Liverpool, North Wales and Cheshire place remains pending. The following candidates provided statements.

## London Transport

### Chris Clark

My name's Chris Clark, and I am seeking your support as Executive Committee representative for the London Transport division.

I joined London Underground in 2007 and was TUPEd to TfL in 2011.

These are challenging times for staff in TfL/LU, and for TSSA. With a Tory-led government in Westminster and a Tory Mayor in City Hall, a co-ordinated assault on the pay and conditions of the people who work for TfL/LU is gradually being revealed. Our response must be co-ordinated and it must be political.

I have been a member of the Labour party for 15 years, and was a parliamentary candidate in the 2010 general election. I'm proud to have been involved in our union's community campaigning and national political lobbying.

We must secure the future of our union as a campaigning organisation that practices what it preaches, and continue working to protect members' jobs, pay and pensions.

As a longstanding member of TSSA, I became an IR rep and a member of Company Council to lead this fight.

I want to be your EC rep, to make sure our good work continues.

I look forward to working alongside you as together we face the challenges to come.

### Biography

TSSA member since 2004

Moved from 55 Broadway to Palestra in 2013

### Positions:

- Chair, TfL Central branch (2014)
- IR rep, LCG1 (2013-)
- TfL company council rep (2013-)
- Assistant Organising Secretary, TfL Central branch (2013)
- TSSA delegate to Labour Party conference 2012 – moved TSSA's motion on rail fares
- Underground HQ branch delegate to 2012 TSSA conference.

### Related experience:

- Helped plan and organise TSSA's 'Better London Transport' campaign
- Played a leading role in supporting TSSA's campaigning on rail fares and station staffing in London and the South East
- Attended Bombardier solidarity march in Derby (2011)
- Attended TUC March for 'A Future That Works' (2012)
- Presented at TSSA's 'Organising for Better Transport' and 'Empower' events (2013).



## London South East

### Steve Leggett

I am seeking re-election to the London and South East EC seat. Since being elected to the EC I have represented TSSA at SERTUC and have since been elected to the SERTUC EC.

I have been employed on the railway since 1994 as a booking clerk, working for Southeastern Trains. For about the last 12 years I have been a local staff rep and have regularly stood in at Company Council level.

I have attended the majority of the National Reps training seminars and prior to being elected on the EC I was a regular delegate to Conference.

For the last 10 years I have served as Treasurer for the South East Metro branch and currently I am the Secretary for Bromley Trades Council and Treasurer for Bromley Cuts Concern where our branch has been taking an active part following the union's encouragement to branch out and make contact with local communities.

### Union positions currently held:

- LSE EC member
- Workplace Rep
- Branch Treasurer
- SERTUC EC member
- Secretary of Bromley Trades Council
- GLATUC Delegate.

### Trade Union education:

- TUC stage 1 and 2
- Pension Champion
- 2010 Equalities Act
- Discipline and Grievance
- Pensions
- Recruiting and Organising in the Work Place
- National Reps Training Seminar
- London and South East Weekend School

The TSSA is facing probably its toughest test in its history, a needed reorganisation following financial difficulties of declining membership and failed mergers, and continuing attacks on all of our livelihoods, jobs, wages and pensions.

More than ever we need to reach out and engage with more people, both in and outside the railway, to show our diversity, knowledge, experience and vision to ensure we keep recruitment and support as high as possible.

Well trained reps are vital to this and to maintain good contact, interaction and communications within the workplace, branches, and the public outside of the industry.

The EC needs to be at the forefront of this and I feel with my current EC experience that I am well placed to carry this out while acting on your behalf and will, if needed, stand up independently to represent you.

I therefore ask for your support.



## City of trams

I've just had a great long weekend in Lisbon with five other TSSA members and two from RMT. The iconic yellow trams that wind up, down and around the steep hills of the city leave a lasting impression.

Visitors can't help but notice how good the public transport is, trams, trains and buses. However, some of us travelled on the new private rail line. Reminding us of Britain, it charges three times as much.

The EU driven privatisation of transport is being resisted by the trade unions and four of us (Malcolm Wallace, Mitch Tovey, Tim Price and myself) discussed this at an informal meeting with senior members of the railway trade union and the Portuguese equivalent of the TUC, the CGTP.

Their unions are well aware of the impact of rail privatisation in Britain and are working closely with local authorities and rail users to prevent it. The CGTP unions, like the TSSA, are actively opposing privatisations and defending publicly owned rail systems against EU directives, the latest being the 'Fourth Rail Package'

which is aimed at forcing out the state railways to meet the demands of the big transport corporations.

Let's hope that our next visit to this beautiful city sees public transport safely under public control with a reversal of privatisation and end to the reduction of the living standards of the majority of the people. (This trip was self-financed)

**Andy Bain**  
TSSA Treasurer and  
Network Rail North  
London branch

## European rights? Just make our own

In her article in the January *TSSA Journal* Glenis Willmott asks what has the EU ever done for us? As a deeply Eurosceptic Socialist with an involvement dating back to before 1970, I ask a different question.

There are undoubtedly a wide range of rights at work which have been acquired since we joined the then Common Market; but I am mindful of the statement by an acolyte of the late Edward

Heath, who stated that he regarded Europe as 'a bastion against socialism'. I already had serious doubts about Labour's support for membership and that decided me. At that time Labour opposed membership, but were too lenient with the rebels who defied a three line whip and supported membership at Westminster. That betrayal merited expulsion from the Party!

However, my question to Glenis Willmott is quite simple: "Which of the benefits of EU membership could not be maintained outside the EU provided we elect a half-decent Labour government in 2015?". I am certain an honest answer would be that we have gained nothing from membership that could not be written into British law by an independent sovereign British government.

**Roger Luffman**  
South Wales and  
Western Retired  
members branch

## The Biggs Picture: A poem on the death of Ronnie Biggs

The only benefit tourist to have been sponsored by The Sun  
Gained his notoriety during decades on the run  
Settling in Brazil, he cocked the law a snook  
As the prized exhibit in a one-man human zoo  
Visitors would pile round to get a look at Biggs  
Buying branded T-shirts and plying him with drinks  
The most memorable name from the great train robbery  
Was only the tea boy, not the brains behind the scheme  
When it comes to crime and punishment, the tabloids love revenge  
So why did they treat him like a loved yet roguish friend?  
There's justice of sorts that he never had that pint  
In a Margate boozer as he would've liked  
I'm going to raise my glass, now that Biggs is dead  
But I'll be making my toast to Driver Mills instead  
**Simon Stabler**  
Peterborough

## Photographic memories

I was interested to see on the back of the January edition of the *TSSA Journal* the article on David Hayday, with accompanying photograph. Whilst I cannot confirm what occasion this group photograph records, I can definitely say that the location is Faverdale Hall, Darlington. The gentleman seated in the middle of the front row is the then principal, Mr Dewey Gibson. No doubt he and some of the others in the picture will be recognised by your older readers – Faverdale Hall was the centre for Instructor Training and NEBSS Supervisors' courses for all regions of BR. I attended the excellent Instructor Training course there in 1975, when Dewey Gibson was in charge, and suggest that the photograph may date from slightly later than the 1950s.

**George Wheeler**  
Wessex branch

