

Issue 62 – April 2010
revised edition

National Organiser
GRAHAM STEVENSON

UNITE - THE UNION
128 Theobalds Road, Holborn,
London
WC1X 8TN

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SECTOR



FATIGUE

The hidden killer on our roads



Passenger News

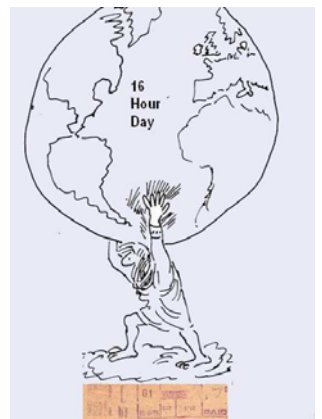
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Tel: 020 7611 2575 *Send your news and reports for inclusion*

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RELAX DUTY TIME

Nearly a hundred delegates attended Unite's Passenger Transport policy-making sector conference at the end of last year.

A detailed discussion ensued on the matter of 'minimum standards in the bus, coach, and light rail sector'. Conference resolved, upon a motion put by Steve O'Rourke [London & Eastern], that the National Industrial Sector Committee plan the development of a campaign around the platform of seeking a recommended but firm standard in domestic driving hours rules to be applied by all operators; thus:

- a maximum length of any single piece of duty not exceeding four and a half hours
- a maximum length of daily driving time under 8 hours
- a maximum single daily total duty time under 10 hours



Local approved variations will be possible under this conception, provided overall duty is demonstrably eased. Your National Committee has now endorsed an approach to the Confederation of Passenger Transport for a national approach across the whole industry, extending into other conditions matters. In view of the importance of this matter, a copy of the letter is reproduced here on page 2. CPT has responded that it has no mandate to negotiate with us. A campaign will now ensue that could result in seeking the views of members as to what you wish to do about all this via a national industry ballot.

THE LETTER TO CPT

Right: a union banner from 1857



Unite House | 128 Theobald's Road | Holborn | London | WC1X 8TN
T: 020 7611 2500 | F: 020 7611 2555

National Organiser – Transport
Transport Sectors: Passenger Transport; Road Transport Commercial,
Logistics, & Retail Distribution; Civil Aviation; Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways

E: Graham.Stevenson@unitetheunion.com



Our Ref: GS.st
Date: 17 March 2010
Contact: Extension 2575

Simon Posner, Chief Executive, Confederation of Passenger Transport UK, Drury House, 34-43 Russell Street, London, WC2B 5HA

Dear Mr Posner,

MINIMUM STANDARDS IN THE PASSENGER-CARRYING SECTOR

I write to you as the director of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, which describes itself as “the government-recognised trade association for the bus, coach and light rail industries”. It also claims to be “the focus for consultation and negotiation on legislation, regulation, practices and standards.” In that setting, Unite – the union, representing 100,000 members who are by far the largest block of unionised employees workers within this discrete sector represented by yourselves, wishes to raise with your organisation the discussing of certain minimum standards for the bus, coach, and light rail industries to be agreed with ourselves.

Indeed, I am directed by the National Industrial Sector Committee of the Passenger Transport Sector of Unite, following its recent meeting to seek a discussion with your ruling council, or its representatives, at which myself and leading lay representatives of our union from the Passenger Transport Sector would wish to place a proposal in this regard. To be clear at the outset, it is not our wish to establish formal bargaining upon the full set of terms and conditions that apply within each individual company that is a member of the CPT – that is to say to create a global national bargaining framework. On most aspects of employment relations within the sector, we favour the determination of such matters at a local level, in the manner which currently applies.

But we do seek your collective agreement to establish with Unite a National Joint Consultative Forum for the whole sector, which can recommend, perhaps as part of the terms of corporate membership of your body as part of your Operator Member Code of Conduct, but certainly as a policy approach of the individual employers associated with CPT, the following. We would seek, at this stage, agreement on only limited, recommended, but firm standards for a select few aspects to be applied by your members. For example, on domestic driving hours:

- a maximum length of any single piece of duty not to exceed four and a half hours
- a maximum length of driving time not to exceed eight hours
- a maximum single daily duty time of ten hours

Clearly, we would anticipate that the practical effect of introducing such a standard would be locally negotiated following the industry body's national endorsement with Unite on these matters. Thus, only where Unite recognition applies at a local level within each existing local bargaining unit would negotiations on detail ensure and such a minimum standard could be flexibly applied locally, where overall superior conditions exist.

2) We also seek a recommended common standard with regard to the following issues across the whole public transport sector covered by CPT:

- Criminal Record Checks
- Drug and Alcohol
- Uniform policies
- Training and personal development

3. Additionally, we seek a recommended minimum standard for employees working specifically within the coaching sector, encompassing:

- Definition of Periods of Availability
- Drug and Alcohol checks
- Standards in scheduling
- A CPT code of practice on employee relations

4. Finally, Unite seeks agreement from CPT to pursue a joint policy with Unite in persuading ATOC, local licensing bodies, and the Government to apply free and open access to all railways terminals and bus stations for licensed hackney carriage vehicles.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

GRAHAM STEVENSON
National Organiser – Transport Sector

Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley
www.unitetheunion.org.uk
Joint General Secretaries



How did it all end? In First Essex Buses - possibly 6.3%!!!!

North & South Essex voted on a recommended offer brokered by ACAS arbitration. Members in South Essex voted by 3 to 1 to accept the offer and in North Essex by just over 2 to 1. The package was:

- Christmas 2009 - £150.00 cash bonus
- 1st February 2010 - 2.8% increase all aspects of pay (moved forward from April)
- 1st January 2011 - 2.5% or RPI to 3.5%

In twelve and a half months therefore, pay will have increased by 5.3% and possibly by 6.3%. It took three 3 ballots, several days striking, hundreds of hours patient negotiating, and an independent recommendation, in all over almost nine months to get a result.

Congratulations to all Essex members who stood together so well and worked so hard to achieve this.



FIRST LEEDS

After Saturday strikes took place just before Xmas, further action for Christmas Eve and the day before was suspended so that a last minute offer could be put to members. This was accepted by the very narrow margin of those voting of 357 for with 328 against, thus ending the dispute.

The settlement gives a reduction from 37 to 36 and a half hours standard working from 24th January without loss of pay, plus a 0.4% pay increase. Then, on May 2nd, there will be a further 22p per hour for all rates.

Currents rates	Rates from 24th Jan	Rates from 2nd May
A rate £10	£10.18	£10.40
B Rate £9	£9.16	£9.38
C Rate £8	£8.15	£8.37
Hosts £7.50	£7.62	£7.84

The increase in pay of new money from 24th January was achieved by converting an offer of £150 cash lump sum (which had been a voucher) into a small percentage increase, plus a sum for accepting a 20 weeks volunteer rota at the two depots that has no lates or Sunday work but will not be paid clock to clock.



FIRST MIDLANDS WEST

Strike action authority was given to First Midlands West members, who voted 73% in favour of strike action on a 63% turnout. The agreement covers drivers, engineers and fitters, supervisory, clerical and managerial grades at Kidderminster, Hereford, Redditch Worcester and Bromsgrove. But a satisfactory negotiated settlement was arrived at.



STAGECOACH in Gloucester & Ross on Wye

These depots held four 4 - 24hr industrial action days from Saturday 19th December, followed by further day's on 24th Dec (Christmas Eve) 4th -11th January. The days of action were in response to the Company's offer of 2% wage deal compared to Cheltenham depot, which received a 4.5% rise.



STAGECOACH Peterborough

Drivers agreed to a one-year pay deal of 20p/hour across the basic rates, which equates to 2.4% for the majority. £8.70/hr for the majority; £8.95/hr for Outstation; £9.33/hr for OPO (about 20 left on that rate). There is also an enhanced rate for lates that starts from 21:00 which is £12.00/hr, which was held at this rate.



STAGECOACH BLUEBIRD

A settlement on pay for 2010 was arrived at by ballot of members. This provides a 2% increase in a one-year deal, together with improvements - all from April 1st. Platform, engineering and admin members voted to accept by 277 to 124 votes.



HALTON MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT

The following has been achieved: from £9.52 to £9.75 from 1st January 2010, followed by £10.00 from 1st September 2010. The pay date has moved from 1st January 2011 to April 2011. [Thanks to Tom McInerney 6/170 Branch]



GAG OXFORD

381 members balloted for strike action and, following further negotiations a new offer on pay averted further action, as follows:

- 1.2% increase in all pay rates, backdated to 1 November 2009.
- Holiday payments will no longer be made in advance.
- For the pay review due on 1 November 2010, an increase on all pay rates calculated at the figure of the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 0.5%.



TRANDEV HARROGATE

118 members opted for a strike ballot on pay; 86 to 11 voted against the offer but negotiations are under way.



ARRIVA CYMRU

77% of our members in Aberystwyth, Bangor, Dollgellau, Llandudno, Wrexham, Chester, Rhyl and Pwllheli depots vote in favour of strike action but a reasonable settlement soon followed.

ARRIVA NORTH-EAST



Authority to take strike action has been given to Sister Fazia Hussain, Regional Officer, on behalf of members at Arriva North East, after 75% voted in a ballot to take action. The dispute covers members at Bishop Auckland, Durham, Whitby, Darlington, Redcar, Peterlee and Stockton Depots.

UK'S MOST ADMIRER COMPANIES?

Stagecoach Group is the most admired of the UK's major five bus and rail groups for the second year in a row, according to an authoritative survey of corporate reputation of 200 companies conducted by Birmingham Business School, with board level representatives, city analysts and commentators. There are nine criteria, including quality of

management, 'product', top talent, investment value, innovation, marketing, social responsibility, and use of assets. Whilst there's no transport companies at all in the top 20, Stagecoach does come out well above other bus companies. Of the other bus companies, Go-Ahead is 4th, First is 6th, Arriva is 7th, and National Express is 9th.

STAGECOACH

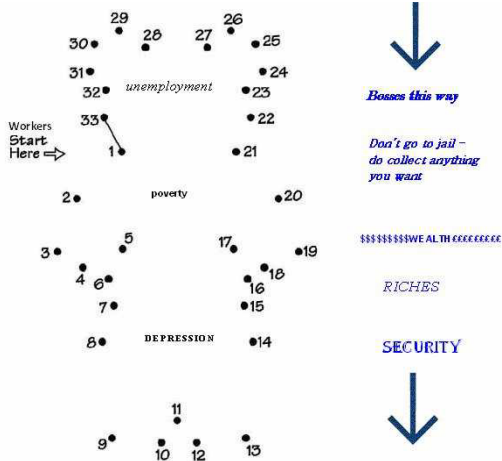
CARDIOVASCULAR SCREENING PROJECT

Preparations are underway to offer cardiovascular screening – on an entirely voluntary basis – to all Stagecoach UK Bus employees with a minimum of 3 years' service. The project will involve a pre-screening process carried out by a nurse at Stagecoach locations. The next stage will include an exercise tolerance test, carried out on a specially converted bus, staffed by a doctor, nurse and cardiac technician. Possible outcomes are reference to an NHS cardiologist, or advice sent to the GP. The results of screening will be confidential and will not be passed to the employer.

NX and David Cameron best pals now?

National Express will be allowed to re-enter the rail franchise market in two years' time if the Conservative Party wins this year's election, reversing the Labour government's plan of forcing the company out of the rail market after it had run of large losses and was ordered to give up its East Anglia rail

STOP PRESS: The Passenger National Committee has called upon Unite's EC to give honorary membership in our union to the imprisoned leader of Iran's bus workers, Mansour Osanloo.



Dot to Dot

Back in January 2009, a small coaching firm, 'Dot to Dot', employing 156 staff, which was a National Express subsidiary was sold to Corot PLC for £1. National Express had lost £14 million in 16 months. Corot set up a company called Smooth Ltd, which 'smoothly' went further into debt, with wages being paid late, or even in instalments, from the start.

Late in the evening of October 12th 2009, Dot to Dot employees were told not to report for work the following day because the company would cease trading at midnight. No wages, holiday pay, notice pay or redundancy money were paid, nor did any consultation take place.

Services continued overnight but, the following day, a reduced workforce moved the workplace from Poyle to the car park of a garden centre in Langley. The move was an attempt to continue the job and this time it was under the name of First Choice.

Yet the buses continued to use the Corot name and address as lettering on the side of the vehicles that is legally obliged. The operation even continued to use National Express operators licence disc.

On 14th October 2009 First Choice set up another new company Skyshuttle to carry on the operation. Further changes to the operations identity ensued on October 22nd and 27th with a move to a new base on October 28th.

Speculation in the industry suggests behind the scenes financing from a coach operator who has sold off his own company to a big player but who is bound by a contract not to operate or work for a coach company for a specified time.

Skyshuttle workers were due to be paid on Friday October 30th this did not happen. All sorts of empty promises were made but workers were laid off without notice, singly and in batches of up to 14 on a day to day basis. No employee has a contract of employment - the company were trying to railroad new contracts in which with lesser terms & conditions when challenged they backed off. The new company totally denies that TUPE regulations apply.

Unite have had several meetings with the employees who are now actively pursuing a complicated legal battle on behalf of nearly 80 individuals to try and recover money that is owed to them.

We are also pursuing a political campaign, having arranged a meeting at the Houses of Parliament with five MPs and a contingent of ex and current employees.

On Monday 8th January 2010 Skyshuttle ceased trading altogether again with no wages, holiday pay, notice pay or redundancy money. There was no consultation and the gates were locked. To date there is no date set for the Employment Tribunals but Unite members have had ongoing difficulties in claiming benefits or job seekers allowances because they have not had their P45's or have not had wage slips to prove where they worked.

To add to the woes of our members, because the company did not go into administration, the official insolvency department cannot pay out any redundancy payments, having to wait for a decision from the tribunal.

The difficulties that these members have had to endure is deplorable and it is highly likely that none of the owners, employers or directors that have had any involvement in this saga will have to pay for their neglect in any way and there is only so much we can do as a union.

An appeal for donations to assist our members has been launched, with the South East Region chipping in £1,000 to kick it off. The Passenger Group urges all branches to consider making a donation in order to help these desperate members out in their hour of need.

Send cheques to Marie Hall at Unite's Reading office, payable to 'Unite - the union'.

CUBA CYCLE CHALLENGE FOR MIKE & JIM

London cabbies and leading Unite members, Mike Hedges and Jim Kelly (also Chair of London & Eastern region) joined nearly 40 British cyclists in a 350 kilometre ride through the beautiful Cuban countryside, raising over £80,000 for the Music Fund for Cuba. In addition, they were able to be part of the May Day celebrations in Havana, along with millions of Cubans celebrating the social gains of the last 50 years.



(Pic: May Day in Havana - Mike on the left, Jim - 2nd from right)

The achievements of the Cuban revolution, notably in health, education and culture, continue to inspire and demonstrate, at a time of global economic crisis, that there is a positive alternative way forward for humanity. Cuba's role has been contrasted to that of wealthier states, in the help they have given in terms of medical care and education throughout the world - for example in disasters in Pakistan and Haiti. The only functioning hospital in Haiti is actually a Cuban field hospital.

Cuba leads the world in vaccinations and illness prevention and has the highest number of doctors per capita anywhere in the world, one doctor for every 165 inhabitants (compared to one per 1,076 in 1959). And Cuba has exported its doctors around the world to assist other countries, such as Venezuela, where doctors from Cuba showed how to establish a free health system. Not only is all medicine and schooling free and compulsory up to 18; all university education is totally free.

The Cuba Cycle Challenge - organised through the Cuba Solidarity Campaign - received a great reception as they went through the island, with encouraging shouts from bus stops, and farmers in the fields waving. Visits along the ride included a healthcare centre, where the delegation donated 3 wheelchairs. At the Abel Santamaria School for visually impaired children in Havana, the cyclists smashed the US blockade by donating a Braille printer, software and individual donations of musical instruments, and other educational materials.

How can you help?

Mike is picture below, not with his cab but with his bike!

Support the Music Fund for Cuba, which the 2010 cycle challenge will continue to support:



<http://www.justgiving.com/jimmike>

View some of the photos of the Cycle Challenge:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/myvoyager/sets/72157619907038397/detail/>

Support the Cuba Solidarity Campaign:

<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>

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Belated seasons' greetings to all PN readers; but it's really only so we can bring you this cartoon, which we didn't have room for before, which seems very relevant to bus, coach and tram workers!!!

