



# The Highway

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**ROAD TRANSPORT COMMERCIAL, LOGISTICS & RETAIL DISTRIBUTION SECTOR**



## Farewell to Ron – but not quite yet!

Long-standing national officer for road haulage, Ron Webb, (above) has retired from the service of the union. All best wishes to him and to his for a restful, long and happy retirement.

Although, so vital is the outstanding issues to be addressed in the oil sub-sector, the union's general secretary, Len McCluskey, has personally asked Ronnie to act on the union's behalf until the end of the year in this area of work as a consultant.

Graham Stevenson, a national officer for 24 years in the Passenger Transport Sector and, since 1998 the National Organiser for Transport, has been asked to assist in the Sector, while retaining his other

responsibilities, in conjunction with Paul Davies, National Officer for RTC. They are both delighted to welcome Matt Draper, regional officer in London and Eastern specialising in the transport sphere, to join them as Acting National Officer. Paul is to concentrate on the organising agenda and Matt on the huge servicing needs of the Sector.

This team of full-time national officials is now working closely with Dave Williams and Mick Johnson, EC reps for the group, and Chair and Vice-Chair, Ronnie Evans and Noel Coard to develop a plan of approach for the future to present to the National RTC Committee.

## Enough is Enough!

### National Fuel Distribution Campaign

Following a series of National Oil Trades Conferences, progress continues to be made towards the Union's strategy of achieving a National Bargaining Forum, setting National Minimum Standards and a sector-wide Pension Scheme. Regional conferences were held across the country, which saw attendances of some 60 to 70. Preparation for 37 ballots for industrial action was engaged in. Led by Unite general secretary, Len McCluskey, representatives from Unite twice met with major employers (BP, DHL, Hoyer, Suckling, Turners and Wincanton). The challenges facing the sector, its future development and opportunities to improve industrial relations are issues now being attended to in a series of working groups.



## **Turners – Sainsbury's Contract, Greenergy Contract**



*Wage negotiations saw the outcome of a 4% increase to basic rates of pay and other elements.*

*National wage negotiations have commenced on the Esso National Agreement and on the Shell National Agreement with further dates at the beginning of May to reconvene.*



## **GB Oils 2011 National Wage Negotiations**

Following extensive negotiations, the Union was able to extract a 4% offer with no strings and no conditions. On being put to a national ballot with a recommendation of acceptance, our members overwhelmingly accepted the Company's offer.

## **Wincanton Ireland/Larne, Asda Contract**

A failure to agree followed an impasse on a potential ballot for industrial action, regarding our members pay claim for 2011. A two-year agreement and an acceptable wage offer resulted.

## **Castle Cement 2011 National Wage Negotiations**

Following a national consultative ballot for industrial action, Unite members voted overwhelmingly by 3 to 1 to be balloted legally on the question of industrial action. Following the Hanson Group takeover our members have not received any wage increases for the last two years.

## **Hire and Reward Conference**

**The Hire and Reward conference met in April and will be reconvening later in the year.**

## **Arla Distribution**

**USDAW, GMB, and Unite, which is the biggest union in distribution, met to conclude discussions and ratify a new National Agreement. This has taken something in the region of 18 months with continued discussion/negotiations, with Unite in as much disagreement with USDAW as we were with Arla at times!**

## **TNT under pressure to sell Express**

**TNT could be preparing to separate its mail and express operations. Rumours of TNT receiving approaches from its biggest rivals, Fedex and UPS, to sell to them have appeared repeatedly.**



**TNT is the market leader in the intra-European express sector, where it faces margin**

**pressure. It aims to increase margins to 10% to 11% in 2015, from 9% currently. However, TNT's clients are predominantly active in the automotive and industrial markets and increasingly opt for slower but lower-cost road-transportation services.**

**Some experts think a Chinese investor could be interested for strategic reasons. Germany's Deutsche Post DHL AG isn't considered a likely suitor because analysts think a combination would encounter serious anti-competitive issues.**

**SNIPPET CORNER: RTC Vice-Chair Noel Coard is working improving the position for LGV drivers when they fail to carry with them both parts of their licence. Both VOSA and DVLA are in the process of bringing in new guidelines for enforcement authorities when drivers are pulled over and are issued with a fixed penalty fine and can't or won't pay on the spot, and are not in possession of their licence. It is currently planned that the vehicle will be impounded.**



# RTC/LRD IN IRELAND

## At the Inaugural Irish Policy conference - Dublin 23/24 May 2011

### RTC National Vice-Chair Noel Coard reports:

Over the last year, the RTC Sector in Ireland has been carrying out a mapping exercise of its members to establish our strengths and weaknesses within our Sector.

By doing so, it has enabled us to put resources into workplaces that are under threat from aggressive management tactics and also support our shop stewards' movement.

This simple exercise has rejuvenated our stewards and brought them closer to their members and in doing so, has weakened the employers position. We have begun to rebuild our membership and take on new challenges within the Sector. The driving force behind all these initiatives has been the Irish RISC Committee, supported by the NISC.

The RISC plays a key role in setting out goals and commitments we need to achieve as a Union and the policies agreed at the first Industrial Sector Conference in Unite. Our experience has also established that it is imperative that these Committees also have a close working relationship with their RIO and Organising Dept, to bring together all areas of Unite for the good of all our members at the workplace and in building

a coordinated approach to the organising in 100% Campaign.

Recently, we went to the inaugural Irish Policy Conference successfully seeking support for the following actions across all Sectors in Ireland

- Mapping within the workplace.
- RISC Committees the focal point for organisation and recruitment.
- Industrial reports from each RIO to the RISC for each Company
- Monitoring of progress to including shop stewards and membership.
- Team ethic for our industrial and organising goals.

### NEWS FROM THE RTC/LRD NATIONAL COMMITTEE

**Unite's RTC/LRD National Committee is to provide a funded DCPC/ADR Driver training vocational course. The first stage is to identify targets and these are currently being looked at. A remaining question remaining is if this is to be a company orientated approach or will it be for sections of our unemployed membership, with a view to enhancing their CVs so they have more chance of success in the job market.**

**Also, the main body of work on a new drivers' handbook is complete and, after a few tweaks, the edition will be sent for print.**



# The Dangers of Working between 00:00 and 06:00 – What your employer does not tell you!

By  
**Dr. Roger Sealey**  
BSc (Hons), PhD, MCILT

It was recently reported that night-time deliveries will form a major part of logistics companies' plans next summer when the biggest sporting event in the world visits London bringing with it severely restricted goods delivery slots. The article stated that *'if businesses adopt best practice and work night-time deliveries into their long-term plans the benefits of transport cost reduction, more reliable deliveries and lower emissions'* will far outweigh the initial costs and effort.

Natalie Chapman, FTA's Head of Policy for London, is quoted as saying: "The benefits of night-time deliveries are proven and irresistible; why waste time and money sitting in traffic when you don't need to? What the Olympics and Paralympics events will do is effectively kickstart interest in adopting this practice. But our advice to business would be to take the long view: this is not a sprint but a long-distance event ...FTA will be working with TfL and the ODA to ensure that the unique challenges presented to our members by the Games – essentially more freight to deliver and less time to deliver it in – are manageable. Night-time deliveries could be a win-win for the Games and logistics."

But what they don't say is that proportionally accidents involving HGV vehicles are at their highest between 00:00 and 06:00. Within the Circadian (24-hour) cycle, a person usually sleeps approximately 8 hours and is awake 16. During the wakeful hours, mental and physical functions are most active and tissue cell growth increases. During sleep, voluntary muscle activities nearly disappear and there is a decrease in metabolic rate, respiration, heart rate, body temperature, and blood pressure. Hormones secreted by the body, such as the stimulant epinephrine (adrenaline), are released in maximal amounts about two hours before awakening so that the body is prepared for activity.

The natural time signal for the circadian pattern is the change from darkness to light.

Working against our body clock can result in accidents. Here are some examples of how your body clock works using the daily time cycle:

3am: Sleepiest time of the day. Major industrial accidents like the Three-Mile Island Nuclear Plant accident, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the deadly chemical release in Bhopal, India, and the Exxon-Valdez oil spill occurred during late night hours.

4am: Blood pressure is lowest - and immune system cells at their highest.

5am: Body temperature at its lowest.

It should be noted that any drastic shift in the circadian cycle requires a certain period for readjustment, and each individual reacts to these changes differently. Can we see any evidence that driving at night effects lorry drivers?

There is a definite pattern to Sleep Related Vehicle Accidents (SRVAs) and this applies to all drivers. They occur mostly between two and six in the morning, with another peak between two and four in the afternoon. Are there similar patterns for professional lorry drivers? Yes!

Time of day	Traffic Flow	Killed	Serious	Slight
00:00-00:02	16	2	7	27
00:02-04:00	11	0	7	35
04:00-06:00	25	2	12	71
06:00-08:00	111	3	22	138
08:00-10:00	149	3	25	241
10:00-12:00	149	2	28	223
12:00-14:00	157	1	17	192
14:00-16:00	165	1	26	161
16:00-18:00	187	0	15	114
18:00-20:00	128	0	8	58
20:00-22:00	67	0	4	42
22:00-00:00	36	0	4	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1330</b>

In 2009, fifty per cent of all HGV killed took place between between 00:00 and 06:00:

Killed	Serious	Slight
7	48	271
50%	27%	20%

This is when traffic flows are at their lowest! In the future for various reasons, but mainly economic, more employers may want to move to more night-time delivers.

But before they do you should ensure that a proper risk assessment has been undertaken. We are sure you don't want to become a night-time statistic.





# ORGANISE OR DIE!

by Paul Davies

*The national officer responsible for developing the RTC sector's organising strategy reports:*

We are all working hard to understand our current membership by region and by company, the latter of which sometimes shows up under different names. Accurate mapping of different divisions within companies is going to be very useful. But it is no substitute for organising workers. Each and every member can play a part in our BIG CAMPAIGN TO BOOST THE RTC FOR THE FUTURE.

A more analytical approach to selecting national 100% targets need to be developed by comparing membership with the number of employees each company declares that it has.

## LOGISTICS

TDG - We are looking at organising activists to pick up members in TDG, which has just been taken over by Norbert Dentressangle, with TUPE operating. We are the biggest union in TDG with 1,600 members but there are sites with no members that need identifying. A TDG combine committee is in our sights, having obtained agreement to facilitate this from Norbert.

DHL - some difficulties with the employers, especially in grocery, so each site will be a battle for recognition. Our main power base is in Jaguar Landrover.

Wincanton - our combine committee has a fairly good relationship with the employer, so obtaining recognition is not a real problem

Stobarts; this is a long hard slog but essential

Ceva Logistics – a large employer and single union with membership potential.

NFT - which is quite large and single union under Tommy Kirwan

## PARCELS

Yodel – This was previously HDNL, which has seen massive redundancies in the parcels division. Even so, there is still a big membership potential, such as the Blackpool operation.

TNT – a significant restructuring task awaits us.

UPS - 50% membership potential but no quick wins, except maybe at main hubs such as Tamworth and Camden.

Geopost – similar task as at UPS.

## AUTOMOTIVE

Unite is a key player in this sector and need to tie up with the Vehicle Building & Automotive Sector to secure our position. Membership potential in plant and in supplies and after-sales in most of the car plants, other than the already noted Jaguar Landrover, given a long-term plan.



## RETAIL

Grocery retail is a major target of Unite's Organising Department. Significant problems have emerged arising from a different approach adopted by USDAW. This is mirrored in other parts of retail distribution but massive potential exists in M&S, Debenhams, B&Q, Boots, etc, etc.

## WASTE

The two players are Biffa Waste and Veolia, with a lesser involvement from Sita and Shanks. In non-municipal waste, Unite dominates. Even so, there is still membership potential albeit located on many small sites. There are, however, new large sites being built for special waste, incineration and recycling and we will target these. Some work is already underway in Veolia.



## REGIONAL HUBS

There are major hubs such as Tamworth, Magna Park, Avonmouth, Junction 41 M1, Daventry etc with large numbers of logistics sites that need to be mapped for potential. Plus of course there are the ports and sea lanes, the North Sea, Irish Sea, and Channel, where 90% of our imported goods gets loaded onto boxes for transport by road.

## EDUCATION FOR ORGANISING

We have trialled a RTC 100% course and in Norbert this generated 250 plus members We have trained RTC tutors in Scotland. NE, NW, EM, WM, and London & E; leaving the SE, Wales and SW to do. These tutors are intended to deliver the 100% training in their regions, once we identify the targets. We have courses planned in July for all Convenors, August for senior stewards in Parcels and September for UPS stewards.



# Sainsbury's feed their profits?

By Ronnie Evans,  
Chair RTC/LRD National Committee

Sainsbury's high profile "Feed Your Family" campaign encourages its customers to eat as a family, but when Unite urged them to protect drivers and warehouse workers from a devastating attack on their family lives arising from a contractor's changes to shift patterns and new working practices, the giant firm ignored us.

We have not yet ruled out a ballot for industrial action of the some five hundred DHL employees working on the Sainsbury's contract. But, to highlight these double standards, hundreds of DHL's Unite members and RTC activists staged a protest outside Sainsbury's London HQ.

Sainsbury's has an exclusive contract with DHL for its warehouse and delivery services. As part of a consolidation programme, DHL is moving its Sainsbury's-dedicated hubs in Allington, Kent, and Charlton into a newer Dartford site. Under the shake-up, employees will only get three weekends off out of 12 five-day shifts. Previously, staff could always get off at least one-day each weekend. DHL has insisted employees accept the changes or take redundancy.

Unite holds a recognition agreement at both of the sites in question. To add insult to injury, DHL implies that our members will not have a choice of union when they migrate to the Dartford site because the shop-workers' union, USDAW, has a recognition agreement. What does this add up to? Let's hope it doesn't come to this and, if things change in the future and I'm proved wrong, maybe I'll eat my words (or a copy of 'The Highway') but experience tells me that I am right to be cautious that this other 'union' will play the gaffer's game. What's this, I hear, Unprincipled Seven Days A Week?!!!

Below - the RTC occupy the steps outside the TUC's head office in London before meeting officials there; pics by Ronnie Evans:



## CRL Distribution

The Co-op Society has decided to outsource their new RDC at Andover to Norbert Dentressangle. Our 20 plus members moved across and it is expected that this location will have approximately 350 drivers in addition to hundreds of warehouse operatives. Management eventually agreed to Unite recognition.

