

**Send reports and pictures for inclusion in this new regular bulletin.**

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# THE INSIDER

News for bus, coach and tram engineers and other inside staff in passenger transport

## Welcome!

Here it is – the new national bulletin for all inside staff in the passenger transport industry.

Thanks to London bus engineers for kicking off the idea. Now, the whole country can join in.

We aim to bring you special news of interest to inside staff. 'The Insider' can only be as good as you make it. Send us news of what's going on down you way.

Oh, and while you are at it, how about sending us pictures of you and your members? The most up to date picture we have just doesn't seem to fit the bill, does it?



## GAG London General

As part of this year's pay deal the company

intend to introduce a hand-held PDA for inspection purposes. This is yet to be discussed and agreed with the membership.

Other elements of the pay offer consist of a £600 lump sum for 2009 and, for 2010, 2% in July 2010, and a further increase in December 2010 at 2% plus an additional increase if RPI is above 2% at 50% of the RPI rate.

The membership in Peckham garage wanted a consultative ballot about the recent pay offer, a shop steward asked for a show of hand to accept or reject the proposed offer. The steward was asked to leave the depot after the vote. The union negotiating committee wanted a straight percentage increase [un-recommended deal], this resulted in a vote of 79 for 72 against.

The company are looking to recruit between 6 and 10 apprentices and between 7 and 9 engineers.



## Arriva London North & South

The negotiating committee met with the Engineering Director to discuss pay in November 2009, the company told the representatives that they could afford to give a percentage increase and so offered a pro rata lump sum payment where the members would receive between £642 to £284 lump sum dependant upon their particular grade. (cont'd)

This offer has been accepted by the membership at a 2 to 1 ratio. The Operating department at Arriva North are balloting the members for industrial action over pay.

In an unrelated meeting with the engineering Director where we discussed the removal of the cover stores position at Enfeild, This has led to complaints of excessive stress, no cover during times of annual leave or sickness absents. Additional logistical problems have been caused by the new national SPEAR computer system which is not yet operating to the expected standards.

A storeman has been dismissed for gross misconduct, unfortunately his appeal has been upheld, an appeal based on clemency for long service and natural justice has been sent to the Engineering Director.

The company have engineering vacancies; but they are temporarily employing short term contract labour; as the candidates so far have not been up to scratch.



A new engineering excellence meeting to be held at each depot is expected to improve performance and standards, all comments and problems will be placed on the notice board and local management will be tasked to resolve the posted issues.



Amalgamation of the company's Shires, Essex and Herts operations will see a change of Engineering Director as the Herts Director will take

charge of all of the above sections of the company. The company have decided to review sick pay procedure.

The company have been successful and retained the route 149 which has changed from an articulated Bus to double deck.

## Metroline

The negotiating committee was invited to attend the company's wage meeting in November 2009, where the engineering staff were offered a £600 lump sum and an increase in all elements of pay at 1.5% in April 2010.

However the negotiating team were not aware that this deal had some strings attached to it and subsequently it was rejected. A consultative ballot for industrial action was run and won which went to a postal ballot. The company then set up another meeting where the offer was improved without the attached strings. The improved offer was a £700 lump sum and an increase in all elements of pay at 3%.

Additionally, all new members of staff employed after the implementation of the new pay deal may have to work the new day shift start and finish times of 06.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs; established staff will not be required to work these hours.

The company want the reintroduction of the flexible [Martini Shift] to a predetermined level.

Christmas day working which normally consists of fire watch duties, a member of the management team has complained that staff provided bus maintenance work did not carry this out.

The Engineering Director said he will consider employing temporary security staff on Christmas day rather than allow our own engineering staff to carryout fire watch. We are still wondering if the proposed additional expense of hiring an outside security firm will include maintaining and servicing of the buses.

The company has proposed the introduction of a new booking out procedure for the stores using a electronic bar coding system, this proposed system has yet to be agreed.

An electronic swipe care system will be introduced to replace the outdated clock card system in April 2010, there are some problems a certain locations where the company does not want to bear the cost of installing the new electronic clock machine.

An engineer has been dismissed in his absence. Management have blamed the shop stewards for the mounting grievances and appeals of disgruntled and unhappy employees.





## First London West & East, with First Berks - Slough

The company have proposed and introduced a new shift pattern at Northumberland Park which is the third shift change within a two year period.

An engineer has been dismissed for allegedly not using his steering wheel cover whilst carrying out vehicle maintenance, he was reengaged on appeal.

A subsequent letter sent to the new Engineering Director based on the merits and circumstances of the engineer's particular case to appeal against the reengagement has been rejected.

Another engineer at Northumberland Park had been dismissed for allegedly not removing the Ric Clips before the final wheel nut check; it was discovered during the investigation into a broken wheel stud that one of the torque wrenches was under performing. Local management stated during the engineer's disciplinary hearing that the under-performing torque



wrench was locked up and unavailable for engineering staff to use. Information obtained before the appeal hearing proved that the defective torque wrench was still available to the shop floor engineers and the manager who stated that it was locked in his office was in fact not telling the truth. However, this new information was ignored and the dismissal was upheld, staff at Northumberland Park are unhappy about the decision.

An engineer was disciplined for removing another member of staff steering wheel cover without permission and was awarded a Final Written Warning at his subsequent disciplinary hearing.

An engineer has submitted a grievance against one of the management team at Slough depot, this is being investigated by the Operations Engineer.

Slough engineering has been offered a 2.75% increase in all elements of pay for the 2010 – 2011, There was no increase in rates of pay for 2009 to 2010.

An engineer at Slough has been elected as Health and Safety representative for the depot.

A cleaner at Uxbridge depot dropped a cleaning machine down the pit whilst carrying out the dock clean, the machine had a defect which contributed to the incident the cleaner has been disciplined and returned to work.

An engineer at Greenford has been disciplined for paperwork errors, Engineers submitted a grievance against one of the management team which is being investigated.



New stores procedure has been introduced to make the local management more responsible about stock not being booked out.

First Group was taken to court by the Health and Safety Executive because of the tragic accident where a driver was crushed between two buses during the early morning run out at Uxbridge depot.

The court found First Group guilty of not putting in enough safety measures to protect its staff during that particular time and fined the company £400,000 pounds.

The Operating department are still in the process of negotiating for 2009 to 2010 increase in salary.

## First Bristol Engineering

Union reps have had preliminary discussions on wages and conditions. The claim was for 5% uplift in basic rates, parity with other groups on service-related holidays, an agreement on the supply and replacement of tools, and a written agreement on redundancy policy and payments. The company countered with less favourable arrangements for sickness, shift changes and efficiency savings.

It was something of a coincidence to ask for a redundancy agreement, since First then proposed to close Muller Road, one of three depots in Bristol, and to transfer the current work there between the other two depots. The consequences of this are that there are now 12 proposed redundancies in engineering, which are the subject of consultative meetings. Thus, discussion on the pay review is on hold, since our priority is the proposed redundancies.

Paul Hodge  
SW/3129  
Branch Secretary



## Health & Safety at Work ...

All engineering staff should be vaccinated to protect them from the neurotoxin

tetanspasmin which can be contracted from any puncture wound. This potentially lethal condition is commonly known as tetanus. Engineering staff who are exposed to the potential of minor injury on a daily basis are advised to ensure that they are immunized against tetanus at least once every ten years to prevent possible neurotoxin infection which has been known to be fatal. Your GP should be able to inoculate you against this infection at your local surgery by appointment.



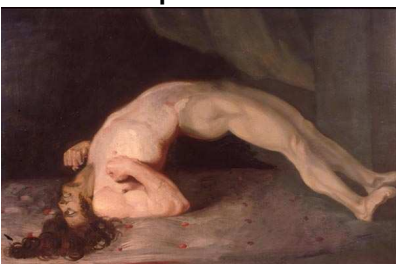
Generalized tetanus is the most common type of tetanus, representing about 80% of cases. The generalised form usually

presents with a descending pattern. The first is trismus, or lockjaw, and the facial spasms called Risus Sardonius. [Probably named after some poor Roman soldier] This is followed by stiffness of the neck, difficulty in swallowing, and rigidity of pectoral and calf muscles.

Other symptoms include elevated temperature, sweating, elevated blood pressure and episodic heart rate. Spasms may occur frequently and last for several minutes with the body shaped into a characteristic form called opisthotonos [Convex shaped]. Spasms can continue up to four weeks and complete

recovery may take months.

*Pic: the muscular spasms of a tetanus patient!*



Tetanus is often associated with rust, especially rusty nails, but this concept is somewhat misleading. Objects that accumulate rust are often found

outdoors, or in places that harbour anaerobic bacteria, but the rust itself does not cause tetanus nor does it contain more C tetani bacteria.

The rough surface of rusty metal merely provides a prime habitat for C tetani endospore to reside, and a nail or sharp rusty surface affords a means to puncture the skin and deliver endospore into the wound.

An endospore is a non metabolising survival structure that cannot thrive in an oxygenated atmosphere; however once it has been injected into the human body it is the perfect place for organism to thrive.

## Beyond comment?



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