

RMTnews



Essential reading for today's transport worker

Issue No 5, Volume 5

www.rmt.org.uk

June/July 2004

- **Tonnage Tax - So where are the jobs?**
- **Join the rail lobby July 20**
- **No to casualisation**
- **112 MPs back SET campaign**
- **Media in the dock**
- **Grades conference reports**
- **Women**
- **Hands off Cuba**
- **Prize crossword**

SEEING RED

Network Rail and Tube workers to take action

RMT fight back:

Our personal injury lawyers won't let bad employers get away with it.

The law says workers have a right to safe conditions – and RMT is here to defend that right. That's why our Personal Injury Service is free – and even covers non-work related accidents for family members. So if you, or a member of your family, have suffered an illness or injury due to someone else's fault, call us now.

FOR FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE CALL THE HELPLINE

0800 587 7516 in England, Wales and Ireland

0800 328 1014 in Scotland

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS.



**FREE - FRIENDLY - INDEPENDENT - CONFIDENTIAL
LEGAL ADVICE**



KAIM TODNER SOLICITORS

Appointed criminal defence solicitors to the 

Member of
the Serious
Fraud Panel

Criminal
Defence Service



**Telephone the number below IMMEDIATELY should you, your
partner, family or friends require advice on ANY criminal matter**

FREE PHONE:

0800 3898003

**ADVICE AVAILABLE
NATIONWIDE - 24 HOURS A DAY**

Community
Legal Service



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Kaim Todner Offices:
5 St. Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS**

CONTENTS

- Page 4** Organising at Park Royal
- Page 5** Strike action at Mitcham Belle
- Page 6** Anti-union laws force re-ballot on Southern
- Page 7** Wales TUC supports tonnage tax campaign
- Page 8** 8 Women members hold special conference



- Page 9** MPs support SET campaign
- Page 10** Health and Safety
- Page 11** Seeing red
- Page 12 & 13** No more Tebays



- Page 14 & 15** No more tiers
- Page 16 & 17** Link the tonnage
- Page 18 & 19** Road freight conference
- Page 20** Hands off Cuba



- Page 21** Tube news
- Page 22** RMT opens new web shop
- Page 23** RMT President
- Page 24** Union Learning Fund
- Page 25** Employment rights
- Page 26** Carolyne Leckie MSP
- Page 27** Women's page
- Page 28** Letters
- Page 29** Classified / Review
- Page 30** Prize crossword
- Page 31** Credit Union

RMT News is compiled and originated by the National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. Tel: 020 7387 4771. Fax: 020 7529 8808. email bdenny@rmt.org.uk. The information contained in this publication is believed to be correct but cannot be guaranteed. All rights reserved. RMT News is designed by Michael Cronin and printed by Leycol Printers. General Editor: General Secretary Bob Crow. Managing Editor: Brian Denny. No part of this document may be reproduced without prior written approval of RMT. No liability is accepted for any errors or omissions. © Copyright RMT 2003.

Defending what is yours



NETWORK Rail has refused point blank to even discuss the closure of the final salary pension scheme to new staff. This callous act, carried out simply to save money, has put the pension fund itself in doubt and this union is now in dispute with the company.

Network Rail ran a dishonest "I'm alright Jack" campaign, attempting to con those still in the final-salary scheme into believing that they would not suffer as a result of its closure. This is not true and to your immense credit, members voted for action to defend pension rights for all.

On travel facilities, Network Rail have conceded an initial 25 per cent discount, further evidence that our arguments that those who work on the network should enjoy priv travel is winning out. Tubelines also recently agreed to a 75 per cent travel discount, to be introduced over three years. However, the same cannot be said of the intransient management at Metronet, which is refusing to negotiate on this and other issues.

London Underground is also refusing to enter into serious negotiations on our long term claim for a four day week. Therefore, the union has called simultaneous strike action at NR and LUL to demand that our aspirations are taken seriously.

Damning reports into privatisation of Tube maintenance contracts published by the National Audit Office and LUL itself have once more exposed the fact that the PPP is giving guaranteed, risk-free profits to shareholders at the expense of everybody else. The cost of City fees alone for the PPP was over £450 million and taxpayers shelled out the same again in higher interest rates than if the government had borrowed the money directly. In exchange we've had derailments, falling maintenance levels, confusion and communications breakdown.

This crazy scheme went ahead just as national rail maintenance was taken back in-house because the private sector failed to deliver. Network Rail's decision to bring rail maintenance back in-house has already resulted in a cut in delays from infrastructure faults in the Thames Valley area by 32 per cent. That success shows the way for rail renewals, train operations and rolling stock.

Since privatisation, the train operating

companies alone have extracted £1.1 billion in 'profits' – that is, cash taken from fares and the taxpayer and handed over to the privateers. Many of them no longer even pretend to operate as franchises at all, simply taking management fees. Therefore, what is the point in spending £4 million on the unnecessary re-privatisation of South Eastern Trains? Over 100 MPs and the travelling public agree with us and want to see it stopped.

As we await the outcome of the government's railways review, leaked progress reports indicate that ministers are minded to abolish the Strategic Rail Authority in favour of stronger ministerial control through Network Rail. But the SRA is only part of the problem. The basic fault-line in our railways remains the unsafe fragmentation brought by privatisation and must be reversed, something we will be arguing for at the lobby of parliament on July 20. I hope you can make it.

FOLLOWING the 'kicking' that Labour got at the recent elections, the government has a golden opportunity to win back public confidence, instead of waging imperialist wars and continuing on the path of mass privatisation. The election of Ken Livingstone on a ticket of peace and mass construction has proved that it can be done.

It was sad to hear deputy prime minister John Prescott blaming his former union for the continued decline in jobs and training for UK seafarers. He made the astonishing charge in parliament about the failure of the tonnage tax regime to deliver UK jobs. Not even the Chamber of Shipping has had the effrontery to attempt to shift responsibility for the lack of UK jobs on UK ships onto RMT, but the employers must be laughing up their sleeves.

Shipowners have so far been handed more than £70 million of taxpayers' money for putting their vessels on the UK register, but the dumping of UK ratings in favour of low-paid overseas recruits continues unabated.

What the industry needs is a formal link between the millions being handed out in tax relief and the creation of training opportunities and jobs. Don't forget to send off the enclosed postcards to demand action.

Bob Crow

RMT membership grows



RMT's organising strategy scored a success – this time in the north east of England, writes Alan Pottage.

Many new members signed up but more importantly a large number of new local representatives will be trained up. This is the only way we can build our union to maximum strength.

RMT must create new levels of activity in line with the large increase of members recruited in the last two years.

The success of our strategy is clear to see. RMT has grown faster than any other union in Britain over the last two years.

BBC labour correspondent Steven Cape said recently, during the TUC's Unions 21 conference, that the RMT was the only union growing at a time when

other union's membership has stalled or is on the decline. The success of the RMT in building the union was also mentioned by delegates and officials from other unions at the recent STUC conference – so we have much to be pleased about. On the other hand, our efforts in the regions have shown areas where we have no reps and are poorly organised.

Our strategy, once fully implemented, will ensure every union branch and regional council tackles this problem and transforms areas of disorganisation into thriving and energetic RMT-organised workplaces.

However, there is much more to be done and we have an obligation to all workers in the transport industry to properly organise. Nothing less will do!



RECRUITING: In the north east



Organising at Park Royal

RMT members at the Initial City Link Park Royal depot in London were impressed that 'their' general secretary made the effort to visit them during a shift.

The union handed out over 50 membership packs to drivers, warehouse and clerical workers and a follow up meeting has been arranged for the near future.

The big issue for the drivers is the implementation of the Road Transport Directive which is due by March 2005. This will limit hours to a maximum 48 hours with no opt out for safety reasons. However, members' pay is so low that they currently have to work over 60 hours to take home a decent wage. RMT members therefore face financial difficulties.

Alan Pottage of the organising unit said that was where the RMT came in.

"If we get more members to join the union then our influence will be greatly strengthened and we can negotiate better pay, a proper bonus scheme and London allowance," he said.

The union has also been busy providing representation at disciplinary hearings for City Link members across the country. RMT lawyers even negotiated a financial settlement from a dog owner after



ORGANISE: Bob Crow and executive member Ray Knight meet Initial City Link members at Park Royal

their dog bit a member as he attempted to deliver a parcel. Without the union he would only have received a sticking plaster!

RMT is in the process of training two reps from every City Link depot, who have been granted 'paid release' to attend a four day course in London. The RMT course will cover the proposed legislation.

**MEMBERS
FREEPHONE
HELPLINE**

**Open six days a week
8am until 6pm**

0800 376 3706

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516

Seven days a week



Viacom balloted for action

RMT members at Viacom Outdoor are being balloted for strike action and industrial action short of a strike in support of better pay and conditions.

Viacom staff, responsible for putting up advertising material on London Underground, rejected an offer from the company for a 3.5 per cent pay increase and a trial sickness and bonus scheme.

RMT regional organiser Bobby Law said that members had expected an improved offer in return for increased productivity for some of the lowest paid staff on the Tube network.

"This company has made millions from this Transport for London contract yet staff are still waiting for any significant improvements in pay and conditions," he said.

The result of the ballot will be announced on June 24.

Reps re-instated at Mitcham Belle

STRIKE ACTION by RMT members at the Mitcham Belle bus company in southwest London was suspended after the company agreed to re-instate two RMT reps.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that further talks would take place concerning outstanding issues still to be resolved.

RMT members at the company held a solid 24 hour strike earlier this month over union recognition, pay, conditions, annual leave and sick pay. There is also a lack of negotiation machinery and unfair disciplinary procedures are used against staff.



RMT members demand union recognition at the Mitcham Belle bus company

The rolling strike action was sparked by the unfair dismissal of 10 staff for trade union duties and for such spurious reasons as allegedly passing a red light while driving a bus. Mitcham Belle was a green field site in terms of union

membership when employees first applied to join the RMT. Despite around ninety per cent RMT membership, the company is still refusing to recognise the union staff had chosen to represent them.

Mitcham also tried to bring in agency staff to scab on the strike. However, half of them refused to cross the picket line when they discovered why they had been employed.

RMT regional organiser Bobby Law said that staff had been treated appallingly with no toilet or lunching facilities and forced to drive old buses.

Mitcham Belle has a contract with Transport for London and the union has inquired to TfL if the company will be fined for failing to run a service during strike days.

The company runs bus services around Croydon and Richmond into central London, including routes 127, 152, 200, 201, 493 and K5.

Merchant seamen charity receives £10,000 retirement home windfall

THE RMT-sponsored Merchant Seamen War Memorial charity based at the Springbok estate received a £10,000 donation last month from Dover shipping branch and MacLachlan solicitors.

The generous gift was the result of negotiations between the Dover branch and P&O ferries during a major re-structuring programme the company was undertaking which threatened nearly 500 jobs.

RMT managed to reduce compulsory redundancies to just 16. P&O made clear that all staff leaving on redundancy would be required to sign an agreement with the company to pay the legal fees.

With fees of up to £250 per agreement Dover branch were keen that the union benefited rather than the legal profession. Therefore branch secretary Malcolm Dunning contacted Mark Griffin, a friendly solicitor who had spent time at sea in his youth.

Mark and his firm of solicitors agreed to donate £50 of each agreement to a charity nominated by the union.

Springbok is based in an 18th century mansion



near Guildford in Surrey and cares for retired seafarers. RMT also use the building to hold education courses throughout the year.

Malcolm said that while the union took no comfort from job losses in the shipping industry it was fitting that money generated from P&O found their way to a nautical charity connected to the RMT.

Yeovil celebrate



RMT YEOVIL bus branch celebrated a double retirement last month. Roger Trowbridge worked at Yeovil depot since 1974 and Geoff Fowler since 1993. Roger and Geoff have both been RMT reps at the depot. The New Nautilus Social Club organised the event, run by Yeovil branch members.



Anti-union laws force re-ballot on Southern

INDUSTRIAL ACTION by more than 750 RMT members at Southern, formerly South Central Trains, was called off by the RMT executive last month thanks to the absurdities of Britain's anti-union laws and a row over one minute's notice.

Complex anti-union laws dictate that the first industrial action must be called within 28 days of the ballot closing. The first action in the dispute was called for 00:01 on June 14 – technically 28 days and one minute after the last day of voting in the ballot.

Other days of action were set involving guards and barrier staff, revenue

protection, ticket office and other station staff in protest over the introduction of agency staff on less money to undermine pay and conditions. RMT members at the company were to refuse to handle revenue for two periods of 48 hours.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the company threatened to use the anti-union laws against the union because they claimed the action was called technically one minute too late to be within the law.

"It seems that a judge can declare our industrial action illegal because it was set to begin on the last bong of

midnight rather than the first.

"These laws were designed as a straitjacket to make it as difficult as possible for workers to take industrial action – and this is about as absurd as it gets.

"To ensure that we do not fall foul of potentially damaging legal action the RMT executive has decided to call off the action," Bob said.

However, the union is still in dispute with the company and intends to re-ballot staff on taking strike action. Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that employing agency staff at £2,000 a year less to do RMT members' jobs was the thin end of a very large

wedge which threatened the jobs, pay and conditions of all of our revenue-handling members.

"Using agency security is bad enough, but to insist on them doing our members' work as well shows the company's true intentions," he said.

Pat warned that the casualisation of the rail network meant lower pay, longer hours, worse conditions and insecurity and it undermined the professionalism of railway staff.

"That is bad for our members but it is also bad for the travelling public," Pat said.

RMT member wins Wing Award for track safety

RMT health and safety rep Barry West picked up this year's Wing Award for an outstanding personal contribution to track safety.

Barry, who worked for Amey but has been recently transferred to Network Rail, was presented the award by parliamentary transport committee chair Gwyneth Dunwoody MP.

Barry won the award for a number of initiatives including managing occupational road risk, which was designed to increase driver improvement and safety awareness.

Other achievements include assisting in and the development of risk assessment in a number of areas designed to reduce accidents and the development of a needle stick syringe policy and register.

Barry has been an RMT health and safety rep for 18 years and his message to reps was to get involved and propose solutions to present to the employer to increase safety at work.

"This is usually more effective than just telling them what the problems are," he said.

Barry said that his



WINNER: Left to right - Rt Hon Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, Barry West, Colin Porter

achievements were really down to the work of the Amey joint safety council and due to the help of a number of reps.

Barry pointed out that a key contribution was development of excellent communications including being in constant touch with each other via e-mail.

"It could not have been done without the full co-operation of the HSE, employers, both Amey and Network Rail, at all levels management have been totally supportive," he said.

The annual Wing award was first made in 1994 to commemorate the life and work of Peter Wing, who was a Fellow of the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers. He was a driving force in the industry who became dedicated to the safety of his colleagues who worked on track.

"Nominations for the award and supporting documentation not exceeding 2,500 words should be sent to K W Burrage, IRSE Chief Executive, 3rd Floor, Savoy Hill House, London WC2R 0BS.

Union says farewell to Mike Gardner

RMT presented London Underground human resources manager Mike Gardner with a token of their appreciation on his retirement last month after over 40 years in the job.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said it was an unusual award to an outstanding manager that the union could always do business with.

"This union will miss Mike, he was always straight forward and honest," he said.

Mike thanked the union for the award and said that in all his years working at LUL he had never known the union to break an agreement.



Welsh TUC supports tonnage tax campaign



RMT was represented at the Wales TUC in Llandudno in April by Peter Skelly, Owen Herbert, Regional organiser Brian Curtis, Council of Executives member Mark Facey, President Tony Donaghey and General Secretary Bob Crow.

The RMT motion calling for re-nationalisation of the railways and an end to the present fragmented nature of the

privatised network gained overwhelming support.

Wales TUC also gave its full support to the RMT campaign to link the tonnage tax to seafarers' jobs. Conference backed an RMT amendment calling for the minimum wage to be applied for seafarers.

Bob Crow also spoke in support of a Swansea trades council motion demanding the repeal of the anti-trade union laws.

An RMT emergency motion calling for a

public enquiry into the events surrounding the Tebay tragedy and the need for corporate manslaughter legislation was also passed.

On the international front, RMT won backing for a call by regional organiser Brian Curtis for the Wales TUC to give all practical support to the development of free trade unions in Iraq.

It was also pleasing that Brian was once again re-elected to the Wales TUC General Council and Wales TUC Executive.

Employment rights debated at STUC Congress

THE 107th annual Scottish Trade Union Congress in Glasgow was attended by 420 delegates, representing 45 affiliated trade unions with 30 affiliated trade union councils. The total affiliated membership to the STUC now stands at 627,478 trade unionists.

A key feature of Congress was the launch of the Union's Work Campaign, targeting workers who are not in recognised trade unions. A massive campaign has been launched covering pay, terms and conditions, fairness, health and safety, equal opportunities, security in employment, support for representatives, training, equality, dignity, holidays and pensions. The STUC noted that it represented a formidable challenge and a lot of the campaigning work and research material was presented to Congress.

RMT members appeared in the launch video and explained the benefits of trade union membership, particularly belonging

to the RMT union that has been successful in pursuing litigation claims on their behalf.

In line with union policy, RMT had resolutions on the agenda in relation to re-nationalisation and the war in Iraq. RMT had a motion on the shipping industry and one on trade union and employment rights, moved by regional organiser Phil McGarry. RMT also submitted two emergency motions, one on the Northlink tendering, moved by Leith Shipping branch delegate Brian Reynolds, and one on the Tebay tragedy, moved by RMT President, Tony Donaghey, as well as two amendments on low pay and educating youth.

General Secretary Bob Crow moved the composite on rail re-nationalisation and Phil McGarry moved the composite on shipping.

North Clyde branch delegate Janet Cassidy participated in the debate over Iraq and Edinburgh & Portobello branch

delegate Michael Hogg moved the amendment on low pay, whilst Stirling & Falkirk Branch delegate Dave King moved the amendment on the youth committee motion with regards to educating young people on the benefits of trade unionism.

RMT received good press coverage over its motions. The STUC delegation now comprises of 11 members as a result of increased membership. This is down to the efforts of all branches and the recruitment team.

Phil McGarry was re-elected onto the STUC General Council.

"The initiative by the STUC in relation to the Union's Work Campaign will greatly assist our own recruitment and retention efforts and we can call upon the expertise of the STUC to lend assistance in any campaign initiatives that we consider relevant," Phil said.

Many thanks to Dougie Kinnear for acting as a Teller.



RMT visitors and delegates at STUC Glasgow from left to right: Stuart Hyslop, Janet Cassidy, John McDougall, Harry Bygate, Brian Reynolds, Andy Gordon, Ronnie Moran, Jim Gray, Tony Donaghey, Bob Crow, Phil McGarry, Dougie Kinnear and Michael Hogg.

Women members hold special conference

RMT women members gathered in London last month to discuss how to increase the activity, role and participation of female transport workers within the union

WOMEN'S committee chair Pauline Howe of Dover shipping branch explained to delegates that the meeting had been called by the executive committee in order to hear the views of female members.

"We need to develop a membership-led campaign to increase women's involvement in the union and represent what they want," she said.

General secretary Bob Crow made clear that as far as he was concerned all members were equal within the RMT and no member should suffer discrimination.

"As long as there is discrimination against women there will be structures within the union, such as the women's committee, to advise the executive committee," he said.

Plymouth delegate Pauline Harris said that her workplace was a very male environment but she got full support from her male colleagues when carrying out her union duties.

"We need to give confidence to other women to get representation," she said.

Bristol delegate Glen Burrows said that many women faced prejudice and abuse every day and a lot of work still had to be done.

Exeter branch delegate Carol Green

pointed out that women wanted to be heard but they were very often isolated.

"Employers will sometimes ignore a woman if she complains about health and safety for instance, but might listen more to another man," she said.

Helen Butler of Lincs Roadcar agreed and said that it was important to encourage women to talk to their union rep and get representation. Linda Wiles of Jubilee and East London Line said it was up to women to get their female colleagues involved and

to support each other.

Mary McNamara of European Passengers Services said it was time that women put themselves forward for positions within the union to increase representation. Cheryl Dennis of Wimbledon branch pointed out that some women are single mothers and may be more reluctant to speak out due to the fact they are the sole bread winners and losing their jobs would be disastrous.

Jacquie McQuade of Feltham branch suggested there should be a women's page in the union journal to encourage interest amongst the entire union membership in women's issues. Conference agreed and encouraged delegates to put pen to paper (see page 27).

● *Female members interested in raising an issue should send material to Unity House or email bdenny@rmt.org.uk*



SISTERS: Women delegates from around the country meeting in London last month

Media in the dock over anti-union smears, again

MEDIA smears against the union continued last month with a scurrilous article in *The Sunday Times* containing serious allegations against RMT officials, which were repeated by *The Sun* and *The Daily Express*.

All claimed that union officials held a "boozy" night in a Gloucestershire hotel at the expense of RMT members. Defamation claims have been lodged as the reports were factually incorrect and unsupportable as fair comment.

All social aspects of the scheduled meeting of RMT officials were paid for by personal contributions from the officers attending. The proprietor also confirmed that staff were duped by a *Sunday Times* reporter, posing as an RMT accountant, into faxing a copy of the bill. The hotel also

pointed out that the RMT party had behaved impeccably.

RMT lawyers have also launched proceedings for libel against Lib Dem mayoral candidate Simon Hughes and the *Evening Standard* following damaging and untrue allegations about Bob Crow's role on the board of Transport for London.

Hughes claimed in the paper that Bob Crow pocketed £23,000 from TfL and never turned up to meetings. However, Bob donates the money – the entitled salary of any TfL board member which is less than half the £23,000 quoted – directly to charity, mainly to the RMT Orphans' Fund. Bob has attended ten TfL board and panel meetings or given apologies.

"When I was appointed to the board I

made it quite clear that my first duty as general secretary of RMT was to the members of the union," he said.

Readers will remember that *The Mail on Sunday* is also embroiled in police corruption charges following the publication of an article detailing how Bob Crow travelled to work by scooter during a Tube dispute.

Charges have been brought relating to how the details of the owner of scooter, which are confidential under the Data Protection Act, found their way to the offices of a national newspaper.

The Evening Standard was forced to publicly apologise to the union in 2002 for claiming that RMT was planning to take strike action on the first anniversary on the September 11 attacks on New York.

112 MPs support call to keep South Eastern Trains public

EARLY-DAY motion 254 calling for South Eastern Trains to be kept in the public sector has been signed by 112 MPs to date, thanks to the RMT postcard campaign.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was encouraging that so many MPs have already supported a motion that could help lead the way to the re-creation of a truly public railway.

"When every penny should be spent on rebuilding our railways as a national asset, it is shocking that the government estimates that £4 million is to be spent on a re-franchising process that simply does not need to take place.

"It is becoming clearer by the day that there is nothing at all to be gained from re-privatising South Eastern Trains, and more and more people are supporting the campaign to keep it in public hands," he said.

The government is to announce the outcome of the review of structure of the railways in July. RMT has been arguing that this is a golden opportunity to return the railways to public ownership. As part of the campaign the RMT Parliamentary group had a very busy month and RMT MPs have been strongly arguing to keep SET in the public sector.

Jeremy Corbyn MP forced a

special RMT debate on the future of passenger services, where a number of MPs conveyed to the Transport Minister that the government should put an end to the policy of franchising and instead return passenger services to the public sector. The following week, during questions to the Secretary of State for Transport a number of MPs again backed the RMT call



for a return to public ownership of the railways.

The next important step in the campaign is to hold a joint rail lobby on July 20, details below.

By joining us on the rally and lobby you will be helping the campaign for a publicly owned railway.

By directly lobbying your MP on the day you will make an even bigger difference. Don't worry if you haven't done it before, it's easy! Simply write to your MP as soon as possible in advance of the rally to the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA or fax your MP by visiting **WWW.faxyourmp.com**. In your letter tell your MP that you wish to meet him or her between 12.30 and 2.00pm on July 20 as part of the lobby for a publicly owned railway. A model letter to your MP can be found by visiting our website **www.rmt.org.uk**

Although you can turn up on the day, you will have a better chance of meeting your MP and making the lobby more effective if you contact your MP in advance.

We will also provide a short briefing paper which you can use to lobby your MP; this will be available on the union's website or will be distributed on the day.

It would be helpful if you let us know that you will be able to attend the rally and lobby by emailing **info@rmt.org.uk** or calling free phone 0800 376 3706.

For a Publicly Owned Railway

National Rally and Lobby of Parliament Tuesday 20th July 2004

Speakers so far Bob Crow, RMT General Secretary; Gerry Doherty, TSSA General Secretary; Graham Morris, ASLEF District Secretary; John McDonnell MP; Alan Simpson MP

11.30am

Assemble Opposite Main Entrance to House of Commons ➡ Westminster

12.30-2.00pm

Lobby your MP

2.00-4.00pm

Rally Committee Room 14

**THIS CAMPAIGN COULD NOT BE POSSIBLE
WITHOUT THE POLITICAL FUND**



New health and safety rep handbook launched

ARISING from a resolution carried at the first RMT Health and Safety conference held in Doncaster last year, a detailed handbook has been produced for representatives containing some of the more common health and safety requirements spanning some fourteen different sets of legislation.

The handbook is now directly available to accredited health and safety representatives. The union has also issued a new plastic identity card for health and safety representatives incorporating a photo image. To date some 250 representatives have applied for the new card and each will receive a copy of the new handbook.

General secretary Bob Crow said the handbook was the first fruits of the creation of the annual health and safety conference. "This union is turning words into action on safety which can make a crucial difference at the work place and even save lives," he said.

Health and safety reps who make applications for a new identity card will also receive the handbook. In this respect, reps will need to submit two passport sized photos with their name, national insurance number and employer printed on the reverse.

These should be sent to the regional organiser for the area concerned to enable them to update the national health and safety database. Similarly, when notifying the

regional organiser about any new appointment, this should be accompanied by two passport sized photos of the member concerned, and where appropriate, details of the representative they are replacing in order that the records can be suitably adjusted.



LAUNCH: Bob Crow, Assistant general secretary Mick Cash and RMT health and safety officer Phil Dee launch the new handbook

New health and safety liaison committee elected

A new liaison committee has been elected made up of members of the health and safety advisory, which meets at least three times a year.

The committee will liaise with the Council of Executives and the chairperson will also chair the annual conference. They will be available to members to directly raise issues of concern, numbers are given opposite.



BRIAN MUNRO, BAKERLOO BRANCH

Brian said that one of the major problems was that management structures across the transport industry, in many cases, put safety at the bottom of their list of priorities.

He said that the new committee would put safety at the heart of the RMT's agenda, equipping reps with the ammunition to make a real difference in the workplace.

Contact number 07947 316259



JACK JONES, HOLYHEAD NO 1 BRANCH

Jack has held local and regional positions as health and safety reps both on the docks and in his present job as a signaller. He said that there was a real need to get work release for reps in order for them to investigate health and safety issues and to explain to members issues around their own safety at work.

Contact number 01407 740467



CHAIR BRENDAN KELLY, BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

Brendan said that he was proud to have been elected as the first chair of this new conference as it was his branch that initially called for the annual event to be established. He said that the very good attendance of conference showed that the forum had already struck a deep chord and highlighted the importance of this issue.

Contact number 0781 5967675
e-mail bristolrail@rmt.org.uk

Together we can win!

Network Rail and London Underground RMT members are to take 24-hour strike action from 18:30 on Tuesday June 29.



MORE THAN 7,500 RMT members at Network Rail are to strike on June 29 after the company repeated its refusal to negotiate on pensions. Another 7,500 RMT members at London Underground, Metronet BGV and Metronet SSL are to take action for 24 hours at the same time following the failure of talks with the three companies to produce agreement on pay and conditions.

All the action being taken is designed to prevent the development of two-tier workforces on the Tube and on the rail network. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that although the disputes with these companies were separate and each can and will be eventually settled individually, the executive had decided to call all the workers out on the same day to maximise the impact of the action and concentrate the minds of the employers.

Network Rail

The union's negotiating committee said that the ballot for industrial action at Network Rail had brought the company to the negotiating table, but on pensions they simply sat there with their arms folded.

"The company belatedly accepted that our pensions are a suitable area for negotiation, but if their offer to set up a pensions forum is to mean anything at all, it must be accompanied by flexibility and a willingness to negotiate," Bob Crow said.

The RMT negotiating team had made several positive and flexible offers – including moving this year's pay anniversary date and forgoing a proportion of this year's bonuses – in order to keep the final-salary pension scheme open, but the company refused to listen to them.

Bob said that closing the pension scheme had become pure dogma: it would cost £4 million to keep the fund open this year, but the bonuses will cost

£16 million.

"RMT reps around the country have had a chance to weigh up the company's offer, and the overwhelming response was one of anger at the failure to respond to our members' concern over their right to dignity and security in retirement.

"They have also been angered by the company's dishonest assertion that only new employees will be affected by the closure of the pension scheme.

"The company knows that is not true, and it is disgraceful that they should try to convince our members or the public that it is," he said.

Anger among RMT members intensified after Network Rail executives gave themselves huge bonuses of £350,000 – worth 20 per cent of their six-figure salaries – despite missing punctuality targets and one in five trains continuing to run late.

"Their decision to go ahead with awarding themselves telephone-number bonuses for 'financial efficiency' will be seen by thousands of loyal NR employees as a grubby reward for pulling the plug on their decent pension scheme," Bob said.

London Underground

RMT members at London Underground, Metronet BGV and Metronet SSL are to strike from 18.30 Tuesday June 29 following the failure of talks with the three companies to produce agreement on pay and conditions.

There will also be a seven-day overtime ban at Metronet beginning from June 29.

"Despite our best efforts, talks with both LUL and Metronet have got us nowhere fast, and our members are now fed up with being messed around," Bob Crow said.

"We have bent over backwards to keep

talks going and to leave the door open to a long-term deal, but the employers appear not to be taking the talks seriously at all," he said.

He said that the union wanted a date for the implementation of a 35-hour week and a date for the start of a four-day week, and we want serious progress on pay.

"We will not accept the destruction of hard-won working conditions, and we will not accept the creation of a two-tier workforce," he said.

RMT suspended action scheduled for June 10 on LUL after emergency talks led to further detailed exchanges but the company continued with its intransigent attitude. RMT has attempted to avert the possibility of action and the union is keenly aware of the losses incurred. However, there comes a time when there is no option but to call on members to take strike action and that time has now come.

At the same time as fat cat directors are reaping the rewards of privatisation in the form of huge, unearned bonuses; the workers are treated with low pay offers and the creation of a two-tiered workforce that will gradually destroy proper working conditions for all.

London regional organiser Bobby Law urged members to support the union and your colleagues in this demonstration of RMT's determination to secure a decent deal in this and coming years.

"Let's be sure we turn the mandate we have for action into a solid strike which will bring these companies back to the respective negotiating tables with sensible and honourable offers," he said.

No more Tebays

THE tragic deaths of four infrastructure workers at Tebay earlier this year was a symptom of wider problems in the industry the RMT engineering grades conference in Inverness agreed last month.

DELEGATES stood in a minute's silence in memory to those lost at Tebay and listened to a detailed description of the events that led to the deaths of the men, employed by Carillion, when a runaway trailer ploughed into their gang.

A delegate who knew the men explained that there had been previous incidents of runaway trailers yet they were still in use.

He said that the noise from light generators alone ensured that the approaching runaway trailer coming out of the night could not be heard.

He said that there were real questions that had not been answered, why wasn't

silent lighting used? Why was planning so bad that work had to be carried out at night?

"This was not an accident, it was negligence and those responsible should be put away", he said.

"This could have happened in your area," he told delegates.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said it was a clear indication of the problems of privatisation.

"There were at least eight different sub-contractors working on the line that night.

"Tebay should not have happened and this union is demanding nothing less than a full public inquiry," he said.

He said that lessons needed to be learnt and real action had to be taken.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow, who attended the funerals of the men, reported that the union had to fight to secure average earnings for Tebay survivors who were injured and traumatised after the company had tried to only pay basic earnings while they were off sick.

Conference backed a motion from Lancaster branch demanding that the union work towards bringing in corporate responsibility legislation. It also demanded a full public inquiry into Tebay and the wider problems on the privatised network and that

the union continue to campaign for the renationalisation of the railway.

Pay and conditions

Conference agreed that following the transfer of many infrastructure workers from the private sector to Network Rail, parity in rates of pay and conditions should be introduced.

Richard Garde of Wimbledon No1 branch said that it was necessary to take the opportunity now, during the changeover to Network Rail, to eliminate large fluctuations in pay scales

"If we don't the industry will descend into chaos as staff jump around from job to job for more pay and better conditions, causing dangerous levels of confusion," he said.

Danny McNickel of EMC branch said that what was required was an industry-wide standard.

Mick Cash agreed and said it was clear that one set of terms and conditions would be good for the industry.

"We cannot allow infrastructure workers to become second-class citizens within Network Rail. We need to take the bull by the horns and establish certainty," he said.

Conference agreed to place the matter before this year's RMT annual general meeting.

Hard hats

Conference called on the union to negotiate with Network Rail and other infrastructure companies that the wearing of hard hats

No more tiers

RMT will fight against the development of a two-tier workforce where some employees receive travel facilities and a good pension while others do not, RMT general secretary Bob Crow told conference.

"How can it be that some infrastructure companies and the Metropolitan police can provide travel facilities, while Network Rail is refusing to even discuss the matter?

"If you work on the Irish rail network, you get travel facilities on the British network but if you joined the British rail network after 1996 you get nothing, that is no joke," he said.

Bob also outlined the case for a decent final salary pension for all Network Rail staff.

"Shutting down the Railway Pension Scheme to new staff will make the scheme more expensive for existing members and threaten its very existence and the number of members putting into the fund inevitably dwindles," he said.

He said that the collapse of Equitable Life pensions showed how vulnerable money purchase pension schemes were.



VOTING: Delegates backed calls for corporate accountability



UNITED: Delegates to the 2004 Engineering Grades conference

should only apply in "hard hat areas".

Gerry McCann of Ayr said the union believed that safety was number-one priority. However, the diktat from Network Rail that hard hats must be worn everywhere at all times was simply unworkable.

"This is more about enforcing a uniform than safety," he said.

Danny McNickel said that the introduction of this hat policy was about corporate identity as well as identifying staff, as new starters wore different coloured safety hats.

Bill Rawcliffe of York Engineering branch agreed that the move had a whiff of control freakery about it.

"Staff can be threatened or disciplined simply for removing a hat," he said.

Lewis Peacock of LUL Signal, Electrical and Track branch warned that the privateers that had taken over maintenance contracts on London Underground were also bringing in a compulsory hat policy.

"It has never been made clear what health and safety dangers head protection is supposed to protect us from," he said.

John Kennedy of Harlesden Engineering branch recounted an incident when a colleague was forced to wear a hard hat while working on open track. "While working on some wiring, the hat fell off, caused damage and delayed trains," he said.

Alex Hogg of Edinburgh and Portobello branch warned that the practice could lead to managers claiming that no risk assessment was required simply because hard hats were in use.

End PPP on the tube

Conference called on the union to continue to campaign to bring London Underground maintenance contracts back in-house and

end the disastrous PPP experiment on the Tube.

Doug Hammersley of Jubilee branch warned that the private companies Metronet and Tubelines were undermining safety on the network in order to save money.

He said that any response to critical safety issues was hampered by the fact the companies will not deviate from their contracts.

"For the private sector there is no profit in increasing spending on safety other than what is absolutely necessary," he said.

He said that public money was being poured into these companies that were carrying out risk assessments based on cost.

"We have already seen track patrols being reduced from 24 hours to 48 hours, then to 72 hours and we have seen the results of that," he said.

Lewis Peacock said that after one year of the so-called public-private partnership on the Tube staff were already witnessing the next stage – even more fragmentation.

"We are seeing the further break-up of the Tube with sub-contractors and now the privateers want to move in on the operational side such as on the East London line," he said.

Pat Collins of Birmingham said that there was a common bond between rail network maintenance staff and underground workers.

"We were privatised nearly ten years ago and have seen the decline in standards, we need to share those experiences and help in the battle for renationalisation," he said.

Accommodation

Conference agreed that the lack of decent accommodation facilities for transient work

Bring back the track

Council of Executives representative Willie Devlin congratulated conference for the work done during the transfer of maintenance staff to Network Rail over the last year.



"Due to the work you have carried out companies like Jarvis and First Engineering have been forced to confirm, in writing, that there would be no compulsory redundancies or erosion of conditions," he said.

He said that the union would continue to campaign to bring all track work back in-house, including upgrades and renewals, in order to prevent disasters like Hatfield and Tebay.

As an engineering worker on London Underground, Willie said that the privatisation of Tube infrastructure had been a disaster and the union would be campaigning against PPP.

"We are seeing the same problems that have developed following the privatisation of overground track.

"The immoral and corrupt privatisation of Tube privatisation must be reversed.

"We need to be listening to this conference to learn the lessons from those who have lived through privatisation in order to win the campaign to bring the Tube back into the public sector," he said.

groups was appalling. Fort William delegate Steve Wallace said that the private sector was forcing the industry backwards in terms of welfare for workers.

"We have workers in miserable conditions with little or no access to toilet or washing facilities," he said.

Ayr branch delegate Gerry McCann said that workers were entitled under law to work in a clean environment.

Andy Littlechild of LUL signal and track branch said that it was a question of health and safety.

"LUL staff shut down the job until management agreed to install decent portacabins," he said.

Compass and ruler

Conference called on the union to enter negotiations with First Engineering to end the "ludicrous" practice of using a compass and ruler to locate signal areas in unfamiliar locations. Ayr delegate Gerry McCann said that forcing staff to undergo compass and ruler tests was outrageous.

"It is humiliating to staff that fail despite the fact that they are good at their job," he said.

Pat Collins of Birmingham Engineering warned that the company was introducing the practice to make workers cover wider areas, allowing them to employ less staff.

NO TO TIER

CONCERNS over the development of two or more-tier workforces on UK ships were recurring themes of the 2004 Biennial General Meeting of docks and shipping grades in Portsmouth last month.

JOHN MORAN of Liverpool shipping branch was "socially dumped" in 1999 when he was replaced by low-paid foreign crew but had since found agency work.

"I get no sick pay but the man working next to me does.

"I work alongside people on better terms conditions than me, that is the reality of temporary work, he said."

Conference agreed that where such disparities exist, the union should negotiate to bring all employees onto the highest rate.

Jimmy McAuley of Glasgow shipping branch said that agency workers were being treated as third-class citizens which caused instability at work and at home.

Jack Whitehead of Portsmouth branch warned that if the erosion of conditions for agency staff was tolerated then the standards for full-time staff would inevitably be under threat.

Mark Winchester of Dover branch also warned that the recent acquisitions of P&O vessels and routes by Stena Line posed serious threats to national terms and conditions due to the introduction of low-paid foreign crew.

"The answer must be to organise all ratings employed on these vessels and fight for parity," he said.

Peter Hall of the shipping committee said he had just returned from the Stena Line Works Council and it was clear that the company was simply not informing workers when they took on non-domiciled seafarers on lower rates.

Derogations

Conference agreed that derogations given to non-EU seafarers to work by the Maritime Coastguard Agency could not be justified.

Mark Winchester said that such derogations undermined conditions and, given the enlargement of the EU,

must be terminated.

Conference called on the union to pressurise the Scottish Executive to abandon the damaging tendering of Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services.

Andy Gordon of Aberdeen said that the moves, demanded by European Union law, were nothing more than the back-door privatisation of an essential lifeline.

National shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the union had joined with the Scottish TUC to demand an end to the sell-off.

Conference called for legal action to be taken through the European courts, bearing in mind the recent legal decision on Altmark, which allowed the German state to support bus services despite EU laws on state aid.

Neil Keith of Aberdeen said that if Cal Mac was made the preferred bidder the transaction could be seen as a new company takeover, leaving employees vulnerable.

"We need to ensure that TUPE applies if any transfers take place," he said.

Mark Winchester of Dover warned that TUPE was not a cure-all and would not automatically protect conditions.

"We need to strengthen TUPE and have no illusions that your conditions are untouchable, they are not," he said.

Conference agreed that the issue of Cal Mac tendering would be taken to the union's AGM.

Andy Gordon of Aberdeen said that if members wanted to know what would happen at Cal Mac under privatisation then look at no further the privatised NorthLink ferries, serving north east Scotland.

"There are nine different wage rates at NorthLink and the development of a multi-tier workforce," he said.

Conference agreed to investigate the multi-tier pay rates at NorthLink, which was still receiving public subsidies.

Conference called for the union to campaign with Numast and the Chamber



National shipping secretary Steve Todd



John McDonnell MP: crisis in the shipping industry

of Shipping to halt the attack on Foreign Earnings Deductions(FED) by Inland Revenue.

It was agreed to seek to extend FED to UK seafarers engaged in coastal shipping as recommended in the governments' 1998 document 'charting a new course'.

Malcolm Dunning warned that FED was now being deemed illegal under EU laws on state aid.

Conference applauded the efforts of the organising unit in increasing the membership of the union. Andy Gordon of Aberdeen said that more work needed to be done in the shipping sector. "We need a recruitment strategy that highlights the advantages of union membership to non-members in the shipping industry," he said.

Jack Whitehead said that recruitment was a difficult job it was necessary for the union get behind the organising team. Mark Winchester of Dover said that it was important not only to recruit workers but to motivate them and make them feel a part of the trade-union movement.

Donald Graham of the organising unit explained the union's strategy, which involved assisting branches to actively recruit and organise members.

He said that the unit would be writing to shipping branches to arrange meetings to discuss recruitment and how to build local structures to represent members.

He said that there was no place for industrial snobbery within the RMT.

"Whatever your grade, whatever your job, you are an equal member of the union," he said.



Mark Winchester of Dover branch



Bob Crow presents Mike Tosh of Portsmouth branch with a richly-deserved 25 years' badge

Conference rejected the concept of employing a recruiter just for the shipping grades as it contradicted the industrial multi-grade basis of the union.

Re-convene in parliament

Conference called upon the union to reconvene the BGM for a shipping conference in parliament in line with a suggestion by John McDonnell MP in order to deepen understanding amongst politicians of the crisis in the shipping industry.

John made the suggestion during his



UNITED: Delegates to the 2004 Biennial General Meeting of shipping and docks grades

parliamentary report to conference. He said that the new parliamentary group had been very effective and had even increased in size since RMT's expulsion from the Labour Party earlier this year.

He said that the group met monthly with the union leadership to discuss developments and how to react and to plan long-term policy goals.

"We have been campaigning on shipping issues such as on the repeal of section nine of the Race Relations Act.

"We now have the bizarre situation where shipowners cannot discriminate on the grounds of race but can pay lower wages on the grounds of nationality," he said.

However, he pointed out that, due to the RMT group's campaigning, the government was committed to a review in the future.

He said that employment rights was another important area of work, considering there is a legal right to strike in the UK.

He said that the tide was turning against the Blair clique within the labour movement. He said that many former loyalists were beginning to realise the damage being done to the Labour Party

over the last seven years in the run-up to the next election.

● Conference agreed that the union should consider organising an RMT P&O ferry committee. Chris Fuller of Dover said that such a committee would fight the employers' tactic of divide and rule. Steve Todd said that the union was setting up a national ferry port committee that would encompass all ferry companies.

"The union will be assisting all reps to get together," he said.

● Conference expressed concern that no representative of the International Transport Workers' Federation addressed the meeting and resolved to invite such a speaker to BGMs in the future.

● Conference expressed concern at the lack of progress of some previous conference decisions and called on the shipping committee and the liaison committee to carry out their democratic functions.

● Conference called for all port committees to have a relevant constitution that complies with the aims and policies of the union.

Defend and extend union rights

THE problems facing the shipping industry are similar to those in other transport sectors, most of which derive from the drive for profit, Bob Crow told conference.

This was the main characteristic of the process of so-called globalisation is the struggle between those who want to maximise profits and those defending their pay and conditions.

One of the major obstacles in defending workers was the implementation of European Union directives which demand the privatisation of ferry services like Cal Mac. The term used to demand such moves is 'liberalisation' which suggests freedom. But it is only freedom for bankers and big business not for those which work on those services. In fact, it means cuts for these people, cuts in wages, pensions and conditions.

We clearly need to protect our members' conditions and organise workers.

The union was bringing in two relief national district organisers and expanding the organising unit to strengthen that work in the shipping, docks and offshore sectors.

RMT is also working closely with the oil workers union OILC. This organisation is not a 'breakaway' union, as some have claimed, but operates on a principled basis.

The union should pay tribute to leader of the RMT parliamentary group, John MacDonnell MP, for the work he has done to represent shipping members in parliament. He and the group continues to work hard to represent the union despite RMT expulsion from the Labour Party. In fact, the number of MPs involved had increased. Union membership had also increased by over 3,000 since RMT had been expelled.

We have made clear that the RMT is no longer prepared to give money and support to those who do not support the aims and policies of union.



Link the tonnage

OVER 80 MPs have signed the Early Day Motion 880 calling for the government to link entitlement to the tonnage tax to training and job opportunities for UK seafarers.

INTRODUCED in 2000, the favourable tax concession to shipowners has led to a three-fold increase in foreign-owned vessels flying the Red Ensign and was envisaged to include training for UK shippers. However, the decline in British seafaring jobs has continued. Over £70 million in taxpayers' money has been handed out to shipowners, but there has been no link to ratings' training and jobs.

Shipowners have continued to employ foreign labour employed at lower rates due to a loop-hole in the section nine of the race relations act, which allows for discrimination on British ships. Today there are fewer than 10,000 UK ratings left. Action must be taken to stem this decline.

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the new tax had been hailed as the salvation of the shipping industry, but there is now a grave danger of the British rating disappearing altogether.

"We have seen some ratings to officer training take place since 2000 but many ratings have been replaced with overseas seafarers on terrible rates of pay," he said.

Flag of convenience?

Ratings from eastern Europe and the far east are being paid little over a pound an hour for working 70 hours a week on British-registered ships, many of them foreign-owned, preventing British seafarers from competing for jobs.

vessels have flagged-in to the British fleet in order to benefit from the tonnage tax but have no respon-

sibility to obey UK laws of employment.

These developments have led to a growing feeling that the Red Ensign – the historic symbol of Britain's merchant navy – is turning into a flag of convenience.

International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) inspectors have uncovered instances of appalling exploitation of foreign crews, with some Filipino crew members earning just £1.34 an hour for working over 300 hours a month.

ITF UK co-ordinator Norrie McVicar described the situation as "slave labour" and "social dumping at its worst".

"It's an absolute disgrace that we are still arguing with the government on bringing in measures to change this," he said.

RMT to blame?

The union rejected bizarre claims by deputy prime Minister John Prescott that RMT were to blame for the rise in low paid foreign crews on British ships.

The former RMT member made the claim during parliamentary question time earlier this month when he was asked why the tonnage tax had failed to deliver extra UK jobs or training places as promised.

The deputy PM claimed that there was extra training but RMT "did not take up the training arrangements for British crew members to be on board the ships".

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said the deputy PM was "worryingly misinformed" on the issue of training

for UK seafaring ratings.

"RMT has consistently reminded the government of the failure of the Tonnage Tax regime to deliver training and employment opportunities for UK seafaring ratings.

"The fact is that there are only around 50 UK ratings being trained each year – not enough to replenish even the current all-time low number of UK ratings in the industry," he said.

Shipping secretary Steve Todd also said that to accuse the union of missing training opportunities was "sheer nonsense", pointing out that RMT would never turn its back on training and job opportunities.

"Taxpayers have been handed over more than £70 million for the tonnage tax, but so far nothing has stopped shipowners dumping UK ratings in favour of low-paid overseas recruits.

"What the industry desperately needs is government action to reverse the decline in UK ratings' jobs – and that means a formal link

between the million out in tonnage tax creation of training jobs," Steve said.

Website

The RMT website has a campaign page with material that can be

Postcard

Enclosed with the postcards which EDM and to the tax, including a Whatever grad MP, adding your sign EDM 880 ar

BGM backs

The RMT's bienn to achieve a link employment of l

National shipp campaign was n the repeal on se

Steve outlined ment and training had been establ lobbied through had been tabled

Brian Armstrong the union should shipowners to th job for UK seafa

Malcolm Dunn foreign ships, in fleets, which hav tonnage tax paid

John Moran o picking" whereb ignoring UK law

"This concess and all legislatio said.

Mark Winches campaign to ma



THIS CAMPAIGN COULD NOT BE WITHOUT THE POLITICAL

e!

TONNAGE TAX: SO WHERE ARE THE JOBS?



www.rmt.org.uk 

ns being handed
relief and the
opportunities and

has a specific
which contains
e used to support

the RMT case. In particular model
letters that can be sent to MPs can
be downloaded and adapted for use.

Many MPs have already
signed the EDM, so a letter should
also be sent directly to the Shipping
Minister and this is also available on
the website.

is edition of RMT News are tonnage tax campaign
you can send directly to MPs to ask them to sign the
shipping minister demanding action on the tonnage
link between the tax and British jobs and training.
le you work in, please find time to drop a line to your
address at the bottom of the card, and ask them to
find out their views on the subject.

Tonnage tax campaign

ial shipping conference backed the campaign
between the tonnage tax and the training and
UK seafarers.

ing secretary Steve Todd said that the tonnage tax
now the priority although work was also continuing on
ction nine of the Race Relations Act.

the determination of the union to secure an employ-
ing link. He reported that a special campaign page
ished on the RMT website and that MPs were being
the postcard campaign to support the EDM 880 that
on this subject.

ing of Southampton branch posed the question why
d continue supporting a tax that had benefited the
he tune of over £70 million but had not produced one
rers.

ing of the shipping committee said that hundreds of
cluding from the infamous Liberian and Panamanian
ve appalling safety records, were benefiting from
d by UK taxpayers.

f Liverpool branch said it was a clear case of "cherry
y shipowners were taking the tax concession and
s.

ion should only apply to ships flying the Red Ensign
n should apply, including the UK minimum wage," he

ter of Dover branch said there was a need to
ke the taxpayer aware of the tonnage tax rip-off.

EDM 880 signatures

LABOUR PARTY: Harry Barnes, Joe Benton, Harold Best, Bob Bizzard, Martin Caton, Colin Challen, Helen Clark, Tony Clarke, Harry Cohen, Michael Connarty, Jeremy Corbyn, Jim Cousins, Ann Cryer, Jim Cunningham, Claire, Curtis-Thomas, Ian Davidson, Terry Davis, Janet Dean, Jim Dobbin, Brian H Donohoe, David Drew, Louise Ellman, Bill Etherington, Paul Flynn, Hywel Francis, Ian Gibson, Win Griffiths, David Hamilton, Ivan Henderson, Stephen Hepburn, Kelvin Hopkins, Lindsay Hoyle, Brian Iddon, Eric Illsley, Brian Jenkins, Lynne Jones, Peter Kilfoyle, Mark Lazarowicz, Terry Lewis, Calum Macdonald, Alice Mahon, Rob Marris, John McDonnell, Ann McKechin, Kevin McNamara, Tony McWalter, Alan Meale, Austin Mitchell, Doug Naysmith, Edward O'Hara, Sandra Osborne, Albert Owen, Gwyn Prosser, Syd Rapson, Phil Sawford, Alan Simpson, Marsha Singh, Dennis Skinner, John P Smith, Gavin Strang, David Taylor, Desmond Turner, Rudi Vis, Joan Walley, Robert N Wareing, Betty Williams, Anthony D Wright, Derek Wyatt
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: Alistair Carmichael, Andrew George, Mike Hancock, Nigel Jones, John Thurso, Roger Williams
PLAID CYMRU: Adam Price
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY: Eddie McGrady
ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY: Roy Beggs, David Burnside, Sylvia Hermon, Martin Smyth
DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY: Nigel Dodds

RMT parliamentary group at work

The RMT parliamentary group has swung into action in support of the tonnage tax campaign by writing to each MP explaining the need for a change in the tax concession to save UK jobs.

The group has been successful in encouraging fellow MPs to sign EDM 880 and hopes the postcard campaign will bring in many more signatures. The RMT group of MPs has also won a select committee enquiry on the issue and secured a meeting with the Treasury minister Dawn Primarolo to discuss the need for reform of the tax.

RMT has also written to the Inland Revenue outlining the union's case and a reply has now been received. The response stated that the Department of Transport would be taking the lead in any decisions regarding an employment or training link. However, it was unable to provide details of the timetable for the review process, including the likely date for any decision.

EDM 880: Seafarers Employment and the Tonnage Tax

"This House is deeply concerned that the total number of UK seafaring ratings has declined from 30,000 ratings in 1980 to less than 10,000 in 2003; regrets that the decline has continued since the introduction of the Government's tonnage tax regime; notes that the proportion of British Officers is also declining and has fallen by more than 27 per cent in the last three years; believes that the decline in UK seafarers cannot be allowed to continue if this country is to retain a core of essential maritime skills; abhors the fact that ship owners who have benefited massively from millions of pounds of public subsidy through the tonnage tax regime have failed to arrest this decline in British jobs, notes that in its current form the tonnage tax has not generated significant training and employment opportunities for UK seafaring ratings and officers and calls on the Government to use the current Inland Revenue review to introduce a firm link between the concession and the increased employment of UK seafaring ratings and officers on UK registered ships."

BE POSSIBLE
FUND

VOTE
YES



Organisation the key

Organisation remains the key to tackling the problems faced by the union's road haulage section, delegates at its annual conference agreed

THE cycle of decline has been broken, senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash reported, but there remained a huge amount of work to be done.

Initial City Link had been particularly hard to deal with, said Mick, and the poor organisation was reflected by poor pay and conditions.

The group regarded the agreement with RMT as cosmetic, and where the union showed signs of effective organisation the company had become increasingly uncomfortable with it.

"The more members we get the less they like it," said Mick, noting that many CityLink franchisees persisted in simply refusing to recognise the agreement.

The union was also heading towards a showdown with Freightliner, where a pay offer of three percent to most staff contrasted with more than five percent offered to train drivers.

The widening pay gap was the result of privatisation, but the low-paid should not be used to subsidise bigger increases for the already better-paid, said Mick.

The company had also rejected RMT's claim for universal travel facilities.

Mick noted that the union had made progress on travel facilities on London Underground and in some infracos, and that the issue was a key part of the Network Rail dispute over the two-tier

workforce.

It was also an issue created by privatisation – and whose resolution could be achieved without any real cost.

Mick also outlined issues in Heavy Haul, Exel Logistics, Lynx and other employers

Welcoming delegates, conference president Peter Daniels also pointed to the organisational problems the section faced.

In Initial CityLink, despite a national agreement with the group, some franchisees continued to evade contact with the union, and in Bradford RMT reps had even been escorted from the depot.

Despite the union's expulsion from the Labour Party, Peter said it was important to retain links and hoped that the union would soon be "back in the fold".

Outgoing secretary Maurice Hamilton also expressed his regret that one of the founders of the party should find itself outside its ranks.

Outlining progress made on the motions passed by last year's road-freight conference, executive member Andy Lister noted that Lynx Express had agreed to allow union reps time off for recruitment.

Freightliner, meanwhile, had indicated that it would support a union campaign for tax exemption for travel facilities for employers employed since the April 1996 cut-off

The huge potential for organisation in

road freight was underlined by Roddy Keenan of the union's organisation and recruitment department.

There were 4,000 potential members in City Link alone, he noted.

Department head Alan Pottage urged branches to use their management funds to recruit: "There can be no better way to spend it," he said.

Problems of organisation in the road-freight sector were also underlined by motions sent up to the RMT annual general meeting, seeking to take organisation in hand at Exel Logistics and Initial City Link.

Simply identifying the Exel depots at which the union already had negotiating rights would be a step forward, noted Peter Daniels

"Let us know where they are and we'll get in there and organise them," he said.

Peter also highlighted problems at Initial City Link, citing the Bradford depot where management, determined to keep RMT out, had escorted Peter and other recruiters from the premises

One Leeds member interested in becoming a union rep had found himself being scapegoated for all sorts of problems, having his round continually changed and his bonus messed up.

Delegates urged the general secretary to take up with Initial City Link why some franchises still did not recognise the union.

At Rotherham the organising department had been told that it would have to give three weeks' notice of any visit, and would be allowed into the depot only on a Saturday afternoon – when it was closed.

Delegates also agreed that booklets should be produced outlining existing terms and conditions in all road transport companies with which the union has negotiating rights, with updates made available on the RMT website.

Jimmy Rafferty, Exeter, pointed to the problems that the implementation of the Working Time Directive was having on the earnings of drivers for whom overtime earnings had been essential to make up for low pay rates.

"Some are losing as much as £10,000," he said.

Decisions at a glance

- Delegates called for a push for parity of privileged travel facilities to be negotiated with all relevant companies.
- The union should seek to negotiate with Freightliner that road motor drivers be paid



Platform: AGS Mick Cash shares a platform with Pete Daniels and Maurice Hamilton

Key for road-freight



Trevor Howard

for their meal breaks.

- Pay and conditions should be standardised across all Initial City Link depots
- The union should also seek to ensure



Conference president Pete Daniels

that all City Link vans are equipped with barrows

- The union should seek to remove the requirement that part-time staff at Lynx Express Parcels work up to two hours

overtime a day without notice – a requirement already dropped for full-time staff.

- The union should negotiate a revised day, afternoon and night shift scheme with Lynx Express Parcels
- The General Grades Committee should negotiate with Lynx Express Parcels to install an RMT rep as a director of the company's pension plan trustee company.
- Bereavement leave of a minimum of four days on the death of a mother or father should be negotiated with all relevant companies.
- Delegates expressed disappointment with the speed with which the union was moving to use of new technology in distributing circulars and updates, and the inability of branch secretaries and reps to download information
- Next year's road freight conference will take place in Exeter, and the 2006 conference in Gloucester



In partnership
with the



Edwards Duthie Solicitors has a special affinity with trade unions, their members and officials. We have advised union members and their families for some 22 years, to the point where we now serve some 40,000 members across 230 branches nationwide. We have a dedicated team which serves RMT members, their families and friends. Unlike our competitors, we offer a full range of legal services, many of which are free or heavily discounted for union members :

- PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS
- SPECIALIST CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE TEAM
- EXPERT ADVICE ON ALL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT LAW
- 24 HOUR CRIMINAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION
- FREE WILLS SERVICE FOR MEMBERS
- 10% DISCOUNT ON RESIDENTIAL CONVEYANCING
- LAW SOCIETY SPECIALISTS IN FAMILY AND MATRIMONIAL ADVICE
- FREE HALF HOUR INTERVIEW IN ALL AREAS OF LAW

Our approach is both proactive and hands on. Our lawyers go to see members and officials at the workplace, at home, at union premises or wherever discussion can best be accommodated nationwide. We are here to provide a service and, unlike our competitors, we do not consider that we can do that from a remote standpoint.

RING NOW FOR ADVICE & ASSISTANCE ON 0208 514 9000

email: allinfo@edwardsduthie.com

HANDS OFF CUBA

HUNDREDS of people gathered at Maritime House in south London earlier this month for the second annual garden party fund raiser for medical aid for Cuba.

Party goers danced to great live salsa music from Omar Puente and heard speeches from a host of labour movement activists and Cuban representatives. Speakers highlighted the need for international solidarity with Cuba and to build the fight against imperialist war, racism and fascism.

Bob Crow welcomed guests and said that Cuba was a proud example of a multi-racial nation that had always answered the call for international solidarity, despite being under constant blockade from the heartland of imperialism, the United States, just 90 miles away.

"I had the honour of being in Revolution Square in Havana, alongside other RMT activists and British trade unionists this year in a crowd of well over a million, celebrating May Day as no other nation can," he said.

He said that the solidarity and comradeship of that day were inspiring, and provided a stark contrast to some of the worst aspects of politics in today's Britain.

Honouring anti-fascist volunteers



A memorial to members of this union and its forerunners who fought fascism in Spain from 1936 to '39 was unveiled by Spanish anti-fascist war veterans Jack Jones and Bob Doyle.

Jack said that the plaque served as a timely reminder that the labour movement must close ranks against the threat of fascism today.

"The far right in Britain is attempting to gain ground on the back of popular discontent and we must learn the lesson of Spain," he said.

TOP RIGHT: RMT president Tony Donaghey, Tony Benn, John McDonnell MP

LEFT TO RIGHT: Morning Star editor John Haylett, SSP convenor Tommy Sheridan, anti-fascist veterans Bob Doyle and Jack Jones, Bob Crow with Cuban MP and film maker Sergio Corrieri and Tony Benn, Bob Crow, revellers enjoying the sounds of the eight piece salsa band Omar Puente



RMT seeks answers on Central Line derailment

RMT is seeking urgent answers from London Underground after it emerged that the points at the centre of last month's Central Line derailment near White City were among 42 identified as potentially dangerous by the investigation into last October's Camden Town derailment.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the White City points were among 42 sets located on curves and of a similar design to those involved in the Camden derailment.

"All 42 were subject to a regulatory notice to the infrastructure companies requiring 24-hourly inspection, with approval by LUL's chief engineer required for maintenance work done on them.

"RMT's safety reps have asked for detailed information on all 42 sets of those points, including their exact locations," he said.

The union is also demanding that extreme-caution speed restrictions be applied

immediately to all of them and want to know if the regulatory notices have been relaxed in any way – and if so why.

Regional organiser Bobby Law said that once again it seemed that the absence of any effective accident-prevention plan under the privatised regime had endangered lives.

"When the infrastructure was transferred to the private sector there were 15,000 known track-related items which fell below engineering standards – but far from sorting them out the PPP contracts simply exempted the privateers from any responsibility for them.

"There have now been six major derailments since September 2002 – how many more do there have to be before someone notices a pattern?

"This is what happens when the interests of private profit are put ahead of safety," Bobby said.



Justice for the Farringdon six

AN employment tribunal hearing into the sacking of the Farringdon six by London Underground privateer Metronet will deliver its findings next month.

The six RMT members were summarily sacked after empty tins of beer were found in the loft of a hut used by hundreds of people, including around 60 sub-contractors.

The six were sacked despite the fact that they all passed alcohol tests and the lack of any evidence linking them to the beer cans. The tins had also been washed by managers to remove months of dust before being

presented to the media.

RMT London regional organiser Bobby Law said that it was the worst case of victimisation he had seen for years.

"These men are quite clearly scapegoats for an incompetent management team," he said.

Metronet's human resources manager has left the company since the cases of the Farringdon six was taken up by the union.

Bobby paid tribute to union lawyers Edward Duthie, particularly Doreen Reeves, for the work put into representing the men.



JUSTICE: Regional organiser Bobby Law and Bob Crow with the Farringdon six unfairly dismissed by Metronet (left to right) Perry Robinson, Andrew Dobson, Gary Hill, Trevor Trower, Mahari Caleb and Ronald Edwards

Victory at Tubelines

STRIKE action at infrastructure company Tubelines scheduled for June 10 was called off after talks yielded an improved offer on pay, travel facilities and a reduction in the working week.

The union has accepted a one year offer increasing the basic rate of pay to 3.1 per cent backdated to April 1 2004 and will work towards the ratification of a deal for 2005 with a view to reaching agreement.

The current offer for 2005 includes a 2.5 per cent increase basic rate or RPI with effect April 1 2005. A further increase will be available for a reduction in the absence rate. This will provide an additional 0.575 per cent of pay for each 1 per cent reduction in sickness absence to a maximum of 2.3 per cent.

Tube Lines will provide travel benefit for those operational grades that joined the company since 2003, subsidising their travel costs between home and work at the level of 25 per cent immediately, 50 per cent next year and 75 per cent week from 2006.

Tube Lines also made a commitment to work towards a 35 hour week. The first reduction of 40 minutes will be implemented in September with another reduction next June. Where this reduction cannot be incorporated in roster patterns, it will be accumulated and taken as additional rest days.

RMT OPENS NEW WEB SHOP

RMT offers a range of merchandise for members and officials. You can buy a range of quality clothing or memorabilia, all with the famous RMT logo. You can show your support and publicise your union by wearing and displaying these items. RMT will be extending the range in the light of demand and if you feel there is a particular item you would like then please advise your branch secretary and it will certainly be considered.

Our current range of items is shown on these pages.

Buying couldn't be easier. You can:

- Visit our web shop and buy on line at

www.rmt.org.uk. Payment can be by debit or credit card using a secure link

- Telephone your order to our members' helpline and pay by debit or credit card
- Complete the tear off slip below and send your cheque

Goods will normally be despatched within 10 days of receipt.

The addition of the web shop follows feedback from members and is all part of the continuing development of services to members.



- ☐ Sweatshirts £10 plus £2.50 postage
- ☐ Polo Shirts £10 plus 75p postage
- ☐ T Shirts £5.50 plus 75p postage
- ☐ Ties - full length & clip-on £4.50 plus 50p postage
- ☐ Woven ladies' cravats £6.00 plus 75p postage
- ☐ Document bag £9.50 plus £1.50 postage

- ☐ Georgian design Pewter Tankard £19.99 - free postage
- ☐ Parker Frontier Pen set £16.99 - free postage
- ☐ Black Leather Notecase £7.99 plus 50p postage
- ☐ Gents and Ladies Watches £19.99 plus £1.00 postage
- ☐ Jackets High Visibility £9.00 plus 75p postage
- ☐ Zipped document brief case £14.99 plus £2.00 postage

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....





Send form to
Finance Dept
RMT,
Unity House,
39 Chalton St.
London
NW1 1JD



Workers of all countries unite

I WAS very pleased to attend an RMT conference of women members to discuss ways of increasing the role and participation of female members in the union. The increased number of women employed in our transport industries, is not yet reflected adequately in representative positions within the union at local, regional and national levels.

An excellent debate took place from the large number of women who attended. Some felt that childcare problems were the principal reason preventing women from attending branch and regional council meetings. Others felt that male RMT members felt that being a representative was "not a women's job", although my impression was that this view is a minority one as the women reps present stated that they didn't experience discrimination and often acted as advocates for men. Several resolutions were carried at the conference which will go forward to the union executive for consideration. All in all it was an excellent conference.

A joint meeting of ASLEF, TSSA and RMT has recently taken place to discuss the improvement in representing our respective members on issues that affect all of us, including travel facilities and pensions, and of course the forthcoming Political Fund ballot that will be carried out later in the year. Working together to maximise union votes in the local elections to prevent the BNP getting a foothold was also discussed. I think there are many issues that we as transport unions could jointly work on and I hope that we can arrange similar meetings regularly in the future, after all, unity is strength.

I was also happy to be invited to the biennial conference of our Docks and Shipping Grades. I listened to delegates on the problems of seafarers, including the tonnage tax, the increasing use of foreign ratings at the expense of British jobs and training and other issues that this section of our union is experiencing.

Delegations from Iraq and Japanese railway workers have visited the union. Our Iraqi colleagues from the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) gave graphic details of their treatment by US forces who are preventing union meetings at gun point, refusing to return union funds which were frozen at the beginning of the war and preventing the unions from functioning. They stated that the US invaded Iraq to "free the people" but instead there is a US dictatorship in place of a Ba'athist one. They have asked British workers to press Tony Blair to use the influence he claims that he has with Bush to allow free trade unions to begin to operate in their country.

Our friends from Japan called in to explain the affects of privatisation of Japanese railways in the late 1980's where many members of their union KOKURO were blacklisted for fighting against the sell-off. Their president, Mitsuru Sakeda, was returning from lobbying the International Labour Organisation in Geneva to press the Japanese government to lift the blacklisting as it is in breach of ILO statutes on freedom of association, and asked for our support through the International Transport Workers' Federation. All this illustrates the need for workers of all countries to unite.

TONY DONAGHEY RMT PRESIDENT



SOLIDARITY: RMT president Tony Donaghey meets a delegation from the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU)

Union learning reps train 25,000 in their first year

THE TUC has published two new reports celebrating the impact of Unions on workplace learning across the UK. According to the reports, in the year since union learning reps were given new legal rights to promote learning at work, they have encouraged 25,000 of their workmates to try their hand at some form of workplace learning.

One of the reports, 'Trade Union Learning Representatives', is produced by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development with the Learning and Skills Council and the TUC. It says that workers in junior positions, many of whom tend to be suspicious of learning and training initiatives, are gaining the most.

Union Learning Representatives are encouraging their colleagues to overcome suspicions and persuade them to go on courses that will help enhance their own skills and their effectiveness at work.

The other TUC report contains the results of a TUC survey of learning reps conducted last year which, as the *RMT News* reported in February, reveals that women appear to be particularly attracted to the new learning roles. Just over one in four (28 per cent) of learning reps are new to union activities, and almost two-thirds of these (59 per cent) are women who have never before been active in a union.

There are around over 7,000 union

learning reps active across the UK, and the TUC believes there will be 22,000 trained learning reps by the end of the decade.

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said that because of their unique position in the workplace, union learning reps are perfectly placed to encourage both their bosses and their colleagues to take learning at work seriously.

"In the last twelve months, with their role now backed by the law, learning reps are going from strength to strength and bringing learning to those parts of the workforce who traditionally missed out," he said.

Full versions of both reports are available at www.learningservices.org.uk

Passport to learning

RMT member Terry Springgett (right), a Revenue Protection Officer for South Central Trains based at Brighton, explains how the Union Learning Fund project at South Central, Passport to Learning, got him back into the classroom.

I first realised that I needed to improve some of my skills when the company (then Connex) introduced new RPO contracts which meant that everyone had to do an assessment and I failed.

I knew that it was my maths and English that had let me down. I only failed English by a few marks but I failed miserably at maths. No one could understand why I'd done so badly at maths when I was fine with ticketing and calculating discounts and other aspects of my work that involved using maths. I think it was just because I wasn't used to the lay-out of the questions and the kind of sums they were asking me to do.

Connex said they would offer training to everyone who failed but that never happened. When I heard about Passport to Learning I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to do something about it.

The first thing I did was sign up for an IT course as I knew nothing about computers and I did a sign language taster course too which was really enjoyable. I then signed up for maths and English. At first I was nervous about the idea of going into a college environment and I was very apprehensive but when I found out it would all take place at Brighton station I wasn't so worried. The teachers were really nice and they put us all at ease.

Last term, I sat the City & Guilds Level 1&2 Adult Literacy and Level 1 Adult Numeracy tests and I passed them all. I'll sit the Adult Numeracy Level 2 test in June.

I have now enrolled at Portslade Community College to do an English GCSE. My Union Learning Representative suggested that I apply for a learning bursary from P2L which I got and that covered all of my costs. I'm also going to apply for maths GCSE.

I would really recommend signing up for a course to anyone. I feel I've gained a lot of confidence as a result. It helps that my colleagues are really supportive. They're all for it. In a way it adds extra pressure as everyone is expecting me to do so well in my exams!

● Passport to Learning (P2L) is the Union Learning Fund project on South Central Trains. If you work for South Central and you would like to do a course, contact the P2L office in Lewes on 01273 784441. If you work for another company and you want to find out if there are any similar projects where you work, contact Scarlet Harris on 0207 529 8820.



Compensation rights under threat



Jennie Walsh of RMT solicitors Thompsons looks at government attempts to undermine compensation rights for rail workers

COMMITTING suicide on a railway line is a violent criminal act. Its effects on the train and tube drivers, guards and station staff who witness it can be so devastating that it can put an end to a career. That is why since 1990 workers on the railway have been able to claim compensation for the trauma of seeing someone commit suicide by jumping in front of a train or from having to deal with the aftermath of the suicide.

It took a legal battle all the way to the Appeal Courts and debate in the House of Lords to persuade a then Tory government to include injury to railway workers caused by railway trespass in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. And now a Labour government wants it removed.

In its consultation, Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime, the Home Office described the inclusion of railway workers in the scheme as “an anomalous provision”. It said it wants to find alternative ways of compensating drivers and others for the horror of witnessing suicides. But how?

How is trespass on the railway and accidental injury an anomaly? If the government saw fit to bring railway workers into the scheme 14 years ago, what has changed to make the provision anomalous? The answer is of course nothing, apart from government spending.

The CICS pays £200m a year to the victims of crime. Around £12 million goes to people injured through criminal acts at work. Just £0.5 million is linked with trespass on the railway because the majority of railway workers get the bare minimum under the CICS's inflexible tariff scheme of £1,000 for witnessing a suicide. So in David Blunkett's drive to slash the fund for victims of crime, railway workers are a cheap target, easy to describe as an anomaly because, thankfully, the incidence of suicide on the railway is still relatively uncommon.

It is not just railway workers the government has in its sights. It is also

proposing to find alternatives to state compensation for everyone injured in the course of duty. That means the police, NHS staff, teachers, bank workers, shop assistants, Jobcentre staff and anyone else who might face violent attack while at work. It would also include station staff who so often face violent assault at work.

What are the alternatives to the CICS for workers? Making the employer pay appears to be the government's preferred option in all cases where a worker is injured in the course of their duty (other than in trespass/suicide cases). Ministers are suggesting that compensating workers might be linked to arrangements that exist for when an employee is injured in a workplace accident, for example through Employers' Liability Insurance. Employers are, the consultation document states, generally best placed to mitigate the risks to their employees.

How can that be when it comes to crime? Whether it is a violent mental patient who attacks an NHS worker, a pupil who hits a teacher, a drunken passenger who assaults a London Underground worker, or someone intent on killing themselves with a train, what can an employer realistically do?

Sure, there are health and safety practices that can reduce risk, and where it can be shown that the employer failed in their duty to protect a worker from assault then they could and would be sued in any case – for far higher amounts of damages than are available under the CICS.

We're hearing now that the Home Office might well back off from stopping any workers receiving compensation from the Scheme for workplace violence. But the railway worker suicides and trespass cases are still very much under attack.

In the case of railway workers and suicide, what is the government seriously suggesting? While maintenance of fencing is of course vital to reduce trespass on the railways, short of somehow enclosing the entire railway network, Jubilee line extension style, how can employers stop anyone seriously intent on suicide? Again, if they could and they didn't, then we'd sue them.

But the government isn't seriously suggesting that the employers are responsible for compensating railway workers who witness suicides. It just wants to end their right to compensation for criminal injury altogether.

Ministers appear to believe that it is somehow in bad taste for railway workers to receive compensation for the trauma of witnessing a suicide. Isn't it in far worse taste to deny compensation to people whose lives are wrecked by the criminal act of a person who chooses the railway as their preferred method of ending it all?



From picket line to parliament



By Carolyn Leckie MSP

IN some ways life as an MSP isn't much different from what it was when I was a UNISON Branch secretary. The battles are the same, the enemy is the same, just a different arena.

But I miss the day to day organising amongst members, the victories big and small. From getting overtime payments a member is due, to making employers provide a safer environment; to the fantastic victories of NHS ancillary staff against the multi-national parasite Sodexo for better pay and conditions and medical secretaries winning the pay grade they deserved. I miss living off the growing enthusiasm and political will of mem-

bers to fight. And I miss the direct involvement in the nitty gritty of tactics and strategy minute by minute.

But being an MSP allows me a bigger platform to promote the battles of workers. Instead of being a Branch secretary representing 5000 workers, Scottish Socialist Party MSPs can and do fight with and for all workers in Scotland.

Right from the word go, we've raised the demands the other parties have forgotten:

- A £7.52 minimum wage for all with no age discrimination.
- A maximum 35 hour week with no loss of earnings.
- Public ownership of the railways and a reversal of the whole privatisation bandwagon that has seen workers lose pay, terms and conditions and safety in the workplace.

More important than that we've stood shoulder to shoulder with all those in struggle.

The nursery nurses have been an inspiration. These women have swum against the tide in a society that only sees them as cheap

babysitters and the children they educate as sources of profit for the fast food chains and fizzy drinks companies etc. A society that demeans women and the work they do and cares nowt about securing the educational development of children and future generations. Their heroism in a year long campaign and 14 weeks of all out action can only be matched in scale by the treachery of their labour dominated employers and government. It's a disgrace they've even had to take strike action, a disgrace they haven't got the national pay they deserve but it's been a pleasure to share their picket lines and protests.

We made the parliament confront the nursery nurses. We made sure their struggle was debated and that the ruling parties' MSPs had to face the people they wanted to turn their backs on.

The day the SSP moved a motion supporting the nursery nurses was the day that made every other day in that torture chamber worthwhile. When I summed up I forgot I was in the parliament and

spoke like I was at a strike rally.

Nursery nurses came in buses from all over in Scotland. They surrounded the parliament and they occupied it. We booked out the public gallery, committee rooms and put on a lunch. Everywhere a politician turned, there were nursery nurses. They sang like linnies and even the police and security staff commented it had been their best day at work ever. And when the old Tories and the New Labour Tories exposed their contempt for the nursery nurses by voting against them, they were there to see it. At least some of them had the decency to have a red face. And the nurses made sure every other week they were on strike that their red faces were re-heated on a regular basis.

We didn't succeed in helping the nursery nurses get their national pay but trying is what we're here for. The battle for them isn't over and the war against poverty pay and inequality has only just begun. But we're in for the long haul and we're still on the picket line.

big

Make big savings with our small loan rate from **6.9%*APR (typical)**

The COÖPERATIVE BANK

Customer led, ethically guided

Our personal loans are now so much more attractive, with our low rates fixed for the lifetime of your loan. You can borrow £2,000 to £25,000 to spend on anything you like. Our rates may never be this low again so act now to make big savings.

Don't miss out! Apply today and make your life easier and even more enjoyable!

Phone 0800 591 682
quoting 791/1265

Typical example: If borrowing £5,000 over 3 years, the monthly repayment, payable by 36 monthly instalments, with Payment Protection, will be £179.94 at a typical rate of **6.9% APR**. Total repayment over the loan term: £6,477.50. If borrowing £5,000 over 3 years, the monthly repayment, payable by 36 monthly instalments, without Payment Protection, will be £153.70, at a typical rate of **6.9% APR**. Total repayment over the loan term: £5,533.11. Amounts shown may vary by a few pence.

When processing your application, we will make an assessment of your personal circumstances based on the information available to us. This may affect the interest rate we offer you, which may be higher or lower than our advertised rates. The Co-operative Bank p.l.c. reserves the right to decline any loan application. Interest rates correct at 04/04.

Written quotations are available on request. Credit facilities are provided by The Co-operative Bank p.l.c., P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP, are subject to status and not available to non UK residents or anyone under 21 or over 69 years of age. Calls may be monitored and/or recorded for security and/or training purposes.

The Co-operative Bank subscribes to the Banking Code and is a member of the Financial Ombudsman Service and the General Insurance Standards Council.

The Co-operative Bank is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

Registered Office: The Co-operative Bank p.l.c., 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP, England.
Registered number: 990937. Website: www.co-operativebank.co.uk

Time to take another stand against nuclear weapons

RMT member Glen Burrows talks about her experiences on the recent anti-nuclear CND march from London to Aldermaston

THE signature chant of the Bristol radical cheer-leaders made a change from the usual slogans as I marched with several hundred other anti-war, anti-nuclear protesters along the 50-odd miles from Trafalgar Square to Aldermaston over Easter weekend.

I've got a strong local interest in nuclear power, having two nuclear power stations on my doorstep.

For 40 years, trains carrying lethal nuclear waste from Hinkley Point to Windscale/Sellafield have left from my station in Bridgwater, Somerset. This waste has been used in the manufacture of several generations of nuclear bombs. For many years, the British government lied that all these materials were for peaceful energy production. Rail workers should have boycotted those trains from the start.

This year's Aldermaston March was not simply, as described dismissively by the press, "a re-run of the historic 1958 Aldermaston March". Unhappily, the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons in Britain is not a thing of the past.

Unlike Iraq, you don't have to look very hard in our green and pleasant land to find Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Easter pilgrimage to Aldermaston was revived to bring to the public's attention the plans for a new round of British nuclear weapons.

The first Aldermaston march was called by the Direct Action Committee against nuclear war, after the discovery of the secret weapons establishment at Aldermaston. Over that Easter weekend in 1958, thousands of people took to the road to demonstrate their objection to the development of nuclear weapons. Like their 2004 counterparts, they slept in church halls and were fed by volunteers along the way. I walked with some of the original marchers. Pat Arrowsmith, the organiser of the first march was there, and is as civilly disobedient as ever.

Aldermaston Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Berkshire is responsible for the design, building and decommissioning of Britain's nuclear babies. It is clear that we, like the US, are currently developing, a new generation of nuclear weapons – probably

tactical "low yield" or "mini" nuclear weapons – "bunker busters" as they call them in the US, with that charming use of understatement which enables the super-powers to get away with murder.

Britain's nuclear weapons industry has always been shrouded in secrecy. The original decision to build nuclear weapons in Britain was made in 1947, by a so-called "socialist" Labour government, without any reference to Parliament. In 2002, the Guardian revealed plans for new developments at AWE, which a spokesperson said would provide the capability to produce mini-nukes. The current Site Development Strategy Plan contains proposed facilities which could be used to build and test nuclear weapons.

At the onset of the Iraq war, Geoff Hoon said that he would not rule out the use of nuclear weapons in any situation where Britain's "interests" were threatened. That, and the fact that Britain's foreign policy is clearly directed by US extreme right-

wing fundamentalists, ought to put us all on red alert.

International law is not something which Bush or Blair feel constrained by. Therefore, nuclear weapons proliferation, followed by a pre-emptive strike using nuclear weapons can't be ruled out. Add the fact that we don't have any control over what is launched from US bases in this country, and it's not hard to imagine Britain as a target for a retaliatory attack, after a first strike launched from here by the US.

It's time for the current generation of campaigners to take a stand. A mass campaign of civil disobedience to stop nuclear proliferation, chuck US bases out of Britain and bring about nuclear disarmament must include trades unionists.

In particular, transport workers, on rail and road, whose skills will be deployed to carry waste, weapons and building materials to Aldermaston, Burghfield, Devonport, and all those other centres of death and destruction.



THIS year's Aldermaston march was not a re-run of 1958, Glen (pictured) said



NO MORE WMD: Marching for a non-nuclear world

Stand up and be counted

Dear Editor,

It is encouraging to witness how the RMT's stand in the face of threats from the Labour Party continues to embolden others to do the same. This is reflected in John McDonnell's lengthy article in the March edition of RMT News.

John noted the need to stand up to privatisation, with particular reference to opposing the Government's reliance on private money to resource the underground via PPP. I sincerely hope that the MP does indeed join our fight against the scandal of using privateers to finance public services so they can recoup huge profits at our expense.

I do however still need convincing, as, in the run up to the last election, apart from standing as the candidate of a party committed to wholesale privatisation of anything that moves, the Hayes and Harlington MP was proud to boast about his role in achieving resources that saw the construction of a local secondary school. What John failed to mention was that the school was a DBFO (Design, build,

finance and operation) Private Finance Initiative project. The profiteers benefiting from this arrangement are none other than Jarvis.

As a school support worker living and working in Hayes at the time, and being a shop steward with UNISON that was fighting PFI, I found this quite disheartening, especially as John was a UNISON sponsored MP.

Clearly, we must be assured that this will not happen again now that Mr. McDonnell is in the RMT parliamentary group. Our union has shown its commitment to standing by its principles and defending workers without compromise, and those our union supports must not only talk about doing likewise, but actually act accordingly at all times.

Yours sincerely,
Roddy Keenan

It pays to be union

Dear editor,
May I express, through the RMT magazine, my sincere thanks to union solicitors Drummond and Miller for their long term diligence and hard work acting on my behalf.

They have represented me in relation to an accident at work nearly two years ago whilst I was working for First Engineering.

Drummond and Miller took on board my case and won a result in my favour, which was settled just two days prior to going to court. It pays to pay your union fee to the only union, the RMT.

Yours sincerely
David Henry

A successful settlement

Dear editor,
I would like to thank my union for all the help, advice and action needed to bring my case for redundancy pay against First Western National Buses Ltd to a satisfactory conclusion.

Edward Duthie solicitors, who fought the case, got a pre-tribunal settlement, a little in excess of my demands.

Yours sincerely
John Hawkes

We've never had it so bad

Dear editor,
Mr John Armitt's well structured and

informative "we've never had it so good" letter I received through the post this morning couldn't have been timed more misfortunately in respect of signallers' conviviality with Network Rail.

Whilst I am not suggesting that our long-term opinion of the wage dispute (whichever stance we wish to take on it) would be affected, one would surely allow us to indulge in a little petulance seeing that a third of our April wage is still in the company bank due to a massive "oversight" in Manchester paybills.

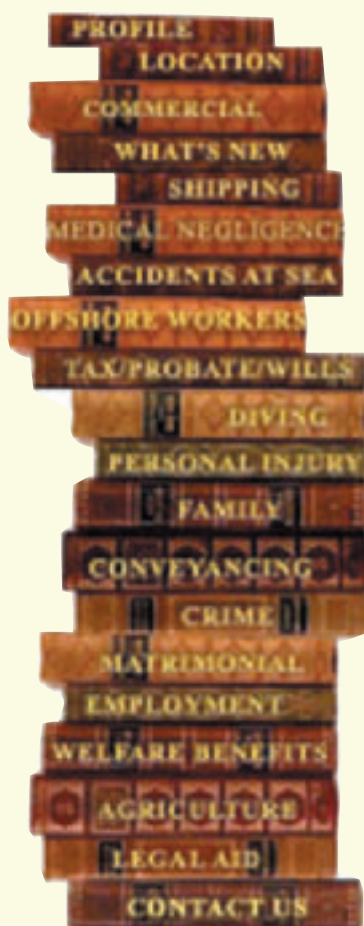
L.N.E.Z signaller.

History in the making

Dear editor,
I am currently interviewing people who have lived and worked in King's Cross for 'King's Cross Voices', a major three year oral history project exploring the social history of the area.

I am keen to interview RMT members about their memories of working at King's Cross and St Pancras Stations. We'd love to hear from you! Please contact Alan Dein on 020 7713 7959 or email: AlanD@kings-cross.org.uk

Alan Dein



Bridge M^cFarland

SOLICITORS

Have you got a problem you need legal help with?

As well as offering expertise in a wide range of subjects we have specialists in employment law, personal injury, accidents at sea, diver's claims and clinical negligence claims

Home visits and telephone appointments can be arranged where appropriate

19 South St. Mary's Gate
Grimsby, North East
Lincolnshire DN31 1JE

Tel. 01472 311711
www.bridgemcfarland.co.uk
e-mail jrb@bmcf.co.uk

War heroes march on Downing Street



Merchant Navy veterans who delivered supplies to the Soviet Union allies in dreadful conditions during World War II, marched in London last month to demand an Arctic Star medal. About 200 survivors of the Arctic convoys delivered a 44,000-signature petition to Downing Street.

Thousands died in freezing conditions and under heavy fire from the Luftwaffe, keeping the supply lines open to the Eastern front against the Nazi menace.

The Ministry of Defence claims that service on the convoys is covered by the Atlantic Star medal, which covers all those who served. But veterans backed by MPs of all parties point out the enormous sacrifice made by those on the Arctic runs deserves a separate campaign medal like those for the Pacific and Burmese campaigns.

Campaign organiser Eddie Grenfell, (pictured right) said that some were awarded a medal for just one day's service, while convoy veterans got nothing.

"It's an injustice and we are fighting against it," he said.

In 2002, Russian ambassador Grigory Karasin presented Arctic veterans with medals for bravery.

Jim Kerr, who served on the destroyer HMS Venus, said that Tony Blair should give a medal to surviving veterans and in memory of the people who did not come back.

"It's our last chance," he said.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

FLORIDA

FLORIDA, Kissimmee, luxury villa 01268-750062

INDIAN WELLS

KISSIMMEE Villas 10 per cent discount on rates for RMT members. Beautiful 3 bedroom 2 bathroom villa in Florida. 5 minutes drive from Disney. Exceptionally central location. Own pool with screen porch and overlooking a lake. Will sleep 8 and cot facilities are available. Tel. 01202 425510 www.indianwellskissimmeevilas.co.uk

DEVON/CORNWALL

NORTH CORNWALL

Comfortable cottages on ancient Moorland farmstead. Seven miles from Tintagel. Coarse fishing, superb walking, scenery. Pets welcome. 01208 850674 or www.eastrose.co.uk

AIRPORT PARKING

AIRPORT CAR PARKING.

5% additional discount for RMT members www.flypark.co.uk/discount 0870 733 0545. Get a quote and see savings

To advertise contact Elaine Smith at Landmark Publishing Services Telephone: 020 7692 9292

WEST INDIES

TOBAGO - 4 bedroom en-suite self-catering family holiday home. View of ocean. £500pw. Sleeps 6. Maid service. 020 7358 0575 or 07956 916682.

TRAVEL

DISCOUNT HOLIDAY

ITEMS. Family Annual Worldwide Travel Insurance only £72.75 plus more. Tel: 0870 4607806 quote RMT. Airport parking throughout the UK up to 60% discount and commission free travel money delivered to your door. Tel 0870 8444042 and quote WZ587. Visit our website for Buy On Line items: Annual Travel Insurance from £38, Super Deal Holidays and all as shown above. www.benefits.co.uk

THE NEW FOREST

TRADITIONAL Victorian farmhouse with uninterrupted views, access to Forest, trailway for cycling, walking, horse riding. Swimming pool (heated). Tel/fax 01425-472 115 or visit our website www.internetonline.co.uk/holidays/49375246.html

The Missing Piece in the Peace Process

By Ken Keable

Price £3

The Missing Piece in the Peace Process, by Ken Keable, published by the Connolly Association, £3

LIKE MANY who had positive hope that the Good Friday agreement was a step towards peace and reconciliation, I am bitterly disappointed by the lack of authority from the government on the present stalemate in the six counties.

On reflection maybe I expected too much: after all, governments only become assertive on democratic issues when pressurised to do so by the working-class movement.

And here lies the vacuum in the so-called Irish question – which I prefer to call Britain's problem in Ireland.

The history of this "next-door neighbour" has been deliberately hidden from working-class people, with the impression that the 'problem' was incomprehensible.

This is a good old-fashioned rul-

ing-class ruse which means the Irish can't forget their history because the English refuse to remember it.

So this little pamphlet is very welcome indeed – a clear and highly readable introduction to the reality of Britain's colonial rule.

It was written by an Englishman with the British working-class and democratic movements in mind, and Ken Keable is to be congratulated for the result.

Tony Benn's foreword describes the pamphlet as "the best and clearest account of relations

between Britain and Ireland", and emphasises the negative impact that Britain's continued occupation has had on democracy here.

This is an excellent, 'must read' for all – but especially for anyone who has ever despaired of ever being able to understand what's going on, or who has ever fallen for the hoary old chestnut that 'it's all about religion'.

Tony Donaghy

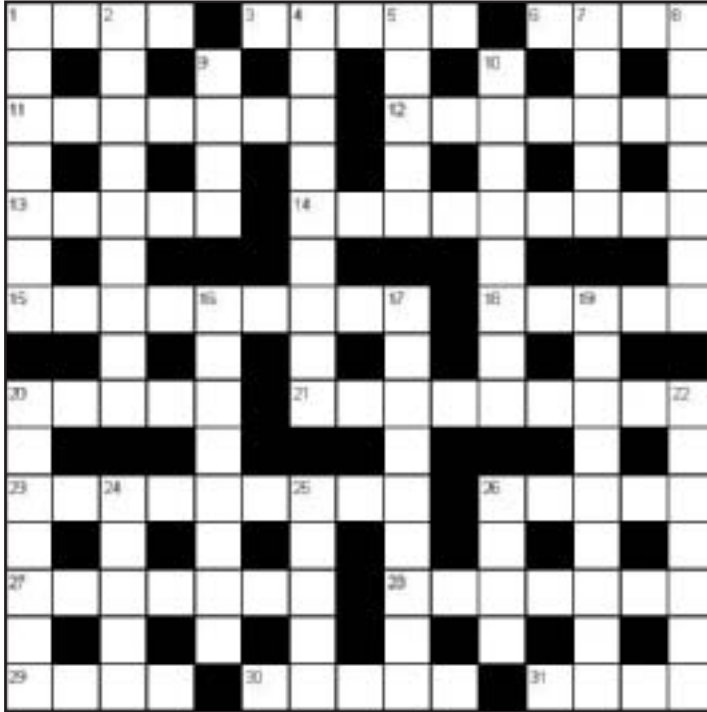
The Missing Piece in the Peace Process can be ordered at £3 from the Four Provinces Bookshop, 244 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR

RMT CAMPAIGNS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE POLITICAL FUND



£25 Prize Crossword No. 6

set by Elk



Send entries to Prize crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by July 22 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Wildebeest (in plural) (4)
- 3 Egyptian capital (5)
- 6 Top cards or fighter pilots (4)
- 11 Held in socket, covered by lid (7)
- 12 Huge grass-covered plain, especially of north America (7)
- 13 Leader of Cub Scout pack (5)
- 14 Final outcome (3,6)
- 15 Painful condition affecting the joints (9)
- 18 Thespian (5)
- 20 Has a thin end and a thick end (5)
- 21 German wines (9)
- 23 Old soap (9)
- 26 Enclosed space for sporting contests or other action (5)
- 27 Waters close to land (7)
- 28 Burn or rust (7)
- 29 Barry Humphreys' Dame Everage, or 'Inebriate Woman' played by Pat Hayes (4)
- 30 Not ashore (2,3)
- 31 Stitches (4)

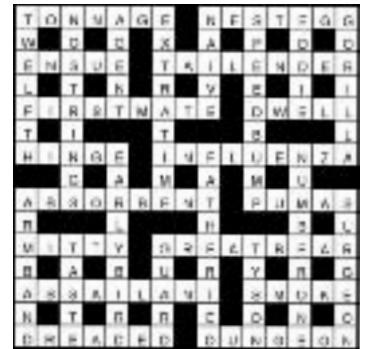
DOWN

- 1 Ernesto Che, Argentinian-born revolutionary, killed in Bolivia in 1967 (7)
- 2 As Brussels bureaucrats or members of the House of Lords (9)
- 4 Such stadiums required for top-flight football (3-6)
- 5 Swift (5)
- 7 Greek island (5)
- 8 Jersey, pullover or jumper (7)

- 9 Festive gathering, traditionally held by mining communities (4)
- 10 Cuba's national sport (8)
- 16 Means of joining ropes, with two loops passing symmetrically through each other (4-4)
- 17 Docker (9)
- 19 Type of mandarin orange with loose skin (9)
- 20 www.rmt.org.uk (7)
- 22 Limbs that help you walk on deck in bad weather! (3-4)
- 24 Mr Welles, actor, writer and director (5)
- 25 Awkward, clumsy, unsuitable (5)
- 26 Corrosive chemical or hallucinogenic drug (4)

Winner of prize crossword No. 5 is Mandy Burke of Glasgow

Last month's solution



Legal services helpline for Scottish & North East England members - freephone 0800 328 1014

Drummond Miller

ARE PLEASED TO OFFER OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT TO THE RAILWAY, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRADE UNION.



65 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 2DD.
22 Pavement, York YO1 9UP
e-mail: mail@drummond-miller.co.uk
website: www.drummond-miller.co.uk

Experts in Employment Law, Accident and Injury Claims

- › Injuries at work
- › Post traumatic stress disorder
- › Repetitive strain injury
- › Road traffic accidents
- › Vibration white finger
- › Criminal injuries claims
- › Asbestos related diseases
- › Unfair dismissal
- › Discrimination
- › Conveyancing - Estate Agency
- › Wills & Executries
- › Family Law



Telephone 0141 332 0086 - Glasgow
01904 - 674061 - York

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD
RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM — please complete your
application along with the attached Direct Debit.



Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname		Address	
Forename(s)			
Home phone			
Mobile phone		Postcode	
Email address			
Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

2 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

3 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

4 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐

5 How much do you wish to save £ This is the amount you wish to save in 'shareholdings' monthly by
Direct Debit (you must complete form below)

6 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

7 Next of Kin
Address
.....
.....

8 I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted.

Your signature

Date



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and
Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., 39 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd Direct Debits for the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards
assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with RMT Credit Union Ltd, if
so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account

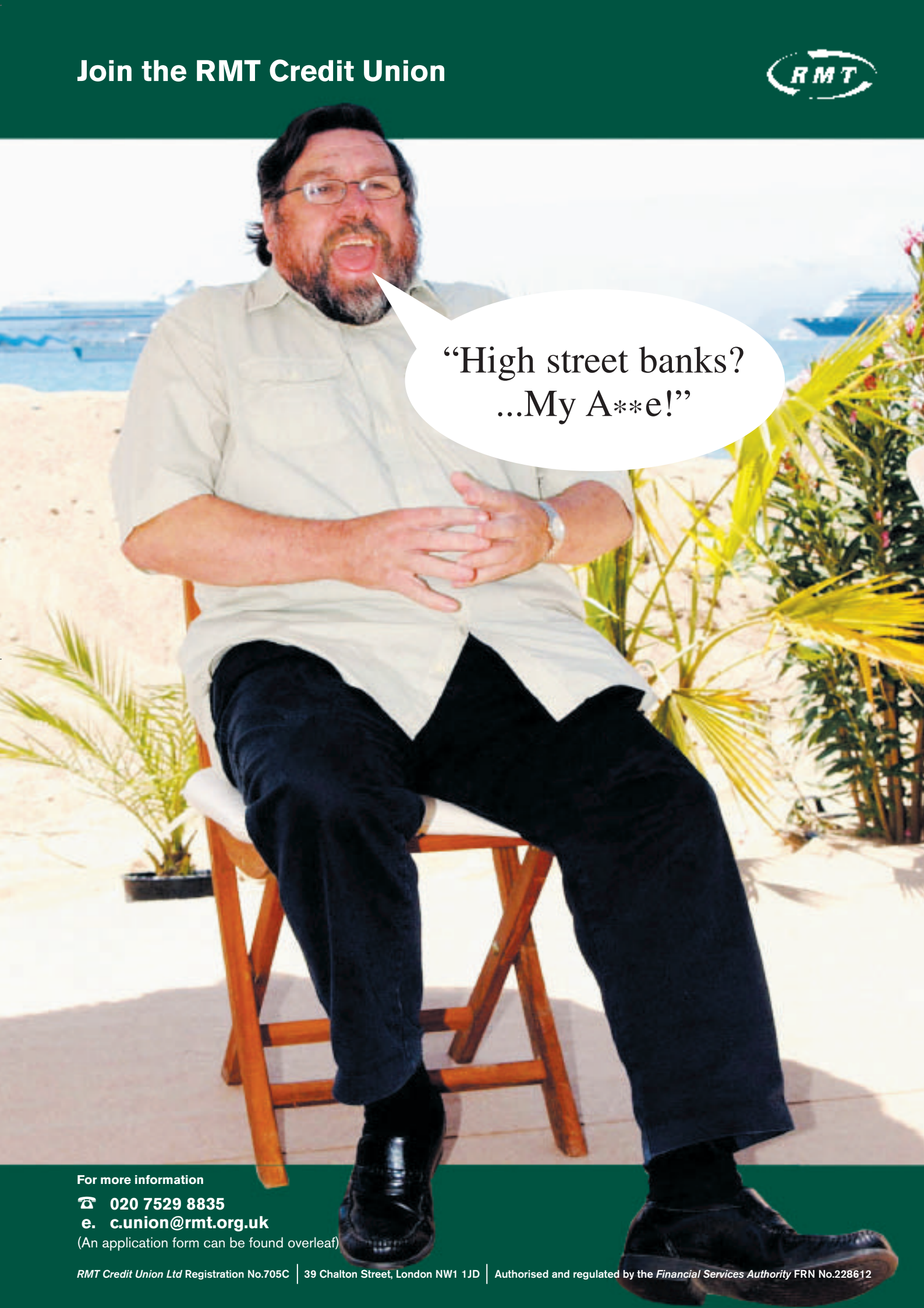
This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment date changes, RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed
- If an error is made by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.



Join the RMT Credit Union

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers, is sitting on a wooden chair outdoors. He is smiling and has his hands clasped in his lap. The background shows a sandy area with some greenery and a blue sky.

“High street banks?
...My A**e!”

For more information

☎ 020 7529 8835

e. c.union@rmt.org.uk

(An application form can be found overleaf)

RMT Credit Union Ltd Registration No.705C | 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD | Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority FRN No.228612