

RMTnews



Essential reading for today's transport worker

Issue No 6, Volume 5

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August 2004



- Full AGM report ● RMT launches battle bus ● Tube safety row
- Pay round-up ● Cuba visit ● Political fund ● Tonnage tax
- PPP scandal revealed ● Compensation victory ● Prize crossword

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Never a dull moment



AS USUAL a lot has happened since the last issue of this journal came through your door. We have secured a great victory at Network Rail – successfully defending the final salary pension – made great strides in our tonnage tax campaign and launched a major initiative to reclaim our railways.

This union has also fought for decent pay deals across the transport industry, regardless of what grade or job you carry out. Our very real commitment industrial trade unionism is clearly gaining appeal as our membership now stands at over 70,000, making RMT the fastest growing union in Britain today. That is something that we can all be proud of.

Our annual general meeting in Portsmouth last month reflected this growing confidence and enthusiasm. In order to rise to this challenge, delegates decided to take on two new relief organisers and look at the possibility of creating the post of assistant national shipping secretary.

Transport workers of all grades need decent representation like never before. That is why we have also launched our very own battle bus to help our organising unit to expand their work and organise workers wherever they may be.

We have shown that we are prepared to negotiate where possible as well as take collective action if our members feel it is necessary. That is a fundamental right which RMT is not prepared to give up. Therefore, it is totally unacceptable for London mayor Ken Livingstone to call on RMT members to cross their own picket lines during the recent dispute with London Underground. This kind of crude knee-jerk union bashing has brought condemnation from all corners of the Labour movement and must cease. We are prepared to talk to employers but we are not prepared to be bullied and demonised through the pages of the right wing media.

WHILE there is some positive news in the government's long-awaited rail review, it does not hide the fact that the industry is still dangerously fragmented and encourages local authorities to close rural railways.

Bringing rail maintenance back in-house and the abolition of the

disastrous Strategic Rail Authority are welcome steps in the right direction, but the jigsaw remains only part-finished. The continued inability to resolve how Network Rail, the train operating companies, the government and Rail Regulator operate together will only require a further review in the next few years. The glimmer of hope is the creation of the new government railway agency responsible for train franchising. The government should use the example of South Eastern Trains in the public sector as a first step towards taking all passenger services back under public control. The next step for the government should be to draw together the infrastructure and operational functions of the industry into one publicly owned and controlled body by merging the railway agency, Network Rail and the Office of Rail Regulator.

THE report by the think-tank Catalyst, which backs this approach, is a thoroughly researched and sober analysis of the failure of the private sector to deliver a safe and reliable railway, despite record amounts of public money being poured in. Catalyst has shown that the government cannot make privatisation work simply by attempting to regulate it. The haemorrhaging of huge sums of public money into private pockets – over £2 billion this year – will continue and must be addressed.

You will read in this issue about the recent progress we have made in our campaigns on the public ownership of the railways, the tonnage tax, the battle over protecting compensation rights and on rail fire safety.

None of this would be possible without a political fund, so remember when the times comes to vote on the issue later this year – vote Yes. Without this fund we will have no political voice, it's as simple as that.

As you can see, RMT has been busy. You can say a lot of things about this union but there is definitely never a dull moment. So I hope you can take a much-deserved holiday at this time of year and remember there's more to life than work.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

Union acts to defend Tube fire safety rules

A CALL by the House of Commons' Regulatory Reform Committee to keep fire-safety legislation that lays down minimum staffing levels and other safety standards for underground stations has been welcomed by RMT.

RMT and its parliamentary group had slammed plans to relax of fire safety standards on sub-surface stations on London Underground, the Tyne and Wear metro and at stations in Glasgow and Liverpool. As originally

drafted, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004 would have revoked the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989, which introduced minimum standards following the King's Cross fire in 1987 in which 31 people lost their lives. The regulations lay down minimum staffing levels as well as fire precaution measures at Tube stations.

RMT parliamentary group chair Labour MP John McDonnell had warned that removing minimum

standards could allow management the freedom to risk-assess fire safety measures.

"It is unclear to me and, I am sure, London Underground users and employees how such a measure will improve fire safety and indeed there are bound to be fears that, without minimum standards, corners will be cut and safety compromised," he said in a letter to the committee.

Following this intervention, the committee said it would be recommending "retention of the

fire safety legislation for Tube stations introduced following the Kings Cross fire" in its report.

RMT London regional organiser Bobby Law said that passengers would be horrified at any relaxation of fire safety standards on the Tube.

"We hope that both ministers and the Mayor of London will act to ensure that statutory minimum safety standards and staffing levels are maintained and not left to the whims of LUL management," he said.

Victory at Viacom

FOLLOWING a massive yes to strike action by RMT members at Viacom Outdoor, the company that puts posters up on London Underground, the employer produced a revised pay offer of up to 4.7 per cent.

In a good turn-out, nearly 90 per cent of workers voted for industrial action and two strike days were planned last month. However, strike action was suspended following the new offer that included an annual pay award for 2004 of 4.2 per cent for LTA contracts and 4.7 per cent for VO contracted employees, up from an original offer of 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent respectively.

Sick pay allowance for VO contracts was also increased to 20 days. It was agreed to up a Joint Working Party to review overtime and productivity rates of pay, new working practices as well as looking at allowances for responsibilities carried out. The findings are to be agreed and implemented by 2005. The improved offer has gone out to a referendum of Viacom members with a recommendation to accept and the result will be known on August 5.

London regional organiser Bobby Law said that the new deal represented a considerable breakthrough which narrowed the gap between pay rates and began the process of dealing with outstanding issues.

Metronet improves offer following strike action

TUBE maintenance company Metronet have made an improved pay offer of 3.2 per cent, with much bigger increases for apprentices and some skilled and technical staff, as well as a 35-hour week by January 2006 and a 75 per cent travel discount for apprentices and trainees.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said the improved offer for RMT'S 1,400 members at Metronet was achieved after a tremendous show of solidarity in their 24-hour strike last month.

"The offer includes a 3.2 per cent basic increase, although apprentices - the future lifeblood of the industry - will get a 5.7 per cent increase, and some skilled and technical grades will see their pay increase by 7.2 per cent.

"Our members will have the final say, and the offer will now be put to them in a referendum, with an executive recommendation to accept," Bob said.

London Underground members also took solid strike action early last month following a strike ballot, which saw majority of well over 80 per cent. Despite the improved offer from Metronet, negotiations are still continuing with LU management over a deal on pay and conditions.

RMT has made clear that it is prepared to negotiate a long-term deal that will deliver a flexible and modern workforce in return for a shorter working week. However, Ken Livingstone saw fit to call on RMT members to cross their own picket lines.

Bob Crow said he was appalled by such actions and tendered his resignation from the board of Transport for London.

"Perhaps Mr Livingstone has not read the small print in the offer so far on the table, but he should be aware that there remain substantial legitimate objections to it.

"In all conscience I can no longer sit on the TfL board, and I have let it be known that I am not available for re-appointment to it," Bob said.

"The Mayor should know that the way to settle disputes is not to attempt to break strikes but to negotiate, and that is what he should be getting his management to do.

"Mr Livingstone would do well to take a leaf out of Network Rail's book and get his chief executive involved in talks personally," he said. Further negotiations are planned.



ON THE LINE: from left to right are Olly New, Jared Wood, Gary Harbord, Linda Martin, Gwyn Pugh, Mark O'Donoghue, Paul Shannon, John O'Leary, John McDonnell MP. Pic by Hiroshi Kanba

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RMT battle bus hits the campaign trail

RMT geared up its organising and recruitment campaign by unveiling its new "battlebus" at the union's AGM in Portsmouth last month.

General secretary Bob Crow said that the bus would assist the union to reach its membership target of 100,000 in the next ten years.

As conference delegates inspected the bus at the seafront, national organiser for recruitment and retention Alan Pottage described the new "mobile organising facility".

"We'll be using our new battlebus for various campaigns to raise the profile of our union and encourage Britain's transport workers to join us," he said.

The bus will become a common sight at Labour movement public and social events and it will be adapted for use as an educational and meeting facility for workers.

The ex-London Transport double-decker was driven down to this year's Tolpuddle commemoration in Dorset by South-West regional official Phil Bialyk. The

bus will also feature at this summer's Pride celebration and the general secretary told conference that it may make an appearance at Glastonbury festival next year!

Alan outlined the organising and recruitment strategy which has seen membership increase from 57,000 to 71,000 over the past two years. (See page 11).

"We're an industrial union for all transport workers and we completely reject any kind of sectionalism or craft snobbery," he said.

In 2002, the union set up an organising unit with a specific focus on recruitment and retention and with the aim of training new members to be workplace reps.

"Our industrial strength is based on a robust structure

of well-trained local reps," Alan added, "so it's not just a numbers game."

"We have an energetic organising strategy in every region and every sector and we're training like never before," he said.



UNVEILED: General secretary Bob Crow takes the battle bus to Portsmouth



ON THE ROAD: The battle bus will travel across Britain

Eurostar staff balloted for action

RMT is balloting 150 customer-service team members at Waterloo and Ashford terminals for strike action over its "utterly inadequate and simply unacceptable" regrading offer.

RMT assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that scandalously low pay and unequal rates for people doing identical work lie at the heart of the dispute.

"Staff in the customer- and terminal-services teams have

long been the poor relations at Eurostar when it comes to pay.

"A salary-banding system which is no more than a rip-off has allowed the company to cut the value of salaries over time," he said.

At present, staff at Ashford International are recruited on £13,000 per year – exactly the same as in 1994. Yet under the company's proposed grading changes, the average increase for staff with more than a year's service would be just £264.

The company also operates different pay rates for people on the same grades, which means that those at Ashford are paid £4,000 less than colleagues at Waterloo doing identical work.

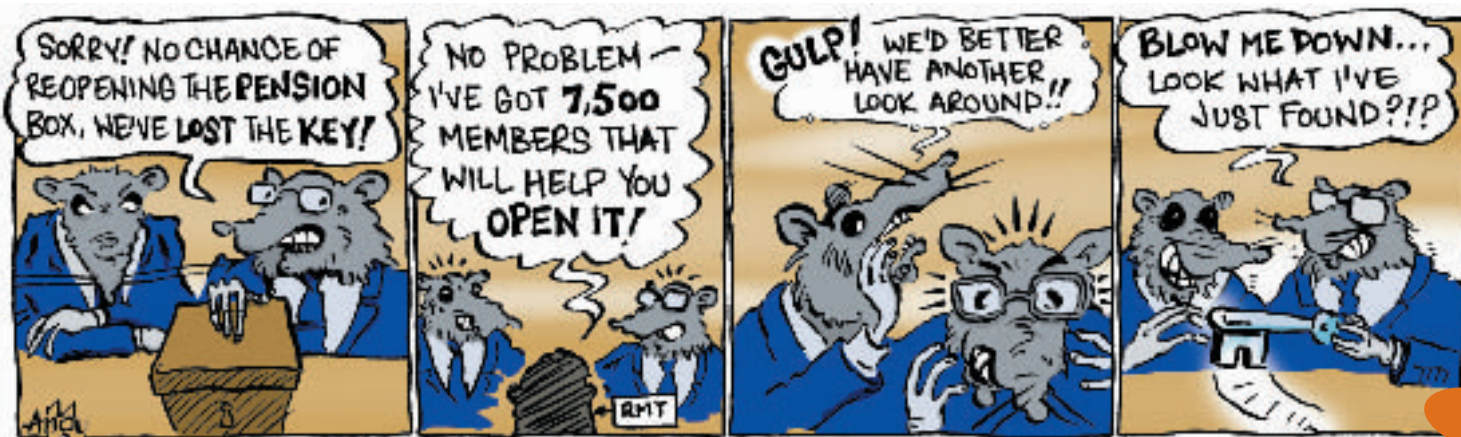
But even those on the new higher rate of £20,000 at Waterloo would be on around £4,500 less than comparable grades on London Underground.

"What we need is a straight-forward 'rate-for-the-job' agreement for every grade that puts a proper value on

multifunctional and often multi-lingual skills, and an end to unequal pay," Pat said.

Thanks to a successful recruitment campaign, RMT has managed to bring the company back to the negotiating table, but Eurostar has refused to listen to RMT proposals on pay structures and has failed to address the problem of unequal pay at all.

"That leaves us with no option but to ballot our members for industrial action," Pat said.



AGM votes for two relief regional organiser positions

THE RMT Annual General Meeting in Portsmouth this year decided to establish two new positions of relief regional organiser, one to be elected from and to cover the north, and one from the south.

The elections for these posts will be combined with those of other regional organiser positions which are up for election this year, with new terms of office starting on January 1 2005, running for five years to December 31 2009. Present incumbents are eligible to stand for re-election, but nobody can stand in more than one regional organiser election.

Regional organisers are elected by individual members of the union in the relevant region: they represent all members in the region, across all grades and industries and also have responsibility for company-wide negotiations. Day to day, they act under the direction of the general secretary and the Council of Executives and are supported by the relevant regional office.

- The main duties of the position are:
- to organise members in the region, with the assistance of the regional council, including recruitment and retention of members, in conjunction with the organising unit
 - to visit branches and workplaces
 - to represent individual members at company or industry level and at employment tribunals
 - to attend collective bargaining negotiations at local company level

Nominations open on Thursday July 15 and close on Wednesday October 6.

Region	Regional organisers	Relief regional organisers
1, Scotland	One regional organiser (the other regional organiser position was filled from January 1 2004 following a by-election)	One relief regional organiser to be elected by and to cover these regions (north)
2&3 combined, Manchester, North Wales & North West	The AGM decided to keep these two regions combined for the purposes of this election, therefore there are two elections in this region	
4, North East	One regional organiser	
5, Yorkshire & Lincolnshire	One regional organiser	
6, Midlands	One regional organiser	
7, South Wales & West	This Region was previously combined with Region 8 (below). However, the AGM decided that the two regions should be separated. Therefore there is an election for one regional organiser in this region.	One relief regional organiser to be elected by and to cover these regions (south)
8, South West	One regional organiser (see above)	
9, South East	One regional organiser	
10, London & Anglia	One regional organiser	
11, London Transport	One regional organiser	

The schedule above sets out the available positions

Miles Platting branch
Nominates

John McDonald
For Northern relief organiser

Simply the best

Bridgend & Llantrisant branch
nominates its secretary

Peter Skelly
for southern relief organiser
and for the re-election of

Brian Curtis

Manchester South branch
Nominates

Andy Warnock-Smith for
North West & Wales Organiser
& **Bill Anderson** for
Manchester & North West
organiser

Manchester South branch
Nominates their secretary

John MacDonald
for Northern relief organiser
and would appreciate further
support

Making waves over tonnage tax

Nearly 150 MPs have signed early day motion 880, demanding a link between the tonnage tax and jobs and training for UK seafarers

RMT’S PARLIAMENTARY group also secured a meeting between the Paymaster General, Dawn Primarolo and RMT officials, together with Labour MPs, to discuss the need for a link between the tax concession for ship owners to training and employment. There has also been a meeting with the shipping minister David Jamison.

The union provided figures that support the case, along with details of redundancies in recent years for UK seafaring ratings and ministers have promised to examine the case.

This campaign would not be possible without the political fund

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that it was scandalous that ship-owners should be allowed to fly the red ensign and receive handouts from British taxpayers through the tonnage tax while shedding UK ratings and paying poverty wages.

“We have evidence of UK-registered vessels employing foreign seafarers at half the minimum wage and working long hours,” he said.

Flag of convenience

The International Transport Workers Federation recently unanimously backed an RMT proposal, supported by NEWMAST, to declare any UK-registered ships with unacceptable employment conditions an FOC vessel on a ship-by-ship basis. The ITF fair practice committee meeting in Singapore agreed to instruct its inspectors to investigate on board conditions of suspect ships.

“Shipowners need to understand that those that use the UK flag as a cloak of respectability while exploiting seafarers will be exposed,” Steve Todd told the meeting.



Employment

Table one provides details of the number of UK seafaring ratings and officers employed on vessels registered under the tonnage tax regime as well as details of seafarers employed from elsewhere in the EU and from non-European Economic Area states.

	OFFICERS				RATINGS			
	UK	Other EEA	Other	Total	UK	Other EEA	Other	Total
2000-01	896	40	187	1123	449	19	455	923
2001-02	3206	206	1204	4616	1685	176	2909	4770
2002-03	2980	536	1638	5154	2021	632	3766	6419
2003-04	3009	531	2593	6133	1811	489	4115	6415

The number of UK seafarers employed on tonnage tax vessels has declined to 1811 in 2004, a fall of over 10 per cent. However, the number of vessels in the regime has increased - see table two below.

	No of Companies	No of Vessels	of which UK flag
2000-01	15	187	
2001-02	42	520	297
2002-03	64	737	351
2003-04	67	755	403

Training

The Chamber of Shipping would not agree to any commitments on training or employment. Instead, shipping companies are supposed to annually review:

- Employment of more UK ratings
- Employment of more highly trained UK ratings in more technical posts
- Recruitment of UK ratings in a planned stream towards officer qualifications
- Assist existing UK ratings to advance towards officer qualifications and posts

DoT Shipping Task Force figures indicate that there were a total of 290 seafaring ratings undertaking officer training. RMT welcomes the opportunity for ratings to undertake conversion training but this has not been followed up with a replacement of UK ratings. It has become apparent that training and employment for ratings positions has been almost entirely ignored by shipping companies.

Ship owners shedding UK jobs

PRIOR to the introduction of the tonnage tax the Treasury asked that Lord Alexander of Weedon QC carry out an investigation into its merit. He concluded that there were good reasons for the scheme but recorded concern that commitments to UK seafarers' training and employment did not go far enough.

In his report Lord Alexander stated that the Chamber of Shipping made a separate non-formal commitment to double the current intake of trainees within three years. At the time of deliberations within the Ratings Task Force sub-group in 1998, approximately 200 new ratings were being trained every year. The latest figures indicate less than 50 trainees for last year.

Dismissals of UK seafaring ratings have also continued.

The union reported the declining prospects for UK seafaring ratings just after the introduction of the tonnage tax. The report said that UK seafaring ratings had been dismissed and replaced by low cost foreign nationals in P&O Irish Sea Ferries, Bibby International and Serac Maritime Crewing.

Hundreds of redundancies have been announced at P&O Dover, quickly followed by 150 dismissals of UK ratings by Northern Marine Manning Ltd. UK seafarers engaged by Northern Marine to work on the Technip diving and pipelay fleet have been replaced by low cost Filipino nationals. UK seafaring ratings have also been replaced by low cost foreign nationals in the hotel and catering department on P&O European Ferries (Portsmouth) vessels.

This latest Northern Marine job losses follows the actions of many other offshore sector operators, such as Sealion, Rockwater and DSND, who have switched to Filipino or other low cost seafarers. In the last few years employment for UK seafaring ratings has been steadily eroded even on the ferries operating from UK ports. P&O have dismissed many UK seafaring ratings from their operations in the North and Irish Sea, and now even Stena Line have announced the gradual displacement of UK seafaring ratings by Filipino seafarers at Harwich.

P&O ferries

The P&O Group have taken advantage of the financial concessions offered by the tonnage tax. However, shortly after it was introduced the company dismissed the remaining UK seafaring ratings from the deep sea (foreign going) P&O Nedlloyd fleet.

P&O Ferries are steadily replacing UK seafaring ratings with low cost foreign nationals. Recent examples include the replacement of 120 UK seafarers with Portuguese nationals on P&O Portsmouth vessels earlier this year. The company has also dismissed UK motormen and replaced them with Filipino nationals on P&O North Sea Ferries vessels and Spanish seafarers have replaced UK seafaring ratings on P&O Irish Sea Ferries vessels. UK seafaring ratings that retire or leave P&O North Sea Ferries are now being replaced with low cost foreign nationals. The only section of the P&O Ferries Group where UK seafaring ratings have remained largely untouched is P&O Dover. However, a current internal business review also threatens the future of these UK seafarers.

How can you help

We can win this campaign by making MPs, the government and media aware of our concerns. You can help by:

- Sending the campaign postcard to the shipping minister and your MP
- Distribute the postcard to your workmates, family and friends. Extra postcards can be obtained by contacting info@rmt.org.uk or call the freephone helpline 0800 376 3706
- Write a letter to your newspaper. Model letters can be downloaded from the RMT website www.rmt.org.uk



Rallying for rail

Hundreds of rail workers lobbied Parliament last month to demand a publicly owned and accountable rail network

THE lobby of MPs coincided with unveiling of the government's own rail review which recognised that the railways were offering poor value for money in return for increasing taxpayer subsidy. The White Paper contained some welcome proposals such as the abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority and the creation of a national Rail Agency.

However, the new proposed structures will leave the network fragmented and the separation of control of track and trains introduced during privatisation. It will also leave the industry hampered by private sector considerations with train operations, train building and infrastructure renewals and freight still driven by profit. Billions of pounds of tax and farepayers' money will continue to leak out of the industry into the pockets of shareholders instead of being invested into the renewal of the network.

Signal failure

General secretary Bob Crow said that it was astonishing that after over 10 years of rail privatisation that the government remained wedded to the belief that the private sector can deliver an effective railway.

"Record levels of public subsidy are not improving rail services but are leaking out

of the industry or being wasted on unnecessary duplication. The review will not change this," Bob said.

He warned that the review also threatened rural rail services and their replacement by buses. "We need to look after the network as a whole, not strip it down to a skeleton service. Main lines feed the smaller regional routes and the other way round, that means cross subsidies should be brought in to provide a social service," he said.

This campaign would not be possible without the political fund

RMT parliamentary group chair John McDonnell MP said that while the review had not delivered what the industry required, there was a sense of "inevitability" that rail will be brought back into the public sector at some point.

"Every option that government has employed to deal with the disaster of privatisation has failed. It is becoming increasingly clear that the cheapest and safest way to deal with the problems of privatisation is to reverse it," he said.

Kelvin Hopkins MP pointed out that public subsidy was higher than under British Rail but the service to the public was now considerably worse. He said that during BR days public subsidy was five times lower than the European average yet the nationalised company achieved much higher levels of productivity.

Catalyst exposes private sector

The lobby of parliament coincided with the launch of centre-left think tank Catalyst's report on the future of the railways, which reviewed the government's record on rail and assessed the options for change.

It concluded that radical action was needed to reverse the fragmentation of the network and reassert public control if the substantial levels of committed public investment are to produce the hoped for "rail renaissance" in the UK.

Catalyst said that the government's rail review was an inadequate response to structures that left a multiplicity of competing private players at the heart of a heavily-subsidised industry. The government's failure to overcome these problems was a major obstacle to meeting the objectives set out in the government's transport ten year plan.

The report found:

- Private firms involved in the railway industry are currently in receipt of a record subsidy from the taxpayer of £3.8 billion a year and rising



PARLIAMENT: Bob Crow speaking for a publicly-owned rail network with MPs Micheal Meacher and John McDonnell



LOBBY: RMT members from SET join Bob Crow outside parliament

- Cash injections are being spent on expanding the network but on the increase in maintenance costs following privatisation
- Performance levels are still falling, with an average one in five trains arriving late
- The government will fail to achieve its targets for rail passenger and freight growth despite their continuing economic and environmental necessity

The Catalyst report proposes a number of steps in order to bring efficiency and accountability back to the industry:

- Direct public ownership of Network Rail for clearer accountability and better value for money through reduced borrowing costs
- Reintegration of track renewals to extend the significant savings and delay reduction already achieved by Network Rail bringing maintenance "in house"
- A moratorium on the costly refranchising of train operations to the private sector following the success of South Eastern Trains since the removal of Connex
- Regulation of the rolling stock companies that currently convert heavy public subsidies into profit margins of 30 to 40 per cent
- Maintenance of tough and independent safety regulation, not the dangerous subordination to questions of cost now proposed in the government's White Paper

Catalyst's Director, Martin McIvor, said that the government needed to seize the agenda and rescue the Ten-Year Plan.

"The appropriate model for ensuring a full social, economic and environmental return on public investment is a railway that is publicly owned and accountable," he said. *Copies of the Catalyst report are available on the RMT website or contact:*

Catalyst, 150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX. Tel 020 7733 2111.

www.catalystforum.org.uk

Summary of government White Paper proposals

- Strategic Rail Authority to be abolished and its functions transferred to the Department of Transport, which will also take responsibility for awarding train operating company franchises. Number of franchises to be reduced and aligned more closely with Network Rail's regional structure.
- Some operational responsibility for services, including issues such as timetabling will be transferred to Network Rail.
- Some devolution of railway powers to the Scottish executive, Wales Assembly, the Mayor of London and PTE
- Responsibility for safety on the mainline railway, the underground and other metro systems will transfer from the HSE to the Office of the Rail Regulator.



A platform for change

IT HAS been an important few weeks for transport workers. The government's Rail Review represents the biggest shake up in the industry for years and it brings some welcome decisions such as the predicted abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority and greater control of the network by central government.

However, I'm sure that workers in the industry and the majority of public will share my view that the review has not gone far enough and the opportunity to provide a fully integrated, publicly owned and publicly accountable rail network has been missed.

The review still leaves the industry in a fragmented state with a web of competing private companies whose overriding priority is to maximise profits. Predictable Tory criticisms that the review should have handed even more power to the private sector just repeats their tired old dogma of private sector good, public sector bad. These doctrines carry no weight with a public that has seen the damage that has been wrought by over ten years of rail privatisation and it's disappointing that the government remains wedded to the belief that the private sector can still deliver an effective railway.

The economic rationale for wholesale private sector involvement in rail was that it would prove to be sufficiently efficient to offset both the expensive dividends that would have been paid to the shareholders and the higher cost of private sector borrowing – it is now self-evident that both theories are false.

However, there are attractions in Labour's plans to create a National Agency to assume responsibilities for train franchises. The fact that South Eastern Trains is already operating in the public sector and that service performance has improved significantly represents a good platform for the campaign to bring other train operations back under democratic control. As a South East MP I am particularly keen to help get RMT's arguments for the South Eastern Trains campaign across to government and I have joined up with other members of parliament to seek an early meeting with the secretary of state for transport to discuss SET and finding ways of improving the rail network.

AS a former seafarer, with more than 25 years' service, I've been pleased to take a leading role in the union's campaign to link Labour's tonnage tax regime to the provision of jobs and training places for British Seafarers. I'm grateful to the 148 MPs who have so far backed my Early Day Motion 880 which calls for such a link. This has been followed up with a constructive meeting at the Treasury when Bob Crow, John McDonnell MP, RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd and myself discussed the topic with the Minister, Dawn Primarolo. David Jamison, the shipping minister, has now also agreed to listen to our case and, having persuaded the influential Transport Select Committee to hold its own inquiry into this issue, we eagerly await their report. We can not and we will not stand by and watch the Red Ensign become just another flag of convenience to benefit rogue employers who continue to hand out poverty rates of pay.

Many of my Labour colleagues are still battling away in the interests of working people. But recent by-election results painfully remind us that the party needs to focus on the issues that matter to them in their everyday lives if it is to win back their trust and support it needs to win an historic third term and stop the Tories wrecking everything again.

GWYN PROSSER MP FOR DOVER AND DEAL

Pay and conditions agreements in brief

MAERSK OFFSHORE DEEP SEA RATINGS

- A 3 per cent increase in the basic rates of pay backdated to February 1 2004
- A 24 day increase in leave from 134 days per year to 158 days per year.

TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS

- A 3.5 per cent increase in rates of pay or £600, whichever is greater
- Maternity pay to be harmonised at 13 weeks

The company is committed to enter into early discussions on harmonisation of Traincrew grades and also re-structuring for station grades, with a view to completion by December 31 2004.

MERSEYRAIL

Following two days of intensive negotiations the following agreement was made:

- A 3.5 per cent increase in rates of pay, from April 4 2004, or a £600 flat rate increase, whichever is greater. This offer will seriously benefit lower paid members such as carriage cleaners and shunters.
- Improved family-friendly policies in respect of increasing maternity leave from 6 weeks to 13 weeks on full pay. Paternity leave to be increased from one week at full pay to two weeks at full pay.
- An allowance of £165 for hosiery for female members of staff on each uniform issue.

HULL TRAINS

Two options were put to staff, which voted for the following: Increase in salary for Train Manager of £725 per annum, equating to 4.6 per cent.

- Increase in salary for Hospitality staff of £500 per annum, equating to 4.9 per cent.
- Introduction of 36 hour week from December 12 2004 subject to local discussions which will also consider how to move to a 35-hour week by December 2005. The following changes to be introduced:
- Lodge turn payments to provide either actual hours worked or subject to a minimum of five hours.
- Existing off-roster payments for Train Managers will continue subject to the following conditions
- Payment to be made where less than 48 hours notice to change of roster is given.
- Payment to be made when moved off roster to a lodge turn.

THAMESLINK

- Basic rates and associated allowances to be increased by 4 per cent from April 4 2004.
- Inner London allowance to be increased by 5per cent from April 4 2004.
- The pay anniversary review date in respect of Revenue Protection staff will be brought into line with other Retail groups with effect from April 2005.
- Rail Operator grades employed within Thameslink booking offices will be re-graded to CO2 grade.
- Paternity leave to be increased to a basic week's leave with pay.
- A 35 hour week will be introduced with effect from June 27 2004, back dated.

FIRST NORTH WESTERN

- A 3.5 per cent increase in basic rates of pay backdated to April 1 2004.
- A commitment has made to set up a joint working party to progress Station Grades restructuring.
- A joint working party to review the formulation of Traincrew diagrams.

ISLAND LINE

The following 4-year deal was agreed by staff

- An increase in basic rates of pay of 4 per cent for 2003
- An increase in basic rates of pay of 4 per cent for 2004
- An increase in basic rates of pay of 4 per cent for 2005
- An increase in basic rates of pay of 3.8 per cent for 2006

ARRIVA TRAINS NORTHERN

- A 3.5 per cent or a £600 increase (whichever is greater) in the basic rates of pay or backdated to 4th April 2004.
- An increase in hosiery to female staff members from six to twelve sets.

Future talks will discuss maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave. This will include diversity, flexible working and time off for dependants.

WINDERMERE LAKE CRUISES

- A 3.5 per cent increase in the basic rates of pay backdated to April 2004.
- A 10.4 per cent increase for the lowest paid grades.
- A reduction to the working week from 41- to 39 hours prior to overtime rates becoming applicable.

The offer gives a total average increase to 4.8 per cent.

BOURNEMOUTH TRANSPORT

- Coach Driver's hourly rate to be increased to £6.54 per hour
- Sick pay paid at agreed National Express 035 roster rate on a daily basis
- Holiday rate is based on 8 hours at £6.54 per hour for 20 days leave
- Charge hand fitters to be paid at £9.32 per hour
- Skilled fitters to be paid at £8.46 per hour
- Semi – skilled mechanics to be paid at £6.64 per hour

OCS EUROSTAR

- A 3.5 per cent increase in basic wages backdated to April 1 2004.
- An RPI (level of inflation) plus 0.5 per cent increase basic wages effective from April 1 2005.

Rates of pay will be affected as follows: -

Job Title	Current Rate	From 1st April 2004
Cleaner	£5.25	£5.43
Night Cleaner	£6.00	£6.21
Buggy Driver	£5.75	£5.95
Window Cleaner	£8.66	£8.96
Team Leader	£6.75	£6.99
Passenger Services Agent	£5.44	£5.63

Membership rises to over 70,000

RMT general secretary Bob Crow announced to delegates at the Annual General Meeting that membership had breached the 70,000 figure and that the breathtaking level of growth was showing no signs of abating.

“If we can build on this great success then there is no reason why we will not reach 100,000 members within the next ten years.

“But we should never forget for a second that our increased strength and ability to fight on behalf of our members comes with stronger levels of activity throughout our union,” he said.

The union’s active organising strategy was implemented shortly after Bob was elected general secretary, when membership stood at 57,000. RMT is now by far the fastest growing union in the country.

National organising co-ordinator Alan Pottage made clear that the more members RMT had, the more could be achieved. However, he said that the union must make sure that growth is matched with an increase in trained and active RMT reps that enjoy RMT support.

“That is why we provide a training day

for new reps shortly after each organising week had been completed,” he said.

An active RMT rep in every workplace

Every RMT region has now carried out a week of intense organising activity with thousands recruited for future organising.

Alan noted that it was vital to leave every region with the intention of carrying out continuous follow up activity.

“We now have active cadres of activists in all regions willing and capable of carrying out this vitally important task,” he said.

The regional council in Scotland has already started to prepare for the next campaign by raising funds to ensure that larger branches help smaller branches. Every region has a ‘lead recruiter’ who, along with the regional secretary, is responsible for recruitment and retention.

So what’s in the pipeline?

The organising unit will meet with all lead recruiters this month to explain the need

for all branches to prepare and implement individual plans. This forum will bring together key people from every region to share ideas and help solve problems. All regional organisers and a member of the organising unit will meet with branch secretaries and chairs to explain strategy in detail.

“True success will come when all of our 240 branches are regularly carrying out activities designed to recruit workers into the union and we keep our members satisfied by ensuring that the problems at the workplace are being tackled and that all members are protected,” Alan said.

Every region, every branch, every member

Alan stressed the importance of motivating and involving every Regional Council, every branch and every member in recruitment and retention.

“All of our elected representatives should be applying for paid release to explain the benefits of RMT membership to new employees and existing workers who are not members,” he said.

He said that the organising unit was very much ‘hands on’ and that its staff were to be found in union offices as they were working with activists in the workplace – this could be a bus depot, a railway station, taxi rank or the engine room of a ship.

“We are a transport union and we are appealing to more and more transport workers as a result of our ability to campaign and fight on behalf of our members,” he said.

Play your part

Every member can play a part. Are all your workmates in the union? If you think the unit should organise a campaign then let us know and we will work out a strategy. You can order your recruitment materials (pens, key rings, booklets, posters etc) by calling the RMT freephone help line on 0800 376 3706 and they will be sent out within 48 hours by Initial City Link – a company that recognises RMT.



ORGANISE: Alan Pottage with the organising unit in Aberdeen last month

Organising unit

The Organising Unit is a cornerstone in RMT’s organising strategy. Standing now at five strong with the recent addition of Gerry Hitchen, they have toured the country reaching into pockets of poor organisation and helping to plan and drive forward local initiatives. We often help local activists in the most difficult areas.

Alan said that the emphasis is on building the union to our maximum strength.

“We can only do this by increasing our strength on the ground in every single workplace so we have set ourselves targets to achieve,” he said.

● National Organising Co-ordinator

Alan Pottage 07734 088 305

Recruitment & Retention Organisers:

Donald Graham 07753 748 074, John

Milligan 07753 748 147, Roddy Keenan 07793

052 138 and Gerry Hitchen 07834 352 834.



Politicians make decisions which affect the lives of RMT members at home and at work. In order to improve the lives of transport workers we need to be able to continue to campaign for investment, jobs, employment rights, safety, pensions and better working conditions, plus all of the other issues which affect transport workers.

The law states that unions must have a separate Political Fund to pay for campaigning. This is raised by members paying the political levy as part of membership subs.

Furthermore, all unions are required, by law, to ballot their members every ten years to retain their Political Fund. In the autumn, RMT will be asking every member to vote 'YES' in the postal ballot.

Your Political Fund allows your union to take our workplace campaigns into the political arena to influence political decisions and to have our say on changes in the law. Winning a Yes vote in the ballot is vital in allowing us to campaign on your behalf in pressing the government and politicians to do far more for transport workers – without it, we will be fighting with one hand behind our back.



For the RMT Political Fund



For more information, contact RMT

0800 376 3706

e-mail infor@rmt.org.uk or visit

www.rmt.org.uk

YOUR UNION YOUR VOICE **IN TRANSPORT**



For The Political Fund



Compensation victory



**Jennie Walsh of RMT solicitors
Thompsons reports on an important
victory in defence of workers'
compensation rights for criminal injury**

IT'S a rare thing for the government to back off destroying the rights of workers, or more specifically railway workers, without a fight.

But ministers have listened and used common sense over political dogma by ditching plans to remove the right of workers injured through criminal acts in the course of duty from claiming compensation.

Last month's *RMT News* went to press before the government had announced that there was to be no change in eligibility for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) scheme.

The Home Office wanted to "examine alternatives for compensating workers criminally injured in the course of duty", possibly by placing the responsibility for paying compensation on to the employers. And ministers wanted to remove altogether from eligibility for compensation what the consultation paper described as "two anomalies whereby compensation can be paid for the trauma suffered as a result of suicide on the railway; and for the accidental injury resulting from taking exceptional risk in dealing with crime".

The response was swift from the trade unions and, for once, the employers and insurance industry were equally emphatic in their opposition to the proposals. Not entirely for the same reasons of course. Big business wasn't concerned about the rights of workers to compensation, but was clearly alarmed by the suggestion that it should foot the bill for compensating those injured in the course of duty through criminal acts.

There was, the Home Office says, strong opposition from railway industry employers' representatives, including the Association of Train Operating Companies and London Underground, to the proposal to transfer responsibility for compensating those affected by railway suicides.

Not quite an unholy alliance, and alas it's unlikely that this government would have backed off if the unions alone had opposed the plans. But between the labour movement and the bosses we caught David Blunkett in a pretty effective pincer movement.

responded to a parliamentary question in June that train drivers were not to be removed from the scheme.

And later that day Blunkett himself rose to announce that no changes would be made to the CICA which would exclude those injured in the course of duty.

The official Home Office response to the consultation states: "There was strong opposition to the transfer of responsibility, on the grounds that railway suicides could

**This campaign
would not be
possible without the
political fund**

lead to permanent psychological damage for those affected and that railway drivers unlike, for example, bus drivers, could not swerve or stop to avoid fatalities. A pre-existing right should not be removed."

It went on: "The level of compensation involved is low, suicides are more frequent on the railway than in any other sector, and it was argued that rather than transferring provision other workers, such as bus drivers, could be brought into the scheme. It was argued that there is sufficient public

concern to the level of trauma that is involved to railway workers, that provision should remain, even if suicide was not a violent crime."

RMT was one of a number of unions also to argue that transferring to the employer responsibility for paying compensation to workers injured in the course of duty, such as station staff assaulted by drunken passengers, was unworkable. While it is important to encourage employers to do more to protect the safety of staff, making them pay the compensation is not the way to do it. Already they deny and delay when faced with a personal injury claim. Why should they be any more willing to pay when their employee has been injured through a criminal act?

The labour movement can rightly be proud of its stand against the government's attempts to deny workers injured in the course of duty the compensation they deserve. But let this not be the end of the fight. The CICA scheme continues to be woefully inadequate. The majority of awards for drivers who suffer trauma in witnessing a suicide are just £1,000, and the strict tariff system of payments means other injuries are rarely compensated appropriately.

I'm sure I'm not the only person who has overheard the lads in the local laughing about how they want to become railway workers because "you get a grand every time you see someone chucking themselves under a train".

Compensation is reported in the media as some kind of pools win. But those who fight for compensation on behalf of the injured know the scale of the suffering behind every payment.



DESPITE media attacks, intimidation and legal threats, RMT members at Network Rail have shown immense courage and determination in defending their final salary pensions.

Network Rail shut the defined-benefit pension scheme to new staff earlier this year without any consultation with the union and replaced it with an inferior money-purchase scheme. The company had refused point-blank even to discuss re-opening the final-salary scheme in pay negotiations.

The company offered an improved 3.5 per cent increase on pay rates, and RPI plus three quarters of one per cent next year, and, significantly, an initial 25 per cent refund on rail season ticket costs. The 35-hour week was also to be brought in by 2006. However, NR refused to budge on pensions.

As a result, the union balloted Network rail staff, including those infrastructure workers being brought back in-house from the private sector.

Members voted for strike action over the issue, prompting a concerted media campaign attacking final-salary pensions and RMT members' right to take action to defend them.

One industry magazine even accused the union of being "lunatics" for believing it could change the mind of Network Rail directors.

Victory

The company threatened to use anti-union laws and drag the union through the courts after RMT announced strike dates in defence of the final-salary scheme.

However, Network Rail chief executive John Armitt finally saw sense in last-ditch talks and offered to re-open the scheme to new employees after they had completed five years service.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow made clear in talks that service would include any agency or sub-contractor service in the rail industry prior to transfer.

"Employees with less than five years' service would meanwhile join a money-purchase scheme, but would be able to transfer into the final-salary scheme upon completion of five years' service," he said.

The offer also included the improved 3.5 per cent increase on pay, the initial 25 per cent refund on rail season ticket costs and the 35-hour week is to be brought in by 2006, as previously agreed.

RMT members had the final say, and voted overwhelmingly to accept the offer.

This RMT victory, and others like them such as at Wightlink two years ago, has once again shown that decent occupational pensions can and must be defended against attacks by employers. RMT has

Union defends Network Rail pension fund

RMT wins a major victory in forcing Network Rail to re-open the final-salary pension scheme to new members



ON THE MARCH: RMT members on the TUC march in defence of decent pension rights

made clear that final salary pensions are deferred wages and are not there to be pilfered by company directors at will.

Defend your pension

One of the reasons why some final-salary schemes are in crisis is that when stock markets were rising employers took the opportunity to take so-called 'pension holidays'. This meant that employers did not put money into the schemes and used the funds to increase profits, pushing up share prices as well as their own share-

option packages.

The TUC's recent *PensionsWatch* report also revealed that the directors of the UK's top 100 companies were pumping millions into their own pensions, while attacking staff final-salary pensions and setting contributions to replacement money-purchase schemes at miserably low levels.

The scale of RMT's latest pensions victory was revealed, perversely, by how little coverage it received in the mainstream media, except for a very illuminating article by Larry Elliot in *The Guardian*, which congratulated the union for fighting to defend pension rights and choosing not to 'genuflect' before the employer.

Stop the pension panic

RMT members recently joined thousands of pensioners, trade unionists, and campaigners who took to the streets of London to demand action over pensions. Assembling in Trafalgar Square, marchers were addressed by trade union leaders and pensioners' leader Jack Jones. Speakers called for unity between pensioners and workers - the pensioners of tomorrow - in campaigning for decent pension provision, and made the case for compulsion in occupational pension schemes, and a fair indexing system for the state pension.

The demand for decent pensions was backed up recently by a survey from actuarial consultants Watson Wyatt which revealed that employers are beginning to reconsider the replacement of final-salary schemes to cut costs.

Consultant Stephen Yeo said that employers "value defined schemes, where the pension is a percentage of pay, as a critical tool for recruitment and retention of skilled staff".

RMT is trying to get the message across that decent pension provision is beneficial to employers as well as staff and that the union is determined to defend members' interests by any means at its disposal.

NETWORK RAIL

YOUR PENSION QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Members have raised concerns over the impact on their pension arrangements following the transfer of infrastructure maintenance to Network Rail. The following is a brief explanation of the many questions received at head office in the light of Network Rail's initial decision to close its final salary scheme and RMT's successful campaign to keep it open

What will happen to my pension? Can I still belong to the Railways Pension Scheme?

Following pressure from RMT, Network Rail has agreed to re-open its Section of the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS). In future new entrants will be required to have five years' service in the rail industry to be eligible to join the scheme. There is no change to the previous situation whereby workers transferring over will be permitted entry to the Section if they are already a member of an RPS Section. Individuals contributing to the Balfour Beatty Final-Salary Scheme will also be permitted immediate entry to the RPS.

Transferees who contribute to their current employer's money-purchase scheme and any future new recruits, will be automatically entered into the new Network Rail money-purchase scheme. Employees with more than five years' service will be offered RPS membership. Employees with less than five years' service will be allowed to join the final salary scheme after completing five years' service.

Example: Jarvis closed its final salary scheme to new entrants in 1997. Members joining after the date of closure would have only been able to join the Jarvis money purchase scheme. Someone starting employment in 2000 and transferring over would be eligible to join the Network Rail final salary scheme during 2005. In the meantime they will be automatically entered in to Network Rail's money purchase scheme.

How much will contributions be to the NR Section of the RPS?

Contributions increased to 8 per cent from 1 January

2004. From 1st January 2005 they will rise to 9.5 per cent.

How does this compare with contributions to other RPS Sections?

All infrastructure maintenance sections have different funding levels. Contributions are as follows:

Amec	6% from April 2003 (new recruits 7%)
Amey	7.5% from 1 Jan 2004
Balfour B.	6.5% from 1 Jan 2004
Centrac	5% until 31 Dec 2004
First Eng.	5% until 30 June 2006
Facilities	5% until 30 Sept 2005
Fastline	5% until 30 Sept 2005
Relayfast	5% until 30 Sept 2005
GTRM	6.5% from 1 Jan 2004

What will happen to the pension I have already earned?

This depends on whether you are contributing to the RPS or to a money-purchase scheme. You may transfer the value of your benefits/fund from both types of scheme to your new Network Rail scheme, or leave it where it is.

For Money Purchase Scheme members, there is likely to be an annual administration charge if the assets are not transferred. For RPS members, the value of benefits already earned will be assessed by an actuary who will then give an indication as to the amount of additional service this will buy in the NR Section. If past service benefits are not transferred they will be increased each year in future in line with RPI rather than average earnings which are usually higher.

Will my transfer include any surplus contained in my current Section?

Since 1 October, 2003, RPS transfers are no longer required to contain a share of a Section's surplus. Transfers will depend on whether the members are protected or not, and whether the transferring Section is in surplus or deficit. Therefore members transferring their past service benefits will not necessarily obtain year for year benefits in the Network Rail Section. Also if the transferee is in receipt of a restructuring premium, pre-restructuring service will not be as valuable as post-restructuring service and the amalgamation of values for these two portions will obviously

result in fewer years in the NR Section as the extra service will be based on the higher restructured pay.

In fact transferees from Sections which have not benefited from previous surplus distributions will be further disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that their benefits have not been improved, they will be unable to transfer a share of the surplus but the benefits of the Section they are transferring to have been enhanced.

What will happen to the surplus in my Section of the RPS.

It will be retained in the Section unless the employer can be persuaded to transfer it, but to date none has agreed.

That seems unfair. Some Sections used the surplus to keep members contributions down.

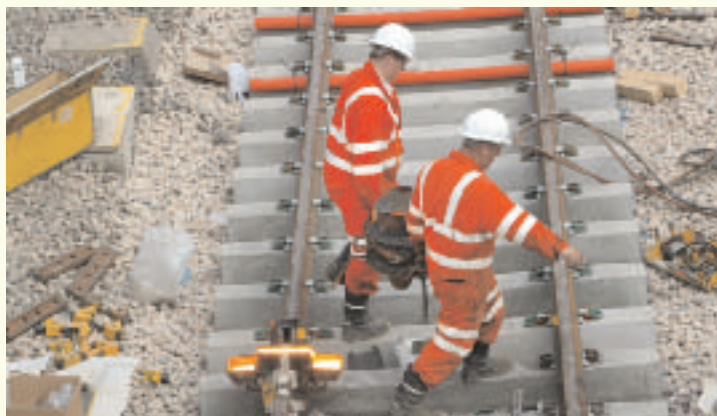
That is right, it is unfair. Members of Sections where surplus was used to improve benefits will have larger transfer values. Those employed by companies such as Jarvis, where management refused to distribute surplus, will be disadvantaged as they haven't seen benefit improvements and now the funds set aside to keep contributions down will be retained within the old employer's Section. The whole purpose of creating the RPS was to ensure that members' pensions were not adversely affected on privatisation. RMT has complained to government on this and a number of other points, but they are not prepared to intervene.

Will my Brass AVC payments still be matched?

Staff transferring into the Network Rail Section will still be able to continue making Brass payments at the level immediately prior to transfer, but although their own Brass payments may be increased, employer matching will be capped at the current level.

I am over 60. Can I take my pension instead of transferring it to the NR Section?

Members aged over 50 may be able to take payment of their past service pension rather than leaving it deferred or transferring into the NR Section. For those over 60 there is no reduction for early payment, but there is a reduction for retirement between ages 50 and 60. However, the reduction for early payment is significantly lower than the majority of final-salary funds and therefore members over 50 years of age should seriously consider this option. Members making



this option should contribute to the NR Section. It is recommended that anyone considering this option should not do so without first discussing the matter with a registered financial adviser.

Provided the decision to commence pension is taken after joining the Network Rail Section, there should be no impact on NR fund eligibility or, where appropriate, Brass matching payments.

Can the union give financial advice?

No. RMT is not permitted to give financial advice. However, Pensions Management has agreed arrangements with independent financial advisers Wentworth Rose for RPS members aged 50 or over, and considering retiring, to receive a free consultation. Wentworth Rose may be contacted on 0800 526340

I'm only eligible for the new money-purchase scheme, should I join?

Yes. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that management will contribute up to 7 per cent of your pay towards a pension. The scheme is not as good as the final-salary scheme, but it is better than nothing. Members should therefore contribute at the 4 per cent level in order to obtain the greatest possible management payment of 7 per cent. RMT believes management savings from introducing the new scheme are nowhere near as high as claimed. If all members pay the maximum, Network Rail's savings will be reduced. However, members should be aware their contributions will be on all earnings and that they will pay higher National Insurance contributions as the scheme is not contracted-out of the second tier of the state pension.

Transfer arrangements – Railways Pension Scheme

Members have been asking what will happen to the pension benefits they have already earned upon moving to Network Rail employment and how these will be valued if transferred to the Network Rail Section of the RPS. As explained earlier RPS transfer valuations depend on whether the transferring Section is in surplus or deficit, and whether the individual is protected. Where an individual's employment has been compulsorily transferred the following would apply:

Schemes in deficit at transfer date

- **Non protected Staff** – Transfer Value is 'share of fund'





(lower than 'past service reserve') resulting in a reduced service credit in receiving Section.

- **Protected Staff** – Transfer Value is 'share of fund' (lower than 'past service reserve') but employer top up required to ensure full 'past service reserve' transfer value is payable, thus providing 'year for year' basis in receiving Section.

Schemes in surplus at transfer date

- **Non-protected Staff** – Transfer Value is 'past service reserve', thus providing 'year for year' basis in receiving Section.

- **Protected staff** - Transfer Value is 'past service reserve', thus providing 'year for year' basis in receiving Section.

For compulsory transfers of protected members prior to October 1 2003, the Pension Trust specified that a 'share of fund' must be transferred where this exceeds the past service reserve. The effect was to transfer an appropriate portion of the surplus from the transferring to the receiving section. It does not enhance the member's transfer terms. However, this arrangement was only protected for ten years from privatisation.

Jarvis Group money purchase scheme

Members who contributed to the Jarvis money-purchase scheme received a letter from Forrester Hyde highlighting the fact that the scheme is invested through Standard Life and that individuals transferring to Network Rail may lose any windfall entitlement if Standard Life floats on the stock market. The impression is given that it would be in members' interests to continue their pension arrangements with Standard Life. As Standard Life has now decided to seek a Stock Market listing, the issue is now more important.

It is a matter of concern that the Forrester Hyde letter makes no mention of the disadvantages of not joining the Network Rail scheme; in particular the fact that not doing so would result in a loss of the new employer's contributions, as Network Rail would not contribute to the Standard Life scheme. Also no mention is made of the possibility that members could join the Network Rail Scheme while still retaining their current investment with Standard Life, either as a closed 'paid up' fund, or as an avenue for making additional voluntary contributions. The letter also fails to state that not all investors would qualify for a demutualisation windfall.

in regard to the full range of options open to Jarvis Group money-purchase scheme members. Members of the Jarvis Scheme are therefore urged to take extreme care prior to making decisions in regard to this matter. While RMT is not permitted to give specific financial advice, the potential of losing employer pension contributions and death-in-service cover is not to be dismissed lightly.

Members who are unsure whether to join the Network Rail money-purchase scheme should bear in mind they would be losing employer payments of up to 7 per cent. Employer and employee contributions to the Jarvis Scheme are both 5 per cent, whereas member contributions of 4 per cent to the Network Rail scheme would attract employer payments of 7 per cent. Thus by joining the Network Rail Money Purchase scheme members would be obtaining higher employer contributions than those available during Jarvis employment and their own payments would be lower than to the Jarvis Scheme. Declining to join the Network Rail Money Purchase scheme effectively saves management up to 7 per cent of the pay.

Likewise declining to join the RPS final salary Section saves management pension contributions of 14.25 per cent of scheme pay.

Financial crisis at Jarvis

Arising from Jarvis's severe financial problems and media speculation suggesting the situation threatens the company's very survival members have raised concerns that bankruptcy represents a threat to their pension entitlement.

While RMT has written to Pensions Management seeking full clarification of the situation, members will be comforted by the fact that RPS funds are held totally separate from the employers' assets and that all three Jarvis Sections – Fastline, Relayfast and Facilities – had a surplus at the last valuation. Therefore while funding levels will have declined since that time, assets levels should still be adequate to cover past service benefits. Members will be kept advised of developments.



2004 Annual General Meeting **REPORT**



A democratically-run

THE RMT Annual General Meeting in Portsmouth last month called for a “democratically run” transport network.

“THE people who use public transport and those who work in it must have a say in how it’s run,” RMT general secretary Bob Crow told conference.

“We don’t want a return to old-style ‘state capitalism’,” he added, “it must be democratically run by the people for the people.”

Backing a resolution urging the union to “campaign vigorously” for the “extension of public ownership throughout the rail and bus industry,” Bob slammed the cost of privatisation.

“From 1996 to 2004 over £16 billion has been paid out in public subsidies,” he said.

Bob went on to explain that, with the system of rail franchising, each train operating company could be brought back into public ownership at the end of its contract.

And he reminded delegates that punctuality on South Eastern Trains had gone up since the privateers had been removed from the network and taken back under public control. The number of staff had also increased and money had been saved.

“Let’s send out a clear message,” Bob concluded, “for renationalisation under democratic control.”

Moving the resolution, London underground driver Glenroy Watson said: “When the Tories first had the idea of stealing people’s property, no-one would have believed the disasters we have had since.”

Glenroy added: “As soon as privatisation took hold, trains started crashing. That was not a coincidence.”

Condemning the policy of public-private partnership as “lies”, he said “It’s just been an opportunity to give away public money to their friends in private industry.”

Glenroy admitted that calling on government to reverse its privatisation policies was “a tall order”.

But, he insisted, “It won’t happen by wishful thinking. It’s down to us.”

Bob Law, also from London, condemned the effect that privatisation has had on railworkers wages. “The reason we’re not getting our just desserts is because LU have to pay off the private companies,” he said.

Seafarer Mark Winchester highlighted the Sealink Ferries privatisation.

“It was originally sold off for £20 million and then sold on for £340 million and the company kept huge assets formerly in public hands,” he said.

Greg Hewitt, from Brighton, said that the proliferation of rail companies had led to a “drive to the bottom” in wages and conditions.

No more Tebays

CONFERENCE unanimously backed calls for a “full and independent inquiry” into the Tebay disaster, which killed four railway maintenance workers in earlier this year.

On the morning of Sunday February 15 a runaway trailer loaded with sections of rail ploughed into a work gang and killed RMT members Garry Tindall, Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess and Chris Walters.



General secretary Bob Crow calls for a democratically-run transport network

Moving the resolution, engineer Alex Hogg said: “We, as a trade union, will never accept that members have to lose life and limb. We must make the company directors face up to their responsibilities.”

Urging delegates to back the call, he added: “We must stop another Tebay.”

And supervisor Albert Lingard said: “We have to try and protect our members by bringing the bastards who caused this to justice.”

The resolution, which came from the engineering sectional conference, also called on the RMT to campaign for “comprehensive corporate responsi-

bility legislation.”

Greg Hewitt, from Brighton, outlined the “catalogue of disasters” that had led to the tragedy, including “an incompatible machine and trailer and brakes that didn’t work.”

And Wigan signaller John Tilley described a similar incident that had occurred ten months previously on the Settle to Carlisle line.

“The bottom line is that privatisation caused those deaths at Tebay,” he said, “politicians are equally guilty along with the employers.”

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash, backing the motion on behalf of the

n transport network



to service the public at the RMT annual general meeting held in Portsmouth

executive, told delegates of the "disgust" that he had felt on hearing the news.

"One man has blood on his hands," he said, "John Major, who sold off our railways ten years ago."

Explaining the need for an independent inquiry, rather than an internal one, Mick gave three examples of similar incidents where investigations had been made but, "nothing was done."

"When will they listen and when will they learn," he asked.

No to low pay

Conference unanimously backed calls to "end low pay

once and for all".

Delegates supported a resolution from the RMT Bakerloo branch to submit "pay claims based on flat rate increases" to help lower-paid members.

Moving the resolution, London Underground delegate Vaughan Thomas explained that a minimum flat rate combined with a cost of living percentage claim would address the issue.

Train driver Derrick Marr told delegates that train cleaners' pay can be as low as £10,000 per annum.

"Train drivers are on salaries three times that, and lower grades are left behind.

"We must make sure they get a fair crack of the whip," he said.

John Whittingham, from Chester, shocked delegates when he revealed that, in his area, cleaners' pay rates were as low as £4.57 per hour.

"I met a young lad working nightshift and he told me that he was only paid £5.17 an hour, including his night premium," he said.

General secretary Bob Crow, backing the resolution on behalf of the EC, said that the resolution alone would not address the issue.

"If we pass this resolution," he insisted, "we must take physical action to end low pay once and for all."

Fight for cleaners

Conference also unanimously pledged to fight for the rights of low-paid cleaning staff.

Moving a resolution calling for an "end to contract cleaning companies on all stations, London train driver Glenroy Watson said: "We, as trade unionists have a task before us.

"The strong defending the weak is a basic principle of trade unionism," he added. "We must fight for the lower paid."

And Trevor Jordan, from Morecambe, told conference that, when Virgin trains took over services in the northwest, "the cleaners were made redundant and re-employed on lower wages."

Paul Burton, from Orpington, agreed with the call to bring cleaning back "in-house" but, he warned: "We need to get in there and organise among the cleaners first."

And LUL driver Bob Law asked if recruitment literature could be printed in other languages.

"Many of these cleaners don't speak English as their first language," he explained.

Too hot

Conference agreed that the union should write to the train-operating companies to demand risk assessments on the issue of working in extremely hot temperatures.

Catering grades delegate Derek England said that members were working in often unbearable temperatures over 100 degrees causing staff extreme discomfort.

London Underground delegate Bob Law backed the call and said that if there was a minimum legal temperature to work at there should be a maximum one as well.

No to de-staffing

Conference agreed to demand minimum rail station staffing levels and to stem the de-staffing of stations.

Delegates unanimously backed a resolution calling for "all stations a minimum of two staff at all times," for the benefit of passengers and workers alike.

Glen Burrows from Bridgwater said: "Single-staffed stations are unsafe for staff and unstaffed stations are unsafe for the public.

"As workers, we must challenge this as a health and safety issue and we should encourage the travelling public to do the same," she suggested.

Referring to the poor pay and conditions that station staff are faced with, she pointed out the recruitment problems that this caused.

"This makes station de-staffing a self-fulfilling policy," Ms Burrows added.

London station assistant



Mark Winchester, from Dover branch: tendering would be bad for the public, jobs and safety



Mike Harding: proud to belong to a union that fights for pensioners



Vaughan Thomas condemned the new Labour clique for "fully embracing neo-liberal Tory policies"



Assistant general secretary Pat Cash: felt "disgust" when hearing about the Tebay disaster

Mick Crossey agreed, saying: "We must fight to maintain staffing levels. Our union should make this a key issue in annual negotiations with the train operating companies (TOCs)."

Signaller Dali Jabbar, from Ipswich, strongly backed the proposal, telling delegates that, in the absence of station staff, passengers often seek assistance from signallers.

Chester customer assistant John Whittingham highlighted the huge rise in vandalism at unstaffed stations, insisting: "We need to point this out to the TOCs," adding that vandalism had reduced in areas where station staffing levels had been maintained.

No to EU drivers' licence

AGM unanimously called on the union to "campaign vigorously" against plans to introduce a new European train drivers' licence.

The scheme, which was agreed by the European Transport Workers' Federation despite the opposition of RMT and ASLEF, was condemned as an "attack on pay and conditions".

London underground driver Mark Harding described the new license as "flags of convenience on the railways."

The license would allow cross-border working by all train crews and employers could employ staff from the lower paid countries of eastern Europe to undermine pay and conditions.

Greg Tucker, southeast delegate, warned that the proposal represented "an EU-inspired attack on our wages and conditions."

AGS Pat Sikorski said that the moves would create the conditions for a "rush to the bottom" in terms of wages of conditions and lead to the kind of "social dumping" seen in the road freight sector.

Dover shipping delegate Mark Winchester reminded everyone that similar schemes

GENERAL secretary Bob Crow congratulated 25-year-old Yvonne McMurtrie as he handed her this year's Young Members Award at the AGM.

"It gives me great pleasure to give you this award," said Bob, adding: "One thing is for sure, our young members of today will become the senior and leading members in the future."

Ticket examiner Yvonne, from Gourock in Renfrewshire, is a rep for her local station, a depot steward and a learning tutor.

She serves as the assistant chair of the RMT young members advisory committee and, in her spare time, she helps with the Stonewall campaign for lesbian and gay rights.

Yvonne wins youth award



had caused huge job losses among British seafarers over recent years.

"There were 80,000 of us 20 years ago, now we're down to 10,000," he said.

Save Cal Mac

Conference urged MSPs to drop "misguided" plans to privatise Caledonian MacBrayne life-line ferries as demanded by the European Union.

Humblydelegate Dave Nelson called on MSPs to "challenge the whole process through the European Court of Justice."

A recent ruling - the Altmark Judgement - by the court allows some "crucial" services receiving government subsidy to avoid tendering.

He said that the RMT had argued strongly that CalMac - which provides ferry services between Scotland and its islands - is crucial to its communities.

"The Scottish executive says it has been forced into putting CalMac out to tender by EU rules," Dave said.

However, he added, "the Altmark ruling means that may well not be the case."

Dave explained that a legal

challenge would now have "every chance of success."

"This is the only honourable course and we can win," he insisted.

He reminded delegates of the outcry which stopped the previous Tory government from privatising Cal Mac services.

"Let's stop Labour doing what the Tories failed to do," he urged.

Mark Winchester, from Dover branch, insisted that tendering would be "bad for the public, bad for jobs and bad for safety."

"We need to challenge it all the way to the top," he added.

Aberdeen shipping delegate Neil Keith described CalMac as a "lifeline service."

"Don't let them take it away," he stressed.

Replying to the debate, general secretary Bob Crow backed the resolution.

"We're 101 per cent behind you. CalMac is not for sale," he said.

Defend your pension

General secretary Bob Crow called on Britain's pensioners to take "direct action" to restore the link between pensions and earnings

yesterday.

"Anyone who has got a car, get as many pensioners as possible in it, get as many cars as possible and block the M25 or the M1," he stormed.

"That'll soon make them sit up and take notice," Mr Crow added.

Anticipating criticism for making the suggestion, he pointed to the "direct action" taken against Iraq by Britain and the US.

"They spent four to five billion pounds smashing up Iraq, lets spend that money on fighting a 'war for pensions' instead," he suggested.

Backing a resolution - which conference passed unanimously - calling for "a programme of action" to restore the link, Bob said that the issue of pensions was "one of the most crucial issues before us this week."

Pointing to the recent success over pensions at Network Rail, he insisted that the victory had not been won by the union's researchers or negotiators.

"The pension scheme was kept open because workers

were prepared to take industrial action. "That's the only thing these people understand," he declared.

Condemning recent proposals to raise the retirement age to 70, he restated the union's policy of retirement at 55.

"Why not provide jobs for unemployed youngsters by allowing over 55-year-olds to retire," he said.

London delegate Mike Harding said that it was a "scandal that five million of our pensioners are below the poverty line", adding that he was "proud to belong to a union that fights for pensioners".

And Bobby Law, also from London said that he would not want the responsibility of driving a train at the age of 70. "The retirement age must come down, not go up," he added.

Wigan signaller John Tilley backed the resolution, saying: "Our union fights for dignity at work. This resolution fights for dignity in retirement."

Dennis McPake, from Birmingham, referred to the



Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski: "We must say no to driver-only operations"



London delegate Bobby Law: he would not want the responsibility of driving a train at the age of 70



No to the EU Constitution

DELEGATES voted overwhelmingly to reject the proposed European Constitution and to campaign for a 'no' vote in the any referendum. Reminding conference of the union's slogan "workers of the unite," general secretary Bob Crow called for solidarity all across the world.

"Why stop at Europe," he asked, "why not, 'out of Europe into the world?'"

He said that EU membership had destroyed the coal industry, the steel industry, manufacturing, fisheries and many other sectors in order due to the introduction of EU rules.

"The EU is totally undemocratic. All the power resides with the Commission and the

Council of Ministers and rules are drawn up by big business.

"At a time when people are talking about devolving powers to the Scottish parliament and to the London Assembly, here is Brussels taking power further away.

"If our government hands over financial decisions to the EU," he added, "it's not a government anymore."

Moving the resolution, London delegate Mick Crossey said that being opposed to the Constitution and undemocratic institutions in Brussels did not make you "anti-European".

"I love Europe, its people and its culture," he said, "but this Constitution is all about big business, privatisation and attacks on working people.

London train driver Greg

Tucker declared himself to be "proudly internationalist".

"But this constitution codifies and enshrines an anti-working class, Thatcherite agenda of privatisation," he added.

Wigan delegate John Tilley said that it was necessary to confront any fears that may exist over campaigning against the Constitution.

"We need to oppose this undemocratic bankers Europe without jumping into bed with UKIP," he said.

London delegate Bob Law said that you only had to look at who had drawn up the treaty, the far right French veteran politician Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

"The bosses and their political parties are all for it so

I'm against it," he said.

● **The RMT TUC submission on the EU constitution is available on the RMT website in the research area under 'consultation exercises.'**



London delegate Mick Crossey: Opposed to the Constitution and undemocratic institutions in Brussels

Towards a new Iraq

IRAQI Federation of Trade Unions general secretary Subhia Hussain brought conference to its feet with a call for “real sovereignty” for the people of Iraq.

The IFTU leader described yesterday’s transfer of authority as a “positive step,” but he demanded an “end to the occupation.

“We won’t give the new government a blank cheque,” he insisted. “We’ll campaign with them, but we’ll campaign against them where necessary.”

Mr Hassain, a former train driver, condemned the occupation forces for their anti-union stance.

“Last year, the US military attacked our headquarters,” he said. Thanking the RMT for its support, he told delegates that the union headquarters was still closed.

“The US military is constantly trying to frustrate our efforts to work and organise,” Mr Hussain added, “but we will not be deterred in our struggle for the Iraqi people.”

The IFTU leader, who was imprisoned for eight years under the Saddam regime, laid out the agenda of the Iraqi labour movement.

“We oppose the privatisation of our utilities and public services and we are fighting for a new Labour Code, to repeal the fascist laws of 1987,” he explained.

Mr Hussain also highlighted the massive levels of unemployment – over 65 per cent – in the country, which, he said, were worsened by foreign firms bringing in their own workers to replace Iraqis.



IFTU leader Subhia Hussain addresses conference

recent D-Day commemorations in France.

“How many veterans were able to afford to make that trip without help?” he asked.

Dorset bus driver Peter Gayle told delegates that, in his area, “we seem to spend most of our time fighting over pensions.”

Mr Gayle explained how, due to a local bus company privatisation, his members had been “conned” over their pensions.

Role of the guard

Conference voted unanimously to “re-launch the fight” to restore the role of

Britain’s train guards and slammed driver-only

operations at Portsmouth.

Since the 2002 national dispute on the issue, the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) had issued a new rule book which has failed to address union concerns over safety.

London train driver Greg Tucker said: “that the TOCs were more interested in revenue raising than in safely operated trains.

“The dispute is not over. It is still alive,” he insisted.

The motion called on the union to make a formal submission to the RSSB applying for the relevant changes to the new rule book, with the possibility of a legal challenge in the event of their refusal.

Rebuild the Labour Party



RMT Parliamentary group leader John McDonnell urged Labour Party members and trade unionists to “re-found” the party.

Speaking at the AGM, Mr McDonnell called for the best possible support for the newly-founded Labour Representation Committee to defeat the Blairite clique.

“It will be the most important meeting of the labour movement for a generation,” he insisted, adding: “Trade unionists and rank and file party activists will come together to re-found the Labour Party.”

The socialist MP added that the aim of the LRC would be that, “one day, socialists and trade unionists can say: ‘This is our party once more’.”

Mr McDonnell slammed London mayor Ken Livingstone for remarks that he made last month – Mr Livingstone urged tube workers to cross picket lines during the Tube strike.

“I’ll personally speak to Ken about this,” he promised, adding that the London mayor’s comments had been “unacceptable and shocking.”

The campaigning MP gave delegates a full report on the work of the union’s 14-strong group of MPs – all Labour – which meets on a six-weekly cycle.

“Our main focus has been on the issue of renationalisation and an end to the chaos of privatisation” he said.

“Our Early Day Motion calling for South Eastern Trains to remain in the public sector has received 112 signatures and rising, reflecting the support we have from the public.

“When we put the arguments for renationalisation in the Commons, ministers are constantly floundering in their attempts to justify their privatisation policies,” the Hayes and Harlington MP said.

“We must put these demands on the RSSB”, continued Greg, “whether they like it or not.”

Del Marr, from Southend, admitted that it had been “a long and arduous battle” but, he insisted, “we can’t give up on our members now.”

Plymouth train manager Eduard Fontaine likened the new rule book to children’s comics. “They’re like the Dandy or Beano”.

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that the issue put guards under “severe pressure.

“We must get back to saying ‘no’ to driver-only operation and we must fight to keep guards on trains,” he added.

However, Pat warned that the union “cannot ballot against the RSSB” but only against the train operating companies.

Save public housing

Delegates congratulated Camden council tenants for resisting government attempts to privatise their homes.

London underground driver Vaughan Thomas described how the Blairite local authority had wasted £0.5 million trying to persuade residents to back the plan.

He condemned the new Labour clique for “fully embracing neo-liberal Tory policies” and he shocked delegates when he revealed

that, nationally, £65 million of public money has been spent on housing privatisation propaganda.

Greg Tucker, from Kennington in south London, said that his local council had spent £0.3 million "just trying to sell off my estate."

Mr Tucker also pointed to the abuse of housing renovation grants by some of the local authorities involved.

"We must stop the bribing of tenants with renovation grants," he urged.

Working class representation

Conference vowed to "support and actively encourage" the newly-founded Labour Representation Committee in its fight to rescue the Labour Party as well as holding discussions with other unions on how to develop working class representation.

Nottingham conductor John Marshall reminded delegates

that "there are still 20 unions affiliated to Labour and we must try to stir them against Blairism.

"We need a strategy to move the struggle forward," he added.

Dennis McPake, from Birmingham, agreed, saying: "Don't forget there are still good people in the Labour Party. We need to fight from outside, but we need to fight from inside as well."

But London train driver Bobby Law said: "I was expelled from the Labour Party 15 years ago and this year, for the first time, I didn't vote for them.

"Working-class people are calling out for a party to represent them," he added.

Bristol delegate Glen Burrows said: "We need to address the issue of how working-class people are represented."

However, opposing support for the LRC, Glen said: "The question of reclaiming the



Delegates share a joke

Labour Party is one for Labour Party members."

And London train driver Greg Tucker told conference that "we need to decide how to construct an alternative to Labour."

However, John Tilley, from Wigan, told conference that the LRC launch had been the only "bit of good news I've had recently".

"We need to reclaim the party - heart and soul," he urged.

Responding to the debate

on behalf of the executive, general secretary Bob Crow asked delegates to back the resolution and the added amendment.

"I've never been in the Labour Party," he said, "but I've got good friends in it and we need to be at the LRC," he added.

Although the union was expelled from the Labour Party in February, the union's rule book still commits it to affiliation and it still sends its affiliation cheques to party



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headquarters – which the party returns.

The union launched a legal challenge to the expulsion and it is still awaiting a date for the hearing.

Support the Chagos people

Conference backed a call for support to the people of the Chagos Archipelago who were “ethnically cleansed” from their homelands by the British government over 30 years ago to make way for a US military air base on the island of Diego Garcia.

Mark Winchester of Dover branch pointed out that the islanders had won a legal case in the British courts but nothing been done about it.

“These people have been abandoned and suffer all the problems of a dispossessed people including poverty, alcoholism and unemployment,” he said.

AGS Pat Sikorski backed the call denouncing the treatment of the islanders as “brazen imperialism”. He compared the treatment of the Falkland islanders, which Britain allegedly went to war to defend, and the racist treatment of the inhabitants of Diego Garcia.

In brief

- Conference agreed that all newly-elected bus reps

Doncaster branch nominates

Allen Heath

For South Yorks & Lincs regional organiser

A very important position that requires Allen's 18 years of experience

Miles Platting branch nominates

Andy Warnock-Smith for North West & Wales Organiser &

Bill Anderson for Manchester & North West organiser and would appreciate further support

Central & North Mersey branch

nominates its secretary

John Tilley & Andy Warnock-Smith

for re-election

Orpington branch Nominates

Paul Burton for South East Regional Organiser

And seeks further support

Manchester Victoria branch Nominates

Andy Warnock-Smith For North West & Wales Organiser & **Bill Anderson** For Manchester & North West organiser to continue the excellent work done

Manchester Victoria branch Nominates their secretary

John MacDonald For Northern relief organiser
The man sure to do a good job

Warrington branch Nominates

Andy Warnock-Smith For North West & Wales Organiser

Re-elect this capable and experienced candidate

LUL Signal, Electrical and Track

Nominate

Willie Devlin For CoE London Transport seat

Fighting against racism



CAMPAIGNING lawyer Imran Khan updated delegates on the fight against racism. He slammed those who “carp about political correctness”.

“They are just pining for a return to ignorance and the acceptance of discrimination,” he said.

Mr Khan also criticised “right-wing politicians and entertainers,” who complain about how hard it is to “have a frank and open discussion about race.

“To my mind,” he added, “what they really want is a license to be racist.

“What they call frankness, I call offensive. What they call open, I call abusive.”

However, Mr Khan recognised that significant progress had been made, particularly over the last 10 years, and he paid tribute to the “struggle and determination” of the Lawrence family – whom he represented in their long fight for justice.

He explained that the Lawrence family's campaign had forced Britain to “accept that there is a problem” and that the subsequent McPherson report had forced public

institutions to “take a long, hard look at themselves.”

Mr Khan then turned to the 2001 murder of Feltham inmate Zahid Mubarek, who was killed by his cell mate only hours before his release.

His killer, Robert Stewart – alleged to have held extreme racist views – was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder.

But an inquiry – due to begin in September – will ask why the two young men were forced to share the same cell and whether prison officers deliberately placed them together.

“Recent press reports suggest that Zahid and Stewart were placed together for a game called ‘Gladiator’ by prison officers who would bet on how long they could remain together before trouble started,” said Mr Khan.

“But,” he continued, “none of these inquiries will mean a jot unless there is real political change.

Commenting on the wider political scene, Mr Khan said: “In Britain, the left is getting organised both inside and outside new Labour. The RMT and others are fighting to defend working-class people and their families.”

He praised the union's contribution to the “historic goals” of building the fight against new Labour, “keeping the Tories out and, most of all, putting proper trade unionism back on the agenda.

“No other union has gained as much influence as the RMT in the wider world,” he concluded, “congratulations to you all.”

should receive paid training as soon as possible after their election.

- It was agreed that branches who require head office circulars to continue to be sent by post should inform the general secretary in writing.

- Conference agreed to re-introduce the practice of

bestowing honorary union membership to those figures that have made outstanding contributions to the Labour and trade union movement.

- Delegates backed a motion to consider making funds available to provide members, reps and branches with copies of classic trade union and socialist books.

- Delegates congratulated members of the CWU postal workers union for refusing to deliver racist and fascist material during the recent elections.

- AGM agreed to commission a study into the participation of women in the union and how it can be improved.

Getting equipped to represent workers

RMT members regularly take the plunge and enrol in long distance courses at Keele in order to equip themselves to represent people at work

CHALLENGING, rewarding and satisfying is how RMT members have described the experience of studying industrial relations. The Centre for Industrial Relations at Keele has its roots in adult education and has been operating for over 15 years.

It is dedicated to the widest possible access for potential students and was pursuing the system of life-long learning long before the term became popular. It is one of the main providers of industrial relations courses and research in the UK with over 250 full-time undergraduates and over 100 part- and full-time postgraduates. Most of the students on the part-time programmes have a practical knowledge of industrial relations and are drawn from a wide range of institutions such as ACAS, trade unions, public and private sector organisations.

Chester RMT branch secretary John Wittingham took up the Keele challenge after receiving a union circular on the subject.

"After a lot of studying and writing four essays and a dissertation on health and safety issues I can categorically state that I feel for more confident and knowledgeable in industrial relations matters than I did before doing the course," he said.

He said that although there was a lot of reading, writing and discussion group work, the Keele tutors were always on hand to

guide students through the course.

"With help from my partner Ann and the union I attained the grades and I have now received my much-valued certificate," John proudly said.

London Underground RMT member Doug Hammersley also took up the course and found it of enormous benefit in the workplace.

"There is no doubt it puts you on a more equal footing with management and you become aware just how ill-informed some managers are of basic rules of industrial relations," he said.

How does distance learning work?

Distance learning is designed to support students for whom traditional full-time residential courses are inappropriate. Keele students study at home, using study packs provided by the centre, and supported by short periods (typically three days) of residential study at Keele. The key points of support are:

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● There are four residential periods in each of the two years of study for the Diploma and MA programmes

What will it cost?

Fees for courses are set annually. They are set at a level to encourage access by working people. Some trade unions have special arrangements. Fees may be paid by installments. For current details please contact the Department, or go to our website at www.KeeleIR.org and follow links to the relevant department pages.

Any member who wishes to find out more should contact the RMT education section at Unity House.



ENLIGHTENING: Doug Hammersley found the course an eye opener



REWARDING: John Wittingham found Keele a rewarding challenge



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Or, for further details and application forms, contact: Margaret Yates (01782)583366/583254, Centre for Industrial Relations, Keele University Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 6BG, or E-mail ida6@keele.ac.uk

The PPP sea



Recent reports into the Public Private Partnership on London Underground confirm that the scheme is little more than a mechanism for giving guaranteed risk-free profits to shareholders.

THE government's privatisation of the Tube's maintenance contracts, known as PPP, has become a byword for inefficiency, complexity and corporate greed. Various consultants and lawyers were paid over £100 million alone to set up the deal (see table below) which finally cost the taxpayer nearly half a billion pounds.

These staggering sums have been justified on the basis that private sector investment will flood into the network and lead to massive improvements.

However, a London Underground report maintains that existing assets will not be in a good state of repair until 2025 and casts some doubt, due in the main to poor project planning, on the private sector's ability to deliver

improvements to the underground infrastructure.

A National Audit Office (NAO) report, called *London Underground PPP – were they good deals?*, also underlines the huge start-up costs and that the Infracos are likely to make annual profits of between 10 and 17 per cent. Nevertheless, returns could be as high as 18-20 per cent if targets set out in the private sector bids are met – this looks unlikely given current private-sector performance.

Not renowned for using radical language, the NAO said: "there is only a limited assurance that the price that would be paid to the private sector is reasonable". The report goes on to make the point that with the deals being reviewed every seven years there is still

some uncertainty as to what the final cost of the PPP will actually be.

The two private-sector groups that run the network, Metronet and Tube Lines, have received over £1 billion in the last financial year and paid almost £16 million in fines. The NAO report criticised the consortia for the work they have carried out. The PPP and the "shadow-running" of the contracts prior to their introduction have also been constantly marked by derailments, falling levels of maintenance, confusion and communications breakdowns.

Gravy train

The NAO has also revealed that the financing of the private consortia's £3.8 billion of borrowing so far is costing £450 million more than would have been charged if the government had raised the money directly.

One of the most controversial issues over PPP is the fact that private sector risk is covered by the public purse in virtually every respect. The government

andal is out



has issued 'letters of comfort' to the private companies who have loaned £3.8 billion to the Infracos. This means that if Metronet and Tube Lines default on debt repayments the public will stump up 95 per cent – or £3.6 billion – of the money.

This led RMT parliamentary group member John Trickett MP to remark at the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee evidence session on the National Audit Office report, that the PPP “must be one of the worst deals ever put in front of the Committee of Public Accounts”.

Remarkably, London Underground also agreed to pay the private companies the costs they incurred during the PPP contract bidding process – a grand total of £275 million. Additionally, the private sector was richly rewarded by London Underground itself for the external advice they gave the company during contract negotiations.

Poor performance

In 2003/4 the Infracos received a payment of £1.07 billion from the public purse via the Infrastructure Service Charge. Despite this enormous sum, Infraco performance is described in the London Underground report as “mixed”.

External Advisor costs to London Underground

Firm	Advice	Cost £millions
Freshfields	Legal (with IT legal team)	£29.2
Price Waterhouse Cooper	Commercial (part financial)	£21.4
Arthur Andersen	Reorganising Operations	£13.8
PA Consulting	Reorganising Engineering	£12.5
Ove Arup	Engineering	£6.0
Hornagold & Hills, KPMG and 25 other firms	Project Management, Audit Insurance, property, pension and miscellaneous technical advice	£26.5
Total		£109.4m

Serious concern is expressed in relation Metronet and Tube Lines project management. The report explains that “high level asset management strategies have been haltingly produced and suffer from inadequate engineering input, while detailed work plans have sometimes been either non-existent, incomplete or inconsistent, rather than competent and professional. The planning capability demonstrated this past year will not be adequate to manage the volume of work once the renewals programme accelerates”.

Ill-conceived

Many commentators have pointed out that the government's blind determination to push through PPP and the privatisation of Tube maintenance was ideologically-driven. It would also appear that ministers or government and Tube officials simply did not understand the nature of these deeply complex contracts. Under PPP, it was claimed that the private sector would fund the project, yet taxpayers are spending over £1 billion a year to pay for desperately needed improvements. The PPP was allegedly designed to remove the costs of running the Tube from the government's public spending bill yet the taxpayer is paying more in interest payments at higher commercial rates.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union will continue to campaign against the PPP and for a return of the Tube to public control.

“These reports highlight the fact that this PPP is no more than a money-making exercise for private interests to make huge, guaranteed profit levels at the expense of the travelling public and the workforce,” he said.





RMT member Greg Hewitt shares his reflections on a union delegation to Cuba earlier this year



SOLIDARITY: RMT delegation of Tony Donaghey, Bob Crow, Peter Hall and Stan Herschel mix with a Venezuelan delegation on May day

RMT CONTAINER FOR CUBA

The Cuban people are suffering the effects of the illegal US blockade, which has been condemned by the United Nations. To break the blockade over 100 countries have organised the export of various essential goods to help the Cuban People.

In association with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the RMT will be sending a container ship to Cuba in October. RMT will be focusing on supporting Cuba's achievements in the care and education of young children and in medical advances.

You can help by

- Sending a donation of £10 to help fund the purchase of essential medical equipment and building materials. Cheque payable to "RMT Container for Cuba" and send to RMT Cuba Container, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.
- Sending educational materials, children's toys and old computers to one of two storage locations in either London or Liverpool.

If you wish to donate material please contact campaign organiser Tony Santamera on 07968 590085.



LOU Reed's soft tones "Oh what a perfect day, I'm glad I spent it with you!" perfectly summed up my Mayday in Cuba earlier this year.

There I was, aged 53, sat on the edge of my bed like some schoolboy who couldn't wait for Christmas to come. It was 5am, Saturday May 1 in Havana Cuba. Not only am I fulfilling a lifelong dream to visit Cuba. I am going to the famous Plaza de Revolucion.

Along with other workers and trade unionists, I was about to join a rally for the workers' day and listen to speakers from across the globe. And I am not ashamed to admit it, I was excited.

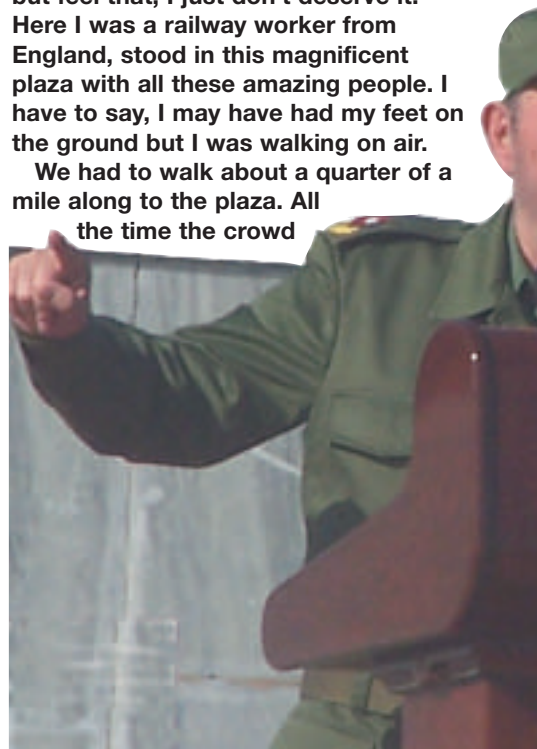
The coach arrives and I get that deja vu feeling. We are all dressed in the red T-shirts with '1 de Mayo' printed on them, given to us by our comrades, almost like we were going to a football match. As we glide through the back streets of Cuba on a still and silent morning, I watch the thronging crowd. Hundreds of thousands of people all have the same aim, to get to the biggest game of them all.

The excitement builds as we near the Plaza and suddenly we are directed into a special area for international delegates. The security is tight as we pass through the barriers. We start to approach a small hill, as we hit the top, we hear the people chanting before we see them. "Viva la revolution! Viva! Viva Cuba! Viva!, Viva Che! Viva, Viva Fidel! VIVA!"

We come level with the crowd and they go wild as they see us, waving flags and banners of all kinds. They shout to us to come over to speak. When we do, we are overwhelmed by genuine love and affection.

It's one of the most humbling feelings I have ever experienced, I couldn't help but feel that, I just don't deserve it. Here I was a railway worker from England, stood in this magnificent plaza with all these amazing people. I have to say, I may have had my feet on the ground but I was walking on air.

We had to walk about a quarter of a mile along to the plaza. All the time the crowd



were calling to us "eh campenero!" (comrade). Any time we went near them we were grabbed for photographs. Finally we arrived, right in the middle of the Plaza de Revolucion.

It was still only 7am. We spoke to many delegates from all over the world. Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Japan, America, Africa, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Venezuela, Australia.

But the show had only just begun. For two hours we were treated to what one can only describe as a kind of cabaret. The type of thing you see at an opening to the Olympics with dancers and some of Cuba's premier singers and bands.

This was interspersed with speeches given by comrades from all over the world. After all the speeches the familiar cry went up again and again. VIVA!

Finally at 9am a hush came over the crowd. There were no fanfares, no fuss. Fidel just appeared from out of the crowd waving a small Cuban flag. The people went mad. I have never heard such a noise. Fidel then spoke for two hours, without a break, in the searing heat, by now somewhere in the high 80s – not bad for a Man of 78. When he finished, the crowd sang the Cuban national anthem. Then in a spontaneous outburst over a million people joined hands and sang the International, all in different languages but the same tune. Well, how do I describe it? It was beyond words. My skin shivered and I was overwhelmed by the magnificence of it all. For a moment I was dumbstruck.

Afterwards I realised I saw something that day. I saw a leader who is loved by his people. I saw no guns or bayonets forcing anyone anywhere and no police pushing anyone. What I did see was a peace loving, free people give a genuine outpouring of support to their leader or as they call him "Comandante".

A moment that will be imprinted in my memory forever, and a "perfect day I wanted to share with you". I hope I have done just that.

FIDEL: Over a million Cubans flock to hear Commandante Fidel Castro on Mayday in Havana



At the union's parliament

LAST month I was privileged to chair my first Annual General Meeting as your union's president in Portsmouth, a town steeped in maritime history. It is at these annual parliaments that you can clearly see the open, active and campaigning nature of our great union. This is reflected in the huge rise in membership over the past year, which is the real litmus test for the work of the RMT. None of that work would be possible without the dedication of RMT branches, reps, regional officials, recruitment officers and all staff.

Conference resolutions also showed us the huge amount that remains to be done for members in all grades. However, we have been able to celebrate some great victories, not least the great result at Network Rail where workers successfully defended their pension rights. Make no mistake, this was a significant victory in defence of decent final-salary pensions. Our members at Wightlink ferries, based in Portsmouth, achieved a similar victory a couple of years ago using the same tactics. There can be no doubt that showing employers that we mean business helps to concentrate their minds. We must also build the campaign to restore the link between pensions and earnings.

The AGM made clear its opposition to the privatised nature of the transport industry in this country. Private companies are now receiving more taxpayers' money than spent under nationalisation, while attacking our members' condition. That is a national scandal.

We are building alliances inside and outside parliament to force a fundamental re-think of rail privatisation. Any government worth its salt would not tolerate this unacceptable situation. But this is not any government, this lot refuses to act in workers interests and openly defend employers in their efforts to maximise profits by using Tory anti-union laws. Despite this our parliamentary group, led by John McDonnell MP, has played an outstanding role in representing the interests of RMT members. Fundamental to all these struggles is the vital importance of organising for a "massive Yes vote" in the forthcoming political fund ballot.

As I told delegates, the political fund is not about the Labour Party or any other party. The legal process was introduced as part of the Tory anti-union laws in an attempt to stop unions having a political voice. This has not worked as our union has consistently voted to have such a fund. A victory in the political ballot will allow the union to continue our political campaigning on industrial issues.

Conference also discussed the dangers posed by the imposition of a European Union constitution, which would transfer huge powers from parliament to the unelected Commission sitting in Brussels. From the Chartists to the founding of the Labour Party, trade unions were the mainstay in the battle for democracy in this country for centuries. To allow ever more powers to be transferred to Brussels would be betrayal to those struggles.

On the international front, we must demand an end to wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine and oppose the warmongering policies of the US under President Bush. From Cuba, where the Bush administration is trying to cripple the people with an illegal economic blockade, to Ireland, whose people demand full implementation of the Good Friday accords, the union must be guided by our slogan: 'Workers of all countries unite'. **TONY DONAGHEY - RMT PRESIDENT**



CHAIR: RMT president Tony Donaghey presides over conference

A people under **SIEGE**

Brighton branch RMT member Mark recently visited Palestine to see for himself how Palestinians live under Israeli occupation

IHAVE recently returned from a two-week trip to Palestine with the International Solidarity Movement, a Palestinian-led group of internationals involved in non-violent direct action dedicated to achieving peace and justice for the Palestinian people.

The group was co-founded by a Jewish activist and contains a high percentage of Jewish activists from across the world. After two days training in Bethlehem we travelled to our base in Biddu, a village north west of Jerusalem which will be seriously affected by the building of the apartheid wall on their land stolen by the Israeli government. They will lose farm land and water wells owned through the generations, denying the children the chance of a livelihood.

We stayed in a village house and our group consisted of five women and five men from five different countries. Life in the villages is very hard with up to 70 per cent unemployment, poor infrastructure and the United Nations providing food relief to alleviate the situation. The rate of childhood anemia is nearly 50 per cent due to poor diet, poverty and constant stress. Despite this the people were the kindest, most generous, humorous people you could hope to meet. They bore no malice towards the ordinary Israelis, only the government and things done in its name. Our work was very varied; we took a tour of the women's agricultural collective and put an international football team in a regional tournament. That day showed us how hard life is: it took two hours to go 15 miles due to road closures and armed checkpoints. Bags were searched and ID checked and you could be held for up to six hours with no charge or refused passage by the soldiers - fans of ID cards take note.

We worked with an Israeli group called Teachers Without Borders, which teach Palestinian children. Six of us did craft

lessons and music for 30 young kids. It was fun and took everyone away from the situation for a while until six US-built Apache attack helicopters flew by, returning us to reality with a jolt. Most evenings we were entertained by local families who were great hosts and told us of their experiences.

We also attended demonstrations by villagers against the theft of their land. At one peaceful demo at Beit Liqya about 100 children and villagers with international and Israeli peace activists found our path blocked by the army and border police. We asked to pass and were given five minutes to leave, we put ourselves between the soldiers and villagers, without warning they threw stun grenades into the crowd and I was hit by shrapnel. This was followed by CS gas which blinded you and made you cough and gasp for breath, plastic bullets were then fired and the young lads threw stones back. We were pushed back into the village, two boys were shot and two older people were treated by ambulance for the effects of CS gas and there were numerous walking wounded.

The locals thought they would have used live rounds as they have in the past if we had not been there. We also attended a big demo on land day, a holiday to remember the day their country was given away. It was good natured and led by the local Boy Scout troop! There was a huge media presence that stopped the usual violence towards people. I did an interview for CNN television. We marched to the site of the wall and villagers occupied their land to pray, hear speeches and build symbolic roadblocks out of stone to mark their determination to get justice. I would like to thank all my RMT and Aslef comrades for their donations which made my trip possible.

For more info go to www.palsolidarity.org



CONSCRIPTS: Female Israeli conscript troops surround a Palestinian protest group



VIOLENCE: A boy is injured by Israeli troops during a peaceful demonstration in Beit Liqya against the theft of Palestinian land

EU states without trains appointed to EU rail agency

TWO new EU member states, Malta and Cyprus, have been given seats on the board of the newly-created European Railway Agency despite the fact that neither country has a rail network. The agency will be located in the French town of Lille and its main task will be to reinforce the privatisation and interoperability of railways within the European Union.

The last train ran in Malta in 1931 and the only train in Cyprus is a steam museum piece which runs on a stretch of track located in the Turkish-occupied north, which is not in the EU.

The appointments have been seen as an attempt to stymie growing opposition to the wholesale privatisation of rail networks in member states demanded by various EU directives. It is unlikely that Maltese and Cypriot members of the rail agency are going to face much pressure from the rail lobby at home.

German rail bosses demand longer working hours

GERMAN national rail operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) are demanding the extension of the working week for its 243,000 employees from the present 38.5 hours to 40 hours without extra pay. It also wants to revise bonus payments on employee performance, citing concern at competition on its regional lines.

DB says if the unions accept the plan, job numbers will be guaranteed for four years. DB last year cut 8,000 jobs and the Transnet rail union believes it is seeking to reduce its workforce by another 37,000 by 2007.

The operator has already shed 150,000 jobs in 10

years and hopes to enter the stock exchange in 2006 before full privatisation.

New French flag discussions suspended

NEGOTIATIONS between the French seafarers' unions, the owners' association and the government have been suspended until "sometime in September". The unions are demanding a minimum of 35 per cent of French or European Union nationals in crews on vessels to be registered under the RIF, France's new international ship register.

The government suspended establishment of the RIF following a series of united strikes. The unions object strongly to RIF plans which require only the master and second officer to be French. They believe it will be an FoC and lead to job losses for officers and ratings.

Italy accident probably due to signalling fault

A SIGNALLING error at the station of Stresa in northern Italy was probably the cause of the derailling of the overnight Rome-Paris train that caused one death and 37 injured in March a preliminary report indicates. Four carriages of the international train were derailed by an oncoming Paris-Rome train as it hit the last carriage of the Paris-bound train. Union sources said that the signalman was finishing a long period of service including six consecutive night duties.

SeaFrance in the red, awaits new ferry

FRENCH Dover-Calais ferry operator SeaFrance fell into the red last year after an "excellent 2002". The



SAFETY: Senior citizen Jim Ross launches a safety campaign in Dublin, Ireland for a new HGV cyclops mirror, which will soon be fitted to all HGVs to eliminate the driver's 'blind spot'. The National Safety Council said that the blind spot in lorry cabs was leading to an alarmingly high number of deaths among elderly pedestrians.

number of passengers fell seven per cent to 3,180,000 with almost the same number of crossings but the number of foot passengers plunged 31 per cent to 260,000. But the first few months of 2004 look better for the operator that next February takes delivery of the SeaFrance Berlioz, a new super ferry that joins its new SeaFrance Renoir.

Russia's rail workers concerned about future

RUSSIA'S 1.2 million railway workers are increasingly concerned at the country's plans to restructure the extensive rail network, which generates five per cent of Russia's income – more than any other industry. The network, one of the world's biggest, last year was transferred from the ministry of transport to RZhD, a new, state-owned corporation, responsible for both infrastructure and

freight and passenger services operated through 17 regional companies. City metro systems have already been handed over to municipal authorities and there is concern that parts of RZhD will be privatised following plans to separate infrastructure management from train operations.

French maritime unions plan 24 hour strike

UNIONS at Gaz de France (GdF) maritime subsidiary Gazocean have called a 24-hour strike to protest at staffing levels on the Gaz de France Energy gas carrier. They oppose management proposals for a crew of six French officers, four French boatswains and 14 ratings for the vessel, due for delivery in December. The Tellier and the Descartes, GdF's two other vessels fly the French reserve Kerguelen flag have 100 per cent French crews.

End inequality and council tax



By TOMMY SHERIDAN MSP

Two weeks ago I received the answer to a question I sent to the Scottish Government in January. No wonder it took them over five months to reply. I asked how many pensioner households in Scotland lived on an annual income of less than £10,000 and less than £15,000. Disgracefully, for a country as rich as Scotland, 44 per cent of pensioner households, 330,000 pensioners, survive on less than £10,000 a year. Another 28 per cent live on more than £10,000 but less than £15,000. 72 per

cent of Scottish pensioners live on less than £15,000 a year and almost half live on less than £10,000. What a damning indictment of New Labour and the big business free market economy they so slavishly promote.

Is it any wonder the most recent statistics on income equality have revealed that Britain is more unequal than it was in 1997 and indeed is even more unequal than it was in 1992 under John Major. New Labour's whole philosophy has been the promotion and protection of big business and their fat cat owners to the detriment of ordinary working class families.

The top tier of tax across the UK is lower now than it was under the Queen of Inequality, Thatcher herself. The tax on profits, corporation tax, is also lower than under the Tories and is the most business friendly of Europe's large economies.

Brown's whole box of tax credit tricks amount to humiliating crumbs that force

more ordinary workers and pensioners to succumb to means testing. Twenty five per cent more pensioners are means tested today compared to 1997.

And to pay for health and education services over 100,000 workers are to be given the chop but not a single penny more tax is to be paid by the multi-millionaires or the big businesses like the three biggest banks who have posted record profits in excess of £7 billion each!

Even 10p more on those earning over £100,000 would generate an extra £5 billion but New Labour is content to punish civil servants and means test pensioners instead to protect their rich friends.

In Scotland that philosophy explains New Labour's opposition to my Bill to abolish the Council Tax and replace it with a progressive income related alternative. Worked out in detail over the last four years by Paisley University Business School, the Scottish Service Tax is applied to each person's

income and establishes a firm ability to pay determinant to fund local services and related jobs.

The new tax is administered and collected by the Inland Revenue with a built-in exemption for the first £10,000 of annual income. Thus the 44 per cent of Scotland's pensioners struggling to make ends meet on less than 10 grand a year and still pay their council tax will have £40 to £60 a month on average more to spend.

The SSP is determined to deliver wealth redistribution. Under our Scottish Service Tax proposal 77 per cent of Scots pay less, 15 per cent pay more and 8 per cent pay roughly the same. Workers on low and average wages and over 90 per cent of pensioners will benefit. The big earners like politicians, chief executives and others pay more. It is an anti-poverty and pro-redistribution measure and I appeal to RMT members to support it.
tommy.sheridan.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

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		Total	£25,322.20	£19,001.66	£22,208.45	£17,811.18	£19,514.13	£16,668.97
6.9% APR	£10,000	Monthly	£199.14	£149.44	£245.11	£196.58	£359.87	£307.40
		Total	£16,727.60	£12,552.26	£14,706.27	£11,794.41	£12,955.07	£11,066.24
6.9% APR	£5,000	Monthly	£99.57	£74.72	£122.56	£98.29	£179.94	£153.70
		Total	£8,363.77	£6,276.12	£7,353.08	£5,897.21	£6,477.50	£5,533.11
9.9% APR	£3,000	Monthly	£65.30	£49.00	£78.53	£62.98	£112.49	£96.09
		Total	£5,484.57	£4,115.63	£4,711.50	£3,778.61	£4,049.41	£3,458.99

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OBITUARY

Former NUR general secretary Sidney Greene passes away

FORMER NUR general secretary Lord Sidney Francis Greene passed away on July 26 at the age of 94. Sid Greene served as NUR general secretary from his election in 1958 to his retirement in 1975, one of the longest-serving in the union's history. Always smartly dressed, Sid joined the railway service in 1924 as a porter and was a member of Paddington No2 branch. He was a new delegate to the 1937 annual general meeting and attended the union's 1939 special general meeting in Conway Hall, London and voted with the minority for strike action over pay. Sid was elected an executive committee member from 1941-43 and was an organiser from 1944-53 and served in the Newcastle, Doncaster, Manchester, Cardiff, Bristol, Nottingham and London districts, and also served as a road transport organiser, until his election as Senior Assistant General Secretary in 1953.

Sid became NUR general secretary following a terrible car accident in Stalingrad in the Soviet Union which killed the union's president Tom Hollywood and general secretary Jim Campbell. As runner-up in the previous election for general secretary, Sid led the union until fresh elections were organised and was elected unopposed.

During his time as general secretary, Sid was a member of the General Council of the TUC General Council 1957 to 1975, chairman of the Economic Committee and TUC President in 1970 and founder member of the National Economic Development Council 1962 to 1975. He was a Justice of the Peace, awarded the CBE, knighted and later became a Life Baron, Lord Greene of Harrow Weald, CBE. Amongst other positions held were Directorships of the Bank of England (1970 - 1978) RTZ Corporation (1975 - 1980) and Times Newspapers (1975 - 1982).

Sid continued his interest in the union and in 2002 attended the opening of the new Unity House. General secretary Bob Crow described him as being "mentally still very much at the top of his game". Sid is survived by three daughters.



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OBITUARY

Former member of the NUR's Head Office Staff, Len Gullen died on June 30 at the age of 75. Len will be best remembered as the chauffeur to the union's NUR's general secretaries, Sid Greene and Sid Weighell.

On leaving school at the age of 14, Len worked as a Tool Makers improver and Lorry attendant. Then following National Service in Africa in 1949 he joined the Eastern Region of British Railways, and worked through the grades of Goods Porter, Loader, Checker (acting) before becoming a Road Motor Driver. He was a Branch Collector for Tottenham Branch during that time.

He commenced employment with the NUR in 1953 as a Head Office Porter at the original Unity House, a position he held until his appointment as Head Office Chauffeur in 1960. From 1983 to his retirement in 1989 he was the Enquiry Clerk on Reception at Unity House and was the first point of contact for members visiting Head Office at that time.

In his early days, Len was a keen cricketer representing the Army and being invited to a trial for Middlesex. An affable man with a penchant for crosswords and table tennis, Len was a good story teller; no doubt he could have told one or two stories from his time as chauffeur to the general secretary.

Welcome back to train drivers

Southern representative on the Council of Executives Paul Cox welcomes train drivers back into RMT in his region

TWO RMT members on South Eastern Trains, Brian Whitehead and Ken Slade, put up a good show in recent train driver company council elections, with a positive and well-received approach that emphasised how second-level reps have to be responsive and accountable to their constituencies.

It was a creditable result, with 110 votes cast for Brian and 101 for Ken. RMT now has close to 100 driver members on SET, and Brian and Ken, along with the national union, are planning

to ensure that our members are well-represented at discipline and grievance hearings.

In 1998 with the advent of the Traincrew agreement, many RMT guard members took the opportunity to become drivers and, as a result, a number joined Aslef – although some remained in RMT and some took up dual membership.

In recent months, many have been returning to RMT. The reasons for this are many and varied, but if you think back to the start of the Traincrew

agreement, most of us believed that there would by now be only one industrial union for all railway grades.

It is possible to understand why people think this is taking just a wee bit too long to achieve, although of course it remains RMT policy. This union believes in industrial trade unionism which welcomes workers from all grades and transport sectors. Regardless of the job they do they are part of the union and RMT believes in the old slogan unity in strength. Unity is the only way to resist employers that seek to divide and rule where ever they can. RMT believes that the strong must help the weak and,

furthermore, more can be achieved together rather than divided into sectional interests. On South Eastern Trains, RMT is leading the fight to keep the region's network within the public sector, under control of the Strategic Rail Authority, in the interests of all rail workers. And increasingly many drivers are beginning to see the benefits of such an approach. To those drivers who have come back on board, we say: Welcome back!

Members can rest assured that RMT will provide first-class representation to anyone who needs it. Driver's can call the RMT helpline on 0800 376 3706 for assistance.

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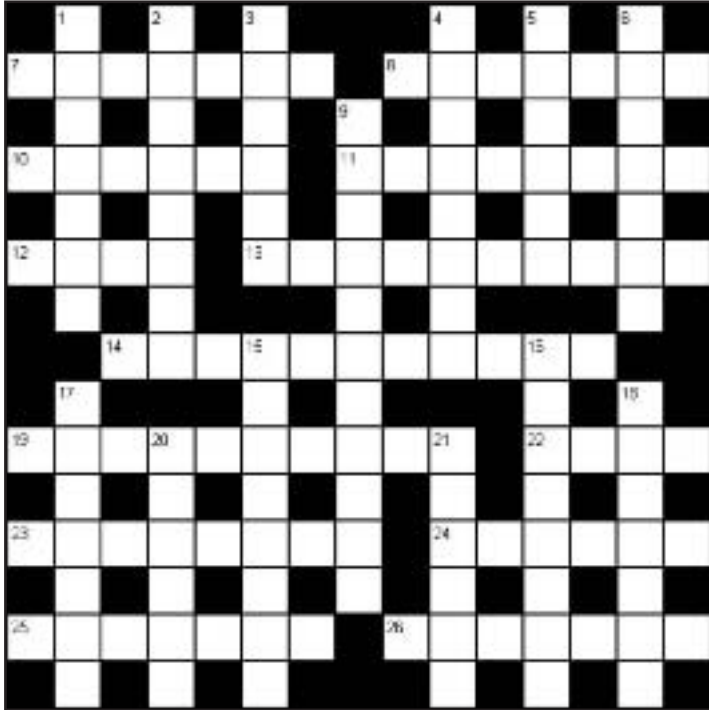
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ACROSS

- 7 More than one cake (7)
- 8 Of fingers or computer processing (7)
- 10 Small firearm (6)
- 11 (Chemical) promoter of change, or think-tank calling for rail to be in the 3 21 (8)
- 12 Information, often 8 (4)
- 13 Form of bowls (5,5)
- 14 Yorkshire cheese (11)
- 19 Crumbled into food for flavour (5, 5)
- 22 Found on finger or holding joint together (4)
- 23 One of a chain of Florida islands (3,5)
- 24 Soothed (6)
- 25 Middle Eastern country whose flag boasts a cedar tree (7)
- 26 Fraudulent imitation, or the practice of creating it (7)

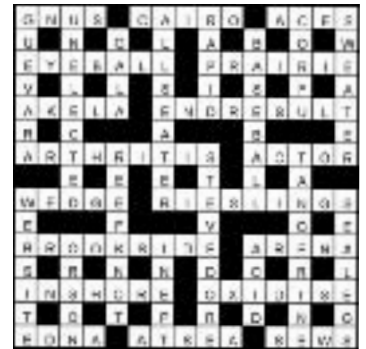
DOWN

- 1 Beirut is 25's (7)
- 2 Money paid for mooring or anchorage (8)
- 3,21 Where the railways should be, according to 11 (6,6)
- 4 Railways would be in 3 21 if ministers had done this to 11 (8)

- 5 Worker of land or steerer of vessel! (6)
- 6 Small rodent, often kept as pet (7)
- 9 An introverted person; a mystery; no longer for discussion (1,6,4)
- 15 The unwell may be sent here (4-4)
- 16 Insect daddy has them (4, 4)
- 17 Soaked (7)
- 18 Noddy's pal (3,4)
- 20 Fight is on to keep this Scots service in the 3 21 (6)
- 21 See 3 down

Winner of prize crossword No. 6 is Ian David Humphreys of Liverpool

Last month's solution



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

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



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How do I join the Credit Union?



RMT members who wish to join the Credit Union need to produce two original forms of identification in order for the union to meet new money laundering regulations. These forms of identification need to be verified by various officials including RMT branch secretaries, a delegated officer of the branch, divisional organisers, executive committee members, or Credit Union officers. Documentation must be photocopied, signed and stamped with the branch stamp. You then complete the application opposite, which together with the ID photocopies are to be forwarded to head office as soon as possible.

Documentation verification procedure:

1. Take one original document from list A and one from list B to the branch secretary or any of the above approved persons.
2. Branch secretary or other approved person will check original documentation; will take a photocopy, sign, branch stamp and state on the photo copy of documents that he has seen the original documentation.
3. Branch secretary or approved person will return documentation, both the original and photo copies, to the member.
4. The member will send the completed application together with the signed identification photo copies (not the original) documents to the Credit Union at Head Office.

LIST A

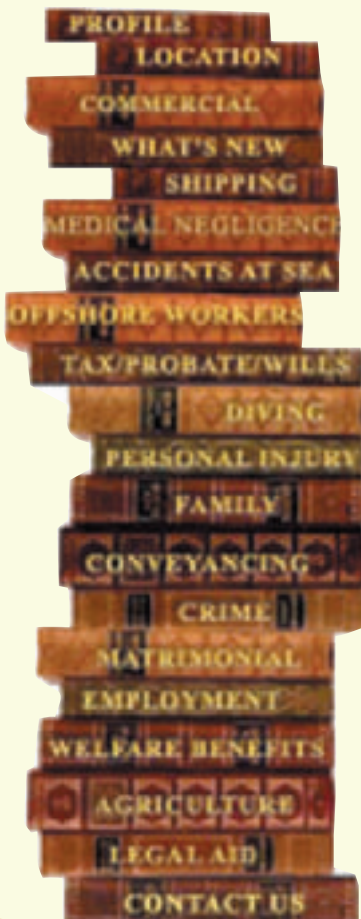
- Full passport
- Full driving license
- Notice of Tax Coding (current year)
- Child benefit book
- Pension book
- HM Forces ID card

LIST B

- Utility bill, e.g. gas, electricity, water or telephone bills
- Bank, building society or credit card statement
- Mortgage statement
- Council Tax demand
- Mail Order statement
- Voter's roll check
- Ship discharge card

These must be originals, and shall not be more than 3 months old.

Accounts may only be opened and transactions accepted on behalf of a member when verification of identification has been satisfactorily completed and cross referenced against RMT membership. Potential new members who are unable to provide documents to prove their identity may provide a letter from a person in a position of responsibility such as a teacher, social worker, priest, doctor, ship's captain, Justice of the peace as proof of identity. If you live / work in the London area, you can bring your original documentation in to head office to be verified.



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with?

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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.

Signature(s)

Date

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

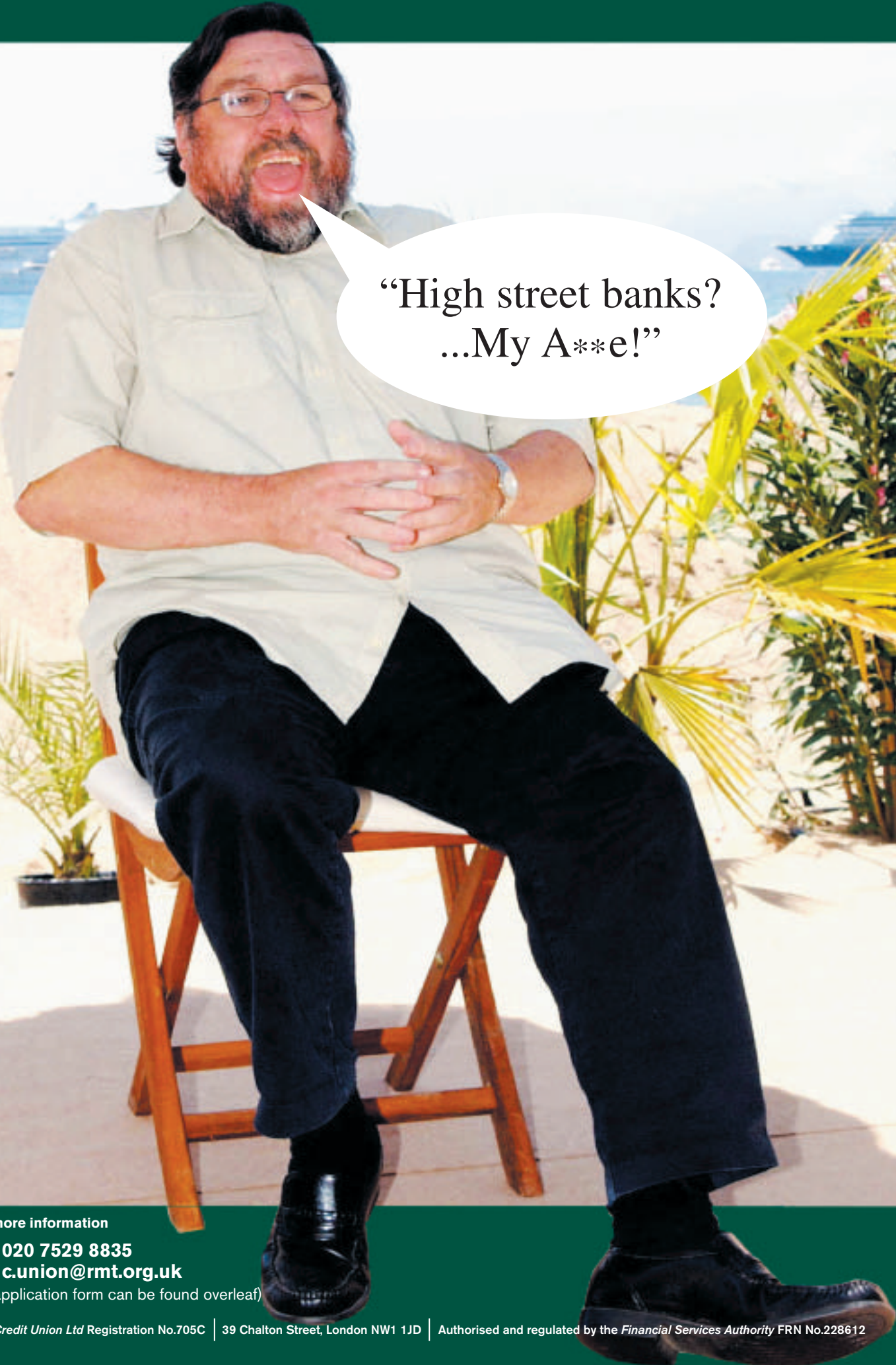
This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

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 body of water with ships in the distance.

“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)

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