

RMT news

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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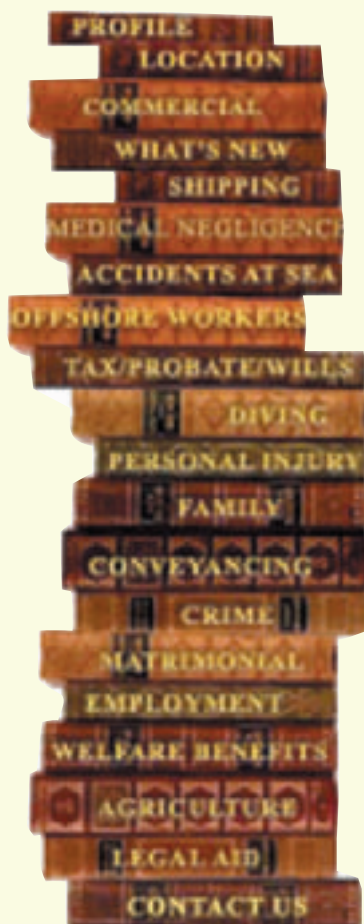
November 2004



EWS hoisted by their own petard

RMT wins historic court victory

INSIDE: ● Tube safety victory ● Action on Tonnage tax ● Act on level crossings
● 35 hour week for LUL station staff ● Fighting P&O job cuts ● Guards under siege
● Traffic wardens win Vinci dispute ● Supporting unions in Iraq ● Prize crossword



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

Rail against privatisation



THE terrible derailment of a high-speed train at Ufton Nervet near Reading has shown once more that action needs to be taken to make our rail network safer. This union has long warned of the dangers of level crossings, and is now calling for a programme to replace them with road-bridges or underpasses on lines carrying high-speed traffic.

Now, of course, private rail operators have attacked such safety measures as costing too much while they continue to suck billions out of the industry in profits. However, a ten-year programme to replace all 1,700 'active' crossings would cost less than £200 million a year. To keep things in perspective, Network Rail spends £14 million every day, and some £5 billion is invested in Britain's railways every year.

After Tebay and other engineering accidents this year in which eight track-workers have been killed, RMT has called for an inquiry into safety on our privatised, fragmented railway. After the Ufton tragedy and seven more deaths we renew that call.

The decision to effectively re-privatise Northern Rail services, with one of the new owners to be state-run Dutch railways company, has highlighted the ludicrous situation we are in. Instead of paying another state to run the network at great cost, why not let the British state do the same job?

The massive improvements seen on South Eastern Trains since it was rescued from the privateers a year ago shows us what can be achieved. SET has steadily improved services while in the public sector so there is no reason to allow another profit-hungry privateer suck out much-needed resources in profits.

RMT plans to launch a 'Rail Against Privatisation' campaign next year, starting with a national march from Scotland to London, to bring these issues into the public eye. Such a campaign will reflect the growing tide of opinion demanding an end to rail privatisation.

RMT is also campaigning to halt job losses at the ferry company P&O, and I have held meetings with angry members in Portsmouth and Dover in a tour of southern ports. We are looking for a way to safeguard members' jobs and secure their long-term future, but

the company seems to be suffering from serious short-sightedness.

The union is also working with MPs to persuade the government to take action to arrest the decline in UK shipping jobs and link qualification for the tonnage-tax concession to the training and employment of UK seafarers.

The historic court victory against rail freight company EWS and the ensuing solid strike action has also shown that if we stand together we can make a difference at the workplace.

Traffic warden RMT members at Vinci Park have also won a significant victory by doing just that. These members stood together and refused to be pushed around by employers seeking to make more money by exposing them to danger. London Underground station staff are also finally set to get their 35 hour week after a long RMT campaign.

THE government's welcome decision to reverse plans to scrap fire regulations introduced as a result of the 1987 King's Cross fire is also a clear example of what effective campaigning inside and outside parliament can achieve. RMT's parliamentary group was able to persuade the government that scrapping the regulations would compromise safety.

The failure of transport privatisation was also shown on the buses with the latest Department of Transport statistics revealing that the decline in bus use outside London has accelerated. This is clearly because local authorities outside London have few controls over fares, networks or service quality with bus services effectively being a chaotic profit-driven free-for-all.

In the run-up to the government publishing its new transport bill, RMT will also be making sure that false choices are not introduced between bus or rail to justify cuts in rail services. Recent victories have shown what can be achieved and we will be advancing arguments for what the country is crying out for: a genuinely integrated public transport system.

Bob Crow

Train franchise debacle continues

THE government White Paper 'The Future of Rail' announced that the number of passenger franchises would be reduced to more closely mirror the organisation of Network Rail areas.

However, recent developments in relation to train operating companies (TOCs) have done nothing to allay RMT fears that the organisation of train franchises remains little more than an incoherent muddle.

Northern Rail

In early September the SRA announced that the 17 October start date for the new Northern franchise would not be met due to a glitch in the final contract negotiations between the Authority and the preferred bidder; SERCO-Ned Railways.

Despite a vigorous campaign by RMT to bring services under public ownership the SRA has announced that the new private owners will begin operating the new franchise from next month. Public money to be paid to the private sector to run Northern Rail services over the next 8.75 years is a staggering £2.4 billion.

This confusion and delay is just the latest in a series. In March 2002 the SRA announced that six firms had pre-qualified as bidders for the Northern rail franchise. The SRA indicated that the franchise was expected to commence in mid-2003. By November 2002 the SRA had put back the start date of the franchise to "summer 2004". In April 2003 the SRA was predicting that the franchise was expected to start in "late summer 2004". Nearly a year ago the SRA announced two shortlisted bidders for the new franchise and put the planned start of operations back again; this time to autumn 2004.

A written Parliamentary reply to RMT parliamentary group chair John McDonnell MP in June said that by that time the tendering process for Northern Rail had cost £2.6million with the final cost expected to be £3.9million.

South Eastern Trains

It is now a year since private sector operator Connex was stripped of the south eastern franchise. Since that time service performance figures have improved in every quarter. RMT's campaign has included over 4,000 postcards being sent to Alistair Darling and 117 MPs signing up to an Early Day Motion calling for SET to be kept in the public sector.

The RMT-led campaign has clearly won the argument for retaining SET under public ownership. Nevertheless, last month the SRA indicated that invitations to tender for the new Integrated Kent Franchise would be issued soon. This indicates that the SRA and government are not at all interested, as they constantly claim, in 'what-works' but purely in maintaining private ownership of passenger operations.

Virgin Cross Country

The SRA announced in August that it was ending negotiations with Virgin after the 'best and final offer' received from the company to run the franchise until 2012 had not passed the SRA value for money test. In addition, the SRA reserved its right to terminate the franchise and said that it would make clear its plans for Cross Country in the near future. If the SRA does decide to terminate the franchise they need to give Virgin 12 months notice.

The future of Cross Country services is now uncertain, which is a matter of serious concern to RMT and the over 750 union members at the company. A key priority for RMT is to defend the job security, pension provision and the terms and conditions of the workforce.

Reduced number of franchises

Transport Secretary Alistair Darling last month announced the first tranche of changes to the franchising regime following the rail review. In 2006 the existing 25 TOCs would become 19.

- First Great Western will merge with First Great Western Link and Wessex Trains
- Greater Northern will merge with Thameslink
- Central Trains routes will be split between the Silverlink, Chiltern, Midland Mainline, Northern and Virgin Cross Country franchises.

The decision to invite tenders in the summer of 2005 for the new Greater Western franchise, the merged Thameslink and Greater Northern operations and to break up Central Trains ignores the decision taken at the last Labour Party conference to renationalise the railways. Instead of taking back into public hands the franchises as they expire, the government is pressing ahead with re-privatisation.



RMT has led the campaign to keep South Eastern Trains out of the hands of privateers





WRECK: Police forensic and accident investigators sift through the wreckage of the train Selby rail crash, Great Heck near Selby, Yorkshire. Photo: Mark Pinder

RMT wins court battle for Selby train crash widow

RMT MEMBER Paul Taylor won prizes for his work as an on-board chef with GNER. On a terrible day in February 2001 he was one of ten people killed, with dozens more injured, when his train was derailed by a Landrover that crashed onto the line when driver Gary Hart fell asleep at the wheel.

With RMT's backing, Paul's widow Lee Taylor won six figure damages in a settlement negotiated by Kevin Hughes of RMT solicitors Bridge McFarland on her behalf. This sum could never compensate Lee and her family for their tragic loss but it did reflect the loss of her husband's salary with a small sum, set by Act of Parliament, to mark Lee's bereavement.

In the meantime, GNER had settled their own claim against Mr Hart's insurers for many millions. It reflected the damage to their rolling stock and their loss of revenue. But they also included, almost as a footnote, a claim for repayment of £17,500 that GNER had paid to Lee Taylor as their employee's widow under an agreement dating back to 1986, which guarantees payments to the families of workers killed in railway accidents.

However, Hart's insurers argued that since they had repaid the money paid by GNER they should be entitled to deduct it from Lee's damages. RMT rejected this argument and instructed Bridge McFarland to sue for the money the insurers had deducted. Eventually, this issue went to trial at Leeds County Court. This could not have happened without RMT's financial backing.

The legal arguments involved were complex and took a day to thrash out in court proceedings. Mr Hart's insurers had the assets of a multi-billion pound industry behind them but Lee Taylor had her husband's union. The judge declined to give his decision on the day but following several weeks of nerve racking uncertainty he handed down his judgement in Lee's favour.

The reasons given by the judge in finding in Lee's favour run into many pages but the position can be summed up very simply: you cannot give with one hand, and take back with the other.

I Gary Hart was convicted of causing death by reckless driving and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He was released after serving half of his sentence.

Keep train-making skills in Britain

NEW HIGH-speed trains for the Kent franchise and rolling stock for the Northern Rail franchise should be built in Britain, RMT has told the government.

Transport secretary Alistair Darling has selected Hitachi as the preferred bidder for a £200 million contract to build 30 high-speed trains for Kent's rush-hour routes from 2009.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed new investment in new rolling stock, but said that there is no reason why these trains should not be built here in Britain. He also pointed out that France and Germany had never bought foreign-built trains for their domestic rail industries.

"Here is a golden opportunity to revitalise Britain's train-making industry, which has suffered thousands of layoffs in recent years.

"We have the skills, we have the capacity and we have the enthusiasm – what we need is the opportunity.

"Much is being made of the Kent high-speed trains being part of Britain's bid to host the 2012 Olympics – building these trains in Britain would be good for the economy and good for jobs," he said.

The union has written to the Transport Secretary to make the case for the Kent high-speed sets and the new Northern Franchise rolling stock to be built in Britain.

Transpennine cuts row

A ROW has broken out between rail privateer First Keolis and public transport chiefs over cuts to Transpennine Express services.

Metro, the West Yorkshire passenger transport executive, was told by train operator First Keolis that the cuts were due solely to leaf fall. But First now admits the cuts also relate to a dispute with train drivers.

A Metro spokesman said it was "annoyed" that First did not mention the dispute when it announced the cuts and said that the passenger group was "caught in the middle".

Timetable changes have

seen trains cut to three an hour between Leeds and Manchester Piccadilly instead of the usual four.

Services between York and Middlesbrough and York and Newcastle and between Sheffield, Doncaster and Cleethorpes are also reduced. The service cuts will be reviewed in the near future.

The passenger group said: "Metro is unhappy with this situation as a whole and with the very short notice that the travelling public has been given over these timetable changes and would urge all parties to resolve the issue and resume full services."

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RMT calls for action after Ufton disaster

RMT called for the elimination of level crossings on high-speed rail lines following the fatal derailment of a high-speed train at Ufton Nervet near Reading that killed seven people and injured many others earlier this month.

The high-speed London to Plymouth train was derailed after hitting a car deliberately parked across the automatic half-barrier level crossing.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the terrible tragedy highlighted a growing problem that RMT has long been calling for action on, for the sake of railway workers, rail passengers and road users alike.

The union has called for the industry to begin a programme to eliminate level crossings from high-speed railway lines, replacing them with underpasses or bridges, and for a feasibility study on the rest with the aim of removing all level crossings from Britain's rail network.

"Level crossings are a



CROSSING: Crash site at Ufton Nervet in Berkshire where seven people lost their lives

19th-century solution, and in 21st-century Britain – roads and railways should not have to cross each other's paths.

"And we are not the only ones to have recognised it, for just two months ago Her Majesty's Railways Inspectorate (HMRI) – the body charged with overseeing the safety of our railways – identified level crossings as the single biggest danger on

today's railway network," he said.

The Inspectorate said that there had been 18 deaths on the country's 8,000 level crossings in the last year and many more incidents. The figures did not include incidents involving objects left on the track or the number of animals which have strayed on to the line and been killed by trains.

HMRI has made no proposals for dealing with the problem but, in the light of the Berkshire rail crash, RMT called for a ten-year programme to replace all 1,700 'active' crossings – the ones where the railway interfaces with roads.

Network Rail estimates that the cost works out at an average of £1 million each crossing, or around half the cost of an average mile of motorway. Therefore the programme would cost about £200 million a year.

The private sector has dismissed such calls as too expensive.

However, the union pointed out that private-sector operators have pocketed well over £14 billion in profits since privatisation – more than enough to replace every level crossing in Britain with a few of billion left over.

Bus use in decline outside the capital

GOVERNMENT statistics have revealed that the decline in use of deregulated bus services outside London has accelerated.

Statistics on bus passenger journeys issued by the Department of Transport show that in 2003/4 bus use in England outside London declined by 2.8 per cent whereas bus use in the more regulated London area rose by 10.4 per cent.

The government's target for local public transport is that by 2010 the use of bus and light rail service should increase by more than 12 per cent in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region.

Pteg chairman Kieran Preston, speaking on behalf of the seven Passenger Transport Executives, said that the biggest problem was that PTEs and local authorities outside London have few controls over fares, networks or service quality.

"We can't offer the public the single, integrated, high quality public transport networks that would stem the decline in bus use, because bus services are, in effect, a free-for-all.

"With the bus network in the capital going from strength to strength – the contrast between regulated London and the deregulated regions, has never been more stark," he said.

Pteg represents Passenger Transport Executives that are responsible for local transport services in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Strathclyde, Tyne & Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

Transport Secretary Alistair Darling ruled out bringing in more regulation on failing services and insisted that local bus services will continue to run on a purely commercial basis.

Victory at Vinci Park

TRAFFIC wardens working for Vinci Park in Bromley, south London, have won the right to take their breaks in safety.

The company withdrew its instruction to parking attendants not to return to their depot for breaks after RMT members returned a second 100 per cent vote for strike action.

"This is a victory for common sense and the right for our members' safety to be put ahead of Vinci Park's profits," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Although few in number, our members maintained 100 per cent solidarity and refused to allow their safety to be compromised for the sake of their employer's bank balance.

"In the end strike action proved unnecessary, but by twice voting unanimously to strike our members have once again demonstrated the truth of the trade union principle that unity is strength," Bob Crow said.

RMT members at Vinci Park twice voted unanimously for action to retain their right to take their breaks in relative safety after their long-standing right to return to the depot for breaks was ended without consultation by the company.

The second ballot became necessary after strike action scheduled for October 2 was suspended to enable talks to take place and the company refused to agree an extension of the deadline for industrial action.

35 hour week for station staff in sight

ALL full-time LUL station staff will now enjoy 52 days leave under proposals for a 35 hour week currently being negotiated by RMT.

The proposals will also mean another hour off the working week, which would also give station staff the best 35-hour agreement of any grade of staff on LUL, or on any train-operating company.

Part-time staff will also see a substantial increase in their rates of pay, and for the first time having the opportunity to apply for part-time station supervisor positions and facilitating family friendly fixed-shift working.

RMT regional organiser Booby

Law said that the latest offer comes as a direct result of the unity shown by RMT members who supported our industrial action earlier this year.

"Until this show of strength by RMT members, management's proposals would have meant the axing of more than 800 station staff positions," he said.

Following detailed negotiations, backed by the ever-present threat of industrial action, RMT forced LUL to remove the majority of the productivity measures originally proposed.

That means there will now be no overall reduction in station staff numbers but the

introduction of a special requirements team. Staff in these teams will be flexible as to duty lengths and locations. However, this team will only be filled by existing staff who nominate into the posts, with any shortfall filled by direct recruits.

The threat to 500 jobs due to the introduction of Oyster Cards has been removed, and although 200 SAMF posts will be withdrawn, any member of staff displaced will be covered by normal redeployment protection arrangements.

A part of the agreement will be a commitment to work all night on up to three occasions every year, similar to the agreement

already in place for train staff as well as an extension of the traffic day on Friday/Saturday nights by one hour, depending on further discussions taking place on detailed arrangements

Bobby Law said that extensive consultation on these proposals has now begun with local staff representatives and a referendum of members in the near future.

"This deal means that combined with rest days and annual leave entitlements, the new arrangements will give staff 43 per cent of the working year off. That is a deal that I can happily recommend to LUL station staff," he said.

Re-instate Joanne White

RMT is campaigning to get station assistant Joanne White her job back after she was dismissed by London Underground without warning after being assaulted at work.

Joanne, who was at home recovering from the injuries she received following the assault,

was phoned at home by managers who tried to intimidate her back to work. She was then summoned in to a meeting, where she was denied any union representation.

Joanne complained about this heavy handed approach from the management team, who then arranged another meeting, where she was invited to come and discuss her 'situation' where she was sacked without warning. No disciplinary hearing took place, no charges were brought and no union representative was present.

Management claimed that Joanne was 'on probation' despite the fact that she had a signed letter saying that she had successfully passed her probation period, a letter LUL now say they sent 'in error'.

In a desperate bid to cover up their mistakes, LUL claimed Joanne was sacked was because of a police caution she had received three years previously, something she had declared on her interview, and was told would not be a problem. Even more worrying was that a manager just 'happened' to come across this police caution, whilst browsing through Joanne's staff file.

RMT has demanded an appeal, at which management changed their story yet again. This time they stated that Joanne was sacked for 'unsatisfactory references' - because she had time off work in her previous job whilst recovering from a hernia operation.

Joanne said that she was completely devastated.

"I enjoy working for the company and assisting passengers at Embankment Station. I can only hope that someone will listen to reason and give me my job back," she said.

A director's appeal will take place later this month.



UNITY: London regional organiser Bobby Law congratulated the membership for standing together to win a 35 hour week

Hats off to the RMT

LONDON Underground management have finally relented on a long-standing RMT demand to end the compulsory wearing of uniform hats.

Management also conceded to withdraw the power blue jackets, often referred to as a clown's outfit, next March. RMT have maintained that the current uniform does little to promote a professional image for staff and actually increases the risk of assaults.

LUL have also agreed that ties would be optional for train operators. The union will campaign that the wearing of ties becomes optional for all grades of uniformed staff. The union has called for station and revenue control staff to be issued with fleeces. Speaking of LUL's decision, Josie Toussiant-Pincock, a member of the uniform committee said: "The RMT, as the biggest trade union on LUL, are the only reason management conceded to these demands. Make no mistake, we would never have had this decision had it not been for the unity of RMT members."

Victory at Viacom

RMT members at Viacom Outdoor recently became the highest paid bill posters in the UK due to a pay deal following an overwhelming vote for strike action.

This year's agreement includes:

- Pay award of 4.7 per cent
- Increase of paid sickness absence from 15 to 20 days a year which even now applies to new entrant employees after only 12 months service
- Increase in overtime rates, for both day and night shifts
- Consolidation of allowances, which now means that members are better rewarded for the same roles and responsibilities.

Camden No 3 RMT branch secretary Mick Crossey on the negotiating team said that RMT members in this company have again seen significant improvements to their pay and conditions following the unity shown by a massive yes vote in favour of industrial action, which forced management back to the negotiating table.

"We were also finally able to sign off and agree a new disciplinary and attendance at work procedure, which is far superior and fairer than the one imposed upon LUL members," Mick said.

Action on Tonnage Tax

RMT demands amendments to the Tonnage Tax with a training and employment link for seafaring ratings.

RMT HAS submitted amendments to the tonnage tax concession as part of the union's campaign for a training and employment link for seafaring ratings. Since the introduction of the tonnage tax, some £100 million in taxpayers' money has been handed out to shipowners, but there is no automatic link to ratings' training and jobs. In two decades the number of UK ratings has dwindled from 30,000 to 10,000.

The government is expected to make an announcement on its review of the tonnage tax before the end of the year. Therefore, the union has met ministers to outline the case for a training and employment link to be part of the commitment made by shipping companies who elect to become part of the tonnage tax regime.

These arguments have also been taken up by the RMT Parliamentary Group. This has proved to be very successful and so

far a total of 165 Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs have signed Early Day Motion 880 demanding action.

Debate

RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP led a House of Commons adjournment debate earlier this month urging the government to link qualification for the tonnage-tax concession with jobs and training.

John said that it must be recognised that this country is an island and should not become dependent on an industry that is controlled from other states.

"We must plan for the maintenance and development of a seafaring sector in this country.

"We can no longer stand by and watch the whole industry decline, our experience relates very much to what is happening in the coal mining industry and the

destruction of whole coal mining communities," he said.

Proposals

As a result of the meeting with Shipping Minister David Jamieson the union has also tabled proposals on the subject. RMT proposals seek to change requirements that concentrate on training only, into two separate commitments, one for training and one for employment. Currently, the commitment for ratings is weak, with companies only obliged to review the feasibility of employing or training more UK ratings. Companies have to engage one cadet for every fifteen officers employed on board, although in certain circumstances they can avoid this requirement by making PILOT payments (Payment in Lieu of Training) to the Maritime Training Trust.

Training

RMT is seeking to insert into the scheme a training and employment link for UK ratings. RMT have not made comments on any proposed officers commitment as this is for NUMAST to stipulate.



RMT lobby US embassy

RMT made representations to the US embassy on World Maritime Day to highlight the problems faced by seafarers as a result of strict new security measures.

RMT president Tony Donaghey and general secretary Bob Crow handed in a letter to Jean Bonilla, minister for labour and social affairs at the embassy, to express concern about the way new rules are curtailing seafarers' rights to shore leave.

Bob Crow pointed out that the restriction of shore leave was a world-wide problem, most acutely in the US, where armed guards are used to prevent foreign seafarers leaving their ships.

Under a new International Labour Organisation convention, crew members will be expected to carry identity documents which include a bar-coded finger-print, and that seafarers holding the new ID should be able to take shore leave without first applying for a visa.

The letter also pointed out that the International Maritime Organisation has recently introduced a code giving seafarers a major new security role, and that imposing unreasonable restrictions on shore-leave is counter-productive.

"Shore leave is vital to the health and well-being of the world's 1.25 million seafarers, and we hope that all governments will ratify and implement the provisions of ILO Convention 185 as soon as possible," said Bob.





RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP led the debate on Tonnage tax

However, the union has stated that it supports the introduction of an employment link for officers. Under the RMT proposals companies are also obliged to commit to the training of UK ratings on the basis of a ratio of at least one in fifteen ratings, this can be through the training of deck, engine or catering ratings.

Employment

The training commitment is then followed with an employment commitment which is calculated on the same basis as the training commitment, i.e. one in fifteen. Companies are required to maintain the training commitment for at least the first three years of entry into the scheme, and then to carry on training as and when required to ensure compliance with the minimum employment requirement.

The proposals do not go as far as RMT would wish. However, at the last available count there were 755 ships in the tonnage tax scheme so if RMT proposals were adopted they really would give a significant boost to UK seafaring ratings employment and training opportunities.

Non-compliance

The union has also taken the opportunity to review other aspects of the scheme. RMT strongly recommended that PILOT payments no longer be allowed and that companies have to train in all circumstances. In addition, the union has stated that the penalties for non-compliance must be strengthened so that a penalty is introduced earlier, and expulsion should be enforced following a second year of failure to uphold the tonnage tax minimum training and employment obligation.

The recent announcement by P&O Ferries of hundreds of dismissals of UK ratings further supports the case for a training and employment link and the union will continue to make representations on this matter.



Keep SET in public hands

IT IS a year since South Eastern Trains (SET) took over the franchise from Connex in November 2003. Throughout this time RMT has been campaigning with MPs to ensure that the government keep the franchise in public hands. The franchise became the first since Tory privatisation to be run under what is effectively public control. This was achieved through what was almost a management buyout. Connex and their executives disappeared from the scene and the people who had been managing the service under them took over. This not only led to a smooth transition, but it also allowed the new managers to immediately start the task of improving the service.

SET has just published its Public Performance Measure on punctuality for the period from April 2004 through to the end of July. These figures show that they are performing consistently better than in the same period in the previous year, with the exception of May where the figures were very similar. In addition, their customer complaints for November 2003 to July 2004 are 50 per cent down on the same period for 2002 to 2003.

As a regular user of SET, I can vouch for the improvement in the service. There are still the odd days when passengers are left fuming on the platform because a train is running more than the odd minute behind schedule, but this is nowhere near the levels of the Connex era.

So why have SET been able to deliver these improvements in such a relatively short period of time, and dare I ask at the risk of being accused of being anti-European, how did they achieve it without being French? This may be a bit facetious, but I can recall being told at the time Connex won the franchise that the French were going to embarrass us because they were experts at running railways. What the Connex experience has shown us is that not even French expertise could make our privatised railways work.

The answer to the question is that SET managers no longer have to serve two masters. They can direct all their efforts and resources into running an efficient railway. Under privatisation, the bottom line was the shareholders of the train operating company and not the long-suffering passenger. It is the same people managing the system today that were running it under Connex, yet they have achieved considerable improvements. The only ingredient missing is the demands of the private sector that drain resources away from the service. SET's success demonstrates, for anyone who wants to learn the lesson, that value for money can be achieved through directly-run publicly-owned railways. The worry is that we are not opening our eyes to this fact.

There have been worrying signals recently that the government intends to re-privatise South Eastern Trains, despite over 100 labour MPs supporting my parliamentary motion to retain this service in the public sector. I and my parliamentary colleagues will be seeking a meeting with the Minister on this vital question. SET has achieved too much in the way of improving services for the government to ignore the compelling arguments for this service to be retained in the public sector.

WHEN the SRA appeared before the Transport Select Committee, they made it clear that they would privatise the service regardless of the performance of SET. The committee stressed the need for a proper assessment of the public sector option to provide a yardstick against which to measure the value for money performance of the publicly managed franchise. To date, all of the data points to the fact that it represents good value for money. The public will not thank those responsible if it returns to private hands and we see a return to the poor performances of the recent past.

I regularly have to remind people that my part of London is not served by the London Underground. This means that my constituents have a heavy reliance on the south east train services. We can not afford to allow dogma to get in the way of an efficient service. We must base our decisions on the facts and they state clearly that the franchise should stay where it is.

● *Clive Efford is the Labour MP for Eltham and a member of the Transport Select Committee*



RMT balloting to fight 'slash-and-burn' attacks on jobs and conditions

RMT members at P&O Ferries in Dover, Hull and Portsmouth are to be balloted for industrial action after the company failed to shift from its "slash-and-burn" plan to axe 1,200 jobs, cut pay and worsen terms and conditions.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union had made it quite clear when this massive attack on jobs and conditions was announced that it would not accept compulsory redundancies.

Cuts

The company has embarked upon a major cost cutting exercise that seeks to reduce the number of ships from 31 to 23 and close four of its thirteen routes without consulting the union. In summary P&O intend to withdraw from virtually all their existing Western Channel routes, leaving a monopoly position for Brittany Ferries, and also significantly cut back operations at Dover and Hull.

Portsmouth

Cuts include the withdrawal of Pride of Aquitaine and Pride of Provence and an end to all Normandy services.

There are plans for the Price of Le Havre and Pride of Portsmouth with 350 seafarers to be transferred to the French state-subsidised company Brittany Ferries.

The remaining UK seafarers currently employed by P&O at Portsmouth, with the exception of the crew from the Pride of Bilbao which will continue in service, are to be dismissed.

Hull

Under the plans staff are to be transferred to agency status and conditions are to be eroded, including deep pay cuts at P&O Hull.

Hundreds of RMT members are faced with redundancy and many of those

who will be left are threatened with possible cuts in pay and conditions, or adverse changes to working practices. The union has pledged to do everything in its power to resist these savage cut backs.

UK seafarers at P&O North Sea Ferries are being asked to work additional hours and lose existing rights to medical severance and enhanced redundancy. P&O are insisting that seafarers sign new terms and conditions with reduced redundancy entitlement, this is followed by a selection procedure and if the UK seafarers fail to gain a position in the new establishment they will be made redundant on new reduced terms. Of even greater concern to employees are



ANGRY: RMT general secretary Bob Crow and shipping secretary Steve Todd speaking to P&O workers in Dover

company plans to undertake third party ship management.

The intention is for P&O to completely outsource operational activities. A new ship management could effectively do the dirty work for P&O by replacing UK seafarers with low cost foreign nationals.

Dover

The situation in Dover is even worse with nearly 800 dismissals planned. The cuts will mean a sizeable reduction in operations. On the Dover-Calais route, six ships will be operated compared with seven at present. There are also now major doubts over the future of the remaining P&O ships as it is widely assumed that P&O are seeking to exit the ferry sector as soon as possible. Increasingly P&O are looking towards their more lucrative interests in ports overseas.

This complete disregard for the welfare of the crews comes after P&O have received substantial concessions from the taxpayer in the form of the tonnage tax. The tonnage tax has increased tonnage on the UK register but not improved training or employment opportunities for UK seafaring ratings. In fact, the number of UK ratings being trained and employed has actually fallen.

In addition to the industrial campaign RMT is seeking to mobilise as much political support as possible in an effort to maximise pressure on P&O and the government.

Action

Early Day Motion 1715 (*right*) on the P&O job losses and the need for government intervention has now been tabled by Gwyn Prosser MP. Already the EDM has received 69 signatures and a briefing letter has been circulated to all Labour MPs seeking their signatures.

The union held a special briefing meeting of constituency MPs likely to be affected by the cutbacks. In addition the union will be publicising any French government support given to their companies; Sea France, who run services on the Dover Calais route, and Brittany Ferries, who will now be in a dominant position on the Western Channel. In this regard efforts are being made to meet with the French unions so that they can assist.

RMT Parliamentary Group convenor John McDonnell said that the government must now intervene by raising this matter with the company and the employer's organisation the Chamber of Shipping.

"A long term future for the UK ferry industry needs to be safeguarded especially in view of the support provided by the French Government to secure their interests in the cross channel trades," he said.

RMT national shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the scale of P&O's job cuts shocked members around the ports, but that shock has given way to anger over the insensitive and intransigent way in which the company is trying to bludgeon the workforce into submission.

"Rather than sit down with us and discuss a long-term plan that would safeguard jobs, the company seems hell-bent on sacking hundreds, tearing up the contracts of those who are left and even slashing payments to those prepared to leave the company voluntarily," he said.

The union has consulted members around the ports intensively, and has become clear that the company's present stance and its refusal to consult with us in any meaningful way are unacceptable.

"We have therefore served notice on P&O Ferries that we will be balloting our members, with a recommendation that they vote decisively for industrial action to defend their jobs, pay and conditions," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

Early Day Motion 1715

That this House is deeply concerned at the recent announcement by P&O that they intend to dismiss 1,200 UK seafarers; notes that many of those who will be left will be faced with cuts in pay and conditions; regrets that this will cause much hardship for many families especially within the communities of Dover, Portsmouth and Hull; regards this as a massive blow to the UK shipping industry; further notes that the number of UK seafarers continues to decline despite the UK shipping industry benefiting from a very significant tonnage tax concession worth £35m per year; further notes that the French Government provide support for Sea France and Brittany Ferries; and calls on the UK government to intervene with the appropriate parties to ensure that the ferry industry in the UK has a long-term future.



CUTS: The P&O ferry Pride of Burgundy arrives at Dover Harbour. More than 600 jobs could be lost under plans by P&O Ferries to reduce services on its Dover-Calais route.

NEVER AGAIN



RMT halts plans to repeal fire-safety regulations introduced following the horrific 1987 Kings Cross fire

FOLLOWING a vigorous campaign by RMT, the government has dropped plans to scrap sub-surface station fire-safety regulations brought in as a direct result of the 1987 Kings Cross Tube blaze that claimed 31 lives.

The planned changes would affect fire precaution laws that cover sub-

surface stations such as those on the London Underground and other metro systems and introduce minimum fire standards and minimum staffing levels.

The government's Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004, as originally drafted, would have repealed the 1971 Fire Precautions Act, and with it the

1989 Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations, which were brought in on the recommendation of the Fennell Report into the Kings Cross fire.

This threatened staffing levels and safety standards.

Following an intervention by RMT



BUSY: Kings Cross today carries even more passengers than in 1987. Picture credit © Duncan Phillips reportdigital.co.uk

parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP, the Commons Regulatory Reform Committee recommended that the regulations not be scrapped. John tabled Early Day Motion 1721 which called on the government to keep the regulations in place. Shortly afterwards RMT was informed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that the regulations

would not be repealed.

RMT and its parliamentary group strongly argued that scrapping minimum standards, allowing management to conduct their own risk assessments and effectively leaving fire-precautions to their discretion would be a recipe for cost-driven corner-cutting. This would have led to a weakening of fire precautions, fewer station staff and more risk to members and the public.

Safety first

“Tube and rail workers and passengers alike will be enormously relieved that the government has accepted the need to keep these regulations in place,” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

“This is excellent news, especially as we approach the 17th anniversary of the Kings Cross fire, in which 31 people lost their lives. Keeping effective fire-safety rules in place is the most fitting tribute to those who died.

“The government says it will draft new guidance on fire precautions in sub-surface stations, and RMT will continue forcefully to make the case for those precautions to be statutory.

“RMT members will be indebted to John McDonnell, the convenor of the RMT parliamentary group, who brought our concerns to the Regulatory Reform Committee’s attention, and to all those MPs who signed Early Day Motion 1721, urging the government to change course,” Bob said.

Victory for all

John McDonnell MP described the

decision as a victory for everyone who uses or works on the underground and sub-surface railways.

“The RMT Parliamentary Group has been at the forefront of this campaign to secure the continuation of adequate fire safety measures.

“We’re glad that common sense has prevailed and we would expect that any future review will maintain the levels of staffing and safety necessary to avoid ever again a tragedy like Kings Cross,” he said.

The Fire Brigades Union, which was also involved in the campaign, welcomed the moves as “vital” for public safety.

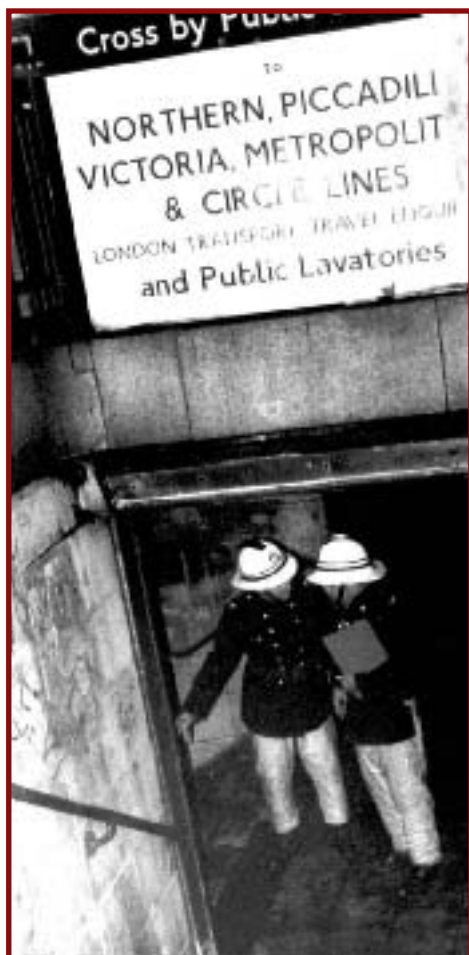
FBU national officer John McGee said that firefighters across Britain, especially London, will breathe a sigh of relief at the decision.

He pointed out that only the trade unions could have blocked government plans “because most people are unaware of the details of such regulations and their importance”.

RMT London regional organiser Bobby Law said that the reality was that since the introduction of PPP and the privatisation of London Underground infrastructure cost has been a growing consideration when it came to running the service.

“These regulations guaranteed minimum standards and staffing levels. “The implications of their removal are clear – massive job losses and the deterioration of safety on the underground,” he said.

RMT exists to make sure that health and safety is not undermined and that employers do not attempt to reduce costs through job cuts.



A tale of two hats



The bizarre story of how an RMT member was arrested, suspended for eight weeks and dragged through the courts after being caught in possession of her own London Underground hat

LONDON Underground worker and RMT member Alix Wood, was having a normal day when she attended work at 5.00am at Waterloo London Underground station last summer. However, life was about to take an unexpected and very unpleasant twist.

Out of the blue, she was arrested by British Transport Police, body searched in front of a male manager, kept in custody for seven hours, suspended from duty for eight weeks, dragged through the courts four times, banned from LUL property and charged with stealing her London Underground uniform hat that was sitting in her locker.

No evidence

Ms Wood's long ordeal began when she was asked to attend Stockwell Underground station to make a statement to police regarding an assault on a work colleague.

When Ms Wood arrived at Stockwell she was sent back to work without the statement being taken and summoned to the manager's office. She was met by British Transport Police and, without more ado, other than identifying themselves and showing a warrant, she was arrested on suspicion of theft. Ms Wood was given no explanation as to why she was being arrested. She was then taken by the two police officers and the Duty Station Manager to her locker and police seized her uniform hat as "evidence".

Roy Parfitt of RMT solicitors Kaim Todner described the arrest as

"astonishing" as police disclosed absolutely no evidence that Ms Wood

had committed any offence.

"It is a fundamental principle of English law that a person is innocent unless, or until, they are proven guilty.

"Police have to prove that a person has committed an offence, that person does not have to prove their innocence," he said.

Mr Parfitt explained that if police have reasonable grounds for suspecting that an offence of theft has been committed, they may arrest anyone whom police have reasonable grounds for suspecting to be guilty of the offence.

"However, given that Ms Wood was arrested prior to the search of the locker it is difficult to see what 'reasonable suspicion' police could have had prior to the searching of the locker and the

seizure of the hat," he said.

Immediately after the locker was searched, the DSM suspended Ms Wood from work and seized her locker key.

A terrorist threat?

When Roy Parfitt first arrived at Euston police station to represent Ms Wood he was informed that police suspected that she had advertised a LUL hat and shirt on 'eBay' an internet auction site – allegations consistently denied by Ms Wood.

In this case police disclosed absolutely no evidence that Ms Wood had committed any offence. As a result the union solicitors advised her to make a 'prepared' statement that could be read at the start of her tape recorded interview. Ms Wood accepted this advice and a statement was read whereby Ms Wood denied the charges. During the course of the interview police raised concerns that terrorists could have obtained these old items of uniform.

Despite these alleged concerns, after



INNOCENT: Alix Wood celebrates with RMT London regional organiser Bobby Law

this bizarre story broke in the media, an interested party handed in a British Transport Police hat to Unity House which they had indeed acquired on eBay. The union immediately informed the BTP of this development which revealed that BTP hats are easily available on the internet.

Crown Prosecution Service in the dock

Following the interview with Alix, police sought the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service as to what further action they should take. The Crown Prosecution Service was formed to ensure that there was an independent and transparent organisation that would review the decisions of police following a person being charged.

It was intended to ensure that a person was charged with the correct offence and most importantly that a prosecution would not continue if there was not sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of a conviction.

However, over the years the independence and transparency of the Crown Prosecution Service has eroded to the point that it is now the CPS that makes the decision to charge, decides on the appropriate charge and whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a conviction.

In this case the CPS advised police that Ms Wood should be charged with

the 'attempted' theft of a hat (the shirt does not get another mention) despite the complete lack of evidence.

After four court appearances, Mr Parfitt informed the CPS that the union intended to go to the High Court for a Judicial Review. Following this threat the allegation was dismissed. Mr Parfitt said that it was "incredible" that this case went so far before being thrown out.

"It is even more bizarre and very worrying that the Crown Prosecution Service tried to proceed with the case knowing that there was no evidence," he said.

Protect yourself

RMT London regional organiser Bobby Law said it was one of the worst cases he had ever come across which traumatised a loyal and longstanding member of staff who had an unblemished character.

"Finding an LUL hat in the locker of an LUL employee at an LUL station is obviously a stunning piece of police work, but this has been a major ordeal for Alix.

"This colossal waste of police time and an estimated £20,000 of taxpayers' money speaks volumes for the BTP's priorities when violent assaults on the Tube are up by nearly a quarter and our members can rarely get an officer to respond to an emergency call," Bobby



said.

The union is currently exploring avenues of legal action to compensate Ms Wood for her ordeal. RMT branch secretary Jason Humphreys, who represented Alix throughout the case on behalf of the union, said that the moral of the whole sorry saga was for staff to protect themselves by joining RMT and getting legal cover as you never know when you might need it.

Alix is now back at work after her harrowing experiences and has been transferred to a different work location.

Hats off to RMT

London Underground has since conceded to RMT demands that the wearing of hats by around 10,000 staff is no longer compulsory. The union advises members not to sell their redundant hats on eBay.




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A magnificent dis



The bitter EWS dispute underlines the importance of a union fighting for all grades, argues RMT general secretary Bob Crow



ON THE LINE: EWS members on the picket line earlier this month in the Midlands

RMT REPS at rail-freight company EWS began consulting members around the country on stepping up industrial action as *RMT News* went to press, after talks with the company over jobs, working hours and conditions broke down.

Our 1,300 engineering and groundstaff have already held one rock-solid 48-hour strike after the appeal court last month rejected the company's claim that our ballot was flawed and overturned an injunction banning industrial action.

Our members' determination appeared to concentrate management's minds, and they eventually agreed to talks at Acas, the arbitration service, four days after our weekend action on November 6 and 7.

Hopes for a settlement were raised when the company abandoned its proposals to load engineering and groundstaff duties onto drivers and lengthen drivers' hours – the notorious '£45k for 45 hours' plan.

However, the company failed to make progress on the outstanding issues or to give us the guarantees we are seeking that there will be no further back-door job losses or worsening of conditions.

Industrial relations broke down in the autumn as managers tried to power through an extension of drivers' hours and responsibilities at the expense of

the jobs, pay and conditions of engineering and groundstaff.

EWS had already taken more than its pound of flesh after the loss of the Royal Mail contract earlier in the year.

But the company was determined to shed even more engineering and groundstaff, and divide and rule was the name of the game as they tried to set about bribing drivers into accepting longer hours and taking on other grades' duties.

When EWS was rumbled and our members voted for industrial action, the company went running to the courts – but the strategy blew up in their faces.

For the company's legal arguments proved too flimsy even for Britain's repressive anti-union laws.

The company argued that RMT hadn't given proper notification of the ballot, because some of our members technically worked for a company called EWS International.

Never mind that they'd never bothered telling us that EWSI existed, or that notice would have gone to the same person in the same office and the ballot result would have been no different.

Nonetheless, rounds one and two went to EWS as the High Court first granted a temporary injunction against our industrial action and then made it permanent.

‘The company was left with egg on its face and a massive bill for the union’s court costs’

Display of solidarity



However, after some fantastic work by John Hendy QC and the Thompsons legal team, the three appeal court judges agreed unanimously that there was absolutely nothing wrong with our ballot.

The anti-union laws were designed to make it as difficult as possible for unions to take strike action, but the appeal court accepted that EWS was attempting to stretch the rules beyond any reasonable point.

The company was left with egg on its face and a massive bill for the union's court costs.

But having tried to frustrate the democratic will of our members and wasted a fortnight messing around in the High Court, EWS had not yet run out of tricks.

These included denying us a seat on a working party discussing the loading of more engineering and groundstaff duties on drivers, even though RMT has full recognition rights for its driver members.

The company was keen to foist its '£45k for 45 hours' plan on drivers – a scam that would have had drivers working 45 hours on a dangerous productivity-led deal and engineering and groundstaff not working at all.



No wonder they didn't want RMT involved in talks.

Freed by the courts to take the action our members had voted for, a ban on overtime, rest-day working and acting-up began on October 26, and a 48-hour strike was first scheduled for the following weekend, October 30 and 31.

That action was suspended to allow the possibility of talks through Acas, but at that point the company said it would not talk unless we called off our

overtime ban, and the strike was re-scheduled for the following weekend.

That strike was a magnificent display of solidarity, as once again our members showed that there is no substitute for standing together in the face of an employer determined to divide and rule us.

And once again we have shown the importance of a union in which all grades stand united to defend each other.

Defending public services



PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka explains why his union launched strike action on November 5 against government plans to cut over 100,000 civil service jobs



PUBLIC: PCS workers held a one-day strike earlier this month John Harris/reportdigital

THE decision to take one-day strike on November 5 was not one we have taken lightly, especially when it is the biggest strike ballot in a generation involving the whole of the civil service. But when faced with savage cuts of 104,000 civil and public service jobs, and the main political parties engaging in the obscene sport of who can cut the most, oblivious to the disastrous impact such cuts will have, somebody has to stand up and defend public services.

Just bureaucrats?

Somebody has to challenge the misguided notion that civil servants are bowler hated bureaucrats with nothing better to do other than to push pens all day. Somebody has to stand up and champion the work done by the thousands of hardworking people who deliver vital public services that touch us all from cradle to the grave. When the government are looking to make cuts on a scale not seen since the attack on the miners, somebody has to say if you want decent public services then you need the people to deliver them.



HERE TO SERVE: Civil servants provide essential front line services to the public

The course on which the government are embarking will damage the very services they have sought to improve, impacting on some of Gordon Brown's very own initiatives such as Sure Start, the New Deal and Tax Credits, initiatives aimed at helping some of the most vulnerable in society. Civil servants all work as a team on the front and back line delivering initiatives such as Sure Start and delivering the things we take for granted, such as your driving licence or child benefit, and protecting our shores against the influx of drugs.

Damaging services

So for the government to think it can cut a fifth of the civil service arguing that it won't have a detrimental affect on services because it will be the back room staff who get chopped is both insulting and naive. As was the manner in which they were announced – the first tranche out of the blue in the Budget with the grand total announced in a rather self-congratulatory tone by Gordon Brown in his Spending Review.

It is therefore unsurprising that PCS members are angry. Angry at being left in limbo with still no real detail of where the axe will fall, fearful for their futures and unable to plan. Angry at being dismissed as just a bunch of faceless bureaucrats and angry at the damage such cuts will inflict on the very services they take pride in delivering.

These are real people delivering real services to real people affecting our everyday lives. So you are left scratching your head when the government employs the rob Peter to pay Paul argument as a basis to slash jobs, saying it will mean more for areas such as health, education and crime. You are left wondering about what value key parts of the public service such as pension credit and winter fuel payments are held in. The government are essentially creating a false divide and saying one part of the public sector is more important than another. The result – poorer services delivered further away from the very people they are meant to serve.

Taking a stand

This is why as a union we are taking a stand. A stand that says if you want decent accessible public services you need civil servants to deliver them. A stand which says that are no false divides in public service delivery and the work that civil and public servants do across the country is integral to every section of our society's lives. It is a stand in which we as a trade union movement and as members of society need to stand shoulder to shoulder, saying no to the cuts.



UNDER SIEGE: Train Crew at Liverpool Street Station London. National Express Group PLC One, the new brand name of the franchise for East Anglia Trains. Photo: Duncan Phillips/reportdigital.co.uk

RMT wins assurances from FGW on role of the guard

ASSURANCES from First Great Western that protect the role of guards on multiple units, won as part of this year's pay agreement, replicates an agreement already signed off with the company.

It means that on ten-car multiple units of class 180 Adelante stock with no connecting corridor, a guard will work in each separate unit. The agreement is not only in line with union policy for a guard on every train, but returns guards to services that had previously been driver-only operated.

The original agreement with FGW to have a guard on each section of a multiple unit was endorsed by last year's Train Crew & Shunting Grades Conference as a model for other train-operating companies to follow.

Plans by Virgin Cross Country to get train managers to undertake self-despatch of trains have also been kicked into the long grass following a strong intervention by RMT.

The company has agreed to defer plans for self-despatch until the end of the year, pending discussions with company council reps at both Virgin Cross Country and Virgin West Coast.

Guards must guard

RMT

Guard's role under siege



RMT assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski warns that the fragile truce over the role of the guard is coming to an end

GUARDS ARE facing a new onslaught from the employers: all the signs are there, and in some companies the attacks have already started. It will affect guards differently depending on whether they work on inter-city, regional or commuter routes – but no-one is safe. In 2001 RMT won agreements from all the train-operating companies on the ten demands of the Guard's Charter.

All the TOCs pledged not to extend driver-only operation to the end of their franchises and agreed to refer the other nine points to the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to be risk assessed.

Several months later the RSSB rejected putting the guard back into the Rule Book from which they had been removed just a week before the Ladbroke Grove disaster.

After RMT's campaign of industrial action in 2003 some TOCs agreed to support a new joint GNER/RMT submission but the RSSB said no.

GNER met with RSSB, which agreed to review the submission – in three to five years' time. They also agreed to produce a 'concept' document by the end of 2003 – but it hasn't been done.

The RSSB has now told the union that it needs to review all 900 Group Standards in the light of European Rail Directives, in a process stretching to the end of 2010.

The TOCs have long argued that the RSSB must be a 'member-led organisation' – in other words led by the TOCs – and that safety regulation is too expensive. They have clearly got their way.

Matters have been made worse by the government's proposals to bring the RSSB and the railways inspectorate into the Office of the Rail Regulator. The union is obtaining opinion on a legal challenge to RSSB's stewardship of safety in the industry.

A four-point campaign plan has been adopted by the union after discussions between the union's Traincrew Conference Liaison Committee and the General Grades Committee's special traincrew subcommittee.

The Guards' Charter is to be re-vamped and re-launched, and the union will continue to pursue the legal aspects of the stewardship of safety in the industry by RSSB.

RMT's 2001 'no extension of DOO' agreements are in urgent need of renewal. Most TOCs have, since 2001, been re-franchised or are being run under management contract or caretaker franchise agreements lasting for up to two more years. Some have already been caught trying to erode the agreement.

There is a massive stock-replacement under way, especially in the London commuter area, which will trigger a 'stock cascade' throughout the network. Some TOCs have already broken the part of their 2001 agreements which pledged that all new stock would be wired to give full control of opening and closing of power-operated doors to the guard.

Most of this new stock is also wired to give setting-up/control of the selective door-open/close function exclusively to the driver. This is the thin end of a wedge leading to full door-control passing to the driver. The government is going to review all its subsidies for regional railways and is to start offering financial incentives for bus substitution.

This 'bustitution' – that would include light-rail and tram links – is being touted on the basis of DOO and the wholesale 'easing' of safety standards. This is the industrial reality, and it means that guards must once more be prepared to defend themselves.



Notification of Contribution Rates for 2005

LIKE most things, the cost of providing you with the benefits of RMT membership increases every year. The increase for 2005 is over the rate of inflation to expand the union's growing activities and provide a better service to you the members. As part of this expansion next year the union shall be employing a further two regional organisers, whose primary purpose is to give support to members.

From the January 1 2005 contributions will be increased by 18p per week, taking the full-time weekly rate to £2.83, for members aged 18 or over in an adult post. For members who are under 18 years or who, if not in an adult post, are under 20 years of age, the weekly contribution rate will be held at the current level that is £1.33, the latter rate also applying to those staff on part-time contracts of employment.

Direct debit payments will be increased accordingly as will contributions collected by employers under pay bill arrangements. Members who pay contributions to cash collectors will receive a new contribution card from the collector.

The new rates applicable are as follows:

Period	Adult/Full Time	Junior/Part Time
Weekly	£2.83	£1.33
4 Weekly	£11.32	£5.30
Monthly	£12.26	£5.74

Provident benefits

Accident Benefit will also increase arising from the higher contribution rate and for Adult/Full Time members will be weekly £28.30 with a maximum payable sum of £735.80

RMT maintain a tight control of costs and continually re-examine them to ensure that the union makes best use of resources to deliver improved services to you the member. The benefits of representation and protection at work and other benefits including the web site and this journal. RMT membership continues to provide excellent value for money.

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Supporting free trade unions in Iraq

JUST this month two train drivers, a train controller and a railway security guard employed by Iraqi Railways were killed and their bodies were mutilated when their train was attacked by an armed group. Three leading trade unionists were also assassinated on the road outside Baghdad. This is the stark reality for workers and trade unionists in the devastated, war-torn country.

Late last year the headquarters of the newly-formed Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in Baghdad was raided by US soldiers who hooded and beat trade unionists found inside. Occupation troops removed documents before smashing up what was left. Detained Iraqi trade unionists were only released after international trade union protests.

New unions

These new unions, emerging after years of dictatorship and in place of the government-run "yellow" unions which terrorised the workforce, face enormous difficulties. While they have scarcely any money or resources, the terrible condition of the rail system and the continuing acts of sabotage against the rail network mean train drivers leaving Baghdad for Basra on the daily service have no signalling system and rely on two way radios to regulate traffic. Bombs on the line are a daily occurrence, along with attacks and US occupation forces are

incapable of securing the line. The US transnational Bechtel now runs the Iraqi rail sector and is in the process of privatising the industry through sub-contracting to British and US firms.

IFTU European representative Abdullah Muhsin said from the start the federation opposed the war and is for a withdrawal of foreign forces in order to build a sovereign, secular and democratic Iraq. It is also now fighting against the privatisation of Iraqi industries.

Rebuilding

He said that against all the odds the IFTU has established 12 national unions in key sectors from oil and gas workers, rail workers, communications, mechanics, printing and a construction and woodworkers union.

Abdullah, who himself was forced to flee Iraq for trade union activities and lived in exile for many years, said that the IFTU was now working very closely with the Kurdish Confederation of Trade Unions to draw up new labour laws that conform with core international conventions.

"Saddam was a catastrophe that crashed down on the once mighty Iraqi labour movement.

"Today the IFTU have to raise money to send a travelling theatre bus on tour in Iraq, performing plays that tell Iraqi workers what trade unions are.

"This was necessary because Saddam transformed trade unions into brutal agents of the state police and

recruiting sergeants for his wars.

"All independent unions were crushed and their leaders killed, imprisoned or exiled and stooge unions replaced them.

"So we are starting again and rebuilding and we desperately need your help," he said.

Solidarity

The recent TUC Congress in Brighton agreed to support the IFTU in its work and backed the federation's position against the war and the occupation of Iraq. Delegates also condemned the abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners by the coalition forces, and called for an audit of the cost of the invasion and occupation.

"Congress believes it is now more vital than ever to support



SOLIDARITY: Bob Crow with Abdullah Muhsin of the IFTU

the new independent trade union movement as an essential force in the creation of a secular, democratic Iraq," it said.

● To find out more go to www.iraqitradeunions.org



Iraqi trade unionists are fighting against the privatisation of their industries



UNITED: from left to right: TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber, Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn MP, TUC president Jeannie Drake, President Basra Electricity and Energy Union Hashimia Muhsin Hussein and General Secretary of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions Subhi Al Mashadani.

THE TUC has launched an appeal to raise much needed money for Iraqi trade unions. You can help build a strong, free trade union movement in Iraq with a donation, or regular contribution, personally or from your union branch online at www.tuc.org.uk/iraqappeal.

Donations to this site receive gift aid tax relief, which can add an extra 29 per cent to their value. Or send a cheque, payable to "TUC Iraq appeal" to Iraq Appeal, TUC, Congress House, London, WC1B 3LS.



WOMEN AND THE UNION

Janine Booth of the National Women's Advisory Committee airs her views on the union's recent women's conference

WHAT are the issues that matter to women at work? Many of the issues that concern us are the same that concern our male colleagues – pay, hours, safety, and more. But there are some that just affect women, and some that women have a particular perspective on.

At the recent Special RMT Women's Conference, delegates put forward their views.

The new Women's Page in *RMT News* is a good forum to air these issues. The point is not just to moan, but to identify the demands that we want our union to take up and fight for. One of these issues

should be access to adequate toilet facilities.

Women train drivers report having to drive for up to six hours without a loo break, because there are fewer facilities for women than for men. To make matters worse, controllers can be uncooperative and unpleasant to women who ask for a "physical needs break/relief" (PNB/PNR), and often the toilets are often substandard. Women workers deserve better than this: it is a matter of basic dignity at work.

There should be proper allowances made for the menopause and menstrual problems.

Going through "the change" or experi-

encing problem periods can be a tough time for women. What we do not need is oppressive sickness policies or rude and intrusive managers. We need sensitivity and support, and if our duties need to be altered at that particular time, then so be it.

There should be procedures for dealing with sexual harassment that actually work.

More and more companies have a policy which looks good on paper, but union members have often found problems including: managers getting 'let off lightly' for harassment in comparison to staff; and complaints taking a very long time to be resolved.

Women also need appropriate and comfortable uniform and there should be female representatives on all uniform committees.

Proper risk assessments and management of pregnancy and new motherhood is required as well as appropriate adjustments made to our hours and work. That means adequate childcare provision and fairness towards workers with kids.

Although we now have 'domestic leave', it is unpaid, so if your kid is ill and you have to miss work, you lose your wages. Whilst transport employers say they want to recruit more women, they will not successfully recruit and retain female staff until they provide workplace nurseries.

Protection from assault is a demand that affects both women and men, and is a priority concern for many women. There needs to be an end to lone working, with a minimum of two staff on duty at any station. And employers should provide door-to-door taxis for people working extreme shifts.

Despite 'equal pay' legislation, women's hourly pay rate is still 19.5 per cent less than men's. Women need a big pay rise for the lowest-paid grades, where many women work eg. cleaning, catering. I hope that this article will start the ball rolling.

● Contributions to the *RMT news* women's page can be sent to Women's page, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD or e-mailed to bdenny@rmt.org.uk

Special women's recall conference report

RMT held a special women's conference last May and a recall conference last month in order to listen to and learn from female members. As a union, we know that to be truly representative, all our members' voices must be heard. The best way of achieving this, is for members to fully participate in union activities. As

women form a minority of members (about 10 per cent), RMT

acknowledges that it needs to work with them to ensure this happens. That was the purpose of the first special conference and the purpose of the special recall conference, to report back on the work done since May including:-

- A women's page now appears in each edition of *RMT News*
- A survey on childcare needs and

encouraging women's participation is underway

- Branches have been asked what they are doing to encourage participation
- every woman member is to be telephoned to encourage participation
- we have written to every company about childcare provision
- campaigning to improve the rights on flexible working

- we want to set up a web page detailing what companies actually do in respect of flexible working
- fighting a test case about Parental Leave in the Court of Appeal.

The list is not exhaustive. What was clear from the latest conference was that there was still much more to do. A Women's newsletter was published just prior to the conference and one delegate rightly pointed out that it had concentrated on childcare issues. It did so because that reflected the focus of our women activists. What about menopausal women and their problems was a question asked by a bus driver delegate. This illustrates exactly why the union needs to encourage activism. The union wants women to flag up the problems facing them. RMT is ready to listen and want to provide forums for this to happen.

Advisory committee

RMT already has a national women's advisory committee, made up of women members from all over the country. Their job is to advise those who take decisions about issues facing women. This year the union the highest number ever on the committee. But this is not enough. Why are there no women from the North East? Why is there only one woman from the

North West and North Wales? It would be comforting to think that women in these areas do not have any problems. If so, can they please share their secret of success?

National advisory committees are essential, but RMT needs to ensure that they connect with ordinary members within their regions and at branch level. That is precisely why the union wants to establish regional advisory committees and, indeed, branch advisory committees to create dialogue between women members. This will enable the problems facing ordinary members to be channelled up and across the union.

RMT has been encouraging regional councils to set up committees. To date, RMT only know of sister Glen Burrows in the South Wales and South West Region who is working hard to get women interested. RMT wish her well, but this should be happening in all the regions. This illustrates the importance of working together to take things forward. Plea after plea can be sent out from head office, but without pressure from ordinary women members, change will be slow.

Voicing concerns

The recall conference gave women the opportunity to voice their concerns and generally share ideas and was a positive event. RMT want to extend that



opportunity to all women members. The new advisory committees will provide that opportunity – they can be as formal or informal as members want.

Don't forget that in addition to the special conferences, the annual women's conference will take place on March 2 2005 in the Bournemouth area. Full details will be sent out shortly. You will need to attend your branch or speak to your branch secretary to ensure you are nominated.

Remember, history shows that change for the better is achieved by being active. Make sure your voice is heard. For full details of the special conferences, visit our website on www.rmt.org.uk.

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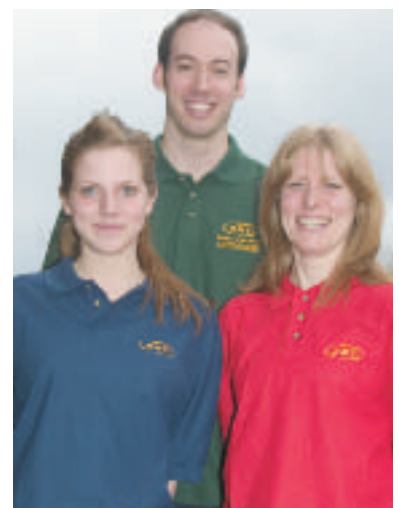
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Stand up and be counted

A VERY important gathering of people from all over Europe took place last month at venues across London. There were three days of debate, celebration and protest with an alternative agenda for Europe and the world, collectively known as the European Social Forum.

This alternative vision was one that believed in an end to eternal war and for the need for global peace and justice without racism.

They reflected a popular belief that public services should exist not for private profit but for public gain. The ESF also reflected the need for a world of equality and diversity on a sustainable planet. The over 30,000-strong event was organised by a host of groups including the TUC and trade unions such as the RMT, the Greater London Assembly and a host of protest and pressure groups opposed to privatisation and corporate greed. In the run up to the G8 next year, the ESF created the right kind of momentum to ensure that our demands are put forward and heard by those in power

However, despite the massive size of the event some could be forgiven for not being aware that it was even going on. This was because there was a complete lack of coverage by our so-called "democratic media" with a few honourable exceptions.

What a contrast a few days later when the "leaders" of European states signed up to the proposed constitution for the European Union in Rome. This was deemed to be "big" news despite the fact that no-one has called for such a document, which was drawn up in secret by those federalist elites that believe in the creation of an undemocratic and authoritarian superstate called Europe.

The fact is that working people need this constitution like turkeys need Christmas.

Far from ensuring workers' rights and decent public services, this constitution is a privatisers' charter that will do nothing to stop governments maintaining anti-union laws.

If adopted it will effectively outlaw attempts by governments to roll back the years of privatisation and attacks on public services, and will force member countries to remain on the neo-liberal economic treadmill. It effectively outlaws socialist policies at a stroke.

Public opinion in Britain is demanding a return to a publicly owned, publicly funded and publicly accountable railway, yet the EU is marching us in the opposite direction.

Opening up Europe's railways to competition will pit worker against worker and can only force pay and conditions down – and that is exactly what Europe's boss class wants.

The Scottish Executive is already using EU rules to force Caledonian MacBrayne's essential ferry routes in Scotland into an unnecessary tendering process.

Delegates at the TUC and Labour Party conferences voted recently to end rail privatisation but the government has decided to ignore these popular calls. Therefore, RMT has decided to take to the road in the run up to the general election next year to draw attention to the disaster of rail privatisation. The Rail Against Privatisation campaign will involve a national march next spring beginning from various points from Scotland to Cornwall. So get your walking boots ready.

Our shipping members are once more in a struggle with P&O to defend over 1200 jobs at Portsmouth, Dover and Hull and these members need all the support they can get.

Members at the rail freight company EWS have shown what can be achieved. Following a ground-breaking court victory against the company's attempt to ban strike action, EWS have dropped their divisive plans that threatened the job security of our members.

The lesson is that nothing will change unless we stand up and be counted and believe that you can make a difference as a member of a campaigning union.



RMT President Tony Donaghey speaking at the European Social Forum last month

Brittany Ferries to take P&O routes

FRENCH P&O employees demonstrated in Cherbourg following the British operator's decision to abandon its western and centre Channel routes except Portsmouth-Bilbao. French Channel operator Brittany Ferries (BAI) will maintain capacity from Cherbourg and transform numerous short-term contracts at Cherbourg into full-time jobs. About 70 Cherbourg-based P&O employees lose their jobs.

BAI said it would take over the UK operator's commercial activity, but not its "errors of strategy and management which in a few years would lead to the same disastrous results". It will operate the Cherbourg-Portsmouth route with a fast ferry with more vehicle and freight capacity than P&O's Cherbourg Express catamaran. It is also taking over P&O's Le Havre-Portsmouth service, saving 350 British seafaring jobs. From January, BAI's Val de Loire will service the route with either the Pride of Portsmouth or Pride of Le Havre 1,650-passenger sister ships that presently operates from Le Havre. The P&O vessels will be renamed respectively Etretat and Honfleur.

Dutch unions reject benefits reduction

MORE than 250,000 people demonstrated in Amsterdam last month in the largest anti-government protest for 20 years. Organised by the three Dutch TUCs, demonstrators rallied against the right-wing government's plans to reduce pensions and health spending while raising taxes. The action was preceded by a 24-hour transport and public services strike.

The measures include an end to early retirement provisions and a bid to stop making collective agreements binding, something which protects pay levels and which has long been part of the Dutch industrial relations system.

French unions in dispute with SNCF

The French rail unions and

management (SNCF) met again in October to discuss wages and a possible dispute prevention mechanism. The SNCF agreed to draft a revised document giving more access to management to rank-and-file union representatives.

The SNCF has also agreed to union demands to re-open wage negotiations following the rejection by most unions of a proposed 1.5 per cent across-the-board rise for 2004 after no increase last year. But a large gap remains between the main union's demands and the management offer. The CGT, the biggest of the eight French rail unions, claim is for six per cent to make up for lost purchasing power over the last few years.

Belgium set to close one-third of stations

BELGIAN rail unions are concerned over job losses following reports from SNCB, Belgium's rail operator, suggesting that 200 of its 530 stations should be closed. The preliminary report states that the stations in question are used by less than 3 per cent of passengers and could go in a cost-cutting exercise to reduce its deficit ahead of opening the passenger rail sector to competition. Most Belgian routes cover less than

100km long and four-fifths of SNCB's operations concern the country's 10 busiest stations.

SNCB is also considering ceasing ticket and season ticket sales in a number of small stations. It has already introduced the measure to 275 stations that no longer have ticket-sales staff. It is advocating extending its ticket sales to the internet, a system it established last spring. SNCB reports a 7 per cent increase in passenger traffic in the first half of this year, due mainly to the introduction of free travel for civil servants and the staff of publicly-owned companies. The ministries and companies involved fund the scheme that from January 1 2005 is to be extended to privately owned firms that agree to pay 80 per cent of the cost.

France seafarers protest at job losses

MORE than 100 people demonstrated in Brest against the reflagging of the Léon Thevenin, the third of France Telecom Marine's (FTM) cable layers from the full French flag to its Kergulen second register. Madagascar nationals are replacing 160 French ratings. About half the ratings have either been granted early retirement provisions or been reclassified to

land jobs at France Telecom. The remaining 80 will be paid they have been found jobs.

FTM last year de-flagged its two other cable layers. Under the FTM collective agreement French ratings work eight weeks on, eight weeks off. While the operator will pay the Madagascar seafarers France's minimum wage, they must work six months at sea with six weeks leave.

Italians promise 'hot autumn'

ITALY'S three TUCs and especially their rail and transport affiliates, have promised the right-wing government a "hot autumn" against the 2005 budget and pensions package which increases from 35 to 40 the number of years of contributions before receiving a full pension.

Union action in three massive united demonstrations and stoppages slowed government plans to reform the state pensions system which now starts in 2008 after the measure was forced through parliament in vote of confidence to prevent the collapse of millionaire media mogul Silvio Berlusconi's five-party coalition for the ninth time since January. The unions are now considering action against the cost-cutting draft budget presently being discussed in parliament.

European Social Forum comes to London



Greek trade union banners on an Anti-war demonstration to mark the end of the European Social Forum held at Alexandra Palace in north London last month. © Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk



Abolish tax on ill-health

By TOMMY SHERIDAN MSP

THE Scottish Executive has announced a review of NHS prescription charges.

My colleague, Colin Fox MSP, the Scottish Socialist Party representative for the Edinburgh area has lodged a Bill in the Scottish Parliament which seeks to abolish the "tax on ill health" altogether.

The response to his Bill has been overwhelmingly supportive. Dozens of health groups, medical professionals and patients' organisations say that the £6.40 charge prevents people from getting the treatment they need. Indeed the Citizens Advice Bureau in Scotland estimates that as many as 70,000 Scots each year are going without the drugs they need because they cannot afford them.

Prescription charges have been around for 50 years but

the writing is now on the wall for them. Last year the Welsh Assembly voted to abolish the charges because they were deterring people from getting treatment.

A new report by the Social Market foundation reminds us that the demand for prescription charges comes from the Treasury, not from the medical profession, who continue to campaign for their removal.

People write to us in their hundreds about the difficulties they face with these charges. Some are on Invalidity Benefit and yet still have to pay for their treatment. Others are chronically sick but are suffering from one of the many conditions not exempted by NHS regulations from paying the £6.40 charge per prescription item. All those patients have one thing in common and that is they face

real hardship in trying to pay their bill.

Pharmacists will tell you of patient after patient who asks them whether there is a cheaper alternative, or if it is possible to have only two of the three or four medicines prescribed for them.

The regulations governing who is and isn't exempt have not been reviewed since 1968. The Scottish Executive accepts that this situation can no longer be tolerated. However, they insist that outright abolition will not be considered. They argue that would mean people who can afford to pay denying the NHS much-needed resources.

We are even accused, as socialists, of seeking "a free handout for the rich." The nonsense is that the rich, by and large, can already get free medicines under current rules.

Rich people over 60 for example – of which there are one or two like the queen and Prince Philip – are already entitled to free prescriptions. Similarly, rich patients with certain conditions like diabetes are entitled to free

medicines.

In fact it is those on very modest incomes that will suffer. People with conditions like asthma or cancer or mental health problems are forced to go without critical medicines.

I am in favour of paying for the NHS out of general taxation, if that means the rich paying a bit more income tax than that's fine by me.

The cost of abolition would be around £40 million. This could be financed out of a windfall tax on the obscene profits made by drugs companies out of the NHS.

I believe Scots really want to follow the Welsh and see the complete abolition of charges. One recent poll put support at 89 per cent.

The Scottish Campaign to Remove All Prescription Charges (SCRAP) has started to hold public meetings across Scotland. Prescription charges are a disease at the heart of the NHS which eats away at the boast that our NHS was available to everyone regardless of income and background.



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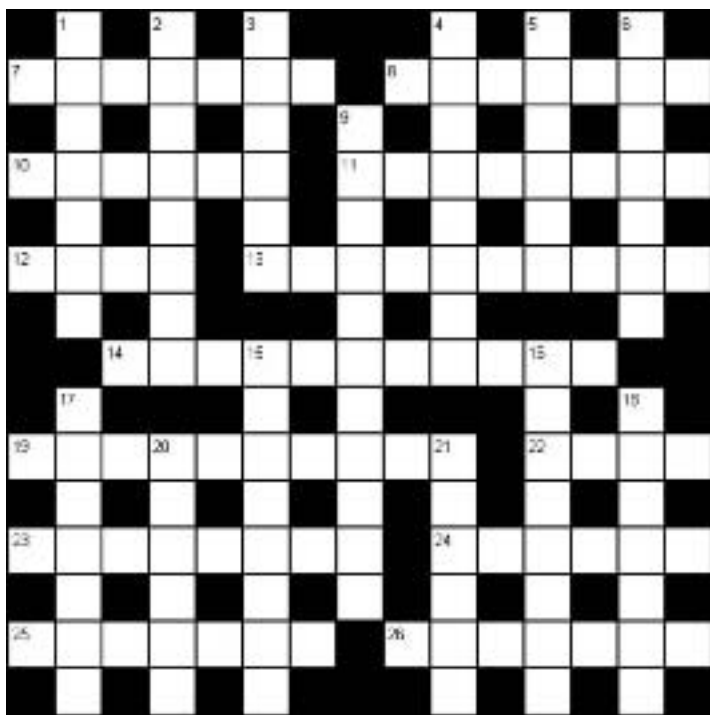
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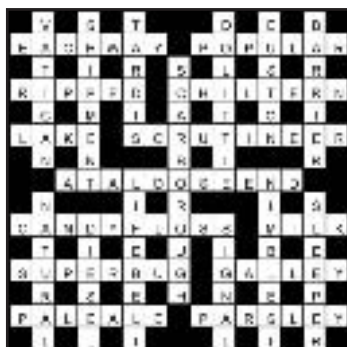
ACROSS

- 7 Leave shore - take up nautical career (2,2,3)
- 8 carried across water (7)
- 10 One who commissions and cuts (6)
- 11 To calculate cost, or calculation of cost (8)
- 12 Guv'nor - or stud! (4)
- 13 Two wheeled powered vehicle (10)
- 14 One of four arty places - two in London and each one in St Ives and Liverpool (4,7)
- 19 dish of meat topped with potato (7,3)
- 22 Set this running and let the dogs go.(4)
- 23 Device for keeping tea leaves out of the cup (8)
- 24 One who 7s (6)
- 25 Occupied - perhaps with forthcoming marriage? (7)
- 26 Collected documents - could well be sexed up (7)

DOWN

- 1 Pig of a driver! (4-3)
- 2 Seaway between Britain and northern Europe (5,3)
- 3 Thrice winner of Grand National and twice runner-up (3,3)
- 4 Muscle to the side of the chest (8)
- 5 US music industry award (6)
- 6 Cold-blooded, scaly creature, or base, malignant or treacherous person (7)
- 9 Manhattan's green lung (7,4)
- 15 One who designs or works with machinery or major works (8)
- 16 Practise performance (8)
- 17 sailing or rowing, for fun (7)
- 18 Wave that crashes on shore (7)
- 20 Use this -- no need for 23 (3-3)
- 21 London terminal for West Coast Mainline (6)

Last month's solution



Winner of prize crossword No. 8 is Craig Diggins in North London

Letters to the editor

Dear editor,
I am writing to you with regards to an article that appeared in the September issue of the RMT News.

This item was discussed at our branch for various reasons, firstly, over the word 'youth', and also as the article seemed to imply that one of our branch representatives was not taking the annual Young Members conference seriously.

Firstly, with regards to the word 'youth'. At the Young Members conference held in Plymouth, a motion called on the union to replace all references to youth with 'young members'. This was subsequently passed. Decision number CE188 states 'That we note and adopt the report in full' - the

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Dave Giles, or Kath Dulson were not taking the course seriously for moving a motion concerning jelly and ice cream. Indeed, it is not what the motion was about, but whether the speakers could win the motion through debate that should be the issue. For cheap shots to be taken at Dave, who does a difficult enough job representing members against management attacks as it is, from his own union's publication, we find nothing short of disgraceful.

Our branch has been proud of the involvement of our young members. It's a shame that some members of the RMT, and the RMT News, do not feel the same.

Yours in solidarity,

Jason Humphreys
Jubilee South & East London Line Branch
Secretary

The late Probyn 'Charlie' Farr



RMT activists from Yorkshire, the north east and Cumbria attended the funeral last month of Probyn "Charlie" Farr (centre of picture) who passed away on October 7 2004.

Charlie may have talked with a London accent and went to school in Wandsworth but it was in the North Yorkshire town of Skipton and across Arriva Trains Northern that he will be known for his loyalty and work for RMT.

Charlie was a key figure in the 14 month Arriva Trains Northern conductors, station and retail pay disputes. He was a familiar sight on the picket line at Skipton and further afield.

He was a keen traveller and recently visited Cuba.

Charlie's funeral at St Mary's Church, Carleton, nr Skipton was attended by work colleagues, managers, company councillors and staff reps from across the north.

When in Rome....



RMT's Union Learning Fund project manager Scarlet Harris (centre) visited Italian railway workers and trade unionists as part of a TUC delegation last month. The visit was hosted by CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Workers).

During their stay the delegation visited the central signal station at Termini station. Considering the heavy traffic at the station (600 freight trains and 800 passenger trains passing through the station every day), Italian signal workers were justifiably proud of their 88 per cent punctuality record.



TURKISH Transport Workers' Union TUMTIS president Sabri Topcu called in at Unity House last month for discussions with RMT general secretary Bob Crow and president Tony Donaghey.

Activists' corner



A tribute to Paul Foot 1937 – 2004

"The great are great only because we are on our knees. Let us rise!" **Camille Desmoulins**

Paul Foot, one of the finest socialist journalists writers/speakers of our time, sadly died on July 18 2004. A member of the Socialist Workers Party and ex-editor of Socialist Worker, Paul was more than a brilliant writer, he was a campaigner against injustice and a class fighter. As fellow journalist, trade unionist (NUJ) and friend John Pilger said at Paul's Memorial in October "Paul was all of these things because of his politics not in spite of them".

Paul contributed to a vast range of publications (Private Eye, Daily Mirror, The Guardian, London Review of Books etc) and was the author of many significant books, including Harold Wilson, Enoch Powell, Hanratty, Colin Wallace, Red Shelley, and more.

In 2000 he was voted Campaigning Journalist of the Decade. The What the Papers Say Awards described Paul as "a journalist who stuck closely to his principles and, to the chagrin of the authorities, has been proven right time and again". The Daily Mirror acknowledged "There are more people walking the streets of Britain who have been freed from prison by Paul Foot than any other person."

Paul's combination of passion, anger and humour in politics was only matched by his honesty. Once Paul was attacked from the floor of a meeting, accused of being middle class, he replied: "I'm ruling class. I choose to be a traitor to my class because they disgust me."

The feeling was mutual, his significance however, they could not ignore. That is why the Economist, the bosses' magazine, clearly recognised the political tradition in which Paul stood:

"The tradition of radical journalism goes back a long way in Britain, to William Hazlitt, William Cobbett, Tom Paine, John Wilkes and beyond. These 18th and 19th century essayists and pamphleteers were not self-described neutral observers who meticulously separated facts from opinions, discarded the opinions and then left readers to form their own judgements. They were committed campaigners who had a point of view and made no apologies for expressing it. Mr. Foot was in that tradition."

Paul used his journalistic skills to bring the spirit of the struggle into every article and speech he made, exposing the machinations of the upper classes, and conveying socialist ideas in a language that was accessible to people who had never come across them before.

At Paul's funeral, whilst many of us mourned the death of such a significant and brilliant contributor to socialism, you could almost hear Paul complaining, quoting Joe Hill: "Don't mourn, Organise!"

The final words must, however, go to Paul's favourite poet, Shelley

*Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number -
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you -
Ye are many - they are few.*

How do I join the Credit Union?



To join the RMT Credit Union you need to fill in an application form and supply us with proof of **your identity** and **address**. Being an existing RMT member, you may wonder why we need proof of who you are and where you live. It is because the Financial Services Authority, in an attempt to combat Money Laundering, has imposed strict identification rules on anyone wishing to open a Bank or Building Society account. Unfortunately, it has applied the same rules and regulations to Credit Unions.

There are two methods of supplying us with the documentation:-

METHOD 1 Send or take your **original** documents, **1 from List A & 1 from List B**, direct to RMT Credit, Unity House, FREEPOST, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. If sending valuable documents such as your passport or current full UK Driving Licence we strongly advise sending them by recorded delivery. We will photocopy the originals and return them to you.

METHOD 2 Take one original document from **list A** and one from **list B** to your Branch Secretary or any of the above approved persons listed below:-

- Delegated Officer of the Branch
- Divisional Organiser
- Executive Committee Member
- Credit Union Officer
- Post Master / Sub Post Master
- Authorised Financial Intermediary
- Councillor (local or county)
- Minister of Religion
- Commissioner for oaths
- Banker
- Doctor
- Police Officer
- Person with honours / peerage
- Full Time Trade Union Official
- Member of Parliament
- Justice of the Peace
- Lawyer
- Teacher
- Accountant
- Dentist

The Branch Secretary or other approved person will check the original documentation; will take a photocopy, sign, and Branch stamp. All proof of identity / address must bear your name, and not be solely in the name of partner etc; but can be in addition to their name.

Satisfactory proof of **identity** will include, but not be limited to the following:

LIST (A)

- Current** signed Passport.
- Current** Full UK old style Driving Licence (not old style Provisional Licence) [if not used as evidence of address].
- Original** Inland Revenue tax notification e.g. tax assessment, statement of account, notice of coding – valid for current year.
- Pension** Book or Benefits Book or original notification letter from the Benefits Agency confirming your right to benefits (if not used as evidence of address).
- Shotgun** or firearms certificate.
- ID** pass and safety cards for the following companies: Network Rail, Trans Pennine Express, Central Trains
- Discharge** Book (shippers only - current).

Satisfactory proof of **address** will include, but not be limited to the following:

LIST (B)

- Original** Local Authority Council Tax bill valid for the current year.
- Current** UK photo card Driving Licence.
- Current** Full UK old style Driving Licence (not old style Provisional Licence).
- A** Utility Bill e.g. Electricity, Gas, Water or Telephone bills. **These must be originals and less than 3 months old.** Mobile 'phone bills are NOT acceptable.
- Bank**, building society or credit union statement – within last 3 months.
- Mortgage** statement from a recognised lender – within last 12 months.
- Pension** Book or Benefits Book or original notification letter from the Benefits Agency confirming your right to benefits (if not used as evidence of address).
- Original** Inland Revenue tax notification, letter, notice of coding, P60 or P45.
- Original** housing association or letting agency tenancy agreement.
- Local** council rent card or tenancy agreement
- Original** Solicitor's letter confirming recent house purchase or Land Registry confirmation.
- Household** and motor Insurance certificates - current

Credit Union accounts may only be opened and transactions accepted when verification of identity and address has been completed and cross-referenced against RMT membership. We are using the method of Direct Debit only and money will be deducted from your bank account on the 28th of each month. Please return completed forms and ID documentation, as we need to make sure you comply with the money laundering regulations. Failing to complete all forms and ID documentation will delay us from setting up your savings account.

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

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 Chalton 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.





Asbestos

Exposure to asbestos is causing at least 3,500 deaths a year. The law now requires employers to establish where it is present.

Is your workplace safe?

**If you have any concerns
speak to your health and safety representative
or phone the RMT helpline**

0800 376 3706