

RMT news



Essential reading for today's transport worker

Issue No 1, Volume 6

www.rmt.org.uk

February 2005

TUBE SIGNAL VICTORY

Signal staff win four year battle

Campaign
postcards
inside

rap
rail against privatisation



END PPP

www.rmt.org.uk

rap



2005 diary dates

RMT National Health & Safety Conference
Feb 24 Liverpool

RMT National Women's Conference March 2
Poole

Catering Grades Conference March 4/6
Torquay

BTUC Women's Conference March 8
Scarborough

Supervisory Grades Conference March 12/13
Portsmouth

RMT Black & Ethnic Minority Conference
March 16 Birmingham

RMT Young Members' Conference March
19/20 Nottingham

Engineering Grades Conference March 31/
April 1 Sheffield

**Station Staff & Associated Grades
Conference** April 1/2 Weymouth

Traincrew & Shunters Grades Conference
April 7/9 Edinburgh

BTUC Black Workers' Conference April 15
Southport

Busworkers' Conference April 15/16 Newquay

Scottish TUC April 18/20 Dundee

**RMT National Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual
Members' Conference** April 22 Birmingham

Road Freight Grades Conference April 23
Exeter

Wales TUC May 25/27 Llandudno

**National Conference of Branch & Regional
Council Secretaries** June 5 Great Yarmouth

RMT Annual General Meeting June 26/July 1
Exeter

**BTUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender
Conference** June 30/July 1 London (tbc)

BTUC September 12/15 Brighton (tbc)

Signalling Grades Conference September
17/18 Great Yarmouth

Edwards Duthie
Solicitors

In partnership
with the



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

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

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

RING NOW FOR ADVICE & ASSISTANCE ON 0208 514 9000

email: allinfo@edwardsduthie.com

CONTENTS

Page 4 No to EU constitution

Page 5 New CoE members

Page 6 New line for Cornwall

Page 7 Midland Mainline uses anti-union laws

Page 8 & 9 Railways Bill

Page 10 & 11 Shipping news

Page 12 Report bus accidents

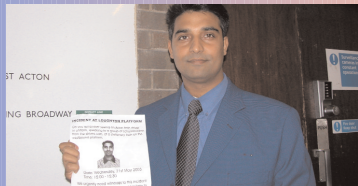
Page 13 Orphan fund



Page 14 & 15 Railing against privatisation

Page 16 & 17 Signal victory

Page 18 & 19 RMT court victory



Page 20 Anti union laws

Page 21 Iraqi trade unionist remembered



Page 22 & 23 Education

Page 24 & 25 European round-up / President's column

Page 26 Scottish report

Page 27 Tommy Sheridan MSP

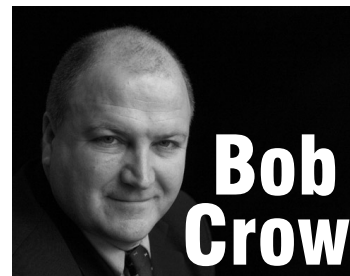
Page 28 Dispatches / Classifieds

Page 29 Prize crossword

Page 30 How to join the Credit Union

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

Signal victory



CONGRATULATIONS to signalling and service control staff on London Underground for winning one of the best improvements to pay, working hours and conditions in the rail industry for a decade.

Following the threat of two days of strike action, management agreed to settle a long-running battle by agreeing to decent pay increases and 15 days extra leave.

Negotiating rights and procedures have also been strengthened as a result of members being prepared to take action to improve their conditions.

Congratulations are also in order for your two new relief regional organisers Brian Whitehead and John MacDonald who are now in the saddle and at work. These additions to our staff will help build the union and there is no reason why by 2010, RMT could not be 100,000 strong. We are already the fastest growing union in Britain so let's keep up the good work.

You can help by passing the recruitment form you received with your DVD last month to a work colleague and explain the benefits of being a member of Britain's specialist transport union, regardless of what grade or trade you are in.

Receiving loose material in a magazine can be an irritation that is resolved by binning the lot. However, it is in your interests to take a closer look at what comes with this month's RMT news.

Firstly, Homebase are offering RMT members an exclusive deal to get 20 per cent off at Homebase for one weekend only – on presentation of the enclosed invitation.

More importantly, enclosed are two postcards for you to send off post-free to your MP to demand the renationalisation of the railway network and Tube maintenance contracts.

Simply fill them in and pop them in the post and you will have strengthened the union's Rail Against Privatisation campaign.

Rail privatisation is a disaster and it is time to end the insanity. The harrowing details that are emerging from the Old Bailey Hatfield crash trial, where three Railtrack bosses face manslaughter charges, only underlines the need to bring the lot back in-house.

Rail bosses knew an incredible 21 months before the crash, which killed four people, that the rail that caused the tragedy was cracked and replacement

track sat beside the line waiting to be fitted for six months.

Rail privatisation has led to the creation of numerous profit making companies that have continued to drain money from the public purse. The cost of funding has increased dramatically since privatisation as the savings inherent in a unified public sector operation have been lost.

Many similarities with rail privatisation are evident in the proposed sell-off of Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services in Scotland.

However, the Scottish Executive is pressing ahead with the privatisation of the ferry service from Gourock to Dunoon just hours after claiming that no decision had been made during our lobby in defence of lifeline services.

After MSPs had voted against the tendering process in December, the Scottish Executive made similar promises and maintained this deceit right up until adverts appeared in the press inviting bids from profit-hungry privateers.

We have now given notice that unless RMT receive assurances that there will be no worsening of pensions, pay and conditions for its workforce CalMac will be facing a ballot for industrial action.

Good luck to Tom Angus, who will run this year's London Marathon in aid of the Orphan Fund, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year.

Another reason to be proud is the fact that the RMT Credit Union now has £100,000 banked and will be holding its first annual general meeting next month. Why not join the club by filling out the application at the back of this magazine?

On the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz by Red Army troops it is worth remembering why we must fight against prejudice wherever it appears. Millions of Jews, socialists, and trade unionists lost their lives in those camps and we must all resolve to fight racism and say Never Again.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

PS: I hope members enjoyed the DVD film sent to you last month about how your union works. If any member did not receive one please phone the freephone helpline 0800 376 3706 to get yours.

Trade unionists say no to EU constitution plans

LEADING trade unionists from more than 20 unions across the country have launched a campaign against the EU Constitution, warning that it threatens public services, democracy and manufacturing.

The campaign aims to unite trade unionists irrespective of their views on the EU itself.

"The proposed Constitution institutionalises privatisation and robs member states of the right to govern themselves democratically, said campaign secretary Doug Nicholls, who heads the Community and Youth Workers' Union.

He added that he believed the campaign reflected the majority opinion of trade unionists and workers in Britain.

"This Constitution won't give trade unionists the rights they should have," said RMT general secretary and campaign chair



Bob Crow.

"This proposed EU Constitution demands the mass privatisation of industries and services and hands big corporations huge powers to increase the exploitation of workers and the environment," Bob said.

The Constitution removes national veto rights in 60 new areas, allowing Brussels to dictate, among other things, transport policies of mass privatisation across Europe.

"This document stands against the historical aims of the labour movement, imposing privatisation and militarisation, as well as curbing democracy and civil liberties," said Bakers' union general secretary Joe Marino.

The campaign will be working closely with Labour MPs and other progressive organisations opposed to the Constitution, including the Centre for a Social Europe.

A powerful website and a pamphlet are currently in the pipeline.

● For more information
www.tuaeuc.org.uk
email: info.tuaeuc.co.uk
www.social-europe.org.uk



Burton hits the big time

FORMER Council of Executive RMT member Paul Burton hit the big time as a match official at a recent football match between Millwall and Ipswich.

Paul was attending as a spectator along with Alex Reid, an employee at Unity House. Just before half time one of the assistant referees had to retire with an injury. The fourth official took over and Paul was requested to report to reception as his services were required as a replacement fourth official.

Paul is a qualified level four referee and can official on the Conference, Isthmian, Midland, Northern and Western Leagues.

"I didn't have time to think and after being kitted out and given a crash course on the substitute electronic board I was ready for action.

"The first 15 minutes of the second half were a little nerve wracking but once that was over I settled down, Ipswich Manager Joe Royle helped as he came over for a chat," he said.

The match assessor was very happy with Paul's performance but Paul received a phone call from the Millwall supporting RMT general secretary to say that he should have indicated five minutes instead of three for injury time.

Referees can never win.

Seafarer wins substantial damages

RMT member John Breckon has won a substantial out of court settlement nearly six years after he received a serious neck injury while working on the vessel Northern Explorer.

John will never work again due to the accident which he received when he fell from a ladder in a freshwater tank he was cleaning.

John had declared that he was unhappy with the dangerous nature of the work and felt that he had been put under pressure to carry it out.

This implicit threat was sharpened by the fact that a member of the crew had been put off the ship some time earlier.

The problem with the case is that John could not recollect anything about the accident and there were no witnesses.

However, his injuries left him with more or less constant pain and pins and needles in his upper limbs and neck. This made returning to work extremely difficult.

After a long battle by RMT

solicitors Bridge McFarland the employer Denholms (Isle of Man) agreed to settle the matter five days before it was due to go to court.

John said that without the union he would have ended up with nothing. "RMT was there for me when I needed it and seemed determined to win on my behalf.

"Members might sometimes ask themselves why pay union dues, but without the union solicitors you just don't have the protection you need," he said.

MEMBERS FREEPHONE HELPLINE

Open six days a week 8am until 6pm
0800 376 3706

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk
Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516
Seven days a week



Meet your newly elected Council of Executive members

John Leach and Peter Trend have been elected to sit on the union's executive committee for three years.

JOHN LEACH: This is the second time John has been elected to sit of the Council of Executives, serving between 1999/2001.

He joined London Underground in 1985 on the station staff side and has always been active in the union in some capacity, including as a branch secretary and a local rep.

He says it is an exciting time to come back onto the executive in order to continue the improvements in services for members made over the last few years.

"In particular it is important to focus on the campaign to end PPP on the Tube and for the rail network to be taken into public ownership.

"The reality of privatisation is that members' pay and conditions suffer as a result," he says.

Another issue close to John's heart is equality.

"That does not mean paying lip service to it but real action.

"The cost of childcare on working families is nothing short of devastating," he says.

John says that the trade union movement needs to be arguing for financial help and other assistance to help parents cope.



JOHN LEACH: joined London Underground in 1985

PETER TREND: Peter works in rail infrastructure and is based in Derby. He joined British Rail in 1979 to work on the Permanent Way and has seen many changes.

He has worked for a number of contractors, including Serco and Balfour Beatty, and has now been taken back in-house after Network Rail took control of all rail maintenance.

This is the first time he has been on the Council of Executives and says he is still learning the ropes. He hopes to use his three years on the executive to help fulfil the aspirations of the membership.

Health and Safety is a number one priority for Peter, who has gained a number of professional qualifications in this area with the help of the union.

"I intend to pass on this knowledge to frontline reps whenever possible," he says.

He says that the growth of the annual RMT health and safety conference is a breath of fresh air and hopes to see it go from strength to strength.

Peter says that bringing Network Rail back in-house was a step forward but sub-contractors were still heavily involved in the industry and need to be squeezed out.

Another important issue for Peter is the need for national bargaining.

"We need national pay bargaining to replace the



PETER TREND

divisive fragmentation that presently exists.

"There is no rationale for duplicating negotiations and national bargaining in the industry would lead to less conflict and more cohesion," he says.

New north west organiser elected

JOHN TILLEY of Central and North Mersey branch has been newly elected as one of the Regional Organisers for regions 2 and 3 Combined, Manchester, North Wales & North West.

Andy Warnock Smith of Warrington and District branch was also re-elected. The period of office runs from January 1 2005 to December 31 2009.



New double line for Cornwall boost for locals and tourists

RMT SAFETY rep Barry West recently attended an event to celebrate the redoubling of the main line between Burngullow and Probus in Cornwall.

The eight mile stretch of track between Truro and St.Austell, which has some sharp curves and a high radius, was singled in 1986 to save money as traffic on the Cornish section was considered to be in decline.

However, the railway has become busier during recent years and the £14.3m redoubling project will remove the bottleneck on the main line between Plymouth and Penzance, which has impacted on both timetable flexibility and punctuality.

The Probus-Burngullow redoubling scheme, which will service Wessex Trains, First Great Western, Virgin CrossCountry and Arriva Trains Wales, has the potential to generate 8.6 million additional passenger miles over a 30-year period, and 283,000 additional passenger journeys.

Barry points out that track access for maintenance should be increased as there will be a reduction in frequency of services as there will now be two lines to run trains over.

He said that with the re-commissioning of the up line,



OLD MEETS THE NEW: The City of Truro steam train passes a Mancunian Voyager

there will no longer be the need for Positions of Safety on viaducts at Coombe and Fal.

"A permanent cess is being constructed and this is yet another trackworker safety benefit. "The test will be to make sure this is maintained and the standard is kept up and I will be watching," he said.

The work was managed by Network Rail and 30,000 tonnes of spoil were removed, 50,000 tonnes of ballast were used, 22,000 metres of new track was laid and 10,000 hours of work were undertaken, all on time and within budget.

Network Rail chief executive John Armitt said: "The dedication

of the Network Rail teams involved in this project has meant that we have been able to provide long term benefits for the people of Cornwall as well as the millions who visit the region each year".



SAFETY: RMT safety rep Barry West celebrates with Network Rail chief John Armitt

Role of COSS examined

RMT and Network Rail have agreed to set up a joint steering group with representatives from both organisations to look at the role and responsibility of Controller Of Site Safety (COSS).

The remit of the steering group, which is expected to meet four times a year, will be to identify issues relating to the safe performance of the COSS role and the safety of track workers for whom the COSS is responsible.

The group will also monitor and comment on progress with initiatives relating to or impacting on the COSS.

It will have the power to propose further action where felt necessary and to communicate progress to the workforce.

The following have been appointed to the steering group by the union:

Mick Cash (Senior Assistant General Secretary)
Peter Trend (GGC Officer)
Barry West (Network Rail)
Dennis McPake (EWS)
Bill Rawcliffe (Jarvis Rail)
Frank Cochrane (First Projects)
Martin Butt (Balfour Beatty Rail Projects Ltd)
Garry Hassell (Amec Spie Rail)

Northern Rail plan to cut services

LESS than two months after rail privateers took over train services across the north of England, plans are being drawn up to cut services.

The Strategic Rail Authority review of the Northern Rail Franchise could result in further service cuts, replacement of trains with buses and above inflation fares increases.

The franchise was created in December when a consortium comprising of Serco and Dutch railways began a nine-year

deal worth £2.5 billion to replace operators, Arriva Trains Northern and First North Western.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said commuters and rail workers across the north of England had already suffered more than enough cuts in rail services, and there was no appetite for yet more cuts, 'bustitution' or massive fare increases.

"The problem with Britain's railways is not so much the amount of money going in but

the amount being drained out by the private sector in profits.

"That is the hole that needs plugging, yet only recently MPs voted down an opportunity to do just that.

"The government can allow the privatised nightmare to continue and give us Beeching all over again, or it can recognise that a modern railway system must be joined up and publicly owned," he said.

The latest plans come barely three months after the SRA

said that the new Northern franchise would 'deliver better service to passengers, and greater value', and would 'bring to an end any remaining uncertainty over the future shape of rail services in the North of England'.

Labour MP George Stevenson, who sits on the transport select committee, slammed the threatened closures. He warned that it was part of the erosion of local services and set a precedent for future cutbacks.

Certification Officer rejects RMT breach of rule allegations

THE CERTIFICATION Officer has rejected claims that there was any breach of RMT rules or the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act in the conduct of the election for RMT president last year.

In the ruling, the Certification Officer rejected seven complaints, which were jumped on by the anti-trade union press

including The Times newspaper, by one of the losing candidates of alleged breaches of RMT rules in the election's conduct. An eighth complaint was ruled to be outside the CO's jurisdiction.

The complaints were made after a letter from RMT general secretary Bob Crow was circulated with the election addresses of the candidates, on

legal advice, in order to correct material inaccuracies in the complainant's election address.

"The Certification Officer has

exonerated the union and me as its general secretary of any wrong-doing in this matter," Bob said.

RMT union boss 'taints election'

BIASED: How the anti-union media portrayed the story.

Freightliner exposed for "daylight robbery"

Midland Mainline uses anti-union laws to block action

RAIL operator Midland Mainline has used anti-union laws to block industrial action in a dispute over the safe operation of multiple-unit trains.

The High Court made the decision last month to block the dispute on a technicality – despite a 90 per cent 'yes' vote for action among the 100 guards involved.

The union is currently re-balloting the guards affected on whether they wish to take industrial action short of a strike.

The dispute centres on the company's instruction that multiple-unit trains with no connecting door should be operated with just a single guard aboard – even though in an emergency the guard would be cut off from the train's second unit and unable to aid passengers.

The court backed the company's application that the union's ballot for action was 'tainted' under anti-union legislation because guards had been refusing, on safety grounds, to operate such trains unless the inaccessible portion was 'locked out' of use.

Despite repudiation by the union of any unofficial action, the court found against the union.

"Once again these pernicious laws are being used to frustrate the democratic will of our members, who have voted by nine to one to take action for safety," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"These laws are nasty enough at the best of times, but the company has persuaded the court to adopt a particularly narrow and perverse interpretation which will give employers far more scope to claim that ballots are 'tainted' – and that has serious implications for the whole trade-union movement.

"This dispute is about safety pure and simple, yet rather than deal with the issues the company has gone running to the courts to use the law as a battering ram against our members and the travelling public.

"We cannot allow the safety of our members and the travelling public to be subordinated to cost-cutting," Bob said.



ABOVE: The Daily Mirror exposes Fat Cat rail executives

FREIGHTLINER chiefs are to pocket £30 million between them by flogging off the firm they bought for just £5 million.

Following the privatisation of British Rail, bosses got £75 million of taxpayers' money after they snapped it up.

However, the firm, which transports containers and other materials across the country, pays its drivers less than £6 per hour.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that employees are forced to work 60 hours a week at all hours to make a decent wage.

"Meanwhile we discover the bosses are busy lining their own pockets," he said.

Management own a 30 per cent stake worth nearly £30 million in the company and chief

executive Alan Galley and finance boss Doug Downie will pocket £5 million each.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow described the sting as "daylight robbery".

"Freightliner was built up at taxpayers' expense, flogged off at a fraction of its real value and then still fed huge sums in public subsidy.

"Now it is being sold on to make a handful of individuals £30 million richer," he said.

Labour MP and RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell said that the public were increasingly sickened by the obscene profits made out of the mess of rail privatisation.

"This is another example of why we need to bring the industry back into public ownership," he said.

It's time for action



RMT general secretary Bob Crow looks at the Railway Bill and the union's Rail Against Privatisation campaign

THE government's failure last month to accept changes to the Railways Bill that would give the public sector the chance to show that it can run train services better than the privateers revealed just how divorced its policy is from public opinion.

Three out of four people favour ditching the failed rail privateers altogether, but the government refused to accept even the idea of an independent assessment of whether a franchise should be brought back in-house.

Still, 51 MPs – and not all of them lefties, either – did back RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell's call for the public sector to be given that chance to prove itself capable of doing the job.

And it would have been more, but for the whips quietly encouraging MPs to stay away.

More than half of all Labour MPs stayed away from the Railways Bill debate altogether, a sickie rebellion that showed how deeply unpopular the government's dogmatic attachment to private rail really is.

And a measure of how keenly aware many Labour

MPs are that being seen to endorse private rail would not go down very well among their voters – whether in the traditional Labour heartlands or in the southeast commuter belt.

For if there is any issue that unites folk across the usual political divides it is this one.

And as if to underline the folly of rejecting the public option, just after the Rail Bill debate came the news that the Strategic Rail Authority had called in the consultants with a view to cutting rail services in the Northern franchise.

Those who had hoped that rail privatisation will be off the radar screens during the coming election are in for a bit of a shock.

For in the run-up to the election RMT is embarking on a major campaign to put public ownership of our railways at the heart of the domestic political agenda.

Men and women from every RMT region will join in a march from Glasgow on April 15 and 16, through towns and cities in Scotland and England, culminating in a demonstration and rally in London on Saturday April 30.

rap
railagainstprivatisation

Along the way MPs and candidates will be asked where they really stand on rail privatisation. They will be asked if it is OK to see the same contractors who were thrown off rail maintenance still raking it in on renewals contracts.

They will be asked if it is OK that three banks rake in super-profits by leasing trains to train operators at

outrageous rates.

In short, they will be asked if they are happy to see the private rail nightmare continue – or if they want to end it once and for all, in line with Labour policy.

You can help put public ownership of our railways at the forefront of the election campaign – write to your MP and candidates asking them where they stand. Write to your local paper, call your local radio station – and get involved with the RAP campaign.

● *For details of what is happening in your area email James Croy at RMT at j.croy@rmt.org.uk, or call organisers Larry Cotton on 07793 052 138 or Geoff Revell on 07753 748 066.*

RMT aids tsunami victims

FORMER RMT security officer Noel Fernando flew out to his Sri Lankan home town of Moratuwa last month with £3,500 in medical supplies provided by RMT.

Hundreds were killed when the tidal wave reached Moratuwa, just west of the capital Colombo, in the wake of the Boxing Day earthquake, and as many as 15,000 were left homeless in the aftermath.

"The dead were mainly poor

people who lived on the coast – carpenters and fishermen, and whose simple homes were easily swept away," says Noel, now based in London.

"Those who survived have been left without boats or tools and little chance of making a living," Noel added.

"We heard that Noel's home town was badly affected and asked him to take medical supplies with him when he flew out to help," said general secretary Bob Crow.

"The RMT executive voted to make a £3,000 emergency donation. Staff and officers responded magnificently.

"Many had already given to the national appeal, but staff also voted to donate a payment due to them for having their pay-day shifted, putting another £4,500 into the disaster fund," Bob said.

The executive also invited branches to make donations through the TUC's appeal.

RMT have contacted rail unions in Thailand and India asking what specific help it can give in the longer term.

● Noel is keeping head office informed on the situation in Moratuwa, and RMT News will carry an update next month.

Bring the troops home

193

Demonstrate Saturday 19 March central London 1pm

Stop the War Coalition, CND and the Muslim Association of Great Britain www.stopwar.org.uk 020 7278 6694 office@stopwar.org.uk



Designed by David Gentleman Printed by Lithosphere 020 7686 6111

Fighting for public railways

THE RMT parliamentary group together with our colleagues from ASLEF made significant interventions on the government's Railways Bill.

Complex parliamentary procedures make placing amendments to Bill, let alone having those amendments debated upon or voted upon, an extremely difficult task.

Yet after a week of intensive activity we were able to push the issues that matter to RMT members to the forefront of the parliamentary agenda. With support from RMT head office we drafted three separate amendments calling for public ownership of the railways, to remove the bustitution, clause in the Bill and for travel facilities for all rail staff.

Once the amendments had been drafted there was an intensive ring round of MPs to seek support. A great deal of this important work was carried out by Simeon Andrews and Andrew Fisher in the RMT parliamentary office. This was backed up by briefings and direct mailings from Unity House.

This lobbying process ensured that when the Bill came to be considered there was enough support from MPs for all our amendments to be debated.

Despite parliamentary time rapidly running out, I was able to force a last hour vote on an amendment which would oblige the government to consider allowing the public sector to run train services.

51 MPs, including 28 Labour, voted to support this moderate proposal. But the real story was that half the Parliamentary Labour Party went missing for the vote.

This was not unexpected



RMT parliamentary convenor John MacDonnell MP explains the goings on around the Railways Bill

and huge numbers of Labour MPs simply would not turn up to vote for the government and against party policy of rail renationalisation. Labour MPs voted with their feet, refusing to support the government's blinkered privatisation agenda on rail.

It was also encouraging to note that those who did support the amendment came from a broad range of the Parliamentary Labour Party, including

former foreign secretary Robin Cook who made an important intervention in the debate, reminding the government of the success of South Eastern Trains in the public sector.

The Bill now goes to the Lords and the government is aiming for Royal Assent by the end of March. As well as continuing the lobbying of Ministers, RMT will also be taking the campaign to the Lords.

South Eastern Trains

JUST before the Railways Bill was debated, Labour MPs Clive Efford, John Austin and John MacDonnell met Transport Minister Tony McNulty to make the case for keeping South Eastern Trains in the public sector. These three MPs have been at the forefront of this campaign and were well briefed by RMT prior to the meeting.

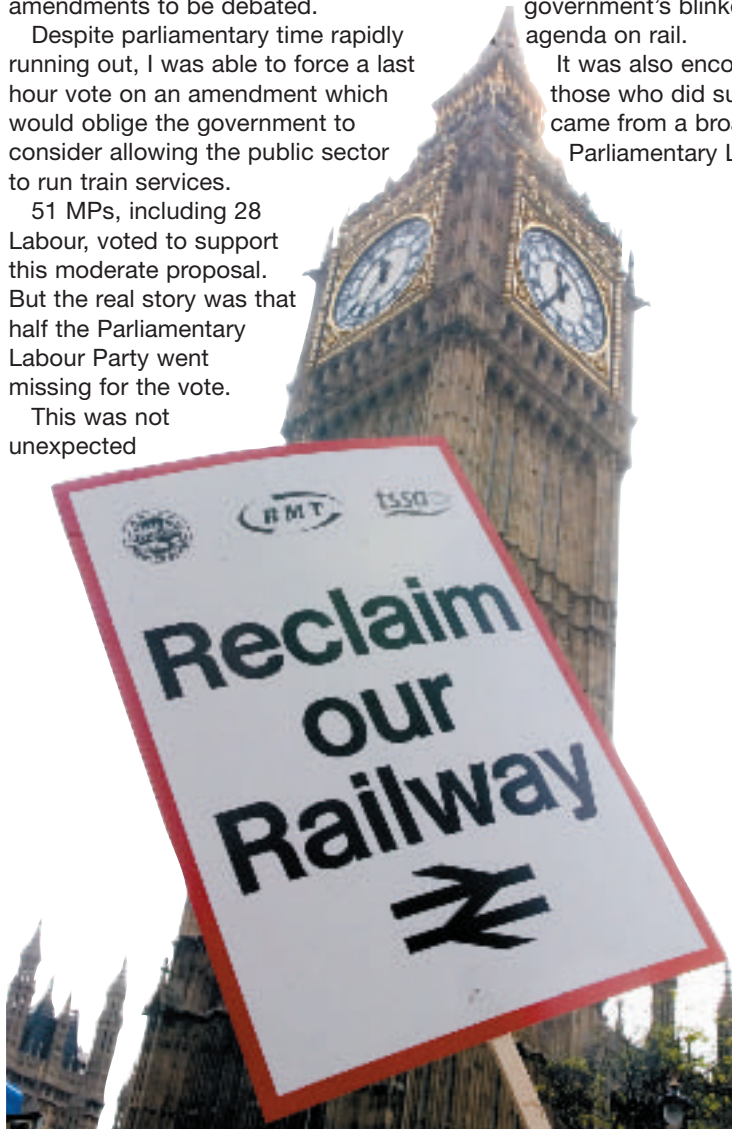
Not surprisingly, arguments about improved punctuality, better financial management and a massive drop in customer complaints fell on death ears. The Minister and his team provided no rational or intellectual justification for re-privatising South Eastern Trains. They simply stated that it was government policy to have private operators running passenger services and that South Eastern Trains could not be treated differently.

When John MacDonnell MP asked why it was government policy, again there was no credible response the Minister.

"He might as well have just said "because it is, because it is, because it is", he said.

However, John said that campaign was still far from over.

"I am sure the RMT Rail Against Privatisation campaign will be making this a key issue over the coming months," he said.



Scottish lobby says no to CalMac privatisation

RMT consider balloting for industrial action after the Scottish Executive invite private bids for life line ferry services from Gourock to Dunoon

HOURS after a lobby of the Scottish Parliament to keep Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services in public hands earlier this month, ministers pressed ahead with the unpopular tendering plans without consultation.

Despite the lobby outside Holyrood in Edinburgh and MSPs voting against the plans in December, adverts appeared inviting bids to take over the Gourock-Dunoon service.

First Minister Jack McConnell claims that European Union competition law means that all CalMac west coast routes must be opened up for privatisation.

Altmark

However, the Altmark judgement by the European Court of Justice has cast a doubt on the need to proceed with the privatisation of these essential lifeline

services.

The court considered the case of Altmark Trans, a German bus company, and decided that it was not unlawful for payments to be made to companies providing essential services and they should not always be seen as state aid.

RMT national shipping secretary Steve Todd said that there was no evidence that the executive had been pressurised into privatisation.

"As far as we are concerned, we have not been properly consulted about the effects of this tendering process," he said.

He warned that a new private operator would squeeze pay and conditions in order to squeeze profits out of the service.

"There are no assurances about what will happen to our members if another ferry operator comes in.

"We will ballot the whole Caledonian MacBrayne workforce because it doesn't

just affect the Gourock-Dunoon service, it could have a knock-on effect for the rest of the employees in the company," he said.

Lobby

Scottish TUC general secretary Bill Speirs joined CalMac crews at the lobby and said that communities who relied on the lifeline



LOBBY: Bob Crow and STUC head Bill Speirs defend lifeline ferry services



SUPPORT: RFA Gold Rover ships' company cheers on Ellen MacArthur and wish her the best of luck in her solo around the world record attempt.

RFA escort Ellen MacArthur

LONE yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur had some unexpected company as she headed southwards in mid-Atlantic in December in her bid to make the fastest time for a single-handed round-the-world voyage. Just two degrees north of the Equator she met up with Royal Navy frigate HMS Iron Duke and Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker RFA Gold Rover.

The two ships were heading northwards from Brazil, and were monitoring Ellen's progress since she left France and have been updating her website with weather reports. When the yacht appeared in sight of the ships, the crews took the opportunity to offer Ellen full support and cheer her on.

Tonnage tax update

THE government has announced plans to set up a special working party to consider measures to improve the employment opportunities for UK seafarers following a campaign by the union to demand positive action. RMT has pointed out that while ship owners are taking millions from tax payers through the tax concession, they are under no obligation to employ UK shippers.

This announcement follows the review of the tonnage tax and the possibility that a training and employment link might be introduced for UK seafarers. However, it is disappointing that the government has not been prepared to introduce such a link despite all RMT representations, and the support of over 160 MPs for an Early Day Motion on the subject.

They have not completely ruled the measure out. However, the presence of the Chamber of Shipping on the working party makes a firm link unlikely as the government would have to impose a mandatory link on the industry assuming that the working party does not agree to this proposal. RMT is of course represented within this working party and will be arguing for firm proposals.

Irrespective of the findings of the working party, it remains RMT's firm belief that the tonnage tax must be linked to training and employment. RMT have written to the Shipping Minister David Jamieson that action must be taken.

In addition, RMT has met with NUMAST under the auspices of the TUC in an effort to boost the chance of a link. Further meetings with the Minister involving all parties are also planned.





services were very apprehensive about the future.

"Despite the claims of the Scottish

Executive in their pursuit of this deeply unpopular action we do not believe tendering is necessary and many support our view," he said.

He pointed to recent report by Dr Paul Bennett of the University of Edinburgh which said that tendering was unlikely to bring "any discernible benefit" to the ferry routes.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow insisted that to protect CalMac services and jobs the tendering experiment should be abandoned.

"There is ample evidence that splitting up

and selling off CalMac's routes is not only unnecessary but that it threatens to undermine its lifeline ferry services as well as the security and livelihoods of those who provide them.

"This is about new Labour's free-market dogma, and the Scottish parliament itself has voted to reject the plan.

"RMT's first duty is to protect the jobs and conditions of our members, and we are demanding assurances that there will be no worsening of the pensions, pay and conditions of current and future CalMac employees," Bob said.

Stena Line deal

MEMBERS at Stena Line voted overwhelmingly to accept the 2004 pay offer following a referendum of members. The two year deal, which following long negotiations includes temporary staff, is as follows:

Year 1

- A 3.8 per cent increase in basic rates of pay with effect from November 2004.

Year 2

- An RPI plus 0.5 per cent increase in basic rates of pay with effect from November 2005 subject to the company meeting budgetary targets.

The level of RPI will be calculated according to the figure released in Mid October 2005.

Reduction in working hours

RMT put strong arguments for a reduction in working hours for all grades bringing daily hours in line with other groups within Stena. In a particular effort to progress the claim, the union said that night workers should be the starting point. The union agreed to submit a detailed paper to the company outlining the case for a reduction in hours. A working party will be set up to consider it.

Harmonisation of pay rates

RMT requested that there be

harmonisation of the OBS rates of pay with those on conventional vessels. The company were not prepared to move on this while the union still had a claim for four weeks paid leave pending. RMT is not happy with this response and intend to pursue the matter further.

Pensions

RMT put forward a claim for the Stena final salary scheme to be opened up to allow all employees the opportunity to join. Stena claim the scheme is closed to new applications although they allowed the TUPED former P&O staff in (TUPE does not cover pension arrangements). This is an issue which RMT will continue to pursue.



Re-convened Biennial General Meeting and lobby

Tuesday March 8 2005

Calling all shipping members

Last year's Shipping and Docks Biennial General Meeting agreed to reconvene in the House of Commons.

The intention of the BGM is to highlight the serious situation for UK seafaring ratings to MPs. The union is inviting as many members as possible to attend and to join a lobby of MPs that will commence at 2pm.

Members are advised to start gathering at 11am for a press photograph and start queuing at the House of Commons entrance at 11.30am. The meeting and rally commences at midday.

Calling RMT busworkers – let's make buses safer

THE government recently unveiled plans to fine bus operators for late or non-running buses.

The intention is good but when the employer is asked to improve things, it all too often results in more pressure being put on workers often already 'under the cosh' to cut corners and turn a blind eye to safety.

In line with requests from bus branches and the bus grades conference, RMT now building a picture of safety problems in the bus industry.

"We need information about accidents, how and when they happen, and what can be done to avoid them," says senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash.

"Building a picture of the situation is a vital part of the process – so let us know what is happening in your company," he said.

● If you have any information phone the freephone helpline 0800 376 3706 or e-mail info@rmt.org.uk



Pay deal agreed at Wincanton Logistics Swindon

- Basic hourly rate to be increased from £8 to £8.20, effective from November 28 2004.
- Over time payment for hours worked Monday – Friday will be increased by £10.50 to £11.50 per hour.
- Class1 drivers to be paid £12 per hour for Saturday working and £15 per hour for Sunday working.
- A new Night Rate of £2.50 per hour.
- Other current allowances to be increased by 2.5 per cent
- Backpay from May 1 2004 to November 27 2004 to be paid on the basis of a 3 per cent increase in overall earnings.

Deal at Joint Retail Logistics

MEMBERS at JRL voted in referendum to accept the company's offer for the

following pay award to be effective from January 2005.

- A three per cent increase in basic and premiums for all grades
- A one hour reduction in the working week for 45 hour annualised, inclusive of two cleaners at Coventry.
- An improvement in Company Sick Pay by £5 per day from 3rd day of absence for 45 hour annualised, drivers, other hourly paid; with the exception of Coventry (who are currently trialling a new scheme), all 39 hour annualised and the 42.5 hour salaried staff at Enfield.
- A commitment to enter into meaning full discussions to take place in respect of Road Transport Working Time Directive. A working party to be formed with a view to first discussions taking place in early January 2005.

Lincolnshire Roadcar deal

The second stage of the pay offer negotiated in October 2003 was implemented last month. The offer was 3.3 per cent or inflation plus 0.5 per cent, whichever is

the greater.

The Retail Price Index for November 2004 was published and it showed an annual increase of 3.4 per cent. Having added the 0.5 per cent to this, it generates a figure of 3.9 per cent and this will be used for the new rates for 2005, which are as follows:-

DRIVERS	NEW RATE
WITH ONE YEAR	£5.85
WITH TWO YEARS	£6.04
WITH THREE YEARS PLUS	£6.24

The fitters' new rates are as follows:-

FITTERS	NEW RATE
SKILLED	£6.91
SKILLED NIGHT FITTER	£8.85
SEMI-SKILLED	£5.55
APPRENTICE 1 YEAR 50%	£3.46
APPRENTICE 2 YEAR 65%	£4.50
APPRENTICE 3 YEAR 80%	£5.53
APPRENTICE 4 YEAR 90%	£6.22

FITTERS (SHIFT WORKERS)	NEW RATE
SKILLED	7.82
SEMI SKILLED	6.28
SEMI SKILLED NIGHT FITTER	7.38



On your marks - get set - go!



AFTER working in the rail industry for 35 years, RMT member Tom Angus has decided to take part in this year's London Marathon in aid of the union's Orphan Fund.

ON APRIL 17 Tom will be rising early and running just over 26 miles across London to celebrate the 125th year of the orphan fund. This fund is the biggest of its kind in Britain and it has paid out more than £7.5 million to 50,000 orphans since 1880.

Tom's decision to run for the orphan fund is particularly poignant as a year ago he survived the terrible events at Tebay, when a runaway trailer killed four of his work gang.

Tom is now back at work and says that the worst is over. "I have no physical injuries so it is great to do something positive for those that have lost loved ones," he said.

Challenge

Tom admits that the Marathon, the world's biggest fun run, is a daunting challenge but remains quietly confident. "It gives you an incentive to get round that course when you know that others will benefit as a result," he says.

At 59, Tom keeps in impressive shape by coaching a local football club, Lancaster City Juniors. He now runs six days a week in preparation for the big day, doing a five mile run at least once a week. So how long does he think it will take him to run the Marathon?

"I'm aiming at five hours but we will see," he says. Tom is also watching what he eats before and after the big run.

"I have been told that a tuna sandwich is very beneficial after a run like that but I'm not sure if the shops will still be open when I cross the line!" he says.

After Tom crosses the finishing line in London he will be taking himself and his family off for a well-earned rest on a seven-day cruise in the Mediterranean he won in a competition. Who could say he doesn't deserve it?

● If you are your branch would like to sponsor Tom please fill in the form below and return to Unity House.



I...../..... branch wishes to sponsor Tom Angus to run the London Marathon in aid of the RMT orphan fund.

£.....

Payable to RMT orphan fund.

Send to: RMT orphan fund,
Unity House, 39 Chalton Street London, NW1 1JD

Railing against privatisation

Just as RMT launches the Rail Against Privatisation campaign, another near disaster caused by shoddy track renewal work by private contractors has come to light

SHODDY track renewal work by private contractor Mowlem near Watford on the West Coast main line led to shut down as emergency repairs were carried out by Network Rail last month. For 12 hours before the glaring errors were discovered trains were travelling up to 100 mph over the affected tracks.

Clamps were missing, bolts were not properly tightened, sleepers were twisted and sections of rail were misaligned, just the sort of circumstances that led to disasters like Hatfield and Potters Bar.

Mowlem, which has since been sus-

pended from the £25 million contract, handed control of the track back to Network Rail after weekend work on Monday January 10 after one of its supervisors signed the job off claiming the track was “fit for purpose”.

However, signal staff at Watford shut down the line after a driver reported a “rough ride”.

Network Rail, which has brought all maintenance back in-house to improve safety and efficiency, sent out their own inspectors and maintenance team to carry out emergency work.

A Network Rail spokesman said: “The piece of track in question had seem-

ingly deteriorated throughout the day after work was carried out”.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow described the incident as a “disgrace in an industry in which safety should come first”.

“Only some decisive action by railway professionals – and a good slice of luck before they were alerted – prevented a potentially massive accident.

“The private sector has been booted



DEATH RAIL

For 12 hours, 100mph trains thundered over track so loose you could slide a phone under it. How could it happen?



DANGER: Phone fits in gap between a sleeper and rail

EXCLUSIVE

By CLINTON MANNING

A STRETCH of 100mph track on Britain's busiest railway line had to be shut after bodged repairs.

Dozens of packed trains passed the spot for 12 hours before the faults were discovered near Watford.

Sections of rail were out of line, clamps missing, bolts not properly tightened and sleepers twisted.

One gap was big enough to slide in a mobile phone. Private contractor Mowlem have been suspended.

FULL STORY: PAGES 4 & 5

out of rail maintenance. So why allow the crazy patchwork of contractors, subcontractors and agencies wreak havoc on renewals?" he asked.

He said that the incident underlines just why all track work needs to be brought back in-house.

Labour MP and RMT parliamentary convenor John MacDonnell said that it was time the entire industry was brought back into public ownership,

including the train operating companies and the lucrative rolling stock companies.

"How many more passengers will have to be killed by this disgraceful fragmented system before the government acts? It is time this fiasco is brought to an end," he said.

● If you have a horror story about rail privatisation tell the union on 0800 376 3706 or email info@rmt.org.uk

Don't forget to
send off your
freepost
postcards
enclosed in this
magazine

rap
rail against privatisation

In this election year RMT has launched Rail Against Privatisation, a major national march and campaign for public ownership of the railways and an end to the part-privatisation of London Underground.

Starting in Glasgow on April 15 and culminating with a rally in London on April 30, there will be events, meetings and rallies along the route, as well as in other towns and cities around Britain, involving every RMT region.

For more information regularly check the RMT website.

End PPP

LAST month also saw further chaos on London Underground after Tube privateer Metronet failed to complete night engineering work on the Central Line, stranding 100,000 passengers. The Circle, District and Hammersmith and City lines also failed to open on schedule.

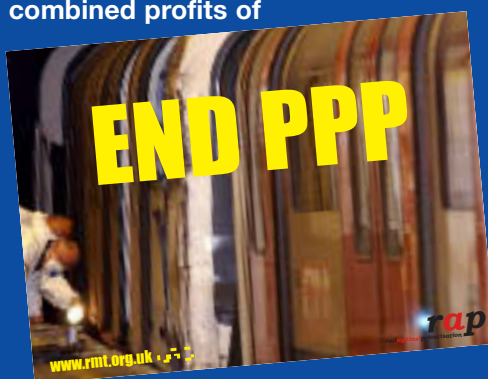
A London Underground spokesman said: "We have been far from impressed with Metronet's performance this week.

"Today's problems on the Central line follow yesterday's on the District and Circle lines, all of which are the responsibility of Metronet," he said.

A full investigation is taking place but it has since transpired that work replacing the Central line track was sub-contracted to rail privateer Balfour Beatty.

The continuing failures by Metronet and Tube Lines have not stopped the privateers making combined profits of nearly £100 million during the first year of the part-privatisation alone. They have contracts to maintain the track for 30 years.

The union said that Network Rail had taken maintenance work in-house precisely to avoid the type of thing now occurring on the Tube.



LOOSE CLIP: Loose clip not holding the rail



MISALIGNED TRACK: Two pieces of track don't line up

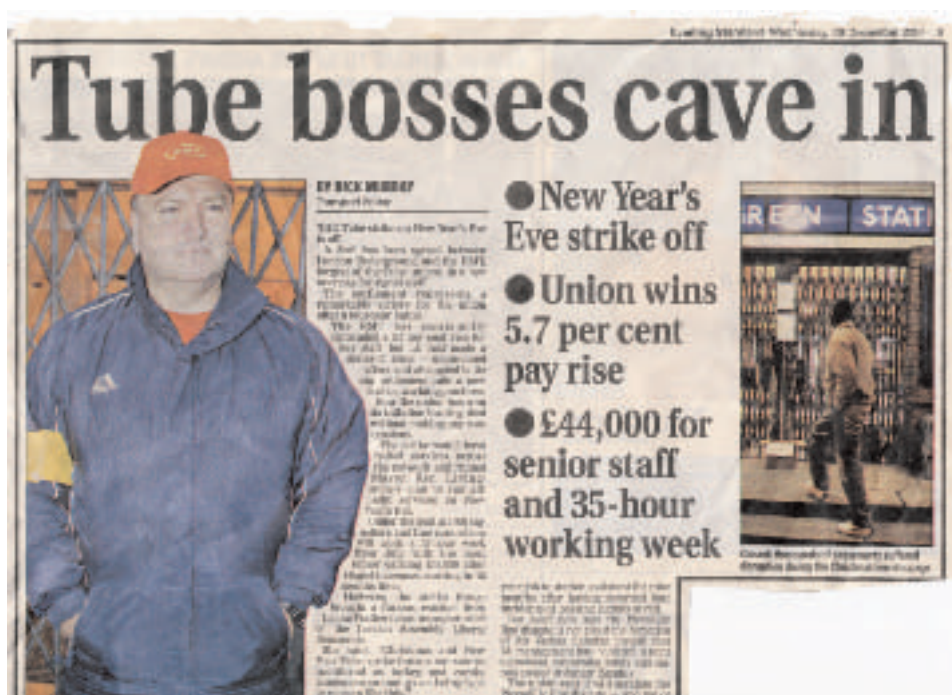


LOOSE BOLTS: Two rails that need welding are held by a clamp resting on ballast and the bolts are not tight



TWISTED SLEEPER: This sleeper is deformed and several clips are not secure

SIGNAL V



MEDIA: How the press reported the deal

Signalling and service control staff on London Underground have won one of the best improvements to pay, working hours and conditions in the entire rail industry for a decade

RMT Tube and line-control staff voted by more than two to one to accept a pay and grading offer, finally bringing to an end a four-year dispute over pay rates, pay structures, negotiating procedures, hours and conditions.

Following the threat of two days of strike action over Christmas and New Year, management agreed to multi-thousand pound

increases and 15 days extra leave.

The deal will give signallers and line-control staff a 35-hour week from July, and bring staged increases in pay to between £31,450 for an ordinary signaller and £44,000 at the top end of the line-control scale by July 2007.

"This deal, achieved by our members' solidarity and determination, has put them at the top of the industrial pay league," RMT



VICTORY: Bob Crow with RMT rep John Cott

general secretary Bob Crow said.

"That solidarity also saw an end to the threat of job losses and removed a number of unacceptable strings, including the threatened cut in minimum rest periods between shifts.

"This is the deal our members have been waiting for four years to achieve, putting in place a new negotiating framework while protecting local industrial relations," Bob said.

RMT assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said it was a "solid" deal which finally set down a clear

VICTORY



errell (standing up) at Earls Court control room

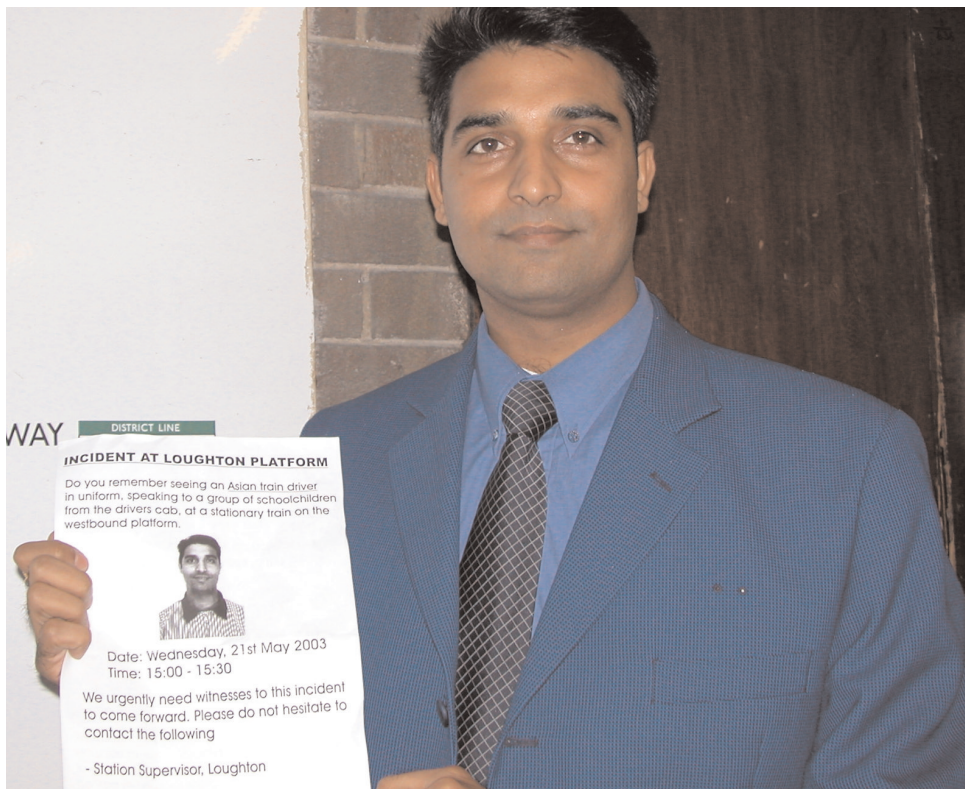
pay structure for all grades (see panel on the right).

“Lines of promotion are also protected for grades which, within the next couple of years, will have to start training to fill the new generation of signalling boxes – starting with Highgate,” he said.

Pat said that as a result of the deal a new negotiating framework was now in place, which fully protected local industrial relations.

“We now have a new, all-embracing, functional committee with a great working majority for this union,” he said.

Grade and existing Salary	New Salary / Banding	Increases
All figures are at April 2004 rates of pay		
Signal Operator 1 £29,008	£30,250	£1,242 (4.3%) - July 2005
Amersham – Hammersmith - Upminster – New Cross - Waterloo.	£30,850	£1,842 (6.5%) - July 2006
	£31,450	£2,442 (8.5%) - July 2007
Signal Operator 2 £29,008	£31,006	£1,998 (6.9%) - July 2005
Rickmansworth – Harrow on the Hill - Rayners Lane – Barking - Whitechapel - Edgware Road – LIA's (existing AG1)	£31,621	£2,613 (9%) - July 2006
	£32,236	£3,231 (11.5%) - July 2007
Relief Signal Operator £29,153	£31,781	£2,628 (9%) - July 2005
	£32,412	£3,259 (11%) - July 2006
	£33,042	£3,889 (13.5%) - July 2007
Senior Signal Operator £38,427	£39,388	£961 (2.6%) - July 2005
	£39,788	£1,361 (3.5%) - July 2006
All Existing Q3 Bands (Con Level 1) £36,149 - £40,327	£37,388 - £40,327	Average £1,958 (3.5%)
SCCA's (Baker Street Met) DMTM's (Stratford Market depot) TMA's (Neasden Tower)	(for existing SCCA's at Date of agreement to receive a min of £39,388)	Min of £935 to Max of £2,939
All Existing Q2 Bands (Con Level 2) £37,725 - £43 ,953	£41,335 - £43,953	Average £2,159 (5.5%)
Train Movements Manager Duty Manager Signals Line Controller Service Duty Manger	(for existing SDM, LC, TMM, DMS. at Date of agreement to receive a min of £42,201)	Min of £1,239 to Max of £4,476
Existing Q1 Bands (Manager Level 1) £37,725 - £47,725	£45,052 - £47,725	Average £4,606 (11.2%)
Duty Line Manager		Min of £1,126 to Max of £7,327
Existing Q1a Bands (Manager Level 2) £37,725 - £51,350	£48,918 - £51,350	
Duty Line Control Manager		Average £3,819 (8.3%)
Duty Operations Manager		Min of £1,222 to Max of £9,530



FLYER: Sanjeev with his leaflet he produced in order to find crucial witnesses

Justice at last

Sanjeev Verma's life became a nightmare when he found himself wrongly convicted of indecency and was sacked by London Underground

TODAY Sanjeev is back driving trains on the Central Line after he successfully cleared his name with the help of RMT solicitors Kaim Todner.

His calm demeanour hides the scars and trauma he and his family have suffered.

His ordeal began when British Transport Police arrested him and searched his house.

The only evidence offered was the word of a gang of children and allegations by their parents. At no time did the BTP attempt to verify stories or look for witnesses. Sanjeev was even prevented from looking for witnesses himself by London Underground. Roy Parfitt of Kaim Todner also warned that Sanjeev's shocking treatment was not an isolated one.

A victim of circumstance

In May 2003 Sanjeev Verma was walking along the platform at Loughton station to

carry out his duties as a driver. His attention was drawn to a group of school children congregated around the door to the driver's cabin.

Sanjeev became concerned that the noisy group may have caused damage, as had happened in the past.

He entered the train through the passenger compartment and approached the driver's cabin and said 'excuse me' to the group.

The children then congregated around asking how the various levers worked. Sanjeev attempted to answer the questions and then asked the children to move away before commencing his journey.

The following day at the same time, Sanjeev noticed a girl on a bench who was shouting abusive language to a group of boys who were on the train.

As he approached the driver's cabin he noticed the same group of children gathering

around the door to the drivers' compartment again from within the passenger compartment.

Silent witness

During these events Sanjeev noticed a woman in the carriage reading a magazine. He told the children that there was a girl on the platform using "foul and abusive language" who should be reported to their parents or the school.

Sanjeev thought nothing more of the incident until British Transport Police officers arrested him on suspicion of indecency with children and he suffered the ignominy of having his house searched in front of his wife and three young children.

Sanjeev was interviewed, where he fully explained all the events.

Despite his innocent explanation, he was charged with using threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour with intent to cause distress to the children.

Witchhunt

In scenes reminiscent of *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller's harrowing play about witchhunts, allegations were made by the children that Sanjeev had used profanities. By September the Crown Prosecution Service had brought charges and Sanjeev was convicted of the offence, fined £400 costs and ordered to complete 60 hours community service.

Unfortunately, RMT solicitors Kaim Todner were not instructed to represent Sanjeev until after his conviction. However, they advised him on his appeal.

A noticeable aspect of the case was the statements of the four girls. Whilst there were differences between the statements, the words they alleged Sanjeev had used were identical in all the statements, suggesting collusion between the four girls and the families.

A former Metropolitan Police officer, Sanjeev insisted that he was a professional family man that would not use profanities in front of children. He also made it clear to the police that there were independent witnesses who could verify his story.

As a result it became a matter of paramount importance that any witnesses be traced. However, the BTP made no attempt to find them.

Despite the need to find witnesses, LUL barred Sanjeev from attending Loughton underground station, making his search impossible.

When Kaim Todner sought permission to attend at Loughton station with Sanjeev, they were again blocked by LUL. The company even refused to allow Sanjeev to try to identify witnesses on the CCTV system.

In February 2004 Sanjeev was sacked. The effect of this dismissal on a family man with three children who had consistently stated his innocence can only be imagined.

Many would have buckled under the

strain. But Sanjeev, known as "Tiger" by workmates who had signed a petition against his dismissal, set about to prove his innocence.

He produced his own leaflet asking for witnesses and began leafleting the station.

Vindication

After nights of handing out flyers to no avail, a woman took a leaflet and walked on before she stopped and turned around and said: "I was there and I saw what happened".

She was the woman on the train reading the magazine. It was a moment Sanjeev will never forget.

"The hairs on my arm stood up and they still do when I talk about it.

"At last there was hope, a chance to clear my name," he says.

The woman remembered the day because her car was not working and therefore, unusually, she used the tube. By a happy coincidence the same thing had happened.

By the end of the month two independent witnesses who remembered the incident had come forward.

They said that the children were rude, noisy and badly behaved.

They were adamant that Sanjeev had not used profanities and acted in a professional manner at all times.

The second witness said that she would have reported Sanjeev herself had she heard any such language.

Almost a year after the incident, Sanjeev's appeal was heard at Southend Crown Court. The prosecution would not accept the version of events given by the two witnesses and sought to call two boys who were not present at the alleged offence, in order to cast doubt on Sanjeev's credibility.

However, having heard all the evidence, the judge and two magistrates returned within minutes to find Sanjeev not guilty.

Contact your solicitor

Roy Parfitt points out that Sanjeev's treatment is all too common.

"It is absolutely imperative that all efforts are made to explore every avenue open to the defence at a very early stage.

"In this case it was fortunate that the two traced witnesses had a good memory and were willing to attend court and assist Sanjeev," he said.

It is essential that RMT members who find themselves in similar situations contact the union and solicitors at the earliest opportunity, prior to answering police questions, in order to get the best quality advice and assistance.

Today Sanjeev Verma is relieved that he can return to work in the knowledge that justice has been done with the help of his union.

"I have had great support from my workmates and my family, and I could not have achieved this victory without RMT," he says.



VINDICATED: Sanjeev Verma back at work after the courts cleared him of all charges



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

**KAIM TODNER
SOLICITORS**

Appointed criminal defence solicitors to the 

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

FREE PHONE:

0800 3898003

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

Kaim Todner Offices:

5 St. Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS



**Criminal
Defence Service**



**Community
Legal Service**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

UK strike laws too restrictive

IT'S OFFICIAL! UK laws place undue restrictions on the right to strike according to recent report by the UK's Joint Committee on Human Rights.



The Joint Committee looked at observations of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to see if the UN's criticisms of UK laws – made in 1997 and again in 2002 – where justified.

Organisations were invited to submit evidence to the Committee and RMT joined the Institute of Employment Rights and a number of other unions to provide evidence of the restrictive nature of UK laws.

Anti-union laws

So what's wrong with UK laws? There are two main problems. The first relates to the many restrictions placed on unions before they can lawfully support their members. The second relates to the threat of dismissal facing individual strikers.

In the UK there is no constitutional right to strike for individual workers or any legal right for unions to organise strike action. The law offers certain immunities for unions from prosecution, but only if they walk the tightrope of anti-trade union laws, which dictate when a strike can be considered "lawful".

The RMT submission to the Committee identified many of the restrictions placed on unions, referring amongst other things to:

"the hideous complexity of the law on the definition of a trade dispute, the difficulties involved in the conduct of industrial action ballots, the rigours of the obligations to serve notices and the ease with which injunctions are granted against unions"

Each and every aspect of the Tory inspired anti-trade union laws that remain a part of the UK framework of law, add another hurdle over which unions have to jump before they can support the legitimate interests of their members.

But RMT's main complaint to the Committee was the fact

There is no legal right for unions to organise strike action in the UK

that in the UK workers who take industrial action can be sacked for breaching their contract of employment. In other countries workers have a specific right to strike and their contracts are suspended during strike activity. In the UK, workers are "free" to strike but have no constitutional right to withdraw their labour.

True, the 1999 Employment Relations Act offered protection against strikers for the first eight weeks of an official dispute. And in July last year the government agreed to increase that protection to 12 weeks as part of the Warwick Agreement.

But as long ago as 2002 the UN pointed out that such limited protection was not enough to guarantee workers their fundamental right to withdraw their labour. In its observations on UK laws the UN Committee said: "Employees participating in a lawful strike should not be regarded as having committed a breach of contract".

Legislation for rights

And in relation to the 8-week rule, the UN Committee said: "The Committee does not find satisfactory the proposal to enable employees who go on strike to have a remedy before a Tribunal for unfair dismissal".

The Committee recommended that: "the right to strike be established in legislation and that strike action no longer entail the loss of employment".

RMT agrees, as did the UK Joint Committee. Having considered the informed evidence provided by the Institute, RMT, CWU, TGWU and UNISON the Joint Committee agreed that the UN was justified in its complaint against the UK and that the Government should review the legislation in light of the criticisms made.

A small but significant victory.

● *The Institute of Employment Rights submission to the JCHR can be downloaded from www.ier.org.uk*

Hadi Saleh, Iraqi trade unionist; born 1949 – murdered 2005



MURDERED: Murdered Iraqi trade unionist Hadi Saleh (right) outside RMT headquarters with fellow Iraqi Abdullah Mushin last year

HADI SALEH, International Secretary of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions who has been murdered in Baghdad aged 56, was a lifelong fighter for right of workers to join and form trade unions and to organise together to advance their interests.

Saleh was born at a time of great working class uprisings against the British-backed monarchist government. He was a printer by trade, his professional life brutally interrupted in 1969, following the second Ba'ath coup, when he was sentenced to death for trade union activities. He served five years as a prisoner on death row along with many other Iraqi trade unionists, before fleeing to Sweden, from where he continued to work for labour rights in Iraq.

Along with other exiles and trade unionists operating clandestinely within Iraq, Hadi Saleh, known as Abu Furat, established the underground Workers' Democratic Trade Union Movement (WDTUM) in 1980 to keep alive an independent labour movement in Iraq during the years of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship.

He was hunted by the regime for his trade union activities. At the founding conference of the WDTUM, held in Kurdistan in 1980, all the participants wore scarves to conceal their identities. Saddam Hussein's security apparatus had been

ordered to find the whereabouts of the meeting and to destroy it, but only managed to set off a bomb after the conference had ended.

Hadi Saleh opposed Bush's illegal war against Iraq. He returned home at considerable danger to himself, even before the collapse of the dictatorship. Saleh worked to end the occupation by democratic and popular means and saw the rebuilding of independent trade unions as essential in this task.

The work of Saleh and others led to the formation of the Iraqi

Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which now represents over 200,000 workers in the transportation, printing, construction, oil, electricity, railways and food production industries.

Last year Saleh visited London, meeting amongst others RMT president Tony Donaghey. He outlined the problems facing Iraqi trade unionists including lack of funds, the continued implementation by the occupying powers of anti-union laws brought in by the Ba'athist dictatorship and attacks from US forces on IFTU offices.

Last month Hadi was targeted by the extremists. He was seized in his home bound, tortured, blinded, terribly beaten and garrotted with electrical wire. Finally, his body was riddled with bullets.

His comrades in the Iraqi workers' movement described the killing as bearing all the hallmarks of the former security services of the Ba'athist dictatorship. The killers also ransacked his house for his union files and records of union members.

Hadi Saleh understood that civil society institutions, particularly trade unions, are the key to preventing a repeat of the past. That is why he gave his life to the cause of the workers' movement.

● For more information: www.iraqitradeunions.org/en/

RMT expresses revulsion

RMT expressed disgust at the brutal torture and murder of IFTU

International Secretary Hadi Saleh last month.

"This callous murder was aimed at undermining the development of free trade unions in Iraq," said RMT president Tony Donaghey.

He said that the tragedy only reinforced the union's policy of opposing the illegal attacks on Iraq and in support of Iraqi trade unionists.

"I only met Hadi in London recently and his commitment to building independent and democratic trade unions in his country was clear.

"On behalf of RMT I wish to pass on our condolences and sympathy both to the family of Hadi Saleh and to the IFTU," Tony said.

The TUC Aid for Iraq Appeal is raising money and unions and providing material support and courses.

● You can find out more and donate online at www.tuc.org/iraqappeal

Kidnapped Iraqi trade unionist released

A LEADING IRAQI trade union leader kidnapped by gunmen in a Baghdad factory last month has been released.

Talib Khadim Al Tayee, who is president of the Iraqi Mechanics', Metalworkers' & Printworkers' Union (IMM&PU), was meeting workers when the gunmen attacked him, hitting him repeatedly on the head with the butts of their guns.

The kidnapping represents the latest attack on leading Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) officials, following the murder of Hadi Saleh.

They tied Talib's hands

and legs and took him to an unknown location.

Talib is well known as a community activist and a champion of workers' rights. He was elected president at the union's first open conference last year in Baghdad.

An IFTU spokesman said that it was the latest criminal act, instigated by extremists who want to stop Iraq moving forward to embrace new politics of tolerance, peace and democracy.

"This criminal act is closely linked in the methods and intentions of the brutal assassination of



Hadi Saleh," he said.

The IFTU Executive Committee thanked all labour movement bodies that demanded the release of Talib Khadim.

What can a course at Springbok do for you?



What did education ever do for you? Well, helped you to read this magazine. Ok, what else? Well, made sure the bosses paid you the right wages, for instance. 2005 brings you a new education programme, with some old favourites, which many people have attended over the last few years.

THE main problem has been that RMT had more applications than the union had places. So this year it is offering more courses not only at the national education centre but also at regional level.

Once again RMT will be running schools at the national education centre at Springbok. The schools will include public speaking which will help students to build confidence when speaking in public, whether it is at union meetings or conferences.

Other schools will include advanced

negotiating skills courses for reps that have done a basic TUC or RMT course. Other courses will deal with issues surrounding discipline at work. This is for members who already represent people at stage one hearings and for reps who wish to represent people at the appeal stage.

NEW MEMBERS: New members who wish to get involved in union activities will be able to once again attend one of our induction courses. This will give them a feel of what the union can do for you and what you can do for the union.

These courses are informal, friendly and easy going so please feel free to come along and do not worry if you do not know anything about the union, that is what the course is all about.

BRANCH SECRETARIES: As branch secretaries will know, the accounts they have to do every year are changing, so RMT will be running workshops for secretaries to get a better understanding of how these work.

also many branches have now been supplied with lap top computers. Later this

year the union will be running workshops on making better use of these to improve the communication systems RMT has in place to keep you informed of what is going on in the union.

ONE DAY COURSES FOR LOCAL REPS:

This year the union has extended the number of regional courses.

For reps that have not done a discipline hearing, a grievance or poor performance hearing RMT will be running courses at various regional locations. Please contact your Branch or Regional Council secretary about these one day schools.

There are also other one day schools which you may be interested in such as recruitment and branch organisation, collective bargaining, harassment in the workplace, problem solving in the workplace (grade specific) many more schools are available please see the web site (www.rmt.org.uk) and click on the education section. You can also contact your branch secretary who will give you further details.

NEW COURSES FOR BRANCH OFFICERS – BRANCH ADMINISTRATION COURSE:

These courses are aimed at branch officers and will be held on a one day basis in a regional council area.

The course will cover: - The role of branch officers and their responsibilities, branch financial responsibilities, elections - branch, regional and national, resolutions to - regional, national AGM grades,

advisory, TUC, Trades Council and outside bodies' conferences.

BRANCH OFFICER'S COURSE:

These courses will be held at various locations and include how to run an effective branch, recruitment, building up a branch, publicity and campaigning links to the wider labour movement. This will include sessions on the structure, rules and constitution of the union and how to make the union work for you.

NEWLY APPOINTED REPS AND BRANCH OFFICERS:

This one day course is for any newly-appointed rep or branch officer who has not yet had the opportunity to attend the 1x10 TUC reps course.

There will be a brief overview of the following subjects: a brief history of the union, a brief outline of the structure of the RMT, making use of the rule book and web site and de-mystifying the rule book.

LEARNER REPS: To assist with the integration of learner reps, RMT will develop a one-day course for learner reps on understanding how the union works and union policy on adult learning in the workplace.

As you can see the union has a wide-ranging education programme over the coming year. So, get along to a course in order to get more out of your union.

● Contact Education officer Ray Spry-Shute for more details on 020 7529 8820 or r.spry-shute@rmt.org.uk



Below are the RMT residential education courses available at Springbok during 2005

May 2005

Public speaking May 8 9 10

This course will enable you to structure a speech for meetings and conferences; Examine techniques of delivery; Use appropriate language; Handle questions effectively.

Who should attend? Members who have little experience in public speaking.

Disciplinary appeals May 23 24 25

The course deals with disciplinary appeals which may lead to dismissal and will help you be more effective; understand the law; prepare cases effectively

Who should attend? Members who deal with appeal hearings or who may anticipate doing appeals

June 2005

Negotiation skills June 20 21 22

This course will give you an insight into the process of negotiations also

interpreting information; lead and conclude negotiations; develop confidence; understand how to use figures.

Who should attend? New members or members who have limited experience of negotiations.

September 2005

Public speaking September 5 6 7

This course will enable you to structure a speech for meetings & Conferences; Examine techniques of delivery; Use appropriate language; Handle questions effectively.

Who should attend? Members who have little experience in public speaking.

October 2005

Disciplinary appeals October 3 4 5

The course deals with disciplinary appeals which may lead to dismissal and will help you be more effective; understand the law; prepare cases effectively

Who should attend? Members who deal with appeal hearings or who may anticipate doing appeals

Negotiation skills October 17 18 19

This course will give you an insight into the process of negotiations also interpreting information; lead and conclude negotiations; develop confidence; understand how to use figures.

Who should attend? New members or members who have limited experience of negotiations.

November 2005

Disciplinary appeals October 14 15 16

The course deals with disciplinary appeals which may lead to dismissal and will help you be more effective; understand the law; prepare cases effectively

Who should attend? Members who deal with appeal hearings or who may anticipate doing appeals

Further courses will also be running at various locations throughout the country - the dates and venues will be advertised in RMT news, on the union's web site www.rmt.org.uk and information will also be sent to branches.

Italian rail unions in massive 24-hour strike

MILLIONS of Italians stopped work to protest against the right-wing government's plans to slash pensions as part of over £4 billion in public spending cuts.

The half-day stoppage halted rail, air and urban transport and shut factories and banks. Doctors and nurses waged an eight-hour strike but emergency services were maintained. The three union movements organised 70 demonstrations throughout the country.

Rome's spending cuts are designed to meet the requirements of the Eurozone stability and growth pact, the rules that govern the single currency.

Italy's billionaire Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who is also the country's finance minister, has persuaded eurozone finance ministers not to accept the Commission's proposal for an 'excessive deficit early warning' against Italy.

However, EU finance ministers approved excessive deficit procedures against smaller EU member states Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland and Slovakia.

Unions protest against EU Services Directive

PUBLIC sector union Unison general secretary Dave Prentis joined other unions in a lobby in Brussels last month against the draft European Union Directive on Services.

The directive aims to remove all barriers to the cross-border provision of services in the EU. It would reduce control over working practices, open the door for companies to bypass labour and environmental standards and impose barriers to state regulation on public services.

"We could find service providers moving their headquarters to the EU country with the lowest protection to 'bid' for temporary contracts to exploit this loop-hole. And, as usual, those more adversely affected will be women - in particular, low-paid part-time women", Dave Prentis said.

Labour MP Ian Davidson warned that "those countries which have established better standing will be obliged to cut them in order to compete".

Workers protest against job protection deal

RAIL workers have protested against an agreement signed by German unions with state rail operator Deutsche Bahn that guarantees employment until 2010 for



CUTS: German riot police arrest protesters outside a benefits office in Berlin last month. Police quashed protests when unemployment benefits were slashed. Germany's unemployment levels are now around five million and analysts are warning that the situation could get worse.

French rail unions launch strike action

SEVEN French rail unions called strike action last month against plans to slash nearly 4,000 jobs and other cuts planned by state rail operator SNCF.

The CGT rail union, the industry's biggest, said that more than 8,000 jobs have already been lost since September 2002.

Polls suggest that two-thirds of the French public back the unions. The latest strike follows a united day of action last autumn when 50,000 rail workers demonstrated in Paris for jobs, against low pay and pensions and against attempts to curtail the right to strike.

Further action is expected against European Union policies of enforced privatisation of rail systems across the bloc. Brussels has also put pressure on Paris to slash public spending in line with eurozone rules.

New EU transport commissioner Jacques Barrot, until recently a minister in the French conservative government, is spearheading the rail privatisation drive.

A CGT spokesman told *RMT News* that "90 per cent of all decisions now come from Brussels and they all back privatisation and attacks on public services".

The CGT's hundred strong executive committee (CCN) also recently voted overwhelmingly to oppose the proposed EU Constitution.

The decision will boost the French no vote lobby before the referendum on the subject due in June.

CGT railway workers Didier Le Reste said that, "unsurprisingly, there is a majority in the CGT to reject the liberal policy directions, including at the European level".

its 140,000 employees with at least five years' service.

Complaints have been made that the agreement neither guarantees that the number of DB employees remains at present levels nor protects rail workers with less than five years employment. Leave is also reduced by a day without compensation and working time has been hiked without extra pay.

DB, Europe's biggest rail network, is also seeking to save £700 million by

cutting 5,000 freight jobs by 2009, 2,000 of them this year.

EU forces Thailand to buy aircraft

TSUNAMI-struck Thailand has been told by the European Commission that it must buy six A380 Airbus aircraft if it wants to escape the tariffs against its fishing industry.

While millions of Europeans are



The legacy of Robbie Burns

sending aid to Thailand to help its recovery, Brussels is demanding that Thai Airlines, its national carrier, pays £1.3 billion to buy its double-decker aircraft.

The demand will come as a deep embarrassment to newly unelected trade commissioner Peter Mandelson as Thailand is struggling after giant waves killed tens of thousands of people and damaged its economy.

Oxfam attacked EU tariffs on Thai fish, saying: "When countries are lying prostrate before us, it is criminal to continue to tax them on what they sell".

It has also emerged that the EU's contribution to the Tsunami disaster fund will come from existing aid allocations, and is not actually new money to help the areas affected.

Spanish ships use mostly Spanish seafarers

A NEW report shows that Spain's maritime operators employ almost 10,000 seafarers - almost two-thirds of them working on vessels flying the Spanish flag. Spanish shipowners together employ 9,900 officers and ratings, two-thirds of whom work on vessels flying the full Spanish flag or the Canary Islands Register. The report attributes the large increase in employment to the growing number of cruise vessels registered in Spain.

EU orders Spain to end national wage bargaining

EU Finance Ministers have told Spain to abolish its system of national collective bargaining agreements, which automatically links the negotiation of new salaries to inflation. EU ministers ordered Madrid to introduce a new system of sector and regional bargaining.

French Council in talks on Hoverspeed route

FRANCE'S Seine Maritime District council, which operates the conventional Dieppe-Newhaven passenger ferry service with its Transmanche Ferries, has confirmed a possible take-over of the rival Hoverspeed service. The Normandy authority's chairman Didier Mari said that an understanding has been reached with Hoverspeed boss James Sherwood to "end competition between the two operators, which is harmful to both services." Negotiations are expected to continue over the next few months.

JANUARY 25 was the 242nd anniversary of one Robert Burns, recognised the world over as one of the greatest poets that ever lived. Like many others on that date RMT held a Burns night at our headquarters Unity House. What a revelation it was to hear Allan Craig of our accounts department give the one of the most passionate toasts, known as giving the "immortal memory", I have ever heard.

It was a fitting tribute to freedom, women and song, all of which were close to the heart of Scotland's true bard.

Burns is best remembered as the author of Auld Lang Syne, a song that still unites people the world over. He is also remembered for his odes to freedom, such as A Man's a Man for a' That, which still have a much resonance today as the day he wrote them.

It made me wonder just how many countless trade unionists and progressives Burns must have inspired over the centuries. Just a glance at his work and you can see what a visionary he was, inspiring many to fight for their own freedom.

His deep sense of anger against the plight of the poor, injustice to women and the growth of aggressive imperialism were all subjects for Burns acid tongue.

When Parliament was asked "to give thanks to God" following a naval victory, Burns reaction was swift.

"Ye hypocrites are these your pranks? To murder men, and gie God Thanks/Shame give o'er - proceed no further/ God won't accept your thanks for murder."

Now what do you think Rabbie, as Burns is known, would make of the oil wars raging around the world today?

Burns was also an early political champion for women's rights, penning the sublime Rights of Women.

"While Europe's eye is fixed on mighty things/ The fate of empires, and the fall of kings/ While quacks of state must each produce his plan/ And even children lisp the Rights of Man/ Amid this might fuss, just let me mention/ The Rights of Women merit some attention".

With enormous courage, Burns also supported the end of feudalism in France and the American Declaration of Independence. These were the first stirrings of modern national democracy. A battle cry that trade unionists in Britain were later to take up through the Chartist movements to demand universal suffrage and the right to vote.

THESE democratic rights were not given to us but fought long and hard for. That it is why they are worth defending. This brings me to another inspiring event that I have been involved in over the last month, the launch of the Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution.

Now you might ask yourselves what is the link between Burns and Brussels. Well, I believe that this proposed Constitution threatens the existence of national democratic rights that Rabbie yearned for in his own time.

Under the Constitution, unelected eurocrats in Brussels will decide our economic policy, our industrial and manufacturing policy, our foreign policy and how to organise our welfare state. It gives Brussels all the powers of a state yet with no democratic accountability. That does not bode well for working people here and across Europe.

Moreover, I have just heard that, when launching the Constitution in Brussels, the eurocrats threw a lavish party for themselves costing over quarter a million pounds. Now, I bet Rabbie Burns would have penned a suitable witty verse to aptly describe their antics.

TONY DONAGHEY

Busy times for RMT in Scotland

By Ann Henderson

THIS year got off to a very busy start for RMT in Scotland. Members of the Scottish Parliament have heard from the union on a number of different issues.

The campaign against the tendering of the CalMac lifeline ferry services got a big boost when the Parliament refused to support the Transport minister's proposals for privatisation.

That is why it was such a shock to learn that ministers had ignored the feelings of Parliament and a very successful hundred-strong lobby outside Holyrood earlier this month and went ahead with tendering bids for life line ferry services from Gourock to Dunoon.

On the UK Railways Bill, RMT has been at the Scottish Parliament Local Government

and Transport Committee, alongside other unions and the STUC. Parliament debated the Scottish aspects of this Bill in what is known as a 'Sewel Motion'.

This allows the Parliament to comment on legislation that will actually be processed and completed at Westminster. Some very tough questioning at Committee revealed some apparent discrepancies and doubts about the financial settlement between Westminster and the Scottish Parliament.

Irrespective of the different views about the adequacy of the funding, with approximately £203 million being passed over annually to the Scottish Executive to manage and run Scotland's railways, and to contract Network Rail to maintain the infrastructure, we are in for extensive change in the industry.

Phil McGarry, representing RMT at the Parliament Committee, was able to place on record the union's commitment to a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway. He also raised the transfer of responsibilities regarding staff travel facilities to ministers.

This as an opportunity to end an aspect of the two-tier workforce, and RMT will be arguing for the standardisation of staff travel facilities across the industry, to allow all staff the same travel entitlement.

We have also been successful in securing an assurance from the Deputy Minister for Justice, Hugh Henry, on the issue of fire precautions in sub surface railway stations.

No change will be made to these without appropriate consultation, and the concerns raised by the trade unions with both the UK and the Scottish governments have been taken on board.

The Scottish Executive is also setting up a new Transport Agency in Glasgow, creating over 100 new jobs, to work with

the new Regional Transport Partnerships which will operate like the old regional authorities in local government.

However, it is proposed that one third of the RTP board members will be individuals, with no direct lines of accountability. RMT has been arguing that there should be a trade union member on each RTP Board.

The Transport Minister has announced a significant extension of the concessionary fares travel scheme from April next year. Free Scotland-wide bus travel will be provided for Scotland's elderly people and for those with disabilities.

In addition two free return ferry trips will also be offered annually to older or disabled island residents.

There are a number of inquiries ongoing in the Parliament at present, including on youth justice.

All the work of the Scottish Parliament can be found on the website, including these Committee sessions to which reference has been made.

● Ann Henderson, RMT Scottish Parliamentary Officer
www.scottish.parliament.uk



AS A TRADE UNIONIST, you wouldn't vote for the boss as your union rep, so why buy a newspaper that backs the bosses? You should be reading the Morning Star — the only daily paper that carries real stories about real people — people like you. Only the Morning Star stands shoulder to shoulder with rail trade unionists in their campaign to take back the railways back into public ownership. Backs the call to repeal all anti-union legislation. Opposes privatisation and private-sector milking of public services through PPP and PFI. Campaigns for international solidarity not imperialist wars. Demands restoration of the link between average earnings and the state pension. Supports the call for referendums on the EU constitution and the euro — and a vote against both. The Morning Star also provides, for just 60p a day, unrivalled daily coverage of the trade union movement, political and general news and comment, together with a no-holds-barred letters page, provocative feature articles and lively reporting of sport, music, arts, drama and books. If you want to become a daily reader, write to or email our circulation department, who will provide the name and address of the nearest shop that supplies your Morning Star.

Morning Star

YES, I would like to become a Morning Star daily reader. Please tell me where I can buy the paper in my local area.

Name.....

Address.....

Email..... Telephone.....

Send this coupon to Morning Star Circulation Department, William Rust House, 52 Beachy Road, Bow E3 2NS or email ivanbeavis@peoples-press.com



Renationalise rail now

By TOMMY SHERIDAN MSP

IN THE course of a two-day marathon involving almost 12 hours of discussion, debate and dissection of financial accounts and projections, the Local Government and Transport Committee unanimously agreed that the provisions contained in the UK Railways Bill to devolve more control over Scottish railways to the Scottish parliament is a good idea.

For two days we questioned Network Rail bosses, Office of Rail Regulation chiefs, the soon to be abolished Strategic Rail Authority, the STUC, unions and the Scottish Executive and Rail Passenger committee. I was in information overload. But the facts proved beyond all doubt the unanswerable case for a fully integrated and publicly owned and controlled rail network.

The case across the UK is

as persuasive but let me present the case in Scotland.

According to the high-flying finance outfit, Ernst & Young, the cost of running the railway industry in Scotland for 2004/05 is £519 million. This allows £119 million to be spent on rail maintenance and £120 million on operating costs, including staff expenditure. These and other sources of rail expenditure are met in Scotland by £53 million in passenger charges and a massive £459 million in public grant.

Thus, of the £519 million to run the whole rail industry in Scotland this year, £459 million is provided through government grant and underwriting of borrowing. The passenger pays £53 million in ticket charges so the public citizen in one form or another meets over 90 per cent of the costs of the railway industry but doesn't own it. How ridiculous.

With the new arrangements

of the Railways Bill, the Scottish Parliament will not only have much more power over the industry but significantly more money to invest. We cannot continue to pour hundreds of millions of public money into an industry that allows the private train operators to siphon off huge profits, without even delivering the overdue improvements in punctuality, safety and passenger comfort.

The figures in the Ernst & Young document, "Scottish Executive Rail Review – a Financial Overview" present detailed expenditure projections for 2005/06 - 2008/09. They confirm each year the public purse bail-out of the privateers (of the £492 million expenditure in 2006/07, £438 million comes from direct grant and £54 million from passengers – the whole year's expenditure from the public). Bringing the whole industry into public ownership with a dynamic structure that involves the rail unions and passengers representatives in the running of the industry alongside management is now imperative.

Even the Ernst & Young representative, Dougald Middleton, had to admit that under the privatised Railtrack, every £1 allocated to maintenance of the track and network resulted in only 30p being physically spent on such maintenance. In other words, 70p in every pound disappeared into the pockets of contractors, sub-contractors, agents and consultants.

It was that stark realisation that compelled Network Rail to bring all maintenance in-house to cut costs and spend more on maintaining the track. The problem is it is too timid, too little. Much more is spent every year on renewals of track and infrastructure. That massive expenditure must be brought in house.

When you consider the grants to private train operators to pay track access charges, you realise that the whole operation should be publicly owned and integrated to deliver a safe, reliable, accessible and high quality rail service to all in Scotland. We pay for the industry, let's assume full democratic control and ownership.



The COOPERATIVE BANK

Customer led, ethically guided

Customers of Unity RMT

Our Personal Loans are now so much more attractive, with our low loan rate of **7.2% APR (typical)**, fixed for the life of your loan. Our rates may never be this low again, so act now to make big savings. Don't miss out! Apply today and make life easier and even more enjoyable!

Fixed APR	Loan Value	7 years		5 years		3 years	
		With Protection	Without Protection	With Protection	Without Protection	With Protection	Without Protection
6.9% APR	£15,000	Monthly	£299.05	£224.41	£367.96	£295.11	£540.03
		Total	£25,120.14	£18,850.06	£22,077.47	£17,706.07	£19,441.11
7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£10,000	Monthly	£202.70	£151.16	£248.38	£198.23	£363.02
		Total	£17,026.95	£12,696.86	£14,902.35	£11,893.56	£13,068.41
7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£5,000	Monthly	£101.35	£75.58	£124.19	£99.12	£181.51
		Total	£8,513.47	£6,348.41	£7,451.15	£5,946.72	£6,534.21
7.2% APR (TYPICAL)	£3,000	Monthly	£60.81	£45.35	£74.52	£59.47	£108.91
		Total	£5,108.09	£3,808.99	£4,470.61	£3,568.03	£3,920.51

Amounts shown may vary by a few pence.

- Enjoy a low rate of **7.2% APR (typical)**
- An instant decision
- Any amount from £2,000 to £25,000
- No arrangement fee or security required
- Payment Protection available*
- Repayments by standing order
- Loans range from 6.9% APR to 24.9% APR

Phone
0800 591 682
quoting 791/1265

Lines open Mon to Fri 8am – 9pm, Sat 8am – 8pm and Sun 9am – 6pm.

Applicants must be UK resident and aged between 21 and 69 years of age.

* Policy terms and conditions apply. Credit facilities are provided by The Co-operative Bank p.l.c. (Registered No. 990937) of P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP and are subject to status. The Bank reserves the right to decline any application or offer a loan at a rate that differs from those advertised. Interest rates are correct as at 07/02/05. Calls may be monitored and/or recorded for security and/or training purposes.

The Co-operative Bank is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (No. 121885), subscribes to the Banking Code, is a member of the Financial Ombudsman Service and is licensed by the Office of Fair Trading (No. 006110).

current
accounts

savings and
investments

credit cards

mortgages

loans

insurance

business
banking



Roddy clocks up half a century

HEBRIDEAN seafarer Roddy MacSween has 'swallowed the anchor' after a full half century at sea – and 50 solid years as an active union man.

Roddy signed up to the National Union of Seamen within a couple of weeks of joining the MV Loch Mor as a 15-year-old galley boy in January 1954.

After a trip with Cunningham's of Scalpay – his home Hebridean island – Roddy went deep-sea, serving with, among others, the New Zealand Shipping Company, Shaw Saville, British Tankers and Hunting's of Newcastle.

During 17 years with Ben Line he became the company's youngest ever bo'sun.

Stints with Scottish Shipping Management and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary were followed by 16 years with Caledonian MacBrayne ferries, latterly sailing between Uig, Lochmaddy and Tarbert until his retirement earlier this year.

"Half a century's continuous membership of the union is a tremendous achievement," noted branch secretary and EC member Stuart Hyslop.

"He is a great shipmate and always a reliable union member," said George Lonie, who sailed alongside Roddy aboard the MV Hebrides.

Frederick Thorn 1920 – 2004

FRED started his railway career in 1948 as a goods guard at Temple Mills in east London before transferring to Kings Cross as a guard. He enjoyed many years working on the Scottish expresses to Edinburgh.

Fred later transferred to Liverpool Street station as a ticket inspector until his retirement. He was well known for his work as NUR Romford branch secretary. His family described him as an "old-fashioned" railway man who loved his job and took pride in working for "British Rail".

OBITUARIES

FORMER secretary of the Ipswich branch **JIM WALES** has passed away after a long illness. Jim, who retired in 1985, was a member of the union for over 40 years and a branch secretary for 10 years. He also represented rail operator grades on the sectional council of British Railways. Jim also represented the branch at the Anglia District Council as well.

Jim Wales continued to work and represent his fellow workers despite suffering a very serious injury in 1946 in which he lost the lower part of one leg and a part of one arm.

His determination to represent rail workers never diminished in any way.



IT is with great sadness that I have to report the death of **DAVID PAIGE** on November 23 2004 following a brief illness. David leaves behind wife Annette and a son and a daughter Simon and Pippa.

During his forty year career in the rail industry David held many positions from cleaner to fireman and guard before becoming a driver for a number of years.

David had spent most of his working career based at Horsham where he held many positions including driver instructor, before transferring to Action as a driver.

David was a trade union activist who held many positions from branch secretary to LDC guards' rep. David's funeral at Slough crematorium in December was attended by family, friends, trade unionists, colleagues and managers from Southern and EWS.

David had a love of angling and had recently caught his biggest ever Carp weighing 15.5 lbs.

Tight lines dear friend.

Adrian Walsh

RMT company council rep

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

FLORIDA

FLORIDA, Kissimmee, luxury villa 01268-750062

INDIAN WELLS

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

THE NEW FOREST

VICTORIAN FARMHOUSE

B&B plus s/c lodge, sleeps 4, also B&B. Set in farmland overlooking forest. Direct access to railway. Small heated pool. Pets welcome. Ideal for walking, riding and cycling. Close to New Forest. For brochure call 01425 472115

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

DEVON/CORNWALL

NORTH CORNWALL

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

AIRPORT PARKING

UK AIRPORT PARKING

Five per cent additional Discount for RMT members. www.flypark.co.uk/discount 0870 733 0545 Get a quote and see savings

TRAVEL

HOLIDAYS & TRAVEL

INSURANCE. Alba Family Annual Worldwide, £72.75. Couples, £66.40. Single, £61.15. Single-trip from only £3.20. Tel: 0870 4607806 quote RMT. Airport hotels including 15 days parking from £49 a couple. Tel: 0870 733791 and quote EE342. All shown at www.benefit-web.com

ORLANDO

ORLANDO Villa website www.torentafloridavilla.com Phone 01514742417.

OBITUARY

BRIAN HESSEY 1937 - 2005

BRIAN HESSEY was a member of the former (NUR) since 1958 of the old Worktop no1 branch which merged with the old Retford branch to form the new Bassetlaw branch in 1989.

Although Brian was a branch delegate to the "guards and shunters" grade conference and regularly attended the AGM,

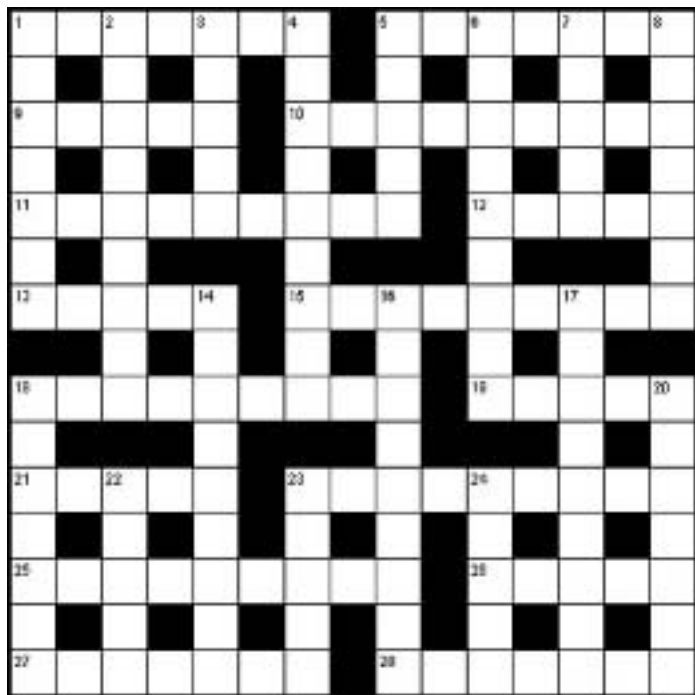
Brian was an LDC man and one of the best LDC chairman you could ever get. He was voted back to the position time and time again and it was a post he held for over 25 years up to retirement due to ill health. At one point Brian was LDC Chairman and his brother Frank Hessey was secretary (nicknamed the terrible twins).

He would never ask for impossible demands. However, he was like a terrier dog and would never give in until he got what his members wanted or until justice was done. He was sacked and reinstated over implementation of DOO. He stuck it out through thick and thin, upholding the policy of the executive during the miners strike. It is to his credit that not an ounce of coal moved out of Worktop depot during the entire dispute.

As a true grass roots representative, he will be sorely missed. He leaves a wife, "our Joyce" as she was always referred to, and three children.

£25 Prize Crossword No. 12

set by Elk



Send entries to Prize crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by March 4 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

1. Rouses from sleep (7)
5. Parties (7)
9. Small mountain lakes (5)
10. County bordered by Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey (9)
11. Shaking, due to cold or fear (9)
12. Light cat! (5)
13. Rate of travel (5)
15. Natural impulses (9)
18. Boss-speak for passengers (9)
19. Gains or acquires, usually through work (5)
21. Expressions of loyalty or swearing (5)
23. Place of hard labour and low pay (9)
25. Stolen, filched (9)
26. Prize money, or its container (5)
27. Duty lists (7)
28. Funfair ride (7)

DOWN

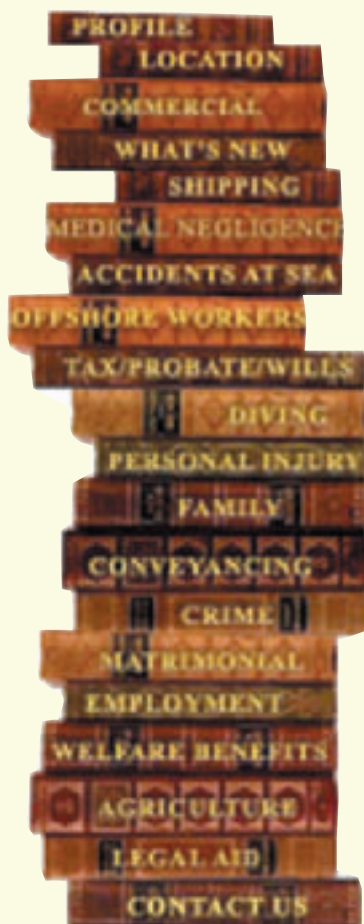
1. Cultural workers (7)
2. Passenger aircraft (9)
3. Follow on from (5)
4. Provide financial support (9)
5. Raise shoulders dismissively (5)

Last month's solution



Winner of prize crossword No. 11 is Mike Rose from Devon

6. Modify to individual specification (9)
7. Stranger, movie or creature from outer space (5)
8. Metal or wooden spikes for barbecue (7)
14. US chemist's shop (4,5)
16. Hung or held in abeyance (9)
17. Large working equine animal (4,5)
18. Small axe or, commonly, aircraft (7)
20. Evening meals (7)
22. Shifts, or twists! (5)
23. Words set to music (5)
24. Not very hot (5)



Bridge M^CFarland

SOLICITORS

Have you got a problem you need legal help with?

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

Home visits and telephone appointments can be arranged where appropriate

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

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

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

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 Charlton 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 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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





RMT Credit Union Ltd

1st Annual General Meeting

Thursday March 17 2005 1.00 pm

The Cock Tavern, Chalton Street, Euston, London NW1

Open to all RMT Credit Union Ltd Members
Elections to the Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee

This is the first AGM of the RMT Credit Union, so under Rule 55, all 15 Directors and the Supervisory Committee shall retire. Nominations are then invited (signed by the nominee, a proposer and seconded) to the Board Of Directors and Supervisory Committee who shall then be elected at the AGM. Nominations must reach the office of the Credit Union no later than Tuesday March 8 2005. Any new Director and Supervisor joining the Board will then have to achieve approval by the FSA in 'Control Function Status' as set out in CRED 6.1.1. Terms of office for the Board of Directors will then be 1, 2, and 3 years according to the amount of votes cast.

All the current Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee are eligible for re-election

Please will all members of the Credit Union who are attending this meeting register their attendance with the Credit Union office at: RMT Credit Union Ltd, Finance Office, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Tel: 02075298835 Email: c.union@rmt.org.uk

Authorised and Regulated By The Financial Services Authority, FRN No. 228612

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

Drummond Miller

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



Drummond Miller

Business and Finance Experts

Incorporating The MacPhail Lawrence Partnership.

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

Experts in Employment Law, Accident and Injury Claims

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



Telephone 0141 332 0086 - Glasgow
01904 - 674061 - York