

RMT news



Essential reading for today's transport worker

Issue No 2, Volume 6

www.rmt.org.uk

March 2005

HERE WE GO!

RMT has launched a nationwide campaign against the privatisation of our railways.

Events have been organised across the UK, from Glasgow to Exeter. So come along and support us and let the government know that you want a publicly owned railway.

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Make sure you're at one of these events and help save our railways

rap
rail against privatisation



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MEMBERS SAVINGS, SUBJECT TO CIRCUMSTANCES AND AVAILABILITY

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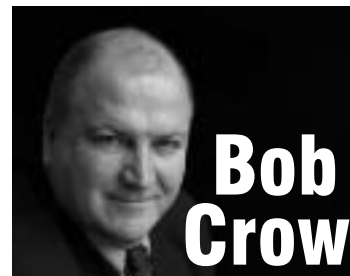


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People before profits



If you ever needed proof as to why the chaos of transport privatisation must come to an end, just look at the vast profits being sucked out of the industry.

After receiving hundreds of millions of pounds in public subsidy, National Express, which runs eight rail franchises, increased its rail operating profits by 76 per cent to nearly £60 million.

Like every other franchisee, they are in it to make money – and that is exactly what they are doing, at the public's expense.

Go-Ahead's interim figures show rail profits of £18.6 million in the last six months and Arriva's rail division boasted a 31 per cent increase in profits to £31.5 million despite the fact that its new franchise in Wales has faced criticism for not delivering improvements or new trains.

The money made by the three bank-owned rolling stock companies (roscos) – that lease trains to the train operating companies at a massive risk-free profit – should be enough to make any transport minister blush.

The rosko Angel Trains, owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland, contributed £86.3 million to the bank's profits – at a cosy return of nearly 32 per cent. HSBC Rail chipped in £248 million to its parent's superprofits.

All this will have raised the eyebrows of transport workers, as well as expectations that the people who actually do the work should see improvements in their own pay and conditions.

It should also increase calls for public subsidies to be used to improve the railways, rather than to line shareholders' pockets. It is this reality – of a railway system still being bled by massive private-sector profits – that will be at the forefront of a major RMT campaign to give the need for public ownership of our railways the prominence it deserves in the run-up to the general election.

Men and women from every RMT region will join the Rail Against Privatisation mobile demonstration that will begin in Glasgow on April 16 and culminate in a demonstration and rally in London on Saturday April 30.

MPs and candidates on and off the route will be asked if they think it is OK that the private sector has taken way

over £10 billion out of the rail industry since privatisation, and that private-sector investment costs three times as much as in British Rail days.

They will be asked if it is right that South Eastern Trains should be reprivatised after delivering better services for less subsidy.

In the capital they will be asked how they feel about Tube privateers lining their pockets with £100 million of public money from just one year of the PPP.

This union will also be asking why lifeline ferry routes run by Caledonian MacBrayne must suffer the same fate. RMT members converged on parliament earlier this month to lobby their MPs and rally for some action to reverse the decline in UK seafarers' jobs, which has continued apace.

RMT is campaigning for a direct link between entitlement to tonnage tax relief and the employment and training of UK ratings, and for an end to exemptions in the 1976 Race Relations Act that enables shipowners to employ overseas nationals on poverty pay rates and inferior conditions.

On women's day this month, the union can be proud that one of our members, Janet Cassidy, has been elected as chairperson of the women's committee of the STUC this year. Along with increased interest in the union's women's conference earlier this month, it is a further sign of growing female involvement in the union.

There was also a significant victory for our bus members at Stagecoach Devon after a court case involving five members collapsed (see page 20). Serious questions should be asked how it is they ended up in court simply for protecting the safety of passengers. It also highlights the importance of being a member of a fighting union as you never know when you might need help.

Finally, the RMT executive has agreed to mark the 125th anniversary of the union's orphan fund – which has paid out over £7.5 million to over 50,000 orphans – by paying each orphan presently on the books a bonus payment of £125.

Best wishes

Bob Crow



Edinburgh branch over 1000 strong

MEMBERS of Edinburgh No1 branch (above) launched a very successful organising week that took place throughout Scotland. Branch activists went through the branch register and worked out priority targets for recruitment.

The organising unit had already delivered recruitment materials which were all distributed in a very busy week.

Many new members were instantly signed up and the local activists anticipated many more completed membership forms being returned in the next few weeks.

Activist Mark Nothard said that a bit of graft would ensure that RMT was at its strongest.

"We had a really positive response from pretty much all the workers we spoke to and it's

great to hear that we have taken our branch to over 1,000 members but we know have a lot of work still to do," he said.

Kelly Griffiths added that the branch was a bit surprised with the low levels of membership in some companies.

"The time we spent ploughing through the branch print out was well worth it as it gave us even more reason to get stuck in.

"We all enjoyed the week and once you get started, recruiting new members gives you a really good feeling and I'm already looking forward to covering Scotrail induction classes in the near future," she said.

The branch has committed itself to carrying our regular recruitment activities in its branch plan.

ORGANISING UNIT

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Organising in Watford

WATFORD branch secretary Stewart Cameron is keen to ensure that all grades in his branch are properly organised.

Stewart has visited his local City Link depot a couple of times along with Alan Pottage of the organising unit.

"I never realised the diversity of members in my branch. Now that I am Branch Secretary I want to ensure that all members are properly taken care of - regardless of who they work for," Stewart said.

"I was aware of the new recruitment strategy that Bob Crow has introduced and now I can see with my own eyes the potential that exists," he said.

He said that, having spoken to City Link workers, it is obvious that they need the help of RMT more than most.

"I never realised workers had such poor terms and conditions and no wonder they are all angry with the way they are treated. Their low pay won't improve with the lousy two per cent just imposed by the employer," he said.

Stewart has already signed up for the organising week for his regional council later this year but he will be making every effort to mobilise branch activists between now and then to get around as many workplaces as possible.



ORGANISING: Stewart outside the City Link depot at Hemel Hempstead - part of the Tiger Haulage franchise.

All grades together



UNITY: GNR and Jarvis RMT members of the Berwick Rail branch, which reports an increase in activities and a healthy turn out at branch meetings. Recruitment and organisation are a priority for this growing branch.

Leaked report reveals PPP has failed to deliver

RMT renewed its call for an end to the privatisation of Tube infrastructure last month following the leaking of documents showing that the private sector is failing to deliver improvements.

The call has been backed by over 60 MPs who have signed up to Early Day Motion 383 which urges the government to renegotiate the public private partnership contracts and bring all maintenance and renewals under the direct control of London Underground.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the only winners from the PPP were the contractors who were pocketing £2 million a week in profits at our expense.

"Several reports have already shown that shows that privatising work on the Tube infrastructure has brought nothing but delays, excuses and increasing safety concerns.

"How many more do we need before the government accepts that the PPP is not the solution but a growing part of

the problem?" Bob said.

The call to end PPP on London Underground is part of the Rail Against Privatisation campaign. Under PPP performance has deteriorated, essential improvements have been delayed.

However, the private sector infracos, Metronet and Tubelines, continue to receive public subsidies and have banked profits of over £100 million in the first year alone.

Network Rail has brought rail maintenance back in-house and booted out these same companies to end the chaos. The time has come for the same thing to happen on the Tube.



New Heathrow Express branch launched

RMT OPENED a new branch at Heathrow Express last month at a meeting attended by general secretary Bob Crow.

Unveiling the new branch banner, Bob expressed delight at the decision of a growing number of workers at Heathrow Express (HEX) to join the RMT family.

Members present discussed the recent history of events at HEX and desperate attempts by management to prevent people joining RMT.

Members reaffirmed their commitment to building the new branch and stressing the positive purpose of the union – better pay, conditions and health and safety for all grades.

Freightliner port staff and drivers back strike action

KEY FREIGHTLINER port staff and drivers at Southampton and Felixstowe docks have voted overwhelmingly to strike in a dispute over pay and conditions.

The union has told the company to work towards a settlement or face the prospect of strike action that could bring operations to a standstill.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow pointed out that Freightliner chiefs had made £30 million between them out of selling off the company, but when it came to pay and conditions staff are supposed to be grateful for what they're given.

"The company should stop trying to divide, intimidate and victimise our members and get round the table to negotiate a settlement that reflects the contribution the workforce have made to Freightliner's success.

"Our members have voted by four to one for strike action and the clock is now ticking away.

"We have told the company that failure to negotiate seriously with us will result in strike action," Bob Crow said.

In a separate dispute, also over pay and conditions, around 100 Freightliner road motor drivers at inland terminals around the country are presently voting on strike action.



Brighton Learning Centre success

THE grand opening of the new rail union-backed Brighton Learning Centre proved a great success. There was an impressive turnout, with over 100 people coming along to celebrate the launch of the exciting new initiative for rail workers, their friends and family.

Those attending ranged from the mayor of Brighton and Hove, local councillors, HR directors from Thameslink, Network Rail, and Southern, several members of the TUC and representatives from local colleges, as well as a good mix of learners, union learning representatives, local reps and branch secretaries.

"Everyone agreed that the evening was a fantastic opportunity to meet all those



OPEN FOR BUSINESS: Training and Development Manager Southern Lawrence Cramer, Ticket collector Terry Springett and centre administrator Emily King.

involved in the Brighton Learning Centre project," said Project manager, Scarlet Harris.

Those attending the launch had a chance to see the new equipment, including 15 new laptops.

RMT member and ticket

collector Terry Springett, who has first-hand experience of the benefits of learning, said that course tutors were fundamental to a good learning experience and they in turn complimented the centre's resources as essential to providing a positive

learning experience.

Centre administrator Emily King said that it was great to see the centre looking lively and full of people.

"The next step is to embark on our timetable for the New Year which includes free courses in Spanish and other foreign languages, IT for people at various levels, English and maths.

"We are also running a deaf awareness course alongside more diverse subjects such as Genealogy," she said.

Anyone who is interested in enrolling on a course at Brighton Learning Centre, or would like more information on activities should contact Emily King on 01273 723 066 or email emilyking@rul.org.uk.

Sick-pay victory at Lynx

RMT member Bob Small has won nearly £5,000 in back pay after a long-running battle over sick-pay entitlement was finally settled by the union.

Several members working for Lynx Express have been having problems with their sick pay entitlement. Bob's case was a particularly bad one.

A member of 17 years standing who works at the Lynx depot at Eastleigh, Bob, was long-term sick from October 2003 until August 2004.

He was paid only statutory sick pay by the company, when his full entitlement was 130 days at full basic pay and 130 day at half pay.

Bob attempted to resolve this

situation through his local rep, but due to the intransigence of the local management, he was denied his proper sick pay.

The local rep, to his credit, would not let this drop and referred the matter directly to the general secretary who took the matter up with the company at national level.

After several months of correspondence it is pleasing to report that the company has conceded the sick pay agreement had been broken by the branch manager and agreed to pay Bob his full entitlement.

RMT has just had confirmation that Bob has received £4882.50 in back pay, a significant victory.

Learning centre gets helping hand

UNION Learning Rep and Southern Railways employee Iain Brown (right) has been seconded for two days a week to help to promote the RMT-backed Brighton Learning Centre.

Iain's secondment is being paid for by the TUC and the local Learning and Skills Council.

Iain has been a union learning rep for three and a half years. He got involved when Southern took over from Connex and introduced assessments.

"The assessments showed that there was a lot of need for education on the railways. It turned out that some people couldn't read or write and had been working for the railways for years without anyone realising," Iain said.

"I wanted to go from working on the gate line to a job in the ticket office. The assessment was in three parts, one part maths, two-parts English. I found out afterwards that I had failed on the maths part. It was my fractions that let me down, I hadn't used those since I was 15," he said.

Iain went on to do an English course and a basic IT course and



got interested in helping other people like himself who left school with no qualifications.

Now that Iain is spending two days each week carrying out his union learning rep duties, he says he has noticed that there is a huge demand for IT courses among ticket-office staff.

"There is also a great demand for sign language, especially for staff who have face-to-face contact with customers as they have a lot of hard-of-hearing customers and staff would like to be able to communicate better with them," he said.

Iain said that interest in courses in the Brighton area has really taken off and people like the fact that the centre run by the union rather than the company.

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Seven days a week





Ten go mad for the Railway Children

THE Railway Children charity has launched its forth MAD Day. Friday May 13 will be an opportunity for the rail industry to make a difference to the lives of children living in and around the world's railway stations.

In the ten years since its start the charity has helped over 35,000 children and provided them with shelter, food, healthcare and education. So to celebrate, the theme of this year's Make A Difference Day is the number 10.

The fundraising pack is full of ideas for raising funds and having fun whilst doing it. Have a ten-pin bowling evening; challenge your colleagues to see how many cream crackers they can eat in ten minutes, or how many sit-ups they can do. If you give up a treat every day for ten days, the money you save could feed a child in India for two weeks. If 100,000 rail employees raised £10 each, they would raise a total of £1,000,000, which would help thousands of children live a better life away from the railway stations.

The charity is particularly in need of support this year following the tsunami disaster. The Railway Children has partner organisations in areas of India affected by the earthquake and tidal wave.

In a natural disaster such as this, many children will be missing, abandoned or separated from their parents. Railway Children will support its partners to offer the care, shelter and counselling that the children whose lives have been shattered by the tsunami will need over the coming months and years.

● To order a fundraising pack, please contact the Railway Children on 01270 251571 or email at madday@railway-children.org.uk

Former RMT officer delivers tsunami aid

FORMER RMT security officer Noel Fernando returned to Britain last month after delivering the union's emergency tsunami aid to the people of his devastated Sri Lankan home town of Moratuwa, where hundreds died and 15,000 were left homeless.

"There was so much devastation, so much to rebuild," said Noel, who delivered £3,500 worth of medical equipment to Moratuwa district hospital.

Noel also handed over a cheque for a further £850 to help buy tools and fishing nets for carpenters and fishermen who saw their homes and livelihoods swept away.

"I want to thank you all for sending us the medical aid to be used in the Moratuwa area, where we run 14 clinics at refugee camps," Dr A P Ratnasingham told RMT general secretary Bob Crow.



Noel Fernando, in glasses, delivers medical equipment to medical staff at Moratuwa District Hospital, and surveys the devastation on the beach near Galle.



Recycle for Red Nose Day

YOU can support Comic Relief this year without parting with cash – you can recycle your old mobiles or inkjet printer cartridges.

As part of the March Red Nose Day, a recycling company has pledged to give cash to Comic Relief for every mobile and recycled cartridge.

This eco-friendly fundraiser will help raise money for this worthwhile charity, which is committed to helping end poverty and social injustice in the UK and the world's poorest countries.

The company Eurosource has a website where you can find out which mobiles and inkjet cartridges can be recycled, and exactly how much will be given to Comic Relief for each one.

All you have to do is pop your old mobile or inkjet cartridge in a secure envelope and post it to Comic Relief Recycling Appeal, Freepost NAT1990, Falkirk, FK2 9BR.

Mobiles and cartridges must be posted by April 15 to allow time for the donations to be processed and the proceeds to be sent to Comic Relief.

● For more information visit the website at www.recyclingappeal.com/rednoseday or call 08712 50 50 50.



RMT attends World Social Forum



ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE: RMT delegation with Bob Hayden of the Australian Railway Workers Union (second left) at the WSF.

AN RMT delegation was among over 120,000 people who attended the fifth world social forum in Porto Allgre in Brazil last month. Delegates

heard Brazilian President Lulu Silva open the proceedings which were held at the same time as western (G8) leaders met in Davos, Switzerland.

While G8 leaders discussed further privatisation and the arms trade, the WSF talked about ending poverty, providing decent pensions, and industries run for the many not the few.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow spoke at the trade union rally hosted by Brazilian metal workers. Delegates had the opportunity to meet with many other activists and trade unionists including Alicia Castro MP and general secretary of the Argentine Air Pilots Association.

A number of forums dealing with the many issues facing working people enjoyed a large participation from young people. The highlight of the conference was being in the international football stadium with over 20,000 people, and a further 5,000 outside, to listen to Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. The forum decided to have regional forums in 2006 and a world forum in 2007 in Africa.



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Rights of asbestos victims protected

INSURERS failed in their attempt to evade responsibility for compensating thousands of victims of asbestos exposure following a landmark judgment in the High Court in Newcastle Upon Tyne last month.

Norwich Union and British Shipbuilders challenged the right of people exposed to asbestos to claim compensation for pleural plaques, scarring of the lining of the lungs caused by exposure to asbestos. The judge rejected their argument that pleural plaques should not be compensated.

Although the insurers succeeded in having the amount of the awards reduced, the right to compensation, and to return to court should the claimant develop a more serious asbestos-related condition, remains intact.

Mr Justice Holland ruled that pleural plaques, indicating an increased risk of developing asbestos-related illness (including the fatal disease mesothelioma), which is a cause of anxiety meant that compensation should be paid.

The insurance industry and British Shipbuilders stood to save millions of pounds had they been successful in defeating the claims. They tried to prevent thousands of people with pleural plaques from making claims against the companies who negligently exposed them to asbestos.

Ian McFall, national head of asbestos litigation for Thompsons Solicitors, the law firm who represented union members in the High Court case, said the judgment was a victory for everyone who has a claim and reaffirmed the right to compensation for pleural plaques.

"It has held that our clients have suffered injury and that the negligent employers and their insurers must pay damages. This is good law which puts people before profits," he said.



Railing for the rural services

FORTY years ago we witnessed the Beeching rail cuts. In an act of vandalism only surpassed by rail privatisation, thousands of branch lines were sacrificed in the name of rationalisation. Rural Britain has never recovered from this singularly stupid move and transport policy has always been subject to what might have been rather than what could be.

As chairman of the backbench group of Labour MPs when many of us were elected for the first time in 1997, transport stood out as the single biggest challenge the government faced in the rural domain.

Access to reasonable public transport is still the biggest single contributor as to whether you can get and hold down a job, if you can get affordable child care, and will depend on whether you can live and work in the countryside, and much more besides.

The issue of rural lines and their future was a key feature in the government's community rail development strategy announced just before Christmas and was a topic chosen for debate early in 2005. Of course this has been against the backdrop of more closure threats, greater reliance upon volunteer railway buffs and off loading of finance to a galaxy of other potential funders including local government, the EU and individuals who want to run their own railway.

Whilst the government's Treasury expenditure commitment is undoubted, those of us who rely on the railway as a means of getting about need to be on our guard.

My constituency, Stroud, in Gloucestershire is the very epitome of what some disparagingly call middle-England. We are an area of market towns and small villages, squashed south and east of Gloucester. This is problematic because of the damage that the 'breaking of the gauge' still causes today, with a station which is largely a terminal. We have two lines that run through the constituency, one from Cheltenham to Paddington, via Swindon, and the other from Bristol to Gloucester and up to the Midlands. Both are well subscribed but as any RMT member will know we face the classic dilemma that if the rail companies want to run more inter-city services, it is the rural stopping trains that are sacrificed, certainly on the second, north-south line.

Over the years I have noticed a marked upturn in passenger use, which is very pleasing. On the early morning and early evening trains' seats are at a premium. Kemble in the Cotswolds, one station down from Stroud, sells more first class tickets than any station other than the main city stations.

Freight also is on the up. We are a reserve line for the Severn Tunnel, and as such come into regular use because of the Tunnel's past fallibilities. As home of the de-commissioned nuclear power station at Berkeley, nuclear material has been freighted to Sellafield by train for many years.

As someone who is also a Co-operative MP I would not in any way want to deny that there could be benefits from Community Rail Partnerships. These could initiate some exciting projects to work on the four identified objectives of accessibility, rural regeneration, social inclusion and sustainable tourism. However, this must be in addition to an appropriate level of subsidy to keep lines and stations open.

Such partnerships would of course be far more effective under a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway which is after all party policy. Indeed, the logic of this policy is confirmed when we find out that in the last year alone the private TOCs and ROSCO's between them have banked almost half a billion pounds in profits, money that could be otherwise been spent on protecting and expanding rural railways.

The alternative will be more closures, greater reliance upon buses and much more disadvantage being faced by those on lower incomes who do live in the countryside. It will also prevent the necessity of much more cohesion between rail and bus travel in rural Britain. Thus rural transport will be a key issue at the next General Election. Whilst Labour has to do much more, we know that the other main parties will aim to make massive savings in the area of rural transport. There is still much to play for.

Save Our Seafarers

RMT seafarers from across Britain lobbied parliament earlier month and rallied to demand that the government take action to halt the decline in shipping jobs

AROUND one hundred RMT activists rallied in London last month to demand action to save seafaring jobs.

RMT parliamentary group chair John McDonnell MP welcomed the RMT delegation and joined the protest.

“The United Kingdom is an island nation heavily dependent upon ships for our trade but the numbers of seafarers have declined dramatically from 30,000 in 1980 to less than 10,000 today,” John told the lobby.

The continued trend towards dismissing UK seafarers and replacing them with low cost foreign nationals has continued for many years. The introduction of the tonnage tax regime has benefited shipping companies but not stemmed the flow of job losses.

“We are facing the prospect now that within a generation there will no

longer be British seafarers on British ships,” John said.

He argued that while the shipping industry had pocketed over £70 million through the tonnage tax promises to create jobs had not been kept.

He said that if shipowners do not deliver employment with the tonnage tax, consideration should be given to its withdrawal.

RMT secretary Bob Crow agreed and said it was a “disgrace” that despite the handouts they are still getting away with exploiting cheap labour and dumping UK ratings.

“It is made even easier by the continuing exemption of shipowners from the 1976 Race Relations Act which allows them to pay exploitative rates of pay to foreign national seafarers recruited abroad..

“It is shameful that the right to discriminate should

still be enshrined in a law designed to outlaw it – and that law must now be changed once and for all to outlaw discrimination on British ships,” Bob Crow said.

The shipowners can continue to replace UK seafarers due to the lack of employment protection for workers in the industry. In particular shipowners continue to enjoy an exemption from the

provisions of the 1976 Race Relations Act which allows them to pay exploitative rates of pay to foreign national seafarers recruited abroad.

It has also recently been discovered that the national minimum wage does not apply to UK seafarers on board UK ships whilst in UK waters; the legislation only applies whilst the ship is in port or UK internal waters.

Collapse of P&O ferry transfer deal “a massive blow”



RMT DESCRIBED the collapse of negotiations to transfer two P&O Portsmouth vessels and 350 jobs to Brittany Ferries as a “massive blow”.

“P&O’s decision to cut these vessels is a massive blow to our members and their families, and another huge body blow to the UK shipping industry,” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

“Our view remains that P&O are not taking the long view, and that cutting these routes is an unnecessarily drastic move.

“We have tried every political avenue to try to get some positive action to save these and other UK shipping jobs, and we believe that it is irresponsible simply to allow them to slip away,” he said.

Brittany Ferries were the only other shipping company to indicate an interest in taking over the P&O Ferries ships on the Portsmouth to Le-Havre routes.

Unfortunately the Office of Fair Trading decided to refer the proposed acquisition to the Competition Commission. It is understood that Brittany Ferries were anxious to plan their schedules for the peak summer season but the Competition Commission Inquiry has meant a delay of several months and the company has now announced that it is no longer interested in acquiring the vessels. The seafarers face dismissal in September.

Shipping secretary Steve Todd said that members now faced the bleak possibility of redundancy which could have been avoided.

“The transfer could have gone ahead last December prior to government interference which led to Brittany Ferries pulling



SOS: John McDonnell MP with RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd (right) at parliament

CalMac members vote to defend jobs and pay

RMT MEMBERS at Caledonian MacBrayne have voted by two to one for strike action to defend their jobs, pay, conditions and pensions on March 23.

The ballot followed the company's failure to provide assurances that there would be no compulsory redundancies and no worsening of pensions, pay and conditions for its present or future workforce.

The union had sought the assurances after advertisements seeking tenders for the Gourock-Dunoon route were placed last month despite the fact that the Scottish parliament rejected the privatisation plans last December.

"Our members have voted decisively for action to defend their jobs, pay, conditions and pensions," said RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

"After three weeks' silence from the company, I hope they

will now see fit to get around the table with us to negotiate guarantees for the terms and conditions of the people who work hard to provide these lifeline ferry services," he said.

Shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the battle was now on.

"There is nothing that demonstrates to us that there is

any pressure on the Scottish Executive to press ahead with this tendering exercise.

"Privatisation will mean job losses, the erosion of pay and conditions and a poorer service," he said.

Scottish TUC general secretary Bill Speirs agreed and said that a recent study by Jeanette Findlay of Glasgow

University highlighted these dangers and concluded that it would be "the most expensive option for Scottish taxpayers".

● In the ballot for strike action, 66 per cent were in favour, and 34 per cent against. In the ballot for action short of strike there were 82 per cent in favour, and 18 per cent against on a nearly 60 per cent turnout.

Swift action protects jobs at Stena Line

SWIFT action by RMT forced Stena Line to scrap plans to introduce low-paid Filipino workers as crew on its Harwich services and further assurances that the company will not do so on its Irish Sea operations.

RMT gave notice of intention to ballot members for industrial action and action short of a strike after the company proposed to employ Filipinos

as cleaners and covering seafarer's jobs "in emergencies" on vastly inferior pay and conditions.

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the company withdrew the plans following the threat to ballot members.

"These are the most concrete assurances we have received from any employer and it proves once again that

this union can deliver and is prepared to defend its members," he said.

"It would not have mattered what nationality the cleaners were but plans to take over other duties was seen as the thin end of the wedge by the union," he said.

Assurances have now been given with regard to the employment of foreign nationals.

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A woman's place is on her union's executive

Women's equality remains a key industrial issue, as well as one for the union itself, according to the biggest RMT women's conference for years

WOMEN IN transport still have a long way to travel to equality, delegates at the RMT women's conference in Poole agreed.

Equal pay, childcare and flexible working – even basics like toilet facilities – remain key industrial issues.

Women's participation and representation in the union itself also remain important issues.

Delegates welcomed the creation of the first regional women's advisory committee, in south Wales and the southwest, and called for the initiative to be followed in every RMT region.

The packed agenda and growing attendance also prompted an emergency call for the conference to become a two-day event.

Agreements on flexible working and childcare should be negotiated with employers in the absence of meaningful legislation, delegates agreed.

Conference endorsed a call for the Council of Executives to prepare a model policy and initiate a national campaign, and referred the issue to the AGM.

"It is absurd to expect that a legal right to ask for flexible working will change things," said **Glenn Burrows, Bristol Rail**. She pointed out that even that right existed only for parents of children under six or of disabled children under 18.

What was needed was the legal obligation for the employer to grant it.

Few local nurseries could cater for parents working in transport industries, noted Glenn: "Try to find a nursery that opens before 6am," she said.

The same was true of shipping, noted conference chair **Pauline Howe, Dover Shipping**, who had seen 80 women faced with no choice but to leave their jobs when the employer had decided he could no longer provide flexible working.

Toilets no laughing matter

A call for a campaign to demand adequate women's toilets – the most basic of working conditions – was endorsed unanimously and referred to the RMT annual general meeting.

"This is a serious issue in every industry where there is a growing number of women workers," said **Susan Marshall, East Midlands Central**.

"It is simply not good enough to have to queue up to use the public lavatories, to ask for the key for the disabled WC, or to make do with just one cubicle for a large and growing female workforce."

No more probation

The union should campaign for the abolition of probation for new employees, delegates agreed.

Employers used probation as a device to deny workers their rights, and probationers were routinely bullied, intimidated and sacked without justice.

With more women now joining the transport industries than before a disproportionate number of probationers were women.

"Employers are helped by the law that prevents workers claiming unfair dismissal until they have been employed for a year," said **Janine Booth, Finsbury Park**.

It was also used as a device to undermine the union, with managers routinely telling probationers that it was illegal for them to strike or even to join the union.

Staff should be released from duty to do work associated with

End sweatshop labour

AN END to sweatshop labour in Britain and around the world was the aim of guest speaker **Kerry Sturman** of campaigning group **No Sweat**.

Providing a disturbing snapshot of long hours in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, super-exploitation and harassment of workers and violence and intimidation against union organisers, she urged delegates to get involved in the campaign for fair wages and decent conditions.

Kerry's speech prompted suggestions that members should ensure that their own uniforms were not made by sweatshop labour – and to refuse to accept them if they were.

applying for or training for promotion to avoid discrimination against those – predominantly women – with caring responsibilities, delegates agreed.

Some employers required staff applying and training for promotional positions to do preparatory and study work in their own time.

That was unfair to all, but was discriminatory against those with

A long, hard road for women in the fire service



PROGRESS FOR women in the fire service has been achieved thanks to a long, hard and continuing struggle, Fire Brigades Union president **Ruth Winter** told delegates.

Change within the union had first been driven by women members organising themselves to resist discrimination and harassment.

The issue was taken up seriously for the first time by former general secretary **Ken Cameron** and president

Ronnie Scott, and by **Ken's** successor, **Andy Gilchrist**.

FBU structures, although still not perfect, were now more progressive than most, said **Ruth**, though less than five per cent of the union's 55,000 members were women

"If our structures were

already women-friendly then women would already have been in senior positions.

"I was elected as the custodian of the rule-book, but sometimes you need to change the rules – and the changes won by women always benefit men too," she said.



*SISTERS: Women make up an increasing percentage of transport workers
Photo: Duncan Philips/reportdigital.co.uk*

caring responsibilities, said professional trainer **Linda Wiles, Finsbury Park**.

"The easiest solution is to allow applicants and on-the-job trainees to do the associated work on business time," Linda said.

Resist attacks on right to choose

The union should actively oppose attempts to undermine abortion rights, delegates agreed.

The trade union movement had always taken a firm stand in

support of women's right to choose abortion, as it was largely working-class women who had been forced into dangerous back-street abortions when the right was denied, said **Janine Booth, Finsbury Park**.

The best way to reduce late abortions was to make access to earlier abortions easier, not to reduce time limits, which would harm the most vulnerable women, she said.

● Next year's RMT women's conference will be hosted by Gloucester branch, either in Gloucester or Cheltenham Spa.

Pauline Howe, Dover

RMT needs to reach every woman member



EVERY WOMAN in RMT should be encouraged and have the opportunity to get involved in the union's work at every level, said general secretary Bob Crow.

"We need to reach every woman RMT member and find out exactly what stands in the way of participating in union life," Bob said.

The biggest single obstacle to the participation of women with young children was the lack of childcare facilities – a problem that had to be tackled.

The solution was not to reserve seats and delegation places, but to remove the obstacles to involvement: "Our job is to unlock the door," said Bob.

Childcare was also a key workplace issue, said Bob, and he had written to 108 companies seeking a commitment to tackle the need for childcare provision, and that some had signalled their intention to introduce childcare vouchers.

"That is a step in the right direction, but we need to ensure that they are of significant value to make a real difference," said Bob.

Two well-attended special conferences had been held to discuss how to improve female participation in the union.

Delegates had called for an RMT women's charter and this was now being developed, said Bob, "not as an exercise in producing a glossy pamphlet, but to promote the interests of women in the workplace and in the union."

The RMT executive had asked branches to indicate what they were doing to encourage women to participate in branch life and the creation of a regional women's advisory committee in south Wales and the southwest should be repeated in every RMT region, said Bob.

The executive had also agreed that RMT News would regularly carry material by and for women members, with the launch of the Women's Charter to be given prominence.

The union had submitted a call for a campaign to improve flexible-working rights to the British and Scottish TUC women's conferences – the latter to be chaired this year by RMT member Janet Cassidy.

Shipping was elected chair of the liaison committee and will preside over next year's conference. Linda Wiles, Finsbury Park, was elected vice-

chair, and **Caroline Parry, Gloucester, Glenn Wallis, Bristol Rail** were elected to serve on the conference liaison committee.

Putting track safety first



The packed third annual RMT Health and Safety conference called on the union to fight for a fundamental review of rail track safety following the deaths of eight track workers in the past year

TRACK worker deaths have been rising steadily since 1995, averaging from around one every 170 days to one every 80 days by the end of 2004, **Birmingham Engineering delegate Pat Collins** told the one hundred-strong health and safety conference.

Pat pointed out that in the past track deaths were associated with being struck by a train while working on a line open to traffic, but now the majority of serious accidents have occurred within engineering possessions.

"Eight track workers killed within possessions during 2004, including the four at Tebay, represents the highest number of deaths since 1990/91," he said.

During the same period the number of major injuries had also risen over the last thirty years from one every six days to one every four days, he said.

"Trackside workers now represent one of the highest risk occupations in the country, exceeding building and agricultural industries," he said.

Delegates heard that in many accidents enquiries had found that there had been serious deficiencies in the planning process, the use of plant and the management of work.

Conference agreed that safety rules had not kept pace with new systems of working and called on the union to press Network Rail for an urgent and fundamental review of the planning processes, use of plant and management of work within such possessions in order to ensure safe systems of work.

Level crossing safety

Conference called for a full review of safety at level crossings following the recent incidents, including the deadly Ufton Nervet rail crash.

The union should look at options such as replacing crossings with underpasses or bridges, or ensure that they are barriered or staffed 24 hours a day or at least staffed during train service hours.

Holyhead delegate Jack Jones said that level crossings were the number one risk on the railways.

"Staff are often disciplined for trying to prevent accidents and in many incidences the CCTV monitors are of poor, black and white quality.

"These issues have to be tackled as a matter of urgency," he said.

Exeter delegate Bob Miles had attended the funeral of victims of the Ufton Nervet disaster and said that the refusal to act to make crossings safer was simply a question of "putting money before safety".

Delegates agreed that there should be a CCTV-recorded link so that following any incidents an independent record can be viewed by the police, HSE or other investigating bodies.

Isocyanate paints

Toxic paints that attack the respiratory system were being used on P&O vessels in contravention of Fleet Regulations **Dover Shipping Branch delegate Tim May** told conference.

He said that P&O fleet regulations clearly stated that only Isocyanate-free paints should be used. However, management now contended that the regulation was incorrectly worded and intended to amend them.

"How can it be that regulations banning

the use of these paints can be removed in such a casual manner, he added.

"This stuff gets into the ventilation system and the smell stays in the air for weeks," he said.

Conference called for independent analysis of these products which should include not only the chemical formula of the paint and additives, but also the full range of potential physical problems that may be caused by their continued use.

Shipboard equipment

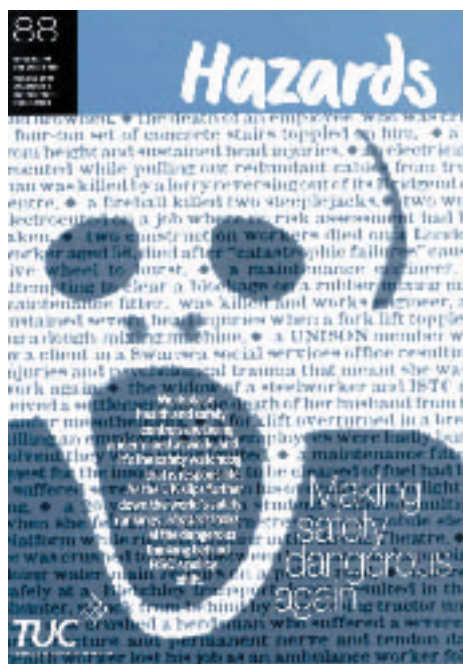
Conference heard serious concerns regarding the suitability of firefighting suits on board Northlink and other ferries.

Aberdeen and Glasgow shipping branches submitted unanimously supported motions that such suits may jeopardise the safety of seafarers in the event of a fire on board ship or other installation due to the materials used and their construction.

The union was called upon to seek guidance from the relevant regulatory organisations as to the designated use of this type of suit and the approved international standard to which they comply.

Assaults on staff

Attacks on rail staff were on the increase,
Warrington and District delegate David



Wilson told conference.

He said that Network Rail had produced a poster in conjunction with the British Transport Police and the rail companies claiming that assaults would not be tolerated and that staff will be given total support in any prosecution.

“However, the reality is that we get little or no support from the police or private

security firms employed by the railway companies.

“Police response times are terrible as they only seem to bother policing the large mainline stations, to the detriment of our vulnerable members on out-stations who mostly work on their own from the early hours to midnight,” he said.

Conference agreed that members should feel safe when they report for duty in the knowledge that if they need assistance, a response by the police or the security firm would be forthcoming.

Delegates agreed that the police had lost touch with their duties, with budgets and overtime outweighing duties, and security firms only seemed to be bothered with collecting revenue for the rail companies instead of making the railways safer.

The union was asked to seek clarification from the various rail companies and BTP on what their policies are for police and security firm patrols at out-stations that are operated by lone workers.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash suggested that the newly elected health and safety liaison committee made up of Jack Jones, Glen Wallis and Brendan Kelly meet with the BTP to discuss the issues raised by conference.

- Conference elected Jack Jones as the chair of next year's health and safety conference and he will chair proceedings.

Safety reps make a difference

THE most effective tool to ensure good health and safety at work is trade unions, because organised workplaces are safer workplaces, TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson told conference.

He said that was one of the main reasons that people join and stay in a union: 70 per cent of new trade union members considered health and safety a “very important” union issue – more even than for pay.

"A recent study showed that where there is a union presence the workplace injury rate is 24 per cent lower than where there is no union presence," he said.

John Milligan of the RMT organising unit agreed that effective workplace organisation was the key to health and safety.

“We need to build the confidence of workers to ensure that members are not isolated in order to challenge employers and ensure a safe working

environment,” he said.

Hugh Robertson agreed and said that the positive impact of union activity also lowered ill-health levels.

Another study by Cambridge University's Judge Institute of Management found: "The proportion of employees who are trade union members has a positive and significant association on both injury and illness rates"

In 2003 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) ran a number of pilots where trade union appointed “Worker Safety Advisers” went in to non-unionised organisations.

An HSE evaluation reported that over 75 per cent of employers said they had made changes as a result and almost 70 per cent of workers had seen an increase in awareness of health and safety (Hazards 84).

“One of the reasons unions make such a difference is that they ensure that their safety representatives are

trained.

“And safety representatives know the workplace far better than management as they are aware of what really goes on. They also act as a channel for individual workers to raise their concerns,” said Hugh.

Many risks were first identified by unions, sometimes after management ignored or hid early warnings.

It was unions that highlighted the dangers of asbestos, carbon disulphide and vinyl chloride monomer. Unions were the first to raise major concerns over levels of violence in the workplace, and RSI, and the effects of passive smoking.

When delegates pointed out that employers were sometime refusing to release health and safety reps to attend training courses, Hugh said that the law required them to do so and those reps affected should contact the union.

RAP campaign k

BRITAIN'S specialist transport union kicked off the 'Rail Against Privatisation' campaign on International Railworkers' Day earlier this month.

RMT kicked off a series of studies, reports and events to demonstrate the positive benefits of reversing the costly and disastrous Tory privatisation in the 1990s.

The campaign will also focus on proposals in the Railway Bill that will make it easier for the government to close down parts of the network and reduce services.

In particular government plans for 56 "community" railways will lead to the run down for these lines.

"RMT's Rail Against Privatisation march aims to put the future of our railways firmly on the

election agenda. We will also be convening a conference of passenger and environmental groups to save the railway," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

Mobile demo

The campaign will include a national mobile demonstration and march from Glasgow to London from April 16 to 30 to coincide with the expected general election campaign (see meeting dates overleaf).

The campaign will highlight the huge benefits of renationalisation for the electorate in terms of taxpayers' expenditure, the environment, congestion and transport planning. It will seek to persuade the government to bring our railways back under democratic control.

No Beeching mark two

RMT has warned the government that it risks an electoral backlash if it continues to pursue Beeching-style attacks on rail services after transport secretary Alistair Darling again threatened the replacement of rural services with buses.

"The original Beeching cuts started by replacing trains with buses, and when the bus



IT'S A RAP: RMT staged a series of local events at 20 rail stations to kick off the campaign on International Railway Workers Day on Monday March 7. RMT members handed out RAP postcards to send to MPs at Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham, Exeter, Bristol, Cardiff, Newport, Taunton, Portsmouth, Southampton and at various Tube station and at the main stations.



Rail against privatisation

Public meeting Dover

Come along and hear RMT General Secretary **Bob Crow** and Dover MP **Gwyn Prosser** plus other invited guests

Monday, April 4 at 7.30pm
The Auditorium, Dover Discovery,
Market Square

Kicks off

replacements were run down whole rural communities found themselves with no public transport links at all," Bob Crow said.

"Something like four out of ten clauses of the Railways Bill will make it easier for government to reduce rail services.

"That is bad news for passengers and it is bad news for the environment," he said.

RMT has said that it is the escalating costs of privatisation that are leading to service cuts, and that is the problem that needs fixing.

Bob also pointed out that while the Secretary of State has said that he is interested in what works, he was pressing ahead with the privatisation of South Eastern Trains, despite performing better and requiring less subsidy in the public sector.

Nearly 100 MPs have already signed Early Day Motion 382 supporting the principle of public ownership and many have signed EDM 95 to retain South Eastern Trains in the public sector following a huge postcard campaign by RMT members and supporters.

"The campaign aims to persuade the government that public ownership of the railways will provide a better deal for

travellers, taxpayers and the public generally.

"Public ownership will allow proper transport planning to cope with increased demand for travel due to new developments and the need to reduce road traffic to get cleaner air," he said.

The union has consistently argued that cutting rail services, encouraging people back into cars and spending billions on new roads will make it far harder for the government to reach its own domestic emissions targets.

How you can make a difference

- Join in the campaigning activities in your area, see details overleaf.
- Write to your MP, your local media and the government asking for a return of the railway to the public sector
- Contact j.croy@rmt.org.uk for campaign material, including postcards urging MPs to support a public railway and an end to the privatisation of Tube infrastructure
- Visit www.rmt.org.uk

rap
rail against privatisation

Fighting for Northern Rail services

THE union has distributed 10,000 postcards for people to send to their MPs to ask them to back Early Day Motion 726. The EDM urges the government to use its powers under the Railways Bill to oppose any line closures, job cuts and substitution proposals which may arise from the ongoing review of services.

The Strategic Rail Authority plans to review service and fare levels on the Northern Rail franchise and there are concerns that the review will lead to higher fares, replacing off-peak rail services with buses, line closures and job losses.

As a result SRA assurances that the new franchise would "deliver greater value for money to taxpayers" and "bring to an end any remaining uncertainty over the future shape of rail services in the North of England" have been cast in serious doubt.



Tackling pollution and global warming

A NEW RMT study shows average levels of nitrogen dioxide pollutant from road traffic in first months of 2005 was well above government targets.

The study finds that in 28 areas of the UK the average levels of this harmful pollutant are above or just at the government target of 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air. Marylebone Road has the highest emissions level in the UK where the average reading is 92 micrograms per cubic metre of air, more than twice the target level.

The RMT study shows the mean emission level from each of the 110 automatic monitoring stations around the country in 2005 so far. Nitrogen dioxide aggravates respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, dry coughs, and eye, nose and throat irritations. It may increase susceptibility to infections and lower resistance to diseases such as influenza.

RMT General Secretary, Bob Crow, said the study showed that levels of nitrogen dioxide were too high and are damaging to those with respiratory and other health conditions.

"The UK also releases 173 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, mainly from road traffic, making the UK the second largest source of this gas in the EU.

"Reducing emission levels of pollutants and greenhouse gasses will entail less road transport. Thus, an expanded the rail and tram network is essential and public ownership of the railways is necessary to achieve this objective," he said.

Air pollutant concentrations: Nitrogen dioxide

Source: Defra Air Quality Archive

	Mean 2005 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Average	33.2
Highest site value	92.0
Lowest site value	3.8
London Marylebone Road	92.0
London Cromwell Road	81.0

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1.00pm, St Enoch's Square

EDINBURGH - Sun, April 17
11.15am, Princes Street

NEWCASTLE - Mon, April 18
6.30pm, Royal Station Hotel

DURHAM - Tues, April 19
3pm, City Centre

YORK - Wed, April 20
12.30pm, The Mount

HULL - Thurs, April 21
11.00am, Hull Station

LIVERPOOL - Sun, April 24
1.30pm, The Casa

LEEDS - Fri, April 22
11.30am, Leeds Station

MANCHESTER - Sat, April 23
1.00pm, Mechanics Institute

DERBY - Mon, April 25
6pm, Spot Conference Centre

BIRMINGHAM - Wed, April 27
1pm, Chamberlain Square
6pm, Birmingham and Midlands Institute

NOTTINGHAM - Tues, April 26
6.30pm, Royal Navy Association Rooms

CARDIFF - Mon, April 25
6pm, Sandringham Hotel

MILTON KEYNES - Thurs, April 28
Details to be confirmed

DOVER - Mon, April 4
7.30pm Discovery Centre

EXETER - Tues, April 5
6.30pm, St George's Hall

BRISTOL - Mon, April 11
6.30pm, The Council House

LONDON - Sat, April 30
March: assemble Whitehall Place noon,
3pm, Rally Camden Centre

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For more information phone 0800 376 3706
or e-mail info@rmt.org.uk

RMT
www.rmt.org.uk

Taxing rules on Company Vans

CHANGES to the tax rules governing the private use of company vans effective from April could have major implications for some RMT members.

In future, an individual will be taxed if a company van is used for anything other than travel to and from work.

Members in any doubt should approach their employer directly or contact the RMT national policy department on 020 7529 8281 or email a.gittins@rmt.org.uk

Inland Revenue fact sheet for employees' tax on company vans - Changes from 6 April 2005



From 6 April 2005, a lot of people will no longer have to pay tax on their company van. You will only pay tax if you use the van for private journeys other than journeys between home and work. If you are affected by this, please talk to your employer then get in touch with us so we can change your tax code to make sure you pay the right amount of tax.

What if I only use the van for work journeys?

If the only journeys you make in the van are work journeys – for example, delivering goods or making calls to customers – there is no tax charge.

What about journeys between home and work?

If you mainly use the van for work and the only journeys you make in it are work journeys and travelling between home and work, there is also no tax to pay.

How can I show there is no other private use?

Your employer must be able to show to the Inland Revenue that you don't have to pay tax. This means you could be asked to

- keep mileage records
- sign an agreement about the van use
- have use of the van put into a contract of employment.

Other private journeys

If you do make other private journeys in the van, you will be charged tax for this. However, if this private travel is insignificant (like taking an old mattress or other rubbish to the tip once or twice a year) then you will still not have to pay any tax.

If you are charged tax, the amounts you will have to pay tax on (normally collected using your Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax code) are:

Year	Age of van	Amount included in your tax code	Tax at basic rate
2005/06	under 4 yrs	£500	£110
	4 yrs or more	£350	£77
2007/08	all vans	£3,000	£660

The amount is reduced if you do not have the van for the whole tax year, if someone else also uses it for private travel, or if you pay something for using it privately.

Fuel for the van

If your employer lets you have free or subsidised fuel for private use, you will have to pay extra tax from 2007/08. For a basic rate taxpayer this will mean paying tax of around £110.

Year	Amount included in your tax code	Tax at 22% basic rate
2005/06	nil	nil
2007/08	£500	£110

Please note: this article is for guidance only and reflects the position at the time of writing.

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

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Victory for the Torquay five

Five RMT bus drivers were “over the moon” last month after prosecutions over a long-running red light saga collapsed

FIVE bus drivers employed by Stagecoach South Devon Buses were alleged on several dates back in 2003 to have driven through a red traffic light on the A380, Newton Road, Jury's Corner, Devon.

The five drivers, Christopher Coverdale, Charles Garlick, Leon Woodbridge, Andrew Whitworthy and Mark Stott, all represented by RMT solicitors Kaim Todner, were summonsed individually to attend court for offences of failing to comply with a traffic light signal.

All five said that there problems at that particular junction as a bus stop was positioned just the other side of the traffic lights. The speed limit at that section of the road is 40 mph.

Danger

RMT rep Danny Ferguson said that the problem was that alighting passengers rang the bell as the bus approached a green light.



“As the passengers walk down the aisle to alight, the lights sometimes change to amber before going to red.

“Drivers are left in a horrible position of braking and throwing the alighting passengers to the floor or up against the front of the vehicle,” he said.

Danny said that any bus driver will tell you that a vehicle fitted with a Telmar braking system stops “on its nose”.

All five drivers complained that this was exactly their predicament as their buses approached the stop and passengers made their way along the aisle to the exit.

Drivers were faced with the difficult decision of stopping quickly, potentially injuring passengers, or driving across the junction when the light was at amber.

Campaign

Danny and the union have lobbied Torbay Council and the police over many years to reposition this bus stop, without success.

Despite this drivers were being convicted on a regular basis while trying to safeguard their passengers.

“A bus driver or train driver's first responsibility is for the safety of passengers at all times”, Danny said.

“Try telling this to the police who persist in convicting bus drivers, or the Council who have



DELIGHTED: RMT member Chris Coverdale celebrates outside Torquay magistrates court. Photo: Andy Styles, Herald Express

the responsibility of erecting bus stops.”

Despite this lobbying, the court decided that the five cases must be heard separately. Chris Coverdale was the first to face trial at Newton Abbot Magistrates' Court last month, some 17 months after the alleged incident.

The Crown Prosecution Service had indicated that if the case against Chris was unsuccessful it would not continue proceedings against the remaining four.

Faulty evidence

In preparing for trial, it became

apparent that the Crown Prosecution Service had failed to maintain continuous log numbers for the photographs.

The photographs were collected from the camera at Kingskerswell were assigned a log number and sent via Exeter to Plymouth for analysis. However, the log numbers given to the photographs were not continuous.

RMT questioned the evidence and challenged the CPS to produce records indicating when the camera had been calibrated. Local members became even more alarmed when, days later, a van appeared at the offending lights to calibrate them. During



this time, four more RMT members were caught in the trap.

All the drivers were well under the speed limit and said the same thing: a passenger had pressed the bell to alight and there were people standing in the aisle waiting as the lights changed to amber.

In criminal law matters the CPS must prove the case and it

was unable to do so as it could not show that there was continuity in the log numbers. Following representations to the Court, the case was dismissed.

Victory

Outside the court Chris said he was "over the moon" and that the case should never have come to court.

"Bus drivers cannot stop a 13-ton vehicle in half a second, he said.

"We think of passenger safety and these buses can brake very suddenly and I do not want to hurl one of my passengers off their seat."

Chris thanked his defence QC, James Martin, and said he was very grateful for the support he received from his union, RMT.

Danny added that not only would bus workers benefit from the court decision, but motorists at the same location and dates would benefit if they challenged the evidence.

Case dismissed

When the Crown Prosecution Service reviewed the other four cases, it became apparent that the same lack of continuity of log numbers was common to all, and the prosecutions were abandoned.

Two further drivers have potential court proceedings remaining against them. It remains to be seen whether the

CPS has been able to salvage its position.

Further campaigning is underway to have the bus stop moved and prevent any further prosecutions in relation to the Jury's Corner traffic lights.

Giles Morrison of Kaim Todner solicitors said that the saga highlighted that it was fundamentally important that RMT members contact their branch secretary the moment they receive notification that they may be prosecuted for a criminal offence.






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The immortal Robert Burns

RMT financial wizard Allan Craig toasted the life of the great Scottish bard at a Burns night earlier this year. Below is an extract.

THOUSANDS of people the world over gather together every January 25 to celebrate the birth of a simple farm lad from Ayrshire, in Scotland.

246 years ago Robert Burns came into the world with nothing and left it all too soon... again with nothing.

However, he left behind a great treasure, a legacy of poetry and songs that has never been surpassed.

But was it possible, for this young man to have had the vision, the perception, the understanding of life that is still applicable to people all over the world?

Especially when the world of his time was a very insular one indeed, with neither radio nor television to relate the news and events of five miles away never mind 5,000 miles away.

This is where his true genius lies, in his universality. He ranks with the great names like Beethoven and Shakespeare, but whilst it could be said that these two grand masters appeal to the sophisticated, Burns appeals to both intellectuals and working class people the world over.

A life

Burns was born in Alloway, in Ayrshire, on January 25, 1759, the oldest of seven children and the family lived in a house their father built.

Around the fire of an evening, Burns learned many traditional ballads and folk tales of ghosts and devils, goblins and witches, giants and dragons and thus the seeds of his imagination were cultivated.

His father was a farmer and Burns joined his father in the fields, toiling from first light until dusk. Burns took a surprising collection of books with him, including Homer, Shakespeare, Pope and, of course, his bible.

These he read voraciously, whenever they would stop for a bite to eat or a brief respite from the wrath of the elements. He had a great hunger for knowledge and was charged with emotion, awareness and sensitivity.

In his mid-teens two great forces

erupted within him, love of the lassies and a love of poetry.

After the death of Burn's father in 1784, he and his brother leased a farm but bad weather caused the loss of their crop. However, it was in this period of adversity that his literary talents flourished and in the space of 15 months, the bulk of his remarkable poems were produced.

He fell in love with Jean Armour and though he gave her a certificate of marriage that was acceptable under Scot's law, her father tore it up and insisted that they part, even though Jean gave birth to twins.

Burns decided to emigrate to the West Indies, and a friend of his, Gavin Hamilton, suggested that he publish some of his poetry to raise his fare.

Thus the Kilmarnock edition of his poems was published and 600 copies were sold and a further edition prepared and Burns received the sum of £20.

During this time he renewed a friendship with Mary Campbell (Highland Mary) and they had decided to marry when Mary suddenly died.

Burns wrote of their love:-



ALLAN CRAIG: Toasts Robbie Burns
Photos: Sarah Evans

*Wi mony a vow and locked embrace,
oor parting was fu tender
And pledging aft to meet again, we
tore ourselves asunder*

*But oh fell deaths untimely frost that
nipt my flower sae early*

*Now greens the seed an cauld the
clay that wraps my highland Mary*

*Oh pale pale now those rosy lips that
I hae kissed sae fondly*

*And closed for e'er the sparkling
glance that dwelt on me sae kindly*

*And mouldering now in silent dew
that heart that loved me dearly*

*But still within my bosom's care shall
live my highland Mary.....*

Burns was persuaded to go to Edinburgh where he was introduced into society as the lion of the season and the Edinburgh edition of his poems was published.

However, he was soon dropped from society when the next thing of interest came along.

He then had a relationship with Agnes MacAchose and he wrote for her, what for me is his most beautiful love song *Ae Fond Kiss*, once described as pain and pleasure distilled in the same drop.

Here are just a few lines:-

*Ae fond kiss and then we sever, ae
fond kiss and then forever*

*Deep in heart wrung tears I'll pledge
thee*

*Warring sighs and groans I'll wage
thee*

*Had we never loved sae kindly, had
we never loved sae blindly*

*Never met nor never parted we would
ne'r be broken hearted*

*But to see her was to love her, love
but her and love forever*

Burns soon returned to Ayrshire, reunited with Jean Armour and set up house with her. She presented him with twins once more, but both girls died.

In 1791 he became a Dumfries exciseman and became occupied with a labour of love for which he received no payment, the provision of songs for the Scottish Musical Museum.

Burns wrote over 200 songs, many of

which he wrote the music to, others he restructured and saved from extinction. He wrote his epic *Tam O'Shanter* in one day.

Freedom

Burns lived through two revolutions and was greatly influenced by them. The American revolution started when he was 16, and the storming of the Bastille in Paris took place in his 30th year.

Burns detested all manner of cruelty and oppression as well as the arrogance of privilege and wealth. He became involved with political groups at a time when it was dangerous to do so.

Burns wrote poems to freedom and here are a few remarkable lines:-

Here's freedom to them that would read

Here's freedom to them that would write

There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard

Than them that the truth would indite

In a few lines he encapsulates everything and who could argue that it is just as relevant today as 250 years ago.

Tragically, he fell victim to rheumatism which affected his heart and Burns died in direst poverty at just 37 years old. He received a grandiose funeral on the very day his son Maxwell was born.

So there we are, a man from such

humble beginnings who saw very little of his own country, never mind the world at large, yet he became not only Scotland's bard, but the world's poet.

His song *Auld Lang Syne* is an international anthem of the world.

He was one of the first to appreciate the subjugation of women, and that they had rights too, and was well ahead of his time.

While Europe's eye is fixed on mighty things

*The fate o Empires an the fall o Kings
While quacks of state much each
produce his plan*

And even children lisp the rights o man

Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention

The rights o women merits some attention

His satires, too, are a bitter exposure of humbug, hypocrisy and oppression.

He turned his ire against the power of the Church, the wealthy and the government, who tended to regard a man by his financial standing, Burns wrote:

Then let us pray that come it may for a' that

That sense and worth o'er a' the earth

Shall win the victory for a' that

For a' that and a' that its comin yet for a' that

*That man tae man the world o'er
Shall Brothers be for a' that.*

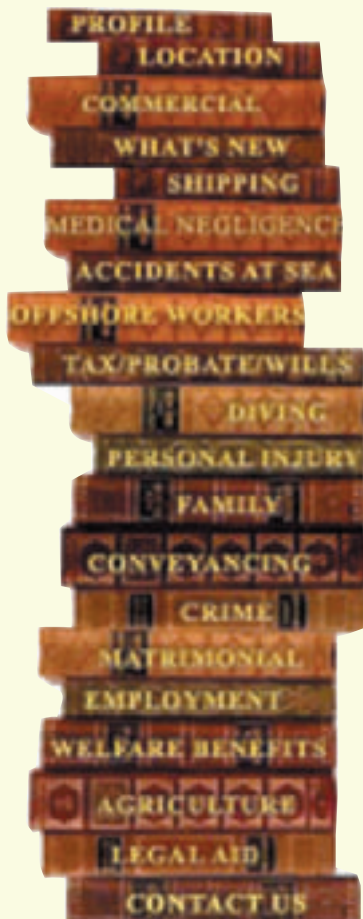
Literary experts have endeavoured to dissect Burn's work. He simply took the rough homespun language and turned it into a thing of eternal beauty.

He wrote simply from the heart.

His songs speak of friendship and love, of country and of fellow human beings with simplicity and sincerity. So let the experts debate and dissect his magical lines: we whose heritage they are, are content to accept the gift, to read and sing and enjoy.



BOB CROW: meets Dave Brooks, the Jimmy Hendrix of the bagpipes.



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A climate for change on freight

Freight on Rail Campaign Co-ordinator Philippa Edmunds looks at the need to act on climate change

THIS is a crucial time for UK transport as the government restructures the Department for Transport (DfT), as a result of abolishing the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), and steers the Railways Bill quickly through parliament.

If the government is serious about tackling climate change, and playing its part in the Kyoto protocol, it should examine the growth in road transport, which currently is responsible for around 21 per cent of total man-made carbon dioxide emissions in the UK. Transport as a whole makes up 26 per cent of the emissions.

Rail has a crucial role to play in the climate change debate as, per tonne carried, it produces around one tenth of the CO₂ emissions of road transport. For a journey from London to Edinburgh, for example, rail travel causes one sixth of the carbon dioxide emissions per passenger travelled by road. Office of National Statistics figures showed that emissions from road freight transport increased by 59 per cent between 1990 and 2002.

That is why, it is vital that the government makes this connection and retains the duty to promote the Railways Bill, as in previous acts, so that the railways can serve the economy and society and help control global warming.

A framework for freight

Other bodies involved in funding or operating the railways – Network Rail, regional government, the London Mayor and PTEs – should have a similar duty. The government must provide guidance in the form of strategies so that there are both a national framework and objectives to give long-term stability that the rail freight industry can make long-term decisions to invest to promote private sector investment.



Setting the right national regional and local planning framework for rail freight is crucial and that is why Freight on Rail, a partnership of the rail freight industry, the transport trade unions and Transport 2000, was set up to work with regional and local authorities to get the right planning policies in place.

Authorities need to identify and protect existing and disused sites, lines and sidings with potential as suitable interchange locations. In particular, planning permission for rail interchanges, without which rail freight will find it more difficult to increase, will not be secured unless the right policies are enshrined in the spatial planning framework at all levels.

This requirement for regional and local frameworks explains why the SRA Regional Planning Managers function, which provides a vital link between land-use planning and rail transport, through the Regional Planning Assessments, must be replicated in the new structures at the DfT. This function, combined with the input of rail knowledge as currently supplied by the SRA Freight Executive, is crucial if the economy is to get full value from its investment in rail freight.

As well as links with land use planning, there is a need for specialist resources, currently undertaken by the SRA, to represent the strategic rail interests at public inquiries and examinations in public.

For instance, Cricklewood's strategic nature was confirmed by the SRA at the



public inquiry and supported by the SRA. 'Freight Strategy' and subsequent 'Plan' which stated that there was a need for 3-4 intermodal terminals in the London area.

The London Interchange Freight Exchange (LIFE) project, at Colnbrook near Heathrow, was lost for the lack of just such a strategic lead. SRA evidence was crucial in safeguarding rail land for future potential rail use in the decision on Beftonforth's appeal, where the SRA gave working examples to show that the existing sidings were viable and proved that there were no capacity constraints on the line.

Larger lorries

As part of the campaign to improve the integration between land use, planning and

transport Freight on Rail has just issued a briefing paper for local authorities on rail freight in Local Transport Plans*.

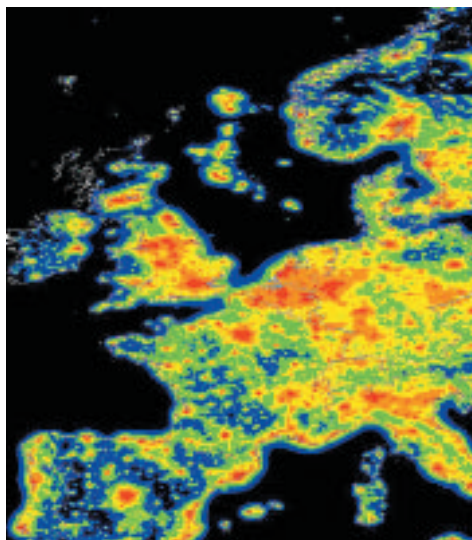
Press reports indicate that the road industry is now pushing for longer and heavier lorries, between 60 and 84 tonnes, at a time when heavy good traffic increased by 2.9 per cent and light goods traffic by 5 per cent.

Existing research indicates that heavy goods vehicles only pay for around 65 per cent of the costs they impose upon society.

So instead of considering even larger lorries, the government should continue to support rail freight as a means of tackling the ever increasing road congestion, which it acknowledges is getting worse, and controlling emissions.

Firms are also faced with the restriction in lorry drivers' hours caused by the adoption of the European Working Time Directive and an acute shortage of HGV drivers making the rail case stronger to act as a freight by-pass.

● For more information contact Philippa Edmunds on 020 8241 9982 or by email philippa@freightronrail.org.uk



Sporting politics

I'M in a sporting mood, so last month I accompanied the RMT football team to sunny Darlington to watch them play Shildon Railway Works F.C. The RMT team is presently in the RMT Helpline League while Shildon Railway are in the Shildon Bring Back Train Manufacturing to the UK League.

The excellent Shildon side won 10-0, mainly due to the fact that Bob Crow had 'two left feet', and allegedly the lineperson "had it in for him".

A very enjoyable afternoon, but – you may well say – where on earth is Shildon? It used to be a thriving town in the northeast, the main employer was British Rail Engineering, and the works built wagons for our railway network and abroad. In the past, there were railway workshops the length and breadth of the country. This is ironic in view of the fact that this island founded, developed and manufactured railway rolling stock and gave it to the world.

In fact the first ever passenger train ran between nearby Darlington and Stockton. So you might well ask what has happened to this proud train manufacturing country.

The reality is that there is little or no new-build, and recent announcements highlighted job losses at Litchurch Lane, Derby and the proposed closure of Eastleigh in Hampshire. To get back to Shildon – the organiser of the football match, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the club, invited the local MP, the Right Honourable member for Sedgefield, Tony Blair, but at the time of the game there was not even an acknowledgment.

Perhaps we should forgive him as his favourite hobby seems to be Bush-licking – that other world renown sporting figure who has a liking for the well known American sport of "shoot the hell out of them" and was roaming European cities looking for the sports equipment that he seems to like labelled "WMD". However, as usual he has had difficulty finding it.

It's quite clear to me that most of our political "leaders" don't seem to care a damn about the Shildons of our country, unlike the governments of France, Germany and Italy who insist that rolling stock for their respective railways are manufactured in their country – and to hell with European Union directives.

I think that we transport workers need to do something about this unacceptable destruction of our manufacturing base which is continuing apace with the privatisation of our transport systems.

We should be demanding the return of rail to public ownership and all rolling stock should be built and maintained in this country.

The huge profits that private operators and rolling stock companies are presently announcing while our rail network gets worse and more expensive for taxpayers to run speaks volumes.

Now is the time to act for the sake of all our futures in order to develop an environmentally friendly, clean and efficient integrated public transport network.

You can help by getting involved in the march and rallies organised by RMT and supported by other unions and the TUC which will be starting in Scotland next month and visiting major cities all the way to London.

TONY DONAGHEY



UNITED: RMT players get a touch of the ball against Shildon Railway FC

RMT resolute at SSP conference

By John Milligan

OUR union's historic AGM decision in 2003 subsequently endorsed by the 2004 Special General Meeting resulted in a number of Scottish branches and the Regional Council in Scotland affiliating to the Scottish Socialist Party.

This year's annual SSP conference saw another historic moment when the RMT presented resolutions for the conference agenda for the first since affiliation.

The first resolution moved by Jim Gray (pictured) from the Council of Executives and SSP member gained unanimous agreement and support for the union's campaign to return rail to public ownership and control.

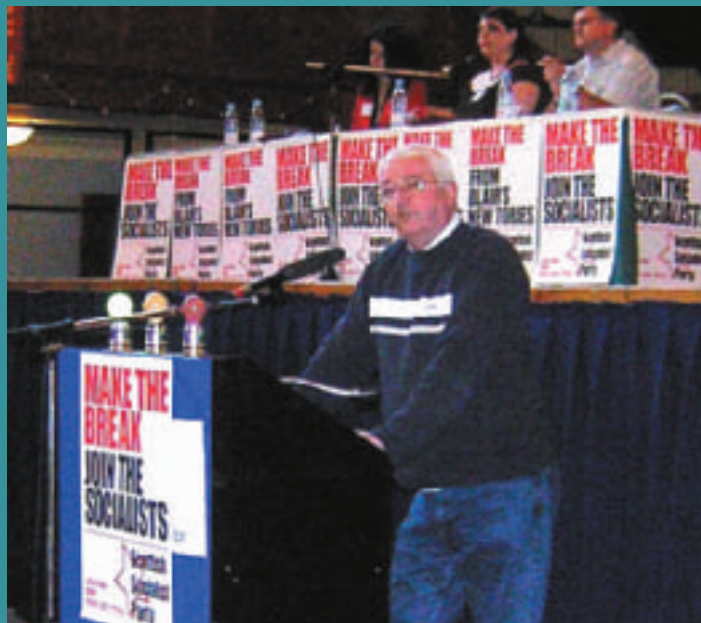
The second resolution covered our campaigns in the maritime industry

including opposition to the privatisation of Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services, for an increase in training and employment for UK seafarers and an end to shipowners' exemption to the Race Relations Act.

The value of affiliation becomes increasingly evident. Not only does the SSP share our aims and policies but it is also prepared to act on our behalf and give support to our campaigns.

Tommy Sheridan has stood down as party convenor but remains an MSP. He will continue, as he has always done, to provide a valued voice on behalf of our members.

The newly elected convenor, Colin Fox, had this to say about the relationship between the RMT and the SSP: "The affiliation of RMT represents a giant step for the SSP into territory which



means we can see our vision of a genuine mass party being realised one day soon.

"Only a party which can claim to represent not just railway workers, seafarers, transport workers and their families but the interests of hundreds of thousands of people across Scotland has a chance of achieving our goals.

"I had the great good fortune to attend the recent Cal Mac lobby of the

Scottish Parliament organised by the union and I look forward as the new Convenor to a continued close working relationship with the RMT," he said.

Jim Gray said that it was marvellous to witness and participate in a conference attended by over 400 delegates from all parts of Scotland united and determined in their resolve to bring justice and fairness to all societies at home and abroad.

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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
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Despot in Nepal

RMT News looks at the recent royal coup in Katmandu

AUTOCRATIC King Gyanendra of Nepal abolished all democratic freedoms and dismissed the government in a dramatic coup last month.

Nepal is now under the rule of an absolute monarchy. All trade union rights have been suspended, meetings of more than three people have been banned and senior political and trade union leaders have been arrested.

Three leaders of the Nepal Trade Union Congress, NTUC, are in detention including its senior vice president Puskar Acharya. Other union leaders are in hiding. Communication with the outside world has become extremely difficult with international phone lines cut. After being closed for some days, email has been restored but it is not known for how long.

The king, who came to power following the mysterious massacre of King Birendra and his entire family, has assumed all executive powers for the next three years, declared a state of emergency and installed a new hand-picked puppet cabinet.

Poverty

Nepal is an extremely poor country where illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition and economic underdevelopment are endemic in a society riven by caste, ethnic and class divisions.

About 90 per cent of the 26

million population are peasant farmers and 71 per cent of wealth is owned by the top 12 per cent of households. The gross domestic product per capita is 240 US dollars, the second lowest level in the world, and over 80 per cent of the population exist below the poverty line on just £1 a day.

The situation of women is appalling; many are abducted to India and forced into prostitution each year. The oppression of the so-called 'untouchables' continues.

Nepal's ruling classes consist of feudal landlords – serfdom is still legal – and sections of the business class whose interests are tied into foreign capital as well as those who directly use the state apparatus to exploit the people.

Nepal's economy is severely dominated by the Indian monopoly businesses.

The refusal of those in power to allow any forms of democratic reform has led to a protracted and damaging civil war in the country.

Nepalese Society (UK) president Karna Shahi said that the regime had unleashed the full force of the Royal Nepal Army through brutality, 'disappearances', torture, rape and executions, with more than 11,000 lives lost, documented by several human rights organisations.

However, the British government has been giving military aid in order to buy two



Russian built military Mi-17 helicopters, as well as explosive ordnance disposal, logistical and communications equipment in aid of the RNA military intelligence support group.

"The time has come for us to tell the British government to stop arming the autocratic feudal monarchy of Nepal," said Mr Shahi.

Military aid

The Guardian (August 5, 2002) revealed that this military aid programme was "hidden in a paper laid 48 hours before parliament went into recess and was slipped through under the 'global conflict prevention pool'", an aid programme meant for war-torn countries.

At the same time the United States announced \$20 million of new military aid.

The BBC also reported last April that the US was investing \$17 million of military aid to pay

for about 20,000 M16 rifles and night vision equipment.

According to the *New York Times*, the US Agency for International Development (AID) is exploring ways to add another \$14 million in "insurgency relevant" aid.

Belgium, Israel and India also give military aid and training. Belgian Health Minister Magda Aelvoet resigned in 2002 over the proposed sale of 5,500 automatic rifles to Nepal.

RMT has joined calls for solidarity, the restoration of democracy and the release of hundreds of political prisoners.

● Protests to His Excellency Prabal SJB Rana, the Nepalese Ambassador, Nepal Embassy, 12a Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QU.

Telephone 020 7229 1594
fax 020 7792 or email
info@nepembassy.org.uk or
rnelondon@btconnect.com



PROTEST: An RMT delegation joined an ITF day of protest on 10 February and a TUC delegation to hand in a letter of protest against the suspension of democracy and trade union rights in Nepal. Pickets were held outside Nepalese embassies to coincide with protest rallies that were attempted by human rights groups in Nepal, but swiftly broken up by police.

Ten-nil to Shildon

A VERY special game between Durham Alliance League football team Shildon Railway Football Club, and RMT took place last month, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Shildon's club formed in 1954 by employees of the British Rail Engineering workshops which once thrived in the town. Despite the closure of the plant in 1984 the club has managed to provide sports facilities for the community to be able to continue playing competitive football.

Shildon soundly thrashed RMT by a whooping ten goals to nil. This was not surprising, however, as the side is unbeaten for over 30 games, second in the league and facing six semi-final cup fixtures.

For the opening half hour of the game RMT gave as good as they got, playing some neat passing football.

Railway, however, scored a couple of goals and from then on overpowered their visitors. Just before half time RMT had their best chance when midfielder Ali Gittins skipped past defenders and rifled in a terrific shot only for Railway keeper Dave Howe to tip the ball over the bar.

After the interval Railway stepped up a gear in the icy cold weather and rattled in more goals. RMT centre-half Robert Crow tried to in vain to stem the flow but Railways' teenage centre-forward Neil Robinson was on top form, notching up five goals.

The score was, however, totally irrelevant. Railway players and supporters appreciated RMT players travelling up to support this 50th anniversary match. The game was also supported by RMT and NUM officials and by RMT solicitors Thompsons.

Luckily there were no injuries so no sick pay has been paid out



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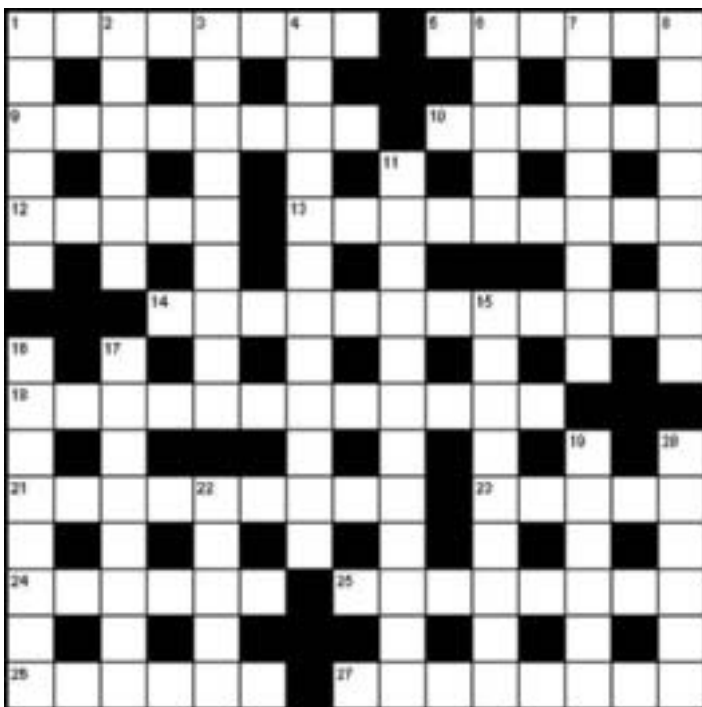
Morning Star

The daily paper of the left

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£25 Prize Crossword No. 13

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Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by April 11 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

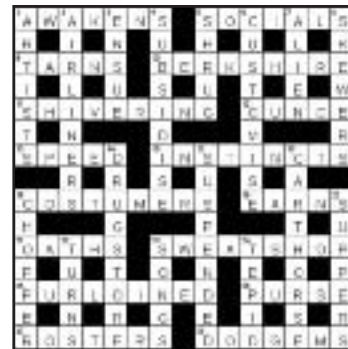
ACROSS

- 1 One who rules on his or her own (8)
- 5 Up tents and leave (6)
- 9 Pragmatists (8)
- 10 Light wind (6)
- 12 A damp one won't make much noise (5)
- 13 Principal sheets, nautically (9)
- 14 Calling off, deletion, marking to prevent re-use (12)
- 18 Youthful silliness (12)
- 21 Optometrists (9)
- 23 Frighten (5)
- 24 Antenna (6)
- 25 Glossy publication -- full of bullets? (8)
- 26 Few and far between (6)
- 27 Worn by birds (8)

DOWN

- 1 Not down! (6)
- 2 Contains beverage or storm (6)
- 3 Reconstituted timber sheet made from waste and woodland trimmings (9)

Last month's solution



Winner of prize crossword No. 12 is Fred Worth from Dorset

- 4 Covering to protect chair back from hair oil (12)
- 6 Aristocrats (5)
- 7 Pre-dinner drink (8)
- 8 Bird, often shot by 6 (8)
- 11 London fish market (12)
- 15 Helper (9)
- 16 Tumblers, but not glasses! (8)
- 17 Ornamental climber (8)
- 19 Deadly shortage of food (6)
- 20 French flat hats (6)
- 22 No-one likes being hauled over them (5)

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- 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

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 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD
RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM – please complete your
application along with the attached Direct Debit.



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

2 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

3 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

4 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐

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

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

7 Next of Kin

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date



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



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

**‘Childcare, pensions,
training and public
services’**

Sara, 32, Telford



What are **your** issues?

Everyone says there will be a general election this year. Who wins matters for people at work.

If you care about help for working parents, the future of your pension, whether you will get the training you need or the quality of your local public services you should care about who forms the government.

It has never been easier to vote. Everyone can now get a postal vote.

Here's how:

- ☐ Contact your town hall and ask for the electoral registration office. Your council's address and phone number will be in the telephone directory.
- ☐ There's a straightforward website that shows how to get a postal vote. Go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/vote/postal

your  **vote**
a difference at work

TUC 