

RMTnews

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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ON THE MOVE



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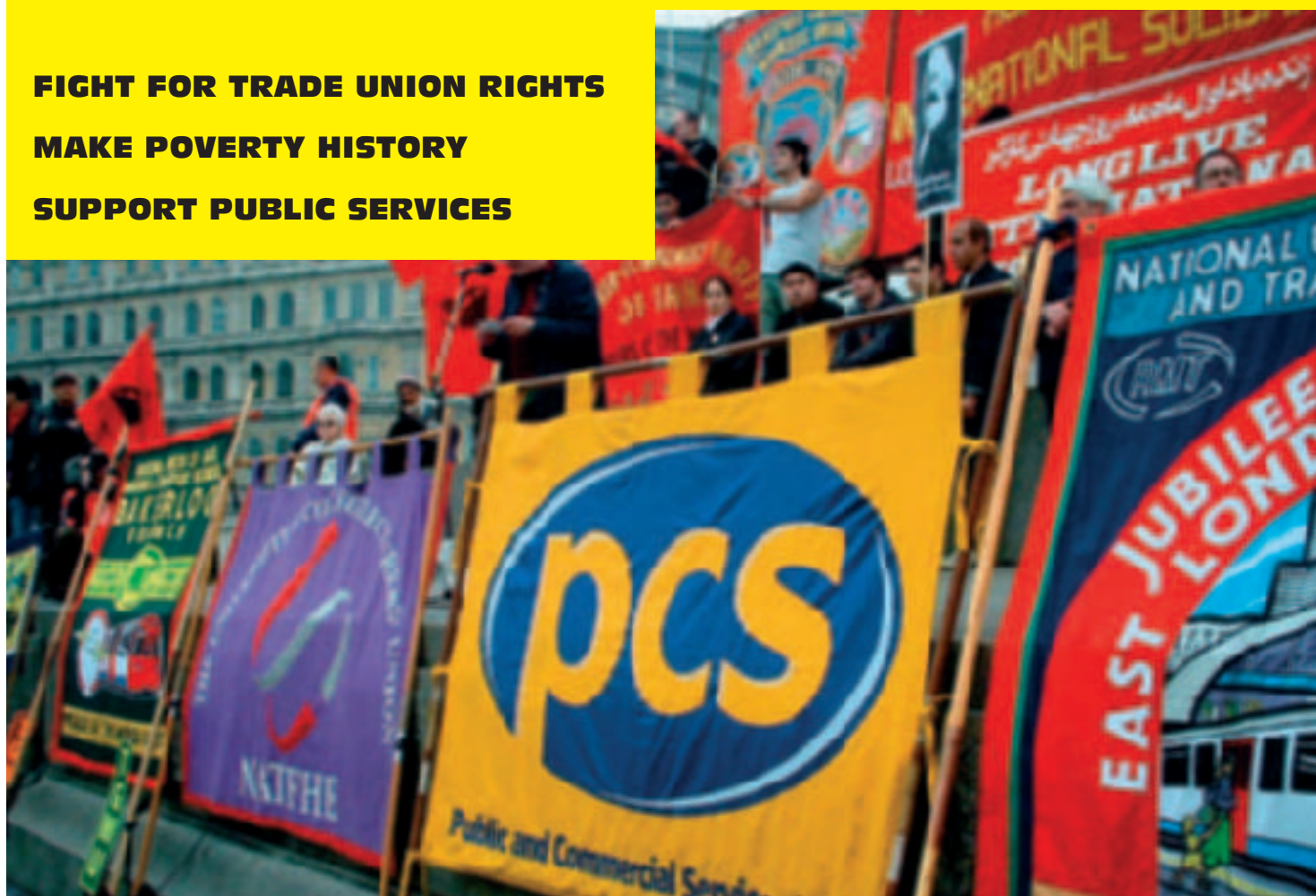
MAY DAY 2005

SUNDAY 1st MAY

**Assemble—CLERKENWELL GREEN 1200
MARCH TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE**



**FIGHT FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS
MAKE POVERTY HISTORY
SUPPORT PUBLIC SERVICES**



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Campaign for public ownership



THIS is my last editorial before the general election on May 5. Obviously it is a matter for RMT members which way they vote, but it goes without saying that the last thing any of us would want to see is the return of the Tories. This union will be supporting the Scottish Socialist Party and our group of Labour MPs elsewhere.

Labour candidate Ann Cryer MP is quite right when writing in this month's journal that the poisonous politics of hate peddled by the likes of the BNP should not get a foothold.

What this country is crying out for is a dose of basic common sense values based on peace, democracy, public ownership of our services, employment rights, and decent housing and education for all.

Most importantly people must use their vote. The biggest threat to our democracy is for ordinary people to turn their back on the political process and leave politics to vested interests of the political elite and the wealthy.

This has not been helped by the actions of this government which has massively alienated core Labour voters in many ways.

Labour Party conference delegates voted to adopt a policy of "resolving the fragmented structure of the rail industry by introducing an integrated, accountable and publicly owned railway". However this has been totally ignored by the party that is supposed to represent them.

The contents of the Railways Act threatens the very existence of many rural lines, particularly through the introduction of so-called Community Rail projects which allows the government to wash their hands of any responsibility for their long-term future.

That is why we will be asking candidates to support the Rail Against Privatisation campaign. This month men and women from every RMT region will be wending their way from Glasgow to London, visiting many towns and cities, and asking candidates if they agree with the 75 per cent of the public who want their railways back in public hands.

Rallies, demonstrations and lobbies will be held throughout Britain,

culminating in a march and rally in London on April 30.

The message is that it is not only affordable to bring the railways back into public ownership but makes sound financial sense, reaping significant long term social, economic and environmental benefits.

The problems of privatisation was clearly seen when GNER paid £1.3 billion for the East Coast Main Line franchise and made clear that this was going to be paid by threats to services, fare increases and a squeeze on jobs and conditions. Such a path will be resisted by this union.

NEVERTHELESS your union has won a pay increase for Network Rail staff of 3.95 per cent. This is based on the agreement made with the company that the rise would be February RPI, which was 3.2 per cent, plus 0.75 per cent. This should appear in this month's pay packet.

Rail members at Merseyrail and road freight members at Freightliners have shown they are prepared to fight for improved pay and conditions by taking decisive strike action. They are sending a message to employers that it is unacceptable for the bosses to pull in millions in profit and refuse to recognise the contribution their workforces make day-in and day-out.

The Scottish Executive has recognised our arguments against the planned privatisation of Caledonian MacBrayne lifeline ferry services and agreed to go to the European Commission, using the evidence we have provided which proves that the most efficient path is to keep an integrated and publicly-owned service intact.

This was a significant victory but not the end of the matter and we may have to fight to defend CalMac in the interests of the workforce and the travelling public.

They can be no doubt that all transport workers provide an essential service and their voices deserve to be heard. And RMT exists to provide them with a united voice that can make a difference.

Bob Crow

Organising success in the North West and North Wales

THE first of this year's regional council organising weeks was undertaken recently by the union's North West and North Wales regional council.

At planning meetings recruitment targets were identified using information gained from branch plans and the regional council.

Efforts were concentrated in three main areas Liverpool, Crewe, and Chester. Each was allocated a team consisting of activists and the RMT's organising unit, who would work alongside local reps to approach workers in the targeted companies.

At Liverpool Lime Street Station Select Service Partners workers, who in many cases were unaware of what RMT could do for them, were keen to join with some even wanting to become reps.

New members also joined at Initial City Link depots throughout the region as well as workers at the Adelphi Hotel and Seat Catering, along with infrastructure workers based in Crewe, Alstom, Chester. Cleaners at Edge Hill and Chester also came on board.

As one new member put it: "We're glad you came along, we were just talking about joining a union because management are just doing what they want and we don't know what our rights were".

The first step

RMT's message was joining the union was the first step. Members could then get help and advice from local officials and the freephone RMT helpline.

Activists pointed out that it is important to get properly organised with a local rep who RMT will train and support in order to have RMT representation in their workplace.

During the week, names were put forward for the one-day RMT introduction course, aimed at new reps with no RMT training in order to gain support as soon as possible.

The course was successful and everyone who attended will be invited to attend a more in-depth RMT course about six weeks after the introductory course.

New regional organiser John Tilley said that it was good to see new reps getting on RMT courses so quickly after the organising weeks.

"It is also important that we continue the recruitment work throughout the year with activity instigated by our branch and regional recruitment plans," he said.

Branch plans

Regional Council Secretary Alan Aitkenhead said that it was the third organising week



the regional council had been involved in and it was getting easier to actually carry out such exercises.

"The message has got to go out to branches that RMT needs your branch plans to be submitted to the regional council.

"This information and the involvement of the branches is absolutely crucial to being able to conduct the regional organising week and putting forward a coherent quarterly recruitment plan," he said.

Regional Organiser Andy Warnock-Smith said that, due to the commitment of all the

activists involved, the region had been able to cover large areas and make inroads into the ones identified during the planning process.

"I'm now looking forward to the review so that we can evaluate what was done and look at what we need to do in the future," he said.

He said that the success of the organising weeks was not only measured in how many new members and reps are recruited and trained but also on the effect they have on union morale and how they effect the day to day activities of the union.

ORGANISING
UNIT
org.unit@rmt.org.uk
ORDER LINE: 0207 819 9843

Cycling for Cuba and to meet a donkey!

RMT members Bill Rawcliffe and Joe Sheridan will embark on the Cuba cycle challenge next month to raise funds for a Cuban school for disabled blind and partially sighted children and have drinking contest, with a donkey!

Bill of York branch and Joe of Merseyside branch, both nudging the grand age of 50, will attempt a grueling 220 miles marathon across the socialist island in aid of the Abel Santa Maria school, organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

Joe said that enough money had been raised already to buy the children speaking

watches and speaking calculators for the children and he was looking forward to delivering them.

"We have been in training doing around 35 miles but the real thing will be harder and hotter," he said.

Bill said that the US government had imposed a blockade on Cuba since the overthrow of the fascist dictator Batista in 1959.

"These spiteful actions have led to enormous suffering especially from those that need help like these children," he said.

He said that response from RMT branches had been



"brilliant" so far and the recent Engineering grades conference in Sheffield raised a further £100 for the cause.

And the donkey? Bill has had heard tales of a donkey in a place called Mayabe in Cuba that drinks up to 30 beers a day. Bill says after his Trojan efforts, he plans to challenge this beast of burden to a drinking competition. RMT wishes him all the best in all his challenges to come.

● If you or your branch wishes to sponsor Bill and Joe please make cheques out to RMT North East Region and send to RMT York office, 2nd floor, Prudential House, 28/40 Blossom Street, York YO24 1GJ.

● For more information on the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign Tel: 020 7263 6452 web: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Merseyrail strike for 35-hour week

STRIKE ACTION by 170 RMT guards seeking a 35-hour week brought rail traffic on the network to a complete standstill earlier this month.

The strike, the second in the dispute, comes after the company scuppered an attempt to resolve it through mediation by setting preconditions on the outcome.

This strike was even more effective than the first, and Merseyrail appear to have given up all attempts at running any sort of service.

"Our members have once more given a magnificent show of solidarity on the picket-line," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"The company pretended that it wanted to find a resolution but brazenly told the mediator that it would only accept an outcome that went in its favour.

"The time has come to drop the silly games and get round the table and reach an agreement," Bob Crow said.

During talks at Acas the company told the mediator that it would not accept any recommendation that did not include its proposed withdrawal of compensation for rest days falling during leave breaks.

RMT also declared its abhorrence of the victimisation of 47 drivers who had refused to cross picket lines.

The RMT train crew conference in Edinburgh sent solidarity greetings to members at Merseyrail and applauded the refusal of many ASLEF members to cross picket lines.

Freightliner strike bites

ROAD MOTOR RMT drivers at Freightliner depots in England, Scotland and Wales took strike action earlier this month in a dispute over chronic low pay.

Over 100 drivers are involved in depots at Birmingham, Cardiff, Cleveland, Coatbridge, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester.

An overtime ban has been in place since March after members voted by 69 to 1 for action. Reports from the picket lines indicate that the strike is biting deeply and shows the determination of members to win a realistic pay structure.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said members had voted

by a huge majority to take action, and instead of putting about misinformation about the value of their latest pay offer and issuing threats the company should be getting round the table and hammer out a sensible solution.

"Freightliner bosses made £30 million between them out of selling off the company, but members still have to work long hours to make anything like a living wage.

"The huge mandate for this action should tell the company that the time has come to end low pay at Freightliner," Bob Crow said.



New road transport working time regulations introduced



THE Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations 2005 comes into force this month, implementing the EU Road Transport (Working Time) Directive 2002/15/EC.

The Regulations apply to mobile workers working in vehicles covered by the Community Drivers' Hours regulations (3820/85/EC). These are typically goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, coaches and some bus services. Self employed drivers are exempt until 2009.

RMT has submitted responses to the Department of Transport at each stage of the consultation process.

The main provisions of the regulations are:

- An average 48 hour week (excluding breaks and periods of availability) over a 17 week reference period. There is no individual or collective opt-out from the 48 hour average. The reference period can be extended to up to 26 weeks by collective agreement.
- A maximum 60 hours work in any single week (excluding breaks and periods of

availability) provided the average 48 hour week is not exceeded in each reference period. For the purposes of the Regulations the working week starts and finishes at 00.00 on Monday morning.

- A limit of 10 hours (excluding breaks and periods of availability) in any 24 hour period if working at night, but this can be extended by collective agreement. The definition of night time is a period between 00.00 and 04.00 for drivers and crew of goods vehicles and 01.00 and 05.00 for drivers and crew of passenger vehicles.

- Typically a period of availability is time where a worker is not required to remain at their workstation, but must be available to answer calls to start work or resume driving on request. The period and its foreseeable duration should be known in advance by the worker either before departure or just before the start of the period in question.

- Minimum daily and hourly rest provisions are generally applied to drivers

by Community Drivers' Hours Regulations. There are additional break requirements under the new Road Transport Regulations where driving is combined with other work. Break requirements under the EU Drivers' hours rules take precedent when driving

- Employers must inform mobile workers of their rights under the regulations and the details of any collective agreement. The employer must retain working time records for two years. Employees must declare in writing any work they have undertaken for another employer.

- Mobile workers who work fewer than 11 days within the scope of Community Drivers' Hours Regulations in a reference period that is shorter than 26 weeks; or who work fewer than 16 days within the scope of the Community Drivers' Hours Rules in a reference period which is 26 weeks or longer will not be covered by the new Regulations.

- Statutory annual leave/sick pay cannot be used to reduce the average working week. However additional leave over and above the four week entitlement can be used to bring down average working time.

- The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency will enforce the regulations.

- The government will review the operation of the regulations within a year of implementation and the TUC has endorsed a proposal to conduct a trade union review after 35 weeks.

- RMT will monitor how the new regulations are implemented and will play a full part in the TUC review. The union will be publishing a short booklet on the new regulations soon.

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Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516
Seven days a week



Huge protests against EU directive on services

OVER 100,000 trade unionists converged on Brussels on last month during a European Union summit to protest against controversial plans to "liberalise" all public services.

Strong opposition was also expressed over the draft directive by France's conservative government and Sweden's social democratic administration.

The directive has since been suspended for "redrafting" in an attempt to assist French leader Jacques Chirac win a looming referendum on the EU constitution on May 29.

However, British prime minister Tony Blair, who supports the services directive, made clear that the contents of the offending directive would remain the same and was also enshrined within the proposals for an EU constitution.

Blair recently told the House of Commons "the European constitution gives a push for the services directive".

A growing number of trade unions across Europe are expressing hostility to the EU constitution as it enshrines a particular economic system based on extreme neoliberal ideology, ie mass privatisation.

Latest polls have shown a majority against the constitution in France and a larger majority against in Britain.

● A Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution pamphlet outlining why the labour movement should oppose the services directive and the EU constitution is available free from Unity House, mark the envelope TUAUEC.

France stops for jobs and pay

FRENCH trade unionists launched a united day of action last month for improved purchasing power, jobs, employment rights and to defend the 35 hour week, which the government has eroded.

Rail, metro and maritime services came to a standstill as more than one million public service and private sector workers joined countryside demonstrations with rail and urban transport union members out in force.

Trade unionists expressed anger at the spiralling profits of French companies while purchasing power has fallen and unemployment has risen to above 10 per cent.

Rail unions said that the one per cent wage rise suggested for 2005 by SNCF, the French rail operator, was inadequate. SNCF last year reported profits of about £87 million, made through cost reductions including 3,300 jobs.



NO REFERENDUM: A protest in Berlin in front of the Brandenburg Gate demanding that Germans be allowed to have a referendum on the controversial EU constitution after France and Britain agreed to a poll. Referendums are illegal in Germany and German politicians have rejected popular demands for a vote on the constitution, which will fundamentally change how member states are governed.

European Rail workers slam 'liberalisation'

EUROPEAN rail unions descended on Strasbourg last month to fight against the opening of rail transport to competition.

Almost 2,000 representatives of European rail unions, including from the UK, demanded the withdrawal of the European Union's draft directive to liberalise rail passenger traffic. The measure is due to be debated by the European Parliament in June.

European Transport Workers' Federation general secretary Doro Zinke said the directive "means the privatisation of European rail services.

"And after what we have seen regarding safety following rail privatisation in the UK, the fight to defeat this measure is urgent."

Seafarers strike as new French flag threatens jobs

FRENCH seafarers launched strike action as the National Assembly (parliament) passed the law on the country's International Shipping Register (RIF). The stoppage also involved deep-sea vessels as crews went on strike at their next port of call.

The RIF, which replaces France's Kerguelen second register, states that the

master and second officer must be French with at least 35 per cent of the crew being European Union nationals on French-financed ships and 25 per cent on other vessels.

The Socialist and Communist parliamentary groups called the RIF a "Flag of Convenience". No major changes are expected as the text goes through the Senate.

Greek day of action against poverty

RAIL and metro workers were in the forefront of a 24-hour general strike that halted much of Greece last month.

Thousands of trade unionists demonstrated in Athens in protest against the conservative government's privatisation plans implemented following criticism from Brussels that it was breaking the rules of the eurozone's so-called "stability pact".

Greek TUC leader Christos Polyzogopoulos said poverty was increasing and unemployment spiralling – it has now reached 10 per cent of the workforce.

He said that purchasing power had fallen since the introduction of the euro in 2001 and almost one-third of the population now lives below the poverty line.

Banners aloft



THE trade union movement has a long and proud history of commissioning national, regional and branch banners and banner maker Ed Hall is carrying on this tradition for RMT around the country.

RMT Manchester regional council has a remarkable new banner



depicting the terrible events of the Peterloo massacre and a quote from the revolutionary poet Shelley.

Ed worked closely with regional council members to agree the subject of the design and went away to do research.

Ed, who already has a deep

knowledge of the history of the labour movement, said that he still found it astonishing that the yeomanry charged the crowd in 1819, considering how limited its demands were, ie "to bring to the attention of Parliament the plight of the urban poor".

Union banner unfurled for the last time

A Carlisle National Union of Railwayman branch banner was given a send off by Bob Crow recently after over 100 years of service and handed over to the local Tullie House Museum.

The last outing of the 12 foot by 12 foot silk banner, depicting Carlisle Castle and Cathedral, was at the annual general meeting of the Carlisle Community Law Centre.

Carlisle RMT branch secretary Craig Johnston said it was one of the largest surviving banners and it was fitting that people could now admire it as it was a part of the history of the city.



ALOFT: Bob Crow speaking in front of the old NUR banner with Terry Jones (centre) and Alan Stubbs of the Carlisle Community Law Centre.

"On the train back from Manchester I read some of its history, and a quote from 1802 talks of child labour in the cotton mills.

"It said 'they come at five in the morning, we allow them half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner, they leave work at six and another set of children relieves them for the night. The wheels never stand still'," he said.

Leominster

Ed also thoroughly enjoyed making the Leominster and Hereford RMT banner.

"I travelled down for a day and was so impressed by the quiet English green valleys that I later took a holiday there.

"There is something magical about the apple orchards with sheep grazing under the trees while traveling on the local train from Leominster to Hereford and watching the rolling hills go by.

"Living in London it is easy to forget there is a real countryside in this country," he said.

Ed, who was once a health union branch secretary himself, says that it is important to show local scenes and events on banners as well as the great trains which are central to the industry, such as the Eurostar and the Coronation Scott (which he included on the Preston RMT banner).

In his work Ed has found that there is great pride amongst transport workers, whatever their grade, which runs through RMT members.

"The fight for equality and against privatisation make banners all the more important," Ed says.

Artist

Ed Hall has worked for Jeremy Deller who won this years Turner prize. He also made the banner for the passenger terminal at Tilbury where the Windrush landed in 1948, bringing the first West Indian workers to staff London's buses and hospitals. He has an exhibition at the Barbican in May, which later goes to the Lowry, and the Manchester regional council have agreed that their banner can be part of it.

● If you want more details of Ed Hall's work or commission a banner for your branch contact: e-mail: edmundhall44@aol.com

Tel 020 8318 0420 or write to:
20 The Lane, Blackheath,
London SE3 9SL



Fighting the fascist BNP

EARLIER this year, the Chairman of the BNP – Nick Griffin – announced that he would be standing against me at the next General Election. After winning four seats on Bradford Council in June 2004, the BNP is seeking to use the General Election as a platform to launch its 2006 council election campaign and claim to be an accepted political force in the area. As Bradford Council is traditionally a hung Council, 2006 could – if Griffin has his way – see the nightmare scenario of the BNP having the balance of power. The repercussions of this for Bradford Council including Keighley and all the honest and hardworking people who live there would be devastating.

The election result in Keighley will be of profound importance and the people of Keighley and Ilkley have a real choice. They can either allow an extremist and racist organisation to secure a political foothold (and accept all the consequences thereafter) or, alternatively, they can send a resounding message rejecting extremism. If Griffin fails in Keighley, where will he go next? The BNP has already failed in Oldham and Burnley and a further electoral defeat will seriously damage the BNP below the water line. Griffin cannot simply go on peddling his poison from one town to another.

The whole strategy of the BNP is based on conflict and division. Wherever the BNP has turned up, it is not to alleviate problems or to find positive solutions to difficult issues. Rather, the life blood of the BNP is conflict and division. It seeks to exploit weakness – setting community against community – for its own political gain. Lies, misinformation and distrust are the BNP tools of the trade.

The vast majority of those people who are fooled into supporting the BNP do not subscribe to the racist ideology of the party fanatics. Rather, they are individuals with legitimate concerns who are largely disillusioned with the major political parties. The job of reaching out to these people – to demonstrate that there is an alternative to the lies of the BNP – is vital. It is the only sure way of eliminating the BNP – but it is a time consuming process.

I have launched a robust and active anti-BNP campaign in Keighley. I am delighted to say that our friends in the Bradford and Keighley Trades Council have done likewise and, importantly, the Keighley Together Campaign has been launched by the churches, mosques, voluntary sector, Keighley College, trade unions and students in Keighley to raise the positive aspects of Keighley.

The will to defeat the BNP in Keighley is very strong and I am confident that we will prevail. However, the responsibility for defeating extremists – hell bent on destroying our town – rests with all of us. If you are abhorred by the BNP or want to ensure that right wing extremism is never allowed to fester, then please do something about it and join our campaign. There are no second chances – if we do not convincingly defeat Griffin at the next election, the repercussions will be felt throughout the country.

It is the working man and woman that will suffer most if the BNP are allowed to secure a political foothold in Keighley. At a time when Keighley is on the verge of seeing the most radical programme of regeneration – with the prospect of new jobs – and investment then a reputation for extremism would cause severe long term damage. I am not prepared to let that happen and I know that I can count on the unions.

Finally, can I thank the many members of the RMT for their help, courtesy and friendly chats during my weekly train journeys between Keighley and London over the past eight years – this part of my routine has been a great pleasure.

ANN CRYER LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR KEIGHLEY

CalMac climbdown

The Scottish Executive agrees to challenge tendering of Caledonian Macbrayne ferry services

AFTER a successful lobby and threats to take strike action, RMT scored a significant political victory in the campaign against the privatisation of Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services.

Working alongside the Scottish TUC, the union has been fighting to retain a fully integrated and publicly owned ferry service.

The Scottish Executive has now bowed to pressure and agreed to make direct representations to the European Commission against the tendering process, making use of the evidence that unions have placed before them.

The union also met the Transport Minister, held a briefing meeting and, with the STUC, organised a very successful lobby of the Scottish Parliament and MSPs.

Climbdown

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that he was “delighted” by the Scottish Executive climbdown.

“RMT members can be proud of the role they played in saving these lifeline services from the privateers.

“However, this is no time to be complacent as there is still work to do to ensure we get the right result,” he said.

RMT commissioned Jeanette Findlay, of the economics department, Glasgow University, to investigate the question of value for money for the taxpayer. The publication and the results of that report, coming at the end of the consultation period, was very timely and crucial to the final decision to delay tendering.

The report assessed the likely costs of ferry services to the taxpayer of a tendering exercise if it was won by Caledonian MacBrayne, or a tendering exercise won by an outside bidder, and also considered the retention of the existing publicly operated service.

She concluded that the non-tendering option was the least expensive.

A number of key findings are outlined below:

● Even if CalMac were to win the tender there would be significant costs associated with periodical re-tendering, as well as with increased tax liabilities arising from the division of the company. New tiers of management would mean fragmentation, new channels of interaction would have to be created and safety regulation would be split.

● CalMac failing to win the contract raised the prospect of even more problems, with a serious shadow cast over the pension scheme. Even if the TUPE transfer of undertakings rules were to apply, they would not protect the pension scheme, and substantial up-front pay-outs were likely to be needed to retain a scheme with similar benefits under a new employer.

● The report warns that a

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new operator with a limited tenure may lack incentives to maintain vessels to current high standards, and that limited resources to oversee the operator could lead to long-term degradation of vessels.

● The report questions whether the vessel owning company would be able to run services as the 'operator of last resort' in the event of the operator's failure to do so, and points out that the current 'light touch' regulation would have to be replaced by a more heavy handed and expensive regime.

The union also succeeded in ensuring that the new evidence was examined by the Transport Committee, following the decision of the committee to agree to a further investigation into the question of tendering. RMT gave evidence and prepared questions for the Transport Minister.

Further evidence has now come to light from Dr Paul Bennett and Professor Neil Kay, who published an extensive report that questions the need to tender and set out an alternative proposals.

RMT responded to the



consultation from the Scottish Executive on the future of the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services by setting out its opposition to tendering based on all the new evidence.

The Minister is now having further discussions with European Commission

officials and will report back to parliament towards the end of this month.

● Members and activists can still register their protests to MSPs against the tendering. Members could also personally visit their MSP as this really raises the profile of the issue.

Victory at Wightlink

FOLLOWING a ballot for strike action which forced management back to the negotiating table, the union has won a 3.2 per cent pay increase and a one hour reduction in the working week to 35 hours.

As soon as the ballot was underway and management knew how serious the union was, talks were held and the company also agreed to pay permanent night crews a 25

per cent premium to salaries for hours worked.

Wightlink agreed that the introduction of the reduced working week will be implemented as previously agreed from January 1 2005.

Therefore the reduction in working hours will be from 1633 to 1589 and the total annualised hours from 1985 to 1941 with effect from January.

Management stated there would be a service review

relating in particular to the night boat services.

The company agreed not to consider any alterations of the service and that night boat services will continue.

Restructuring

There were also proposals to restructure the establishment and staffing arrangements of Chief Officers on the Portsmouth to Fishbourne route.

This would have resulted in 15 Chief Officer positions being lost with effect from December 31 2004. RMT

made it clear to the company that the union needed a resolution on this issue.

The company has agreed that the founding principles of the negotiations are as follows:

- no compulsory redundancies,
- no reduction in salaries.
- A new career structure based on competency.
- A new salary to reflect the post held including competencies, skills and qualifications Class I to IV.
- The MCA involved in all matters of safety.

Other shipping and docks agreements

BP Oil: The 2004 pay award has finally been agreed between the union and BP Oil for our contracted seafaring members.

The offer accepted is for a 2.5 per cent increase in basic rates of pay backdated to September 2004.

With acceptance of the 2.5 per cent offer, the company has promised that extra funds will be made available to address serious disparities affecting agency staff, many of whom are RMT members. These employees have over the years been paid inferior wages and suffered worse terms and conditions than

their contracted counterparts.

The company and the union have agreed to make serious efforts address this historic problem. Extra funds will be used to increase leave rates, sickness rates and pay rates for these agency workers, with discussions to be held in the near future.

Newhaven ports and properties deal:

The union has secured the following deal for RMT members employed at Newhaven ports and properties:

- An average increase of 3.66 per cent in order to address any discrepancy in

pay rates between employees

- Employees with salaries in excess of £19000 pa will have a 2.5 per cent increase
- Employees with salaries under £19000 pa will have a 4.5 per cent increase.
- All increases will be backdated effective from January 2 2005.

Isle of Man Steam Packet Conventional Ferry:

RMT negotiated a two-year offer with the company which was put before members at various ship-board meetings and the members have agreed to accept the deal which is as

follows:

- A four per cent increase in basic rates of pay effective from January 1 2005, this being year one.
- A three per cent increase in basic rates of pay for year two. A trigger element has been incorporated into year two.

This is a 12-month average of UK RPI as published in November 2006, providing for a review in the event of the average RPI exceeding 3.5 per cent, with the 0.5 per cent ranging between 3 and 3.5 per cent being excluded from any potential review.

Salaried grades dig in for a fight

EROSION OF jobs and back-door undermining of working conditions will be resisted, with industrial action if necessary, delegates at RMT's salaried grades conference agreed in Portsmouth last month

THE union's biggest clerical grades conference for many years noted that on-line ticket seller

Thetrainline.com had boasted that its ambition was to be retailing half of all rail tickets within three years – a fivefold increase.

Together with the increasing use of agency call centres there was a major and growing threat to booking-office jobs, warned **Bristol delegate Robin White**.

"The only response is to begin the resistance now, with industrial action if we have to," he said.

Delegates were also alerted to employers' growing tendency to attempt to use annual reviews to expand job descriptions without agreement.

Such 'back-door restructuring' should be resisted, delegates agreed.

Enormous changes under way in the railway industry,

particularly with the continual reshaping of private-sector franchises, meant that reps had to be continually on their guard, **assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski** told delegates.

End privatisation

The union aimed ultimately to see an end to privatisation, but attempts by private-sector bosses to cut jobs and pay and undermine conditions would be resisted "all the way", said Pat.

Delegates also renewed their commitment to fighting the scourge of low pay in the industry.

RMT's policy of seeking flat-rate increases for lowest-paid grades in addition to the usual percentage pay rises had borne fruit in a number of train-operating companies, said **conference president Paul Burton**.

Paul paid tribute to the "massive victory" that RMT had won in keeping the Network Rail final-salary pension scheme open last year.

"That was only achieved thanks to the massive support shown by members: our unity was the only thing that stood in the way of losing that pension scheme for good," he said.

"Our growing conference is a sign that the salaried grades play an important and vital role in the life of RMT."

Progress on restructuring clerical grades should be made before new ticket-issuing systems are accepted, delegates agreed.

Some companies were attempting to introduce new systems despite there being no acceptable restructuring package in place, said **Dave Rudland, Feltham**.

"Management keep expecting more and more work to be devolved onto clerical grades, without any recompense, but we should withdraw co-operation until they begin to give as well as take," he said.

Conference renewed its call for employers to commit themselves to zero tolerance of assaults against railway staff.



MARY DWYER: victims of assault threatened with removal

Members working with the public were subject to constant verbal and physical assault, said **Peter March, Hull Rail**.

Delegates welcomed the TOCs' recent poster campaign, but called for it to be followed up by legal action against culprits.

"It doesn't help when it's the victim of the assault who's on 'three strikes and you're out' – threatened with being moved from their job for being assaulted," said **Mary Dwyer, North Thames**.

Levels of aggression had increased massively at Eurostar terminals, said **Rosalyn Fong, EPS**, but the company was reluctant to prosecute or even to display posters saying they would back staff who were assaulted for fear of cheapening their image.

A call for the setting of minimum entrance standards for the rail industry was rejected after a passionate debate.

“There should be a job for everyone on the railways,” said **Gary Hassell, Brighton**, who pointed out that the only education he’d received was thanks to the union.

“There is no way that our union should be demanding that only those with the privilege of a good education should get the jobs with the most money,” he said.

Failure to pay adequate rates was creating difficulty in some companies in recruiting staff educated to a reasonable standard, and that added strain to existing staff, noted **David Rudland, Feltham**.

However, delegates rejected a call that entrance standards should be maintained at, or returned to, British Rail Board levels.

In-post education was the way forward, said learning rep **Mike Sergeant, Cinque Ports**, who said that staff should have the right to progress through the grades and that employers had the “moral obligation” to provide opportunities and time off for education.

“Anyone can get there,” said **Andy Budd Leeds City**. “There’s a lot who couldn’t pass the railway clerical exam



A record number of delegates attended last month’s salaried grades conference held in Portsmouth. Photos: Paul McDonnell

who make great railway workers – the accent should be on fighting for the right rate of pay.”

“It’s the ones with the degrees who often haven’t got a bloody clue what to do,” said **Duncan Braithwaite, Kings Cross**.

Expansion of managerial grade contracts throughout the rail industry had reduced opportunities for clerical grades to ‘act up’ in higher-grade duties, conference noted.

Some employers were reluctant to offer vacant positions to lower-grade staff pending advertising and appointment – denying staff valuable

experience in an effort to make savings.

Companies using restructuring to reduce holiday entitlements for new staff should be challenged and such discrimination ended, delegates agreed.

The problem was endemic in the industry, said **Robin White, Bristol**: restructuring deals often gave newcomers fewer holidays and that should be challenged, both legally and industrially.

In Amec there were at least three different types of contract, all with different hours and holidays, noted **Gary Hassell Brighton**.

Conference reiterated its call for the RMT executive to publish guidelines on booking-office security – a particular problem for staff working on single-staffed stations.

Conference agreed an emergency call to oppose attempts to exclude Network Rail section managers from the bargaining machinery – part of a manoeuvre to get managers to sign individual contracts, said **Billy Laing, Central and North Mersey**.

The union should campaign against the compulsory wearing of uniform hats, delegates agreed.

Hats were no longer compulsorily worn by London Underground staff, said **Mark Still, Waterloo**, and the union should ensure that other employers followed suit.

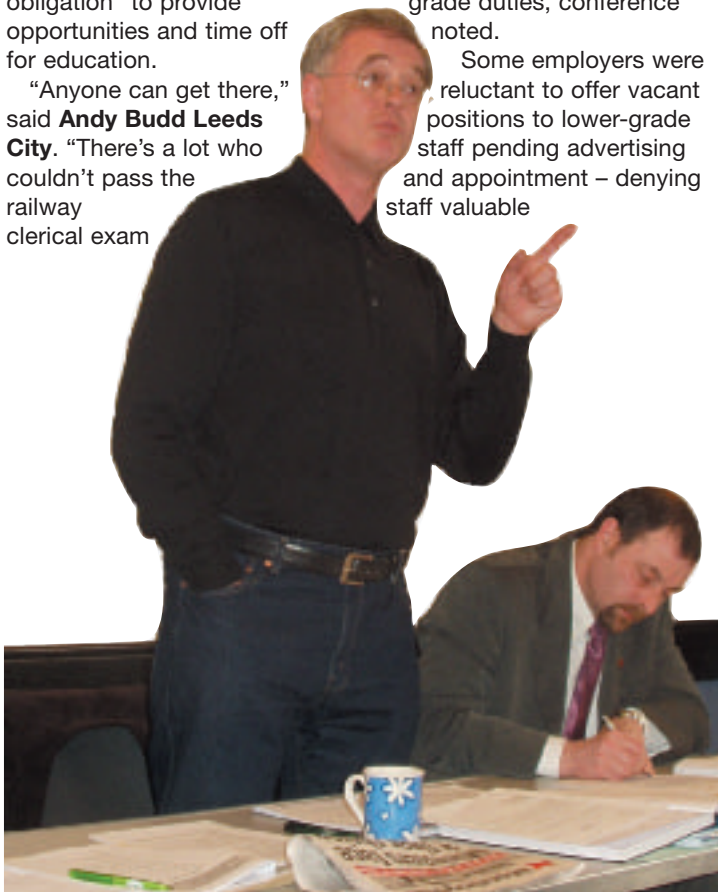


Sarah pledges fight for jobs

Welcoming delegates to Portsmouth, local Labour parliamentary candidate **Sarah McCarthy-Fry** said that the loss of hundreds of P&O jobs was “a massive blow” to the city.

The company had taken full advantage of the tonnage tax – but in the end it meant nothing to them as they slashed jobs and future job opportunities.

“A subsidy like the tonnage tax should bring with it the obligation to create jobs and build up the skills of the workforce by improved training,” said Sarah, pledging that as an MP she would work to establish the link that RMT had called for.



Connecting with women members

THE very first regional RMT women's advisory committee kicked off in Bristol recently.

The union congratulates sister Glen Burrows for all the hard work she put in to get the committee up and running. This will provide a valuable forum for women members to discuss the issues affecting them.

This is your union and we need to

ensure your voice is heard – what better way than by meeting with others to share your experiences and common problems? Participation is paramount. The more women join in, the more the union can properly voice concerns and campaign on what matters to women members. That's why the setting up of regional and branch advisory committees is so important and it should matter to you!

Ring round

The union is in the process of telephoning all women members to encourage them to become active. This is a very big exercise – one that no other Union as far as we know has tried. A pilot exercise, where RMT has tried to telephone all women members covered by the London Regional Transport Council area is almost complete. The reception to the calls has been very positive so far. Once the pilot has been evaluated, RMT will endeavour to phone women in the rest of the country during the spring and early summer.

RMT Women's Charter

Asking women to become 'active' is meaningless without something to become active about. When issues arise

Black and ethnic conference

CONFERENCES always provide an excellent opportunity for members to talk to others from different companies and areas of the country to exchange experiences and views.

This year's Black and Ethnic members' conference was no exception. There were a number of delegates who had not participated before and welcomed the chance to mix with other members.

For those who have never attended conference before, the thought of speaking in front of others can be daunting. However, delegates are

amongst friends and the atmosphere is one where everyone is encouraged to put their views across. It was not long before everyone had spoken on one subject or another.

Roger McKenzie (left), the newly appointed TUC regional secretary in the Midlands, gave the keynote speech. Like so many who have spoken at our conferences, he too had a family connection with the union.

His father had been a permanent way worker in Walsall back in the 1950s.

Roger's main memory of his father was only really seeing him on Sundays. The work was hard physical labour and long hours. Have things changed that much?

The theme of the conference was putting equality back on the agenda. Roger pointed out that this presupposed that it was on the agenda in the first place.

His past job as TUC race equality officer had taught him much about what was going on, or more to the point, what was not going on, ie tackling racism.

Roger spoke of how racism had reached epidemic proportions, where in some areas it was not safe to walk down the street. Certain jobs are simply not applied for by ethnic minorities as they know they will be rejected. There was an urgent need to remind people of this and that included employers and unions alike.

Roger's main message to delegates was 'organise, organise, organise'.

● A full report on the conference will appear in the next edition of RMT News. Unfortunately, before the conference could finish, the hotel was evacuated because of a fire. Arrangements have now been made to reconvene the conference in London on May 10.



that directly impact upon you or general issues that you feel strongly about, RMT wants to do something. The delegates who attended last October's special women's recall conference were clear that there were issues that would stimulate women into activity. They compiled what has now become RMT's Women's Charter. This is now union policy.

RMT'S WOMEN'S CHARTER

- Equal terms and conditions
- End lone working to end assaults
- Access to sanitary and toilet facilities
- Flexible/part-time working
- Meaningful consultation on uniform decisions
- Menopause support and menstrual problems
- Low wages
- Work of equal value
- Regional women reps
- Local advisory committees
- Better maternity pay and leave
- Better H and S in regard to pregnancy
- Safe/secure transport for those doing late/early shifts
- Better childcare facilities
- Counselling tailored to womens' needs



Slug women pic SISTERS: Male members gave support to the first regional women's advisory meeting, where the message was that the union was all about you!

However, policies have to be implemented or they become empty slogans and members feel let down. This is where members come in. We need to turn the Charter into fully fledged policies so that when the union approaches companies RMT has coherent strategies

that tackle the problems you have identified.

That's why RMT want regional and branch advisory committees so that members can have a say in developing policies, and the union knows what sort of child care facilities you want at work.

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Ending privatisation ‘the only sane option’

TAKING BRITAIN’S railways out of the private sector is the only option in the light of new evidence of the huge and growing cost of privatisation to taxpayers, according to a new report by the Catalyst think-tank.

It reveals that clearing the privateers off Britain’s railways would save the taxpayer at least half a billion pounds every year (see panel opposite).

The report makes the economic case for bringing train operating companies, rolling stock companies and infrastructure back in-house.

The simplest way of bringing passenger operations back into the public sector would be to take them over as and when current franchises expire.

Restoring network infrastructure and rolling stock to public ownership would entail a one-off increase in public debt by, at most, 2.15 per cent of GDP. This capital investment could produce immediate savings of £300 million or more a year.

On the other hand, any private sector investment in the railway must ultimately be paid for by farepayers and taxpayers – with interest. Around £800 million a year is taken out of the industry as

returns to private lenders and investors – a total leakage of more than £6 billion since 1996.

“Catalyst have shown that public ownership will plug an enormous financial hole in the railways that has been leaking at least £800 million in public money into private pockets every year since 1996,” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

“The study shows that privatisation has already cost taxpayers more than £6 billion, and that bringing the railways back into the public sector will reap a rail rebate for Britain of at least £500 million every year.

“Catalyst are absolutely right to warn that leaving things as they are will mean private-sector costs spiralling further out of control and a bleak future of service cuts, job losses, fare rises and ever-growing congestion and pollution on Britain’s roads.

“Public ownership is now the only sane option so let’s have a big turnout on April 30 for the London rally,” Bob said.

rap
rail *against* privatisation



sation

EDM 382

Over 100 MPs sign Early Day Motion 382 calling for an end to rail privatisation

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE RAILWAYS

That this House notes that since November 2003, passenger services have been operated in the public sector on South Eastern trains; further notes that since that time punctuality figures have improved in every quarter; further notes that in the Network Rail areas where maintenance contracts were first brought in-house delays caused by infrastructure failures have fallen between 36 per cent. and 50 per cent; welcomes these developments alongside the growing support for public ownership of the rail network; and supports the principle of an integrated, publicly-owned, publicly-accountable railway.

Below are MPs by party group who have signed public ownership EDM

LABOUR PARTY

Abbott/Diane	Flynn/Paul	Sawford/Phil
Austin/John	Follett/Barbara	Sedgemore/Brian
Banks/Tony	Francis/Hywel	Shipley/Debra
Barnes/Harry	Gapes/Mike	Simpson/Alan
Bennett/Andrew F	Gerrard/Neil	Singh/Marsha
Berry/Roger	Godsiff/Roger	Skinner/Dennis
Best/Harold	Grogan/John	Smith/Chris
Betts/Clive	Hall/Patrick	Smith/Geraldine
Bradley/Keith	Hamilton/David	Smith/Llew
Burden/Richard	Hepburn/Stephen	Strang/Gavin
Campbell/Ronnie	Heyes/David	Taylor/David
Caton/Martin	Hoey/Kate	Trickett/Jon
Chaytor/David	Hopkins/Kelvin	Truswell/Paul
Clapham/Michael	Hurst/Alan	Vis/Rudi
Clark/Helen	Iddon/Brian	Walley/Joan
Cohen/Harry	Jones/Lynne	Wareing/Robert N
Cook/Frank	Keen/Alan	Williams/Alan
Cook/Robin	Lewis/Terry	Williams/Betty
Corbyn/Jeremy	Lloyd/Tony	Wood/Mike
Cousins/Jim	Mahon/Alice	Wright/Anthony D
Cox/Tom	Marris/Rob	LIB DEMS
Cruddas/Jon	Marshall/David	Barrett/John
Cryer/Ann	McCafferty/Chris	Chidgey/David
Cryer/John	McDonnell/John	George/Andrew
Cummings/John	McNamara/Kevin	Hancock/Mike
Cunningham/Jim	McWalter/Tony	Jones/Nigel
Davey/Valerie	Meacher/Michael	Pugh/John
Davidson/Ian	Mitchell/Austin	Russell/Bob
Dean/Janet	Naysmith/Doug	Sanders/Adrian
Dismore/Andrew	Olner/Bill	PLAID CYMRU
Dobbin/Jim	Osborne/Sandra	Price/Adam
Donohoe/Brian H	Perham/Linda	Thomas/Simon
Drew/David	Pollard/Kerry	RESPECT
Ennis/Jeff	Pound/Stephen	Galloway/George
Etherington/Bill	Prosser/Gwyn	SNP
Fisher/Mark	Sarwar/Mohammad	Ewing/Annabelle
	Savidge/Malcolm	

Rail renationalisation could save £500 million a year, says Catalyst

BRINGING Britain's railways back into public ownership could produce immediate savings of more than £500 million a year, followed by steady improvements resulting from better integration, according to the thinktank Catalyst.

Last year delegates at the Labour Party's conference voted for an "integrated, accountable and publicly owned railway". Ministers argued that such a move would be too expensive and deprive the industry of private sector investment.

But a pre-election briefing paper circulated by Catalyst shows that renationalisation could be carried out in a third-term without breaching the government's fiscal rules. Drawing on research by Professor Jean Shaoul of Manchester University, it shows that ousting the privateers could produce immediate savings of at least £500 million a year as well as leading to further savings and service improvements over the medium term as the industry was reintegrated.

Key points from the briefing include:

- Any private sector investment in the railway must ultimately be paid for by farepayers and taxpayers - with interest. Around £800 million is taken out of the industry every year as returns to private lenders and investors, a total leakage of more than £6 billion since 1996.
- The majority of passenger services could be taken into the public sector at no cost. Reductions in regulatory bureaucracy and in the subsidies paid to private Train Operating Companies could save more than £200 million a year.
- Restoring network infrastructure and rolling stock to public ownership would entail a one-off increase in public debt by, at most, 2.15 per cent of GDP. This would not breach the government's Golden Rule or Sustainable Investment Rule. This capital investment could produce immediate savings of £300 million or more a year in current spending.
- Overall, the most conservative estimates indicate that bringing the railway system back into public ownership could produce immediate cash savings of £500 million a year or more through reduced bureaucracy and leakages to private providers of finance. Over the medium and longer term, reintegration would produce further savings and improvements as the post-privatisation trend to waste and cost-escalation was reversed.
- Rolling stock companies should also qualify for a one-off windfall tax on excess profits. If this was calculated and applied in the same way as Labour's 1997 windfall tax on privatised utilities, additional revenue of £100 million to £200 million could be yielded. Martin McIvor of Catalyst said that Britain could not afford not to take the railways back into public ownership.

"Continuing with the status quo means continuing with low growth, poor performance, compromised safety – and spiralling cost escalation. The Exchequer will not bear this increasing burden indefinitely – sooner or later there will be pressure to shift the costs of privatisation to passengers, through fare rises and cuts in services. Either way, the public loses.

"Britain's railway has a vital role to play as part of a rejuvenated transport strategy for the 21st century, delivering vital social, economic, and environmental benefits. To meet these public interest objectives, we need a railway that is public owned and publicly accountable, and which delivers a real return on the public money invested in it," he said.

● Catalyst is an independent think tank of the left committed to promoting "practical policies for the redistribution of wealth, power and opportunity".

For more information please contact the Catalyst office on 020 7733 2111 or visit www.catalystforum.org.uk.

Email: catalyst@catalystforum.org.uk at 150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX.



END PPP RIP-OFF

PPP has cost the taxpayer over £1 billion and is not value for money say House of Commons committees

THE privatisation of London's Tube maintenance and infrastructure contracts has led to enormous costs for the taxpayer, a report from MPs has revealed.

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee report agreed that there were cheaper ways of introducing the Public Private Partnership (PPP) deal for maintaining and upgrading London Underground.

The committee's chairman Edward Leigh said that it has cost the public purse nearly £1 billion to set up and finance the deals in this way.

"The PPP deals are inherently complex, given the approach taken, and have led to enormous costs for the taxpayer.

"The set-up costs to the public sector include LU's costs of £180 million and the payment of £275 million of bidders' costs", he said.

He went on to point out that lenders are well protected but still see enough uncertainty in the deals to charge £450 million more for the financing than it would cost to repay government loans for the same amount of borrowing.

Under PPP, two private infrastructure companies – Metronet and Tube Lines – are now responsible for maintaining and upgrading

the Underground.

The committee's report said that a bond financing scheme would have been cheaper than the PPP financing costs – the option favoured by Transport for London

MPs also said the two infrastructure companies were chosen as preferred bidders in May 2001, although financial deals were not finally

concluded for Tube Lines until December 2002 and for Metronet in March 2003.

The report revealed that the bidders were therefore in a position of some negotiating strength for over a year.

Transport committee

The House of Commons Transport Committee also said that PPP had been a costly exercise not justified by any benefits.

They also found that on most London Underground lines the privateers had been unable to meet train availability

benchmarks which were lower than those which had been met previously. The Committee said that because of this failure they had no confidence in the ability of the Infracos to meet more demanding targets in the future.

On health and safety the Committee drew particular attention to the White City derailment. The report explained that the derailment appears to have been caused because measures put in place following the Camden Town derailment "had not been adequately communicated or explained to individuals within the Metronet BCV Central Line track team". Alongside these serious concerns caused by private sector fragmentation the Committee also noted that post PPP there has been an increase in the number of incidents which could lead to accidents.

RMT submitted written evidence to the committee's inquiry which was critical of the massive profits that the private sector has made in the first year of operations – in 2003/04 the Infracos banked pre-tax profits of almost £100 million.

RMT evidence also pointed



out that the experience of privatisation on the mainline in relation to fragmentation, increased safety fears and de-skilling was now being replicated on the Underground.

The union highlighted the effects of the PPP on terms and conditions and the multi-tiered workforce particularly in regard to pensions where Tubelines has closed their final

salary scheme to new entrants – a move which Metronet plans to follow.

These attacks on pension provision stand in sharp contrast to the £100,000 bonus paid to the Tubelines chief executive in 2004.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that every pound wasted on this “shameful” scheme is a pound less

invested in trains.

“We already knew that the privateers were taking £2 million a week out of the Tube system in profits, now we know that taxpayers have been mugged of £1 billion just to set this ludicrous scheme up.

“The time has come to draw

a line and bring Tube infrastructure back into the public sector where it belongs,” he said.

rap
rail against privatisation

Over 80 MPs signed Early Day Motion 383 for an end to PPP

LONDON UNDERGROUND PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: McDonnell/John

That this House welcomes the decision of Network Rail to bring all maintenance work back in-house on the national network; notes that in the Network Rail areas where maintenance contracts were first brought in-house, delays caused by infrastructure failures have fallen between 36 per cent. and 50 per cent.; further notes that Network Rail has stated that the decision will bring the benefits of a single, integrated rail maintenance operation and management structure, which will improve track safety and standards of rail maintenance; believes it is now untenable to have fragmented maintenance on the London Underground or to allow the same companies, such as Jarvis, that have been removed from maintenance contracts on the national railway to continue to profit from declining standards on the Tube; and calls on the Government urgently to authorise the renegotiation of the public private partnership contracts with a view to bringing all maintenance and renewals under the direct control of London Underground.

McDonnell/John
Dismore/Andrew
Gerrard/Neil
Cryer/John
Corbyn/Jeremy
Russell/Bob
Hancock/Mike
Cohen/Harry
Cryer/Ann
Taylor/David
Caton/Martin
Hopkins/Kelvin

Cummings/John
Lewis/Terry
Barnes/Harry
Campbell/Ronnie
Clapham/Michael
Jones/Nigel
McNamara/Kevin
Mahon/Alice
Hamilton/David
Price/Adam
Vis/Rudi
Breed/Colin

Skinner/Dennis
Tonge/Jenny
Jones/Lynne
Wareing/Robert N
Drew/David
Davidson/Ian
Smith/Llew
Cox/Tom
Khabra/Piara S
Marris/Rob
Francis/Hywel
Mitchell/Austin

Dean/Janet
Abbott/Diane
Trickett/Jon
Truswell/Paul
Etherington/Bill
Simpson/Alan
Sedgemore/Brian
Strang/Gavin
Benton/Jo
Olner/Bill
Llwyd/Elfyn
Hurst/Alan

Clark/Helen
Baker/Norman
Coleman/Iain
Bennett/Andrew F
Hoey/Kate
Grogan/John
Cruddas/Jon
Hall/Patrick
McWilliam/John
Rapson/Syd
Cotter/Brian
Wyatt/Derek

Hepburn/Stephen
Clarke/Tony
Follett/Barbara
Godsiff/Roger
Holmes/Paul
Donohoe/Brian H
McCafferty/Chris
Reid/Alan
Perham/Linda
Smith/Geraldine
Flynn/Paul
Shipley/Debra

Chidgey/David
Stringer/Graham
Davey/Valerie
Bradley/Keith
Teather/Sarah
Savidge/Malcolm
Pollard/Kerry
Naysmith/Doug
Cousins/Jim

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Unity against lone working

Catering grades conference met in Torquay last month to discuss pressing issues, including the growing problem of lone working.

LONE working by catering staff is on the increase on the rail network leading to unsafe working conditions and exposure to verbal and physical abuse, conference agreed.

Mandy Evans, Swansea No 1 said that employers were not following legislation to protect staff against attacks after football matches and on late night trains.

Chris Bryant of Plymouth No 1 said that attacks on staff in Devon and Cornwall increased on late night trains when lone working was in place.

Derek England, Leeds said that when attacks occur members should fill out incident forms and inform a health and safety rep in order to build up a picture of what is happening.

"If management does not act upon this information then they are condoning the treatment suffered by staff," he said.

Bristol delegate Andrew Jefferies said that staff in his area were also having guaranteed car parking taken away from them.

"Female staff are being told to park their cars in town and are being expected to walk some way to retrieve their vehicles late at night, that needs to be addressed," he said.

Conference instructed the union to act upon legislation that states that employers must consider risks to employees and decide what to do to prevent such risks and develop a plan to make sure



CANDY KEFFORD: Staff should be paid more for carrying out safety procedures

that happens.

Emergency at Virgin

Conference agreed that Virgin Crosscountry should provide adequate training to reflect the company's policy requiring catering staff to "assist the train manager" in the event of emergencies.

Plymouth delegate Chris Bryant said the company expected staff to be responsible for the safety of the passengers without the training or pay to reflect those duties.

"Catering staff have not been trained in evacuation procedures, so how can they be expected to carry out these duties?" he said.

Candy Kefford, Euston No 1 warned that such training may be used as a stick against staff and increase responsi-

bilities for little reward.

Derek England, Leeds said that any agreement should be drawn up in conjunction with other grades which may be impacted by such a move.

Conference called on the union to request that Virgin Crosscountry clarify procedures and reflect any such responsibilities in the pay of catering staff.

Virgin blackout

The Virgin on-board safety book also states that catering staff must take over the role of train manager in the case of emergencies including providing information to customers and liaising with the driver.

However, **Michael Greaves of Plymouth No1** pointed out that when Virgin Voyagers lose power, all lights and communications with the train manager, driver and passengers are cut.

"You are in complete darkness and it is not funny.

"Although management provide lists of telephone numbers of staff you can't see the list in the dark and phones are blocked and are for internal railway numbers only.

"We are left feeling like a passenger rather than part of the train crew," he said.

Conference agreed to call on the union to campaign for Virgin to supply torches and unblocked phones to allow retail service managers carry out such duties in



MANDY EVANS: Staff are not protected against attacks from the public

President's address



Catering staff are frontline workers

CATERING GRADES president Owen Herbert welcomed the good turnout of members attending conference in Torquay.

"It is good to see new faces as we need to strengthen our grade which represents thousands of workers on trains, platform concourses and ships.

"Catering represents big business but workers suffer low pay and poor conditions and there are is a high turnover of staff as a result," he said.

He said that catering workers were sometimes seen as second class employees.

"But catering staff are front line workers that run the same risks as other rail workers and suffer abuse from the public and sometimes even other transport workers.

"We have been described as 'Kit Kat' sellers, but we are more than that and we deserve respect," he said.

emergencies.

● Conference agreed to call on the union to demand that train operating companies provide adequate and across the board aftercare for staff involved in major accidents.

Work/life balance

THE union should inform members what maternity and paternity rights they are entitled to, conference agreed.

Candy Kefford, Euston said that childcare and other care issues related to both men and women.

“Members need to know what they can claim for and the union needs to provide up to date information on legislation pertaining to childcare, work/life balance and primary care,” she said.

Derek England, Leeds said that one of the problems to getting time off or flexible working arrangements staff had to put forward a “business case”.

“If the request is declined you have to wait a year before reapplying,” he said.

What was required was a template provided by the union to put forward a business case.

Andy Lister, Council of Executives said that guidelines should be drawn up by the union as it was a general problem across the transport industry.

Conference called for a full list of maternity and paternity rights presently guaranteed under the law to be printed in a future edition of *RMT news*.

● Conference agreed that a relief catering council representative be elected in order to cover when council members are unable to attend meetings.

● Conference agreed that company catering councils distribute all minutes to branch secretaries and LLC reps.

● Conference stood for a minute’s silence in memory of former conference secretary Gareth Jones who has passed away.

● Conference agreed to hold next year’s meeting in Great Yarmouth.



Lone working and staff safety were top of the agenda when catering delegates held their annual conference in Torquay last month

Respect for catering workers

ASSISTANT general secretary **Mick Cash** told conference that the chief executive of Compass received half a million pounds last year.

However, staff in Select Service Partners, part of Compass Catering, received a pay rise of just 5p above the minimum wage which currently stands at £4.80.

“That such a huge gap exists is an absolute disgrace and a damning indictment of catering companies like Compass.

“What makes it worse is that it would not be £4.85 except for the introduction of the minimum wage,” he said.

Mick said that the union provided the organisation and industrial muscle that the employers understand.

“However, that is what is missing in hotel and catering grades,” he said.

He said that it was ironic that the one grade that cries out for better pay is the most difficult for us to organise.



“High turnover and poor wages cause low levels of union membership and morale.

“Where we are best organised is where we have a fairly stable membership and a good network of representatives. They act as recruiters but also deal with members’ problems, making the union real to workers

ensuring that they stay members,” he said.

He said that the train operating companies should bring catering services in-house where they have not done so already in order to create a stable working environment.

First Scotrail were doing just that and catering currently provided by Eurest was to be brought in-house.

“We support such moves because by cutting out the middle men we believe more money can be put into paying our members a decent living wage,” he said.

He said that in the coming year RMT would like to work with activists to map out who provides catering for the TOCs and identify who pays what.

“Despite these problems overall the union is doing well.

“Membership is increasing, financially we are going from strength to strength and we continue to improve the services we provide,” he said.

Vote for a real Labour manifesto



The Labour Representation Committee calls for a real Labour manifesto, writes John McDonnell MP

IN the general election Labour is facing the prospect of the lowest turnout in the political history of this country.

Traditional Labour supporters, many of whom stuck by the Labour party even through the Thatcher years, are now threatening to stay at home on polling day.

The fear is that this angry backlash amongst Labour supporters against the New Labour policies of the Blair government will allow the Tories to slip back into power.

How is it that there could be any chance whatsoever of a Tory leader famed for the disastrous policy of the poll tax could stand any chance at all of defeating a sitting Labour government?

The answer is that many hundreds of thousands of Labour supporters and even Labour party members have been alienated, disillusioned and de-motivated by New Labour in government.

Nowhere is this more evident than among rail workers and seafarers, who have witnessed a New Labour government continuing the Tory policies of privatisation and job cuts. The stark example of the re-privatisation of South Eastern Trains by a New Labour secretary of state has angered both rail workers and all those who recognised the need for a properly integrated and publicly accountable transport system.

If Labour is to form the next government on the basis of a large scale popular vote, there needs to be a radical reappraisal of the future directions of any Labour government. What is needed, is not the failed policies of privatisation and fragmentation within the rail industry, but the development of a real Labour policy programme.

Last year members of the Labour party, the Socialist Campaign group of MPs and a number of trade unions came together to launch the Labour Representation Committee. The aim of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) was to stimulate a new debate within the Labour trade union movement on the policies needed by a Labour government to retain the confidence of Labour supporters and thus maintain office in the long term.

Labour policy

Since its inception nine months ago the LRC has served as a think-tank to the Labour left bringing together policy experts with rank-and-file members of the Labour and trade union movement to examine in detail the policy needed by a

real Labour government. The culmination of this work is a booklet summarising the key policies which we believe should be included in Labour's manifesto for the general election and which should form the work programme for an incoming Labour government in its third time.

The LRC's policy booklet states clearly that it is now time for a real Labour government. After eight years of New Labour in office, Labour supporters increasingly want to see a real Labour government in power.

The LRC's key demands for Labour include

- An end to the occupation of Iraq
 - Basic state pension of £109 per week
 - Public ownership of rail and postal services and an end to privatisation
 - Abolition of tuition fees and selection in education
 - Direct investment in council housing
 - Defence of civil liberties and the rights of asylum seekers
 - Restoration of full trade union rights
- Just as the predecessor of RMT was



THE Labour Representation Committee has served as a think-tank to the Labour Left

the union moving the founding resolution for the Labour Party, today's RMT played a pivotal role in the establishment of our modern day Labour Representation Committee.

Along with members of many other trade unions, RMT members have participated enthusiastically in the discussion, research and development of the LRC's policies. This has mobilised the expertise of the very people who will have direct responsibility for implementing these policies at the workplace. That is why our policies are immensely practical and readily implementable.

The LRC has now submitted this policy programme to all the members of the national executive committee of the Labour Party. Under the Labour Party constitution for the general election, a manifesto is drafted by a special sub committee of the national executive. Trade union representatives form a sizeable proportion of the sub committee. We are calling upon the trade union NEC members in particular to press for the inclusion of the LRC policy proposals within Labour's manifesto.

On issues like the restoration of public ownership of rail, a policy adopted by the

Labour Party conference, it is self evident that this policy should be included in any Labour manifesto.

As we know from every opinion poll, public ownership of rail is hugely popular. It is this type of policy which would greatly contribute to mobilising Labour's supporters to come out on polling day to

Rail workers and seafarers have witnessed policies of privatisation

vote Labour and to motivating trade unionists and Labour Party members to campaign on behalf of the party. It is almost inexplicable why the Leadership of new Labour has turned its back on a policy which is such a vote winner.

The task of the LRC is to promote the policies we would wish to see a real Labour government implement and to campaign for their adoption and

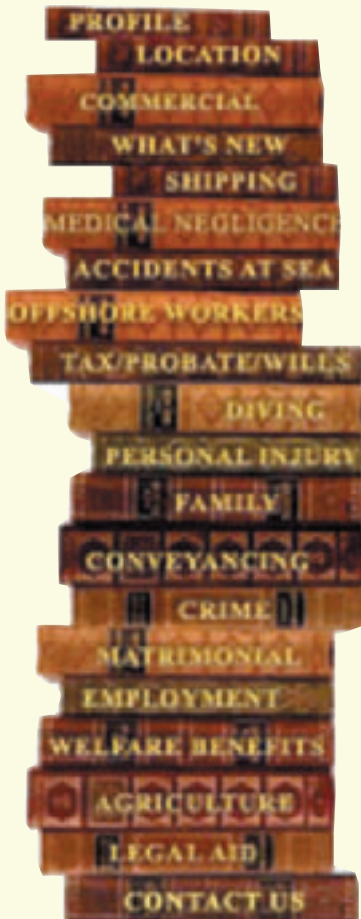
implementation in a third term. To do this successfully, we need the active support of participation of RMT members and branches.

RMT members are eligible to join the LRC and RMT branches are eligible to affiliate. You can do so by contacting 020 7219 1626 or www.l-r-c.org.uk

The LRC is a democratic organisation based upon active rank-and-file engagement at every level of its activities. The direction and policies of the LRC are determined at its annual conference by its members in an open democratic debate. We adhere strictly to the traditions of the Labour and trade union movement in that the LRC is a member-led organisation.

This year's conference is to be held on July 16 at the TUC. The conference will focus on a wide ranging policy debate based upon the policy documents prepared over the last year by the various policy discussion groups convened under the auspices of the LRC.

The conference will be resolution based with members and affiliates having the right and ability to propose policies and amend policy documents. I urge all RMT branches and members to join the LRC.



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Equality on the agenda

THIS time of year is RMT grades conference season, where all our sections meet to discuss particular issues in the lead up to the unions Annual General Meeting. Our not so active members often ask: what happens at these various grade or section conferences? Well, I have had the pleasure of attending some this year, and I think the particular problems got excellent and widespread discussion and debate to be followed by chats and bar debates in friendly atmospheres in the evenings.

The women's conference at Poole in early March witnessed mature debate on what is the most import problem for our women members – that of childcare – the view being that it is about time that employers and indeed the government took this seriously. This is of particular importance in the transport industry which has the added problem of shift working which many of our women are having to contend with.

I say women as childcare is thought of a women's issue but it is a question for everybody, including men. Governments these days seem to play lip service to equality and the role of women in this “flexibile” economy, without providing an equal playing field in terms of childcare. However, this should be high on the election agenda.

Our women members again asserted the fundamental right of women to choose on abortion and warned against any change in existing laws that would weaken their right as women to choose.

I also attended the black and ethnic minority members conference in Birmingham and listened to an excellent address by Roger McKenzie who is the first black TUC regional secretary.

Roger outlined his origins – coming to England in the sixties to the “black country” where his father joined the P Way on British Railways in the Wolverhampton area. He outlined the racist problems his family experienced coming from the Caribbean to do valuable work for the country that many others didn't want to do.

Roger went on to join the trade union movement and become an activist, pointing out that all is not well as the BNP is still raising its ugly head. Roger inspired members by pointing out that black and ethnic workers should be proud of their contribution to the country and demand recognition as an equal right.

Our young members met in Nottingham to highlight the fact that whilst most of us think that life is easy for the young – that is not the case. In this rat race life just getting a roof over your head is no easy task as getting a mortgage is very difficult since council houses are not being built and existing stock is being sold off.

This is leading to young people to move away from their communities. The feeling was that trade unions perhaps do not understand young people and that we “oldies” should do more to listen and involve them, - is there a lesson there?

Our Retired members met recently – pointing out that all of us will sooner or later be retired and therefore we should join them in fighting for decent pensions by restoring the link between pensions and average earnings. Retirement for men and women should be sixty unless they wish to work longer – why should people not enjoy a secure and happy retirement after a life of long toil and sweat?

TONY DONAGHEY

New SSP leader on board



New Scottish Socialist Party convenor Colin Fox MSP unveils plans for May Day

IN this my first column for the *RMT News* as SSP National Convenor I want to start by thanking Tommy Sheridan, MSP for the job he did before me. His is a tough act to follow.

I know he is immensely proud of the RMT's support for the Scottish Socialist Party. I am too.

I know a little bit about this union's history and the prominent role it played in founding the British Labour Party a century ago. Many meetings took place then with James Keir Hardie – like me a native of Motherwell – and others pointing out that the Liberals no longer deserved the support of workers and that they needed a party of their own.

It is remarkable that in Scotland there are now meetings taking place all over the country with people looking at Tony Blair and the Labour Party in the same way as they once did the Liberals. And they see the SSP fighting for the interests of working people.

I also appreciate from history that it was not just in Britain where railway workers led the way in promoting socialist ideas.

In the United States for example the leader of the Railroad Employees Union Eugene V. Debs helped establish the Socialist Party of America and ran for President in 1912. He got a million votes.

I follow the ups and downs

of the socialist movement in the US with interest. The authentic voice of working people there is seldom heard around the world.

The Edinburgh May Day celebration, which I help organise, intends to do something about that silence.

In recent years many important figures have spoken here – including Tony Benn, Tommy Sheridan, Arthur Scargill and RMT General Secretary Bob Crow.

We also had Paul Robeson Junior over from New York in 2001 to lead the parade. He was superb and had us enthralled with stories of his famous father.

This year we are absolutely over the moon to have Bernie Sanders address us.

Who, I hear you ask, is Bernie Sanders? Never heard of him?

He is a socialist who sits in the US Parliament, the House of Representatives.

That's right! A socialist sitting in George Bush's Congress.

Bernie Sanders is the only member of Congress who doesn't belong to the

Democrats or Republicans. Yet he has been re-elected five times by the voters of Vermont. This last time with more than 60 per cent of the votes cast.

His website contains a long list of causes he has fought on behalf of working people.

- For universal free healthcare – 50 million American have none at all.
- A national minimum wage level where people don't need to have two jobs
- Union protection against the corporate agenda for all workers
- Opposition to the war in Iraq

I believe it is the job of all of us in the labour movement including magazines like *RMT News* to try to get news of people like Bernie Sanders out to the wider world.

I hope all RMT members will get along to support their local May Day celebrations.

The Edinburgh one takes place on Saturday April 30 [that's right May Day is in April this year!]. Come along and meet Congressman Bernie Sanders if you can.

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RMT at the Women's TUC

RMT delegate Janine Booth moved a motion arguing for flexible working laws to have more clout

RMT recognises that juggling work and family responsibilities is a major issue for many of our members. Therefore, the union submitted a motion to this year's TUC women's conference last month calling for existing flexible working laws to be made much tougher.

RMT delegate Janine Booth, from Finsbury Park branch, proposed the motion.

"We now have a flexible working law that allows workers with a child aged under six, or a disabled child aged under 18, to ask for their working hours or location to be changed to fit in with their childcare needs," she told conference.

"This law has enabled a woman like me to combine working on the railway with looking after my three young kids.

"So, am I here to lead the celebrations?"

"No – I'm here to tell you that

the flexible working law is weak, limited and divisive," she said.

Janine pointed out that it was weak because it is only the right to ask and employers have the absolute right to refuse. The law gives them a long list to choose from, and in case they are struggling, the last on the list is "any other reason".

She said that workers can complain to employment tribunals only about the process, not the decision. So long as the employer refuses in the correct way, there is nothing you can do about it legally.

"The tribunal can not compel the employer to give you the hours and conditions you need – this resolution says that it should do.

"The law is limited, because it only applies to parents of children under six – as if parenting suddenly becomes a

piece of cake on the day your kid hits his or her sixth birthday.

"We want this age raised to 16. I'd personally like it also to extend to carers of adult dependants, such as elderly parents or disabled partners. Again, the brunt of this care (but not all of it) is borne by women," she argued.

Delegates unanimously agreed that because this law is weak and limited, it is also divisive as some employers encourage workers to think that some staff are getting special treatment.

"The law should compel employers to meet flexible working requests without disadvantaging other workers, so that management can not use it to divide us.

The flexible working law is welcome, because some women and some men in some workplaces can get better working conditions – usually, where there is a union that is strong enough to win for workers," Janine told conference.

The weakness of the legislation puts workers in the role of Oliver Twist – "Please sir,

can I have some more?"

"It leaves workers with caring responsibilities forced to choose between a job and your kids, to give up a job you like for a job you don't, or to go mad trying to juggle it all.

"The weakness of this law flows from an ideology that having kids is a private matter that is not the responsibility of employers.

"That comes from a capitalist system under which employers' only responsibility is to their shareholders and their profits, not to wider society, not to the workers of today or tomorrow.

"This ideology says that women are less reliable workers than men, and therefore lesser citizens". It stands in the way of both women and men having a good job and a good relationship with our kids. It underpins the sexism that all working-class women experience, whether or not you have children.

"It is time to reject this out-of-date, oppressive nonsense, and to demand laws with real teeth, that really benefit women workers, all workers, and our dependants," Janine said.



FLEXIBLE?: RMT argued for flexible working laws with real teeth: Photo Duncan Phillips

50 years in the union



LONG-SERVING RMT member Gary Howells was presented with an RMT hip flask and glass set after 50 years in the union.

South East Regional Council president Bill Martin, (left) and branch secretary of Ramsgate Workshops Willy Marshall (right) did the honours at a presentation evening at Deal Cricket Club.

Gary started work at Ramsgate depot in the summer of 1955 as a junior oilman in the days of steam. In 1960 he started work at Deal Wagon Depot as an examiner but was made redundant in 1962. He returned to Ramsgate and worked on the carriage and wagon department and has been there until his recent retirement.

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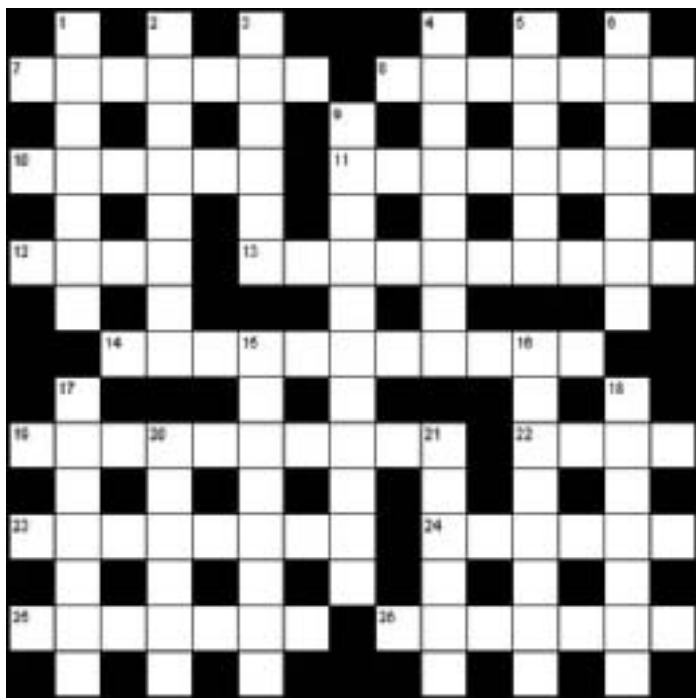
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Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by May 6 with your name and address. Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

7. RAP starts here... (7)
8. Explanatory note on picture (7)
10. Narrow pieces of leather or other material, used to restrain or hold in position (6)
11. Those with religious beliefs contrary to the orthodox – often persecuted (8)
12. Fish, musical instrument or voice (4)
13. Wearing glasses (10)
14. Raw, as in sewage (11)
19. Islanders served by CalMac (10)
22. Ripped (4)
23. One's neighbours live here (4,4)
24. ...Rap finishes here on April 30 (6)
25. Agrees to (7)
26. Not on time, as in birthday card (7)

DOWN

1. High plain (7)
2. Killer, hired or political (8)
3. Employers (6)

Last month's solution



Winner of prize crossword No. 13 is Mr K Gladdin of Derbyshire

4. Gives commentary to film or play (8)
5. Not moving (6)
6. Trained (7)
9. Conveyances for those who cannot walk (11)
15. British soldiers of old or holiday-camp entertainers (8)
16. Native of Baltic state (8)
17. Not one of the forward gears (7)
18. Smartened - by one who is marrying? (7)
20. Johnny decomposed (6)
21. Vendor (6)




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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

RAIL AGAINST PRIVATISATION

**NO TO PRIVATISATION
YES TO A PUBLICLY OWNED RAILWAY**

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

GLASGOW - Sat, April 16
12.30pm, St Enoch's Square

EDINBURGH - Sun, April 17
11.45am, Market Street

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

DURHAM - Tues, April 19
3pm, City Centre

YORK - Wed, April 20
12.30pm, Clifford's Tower

HULL - Thurs, April 21
11.00am, Hull Station

LIVERPOOL - Sun, April 24
1.30pm, The Casa

LEEDS - Fri, April 22
12.00pm, Leeds Station

MANCHESTER - Sat, April 23
1.30pm, 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 Naval Association Rooms

CARDIFF - Mon, April 25
6pm, Sandringham Hotel

MILTON KEYNES - Thurs, April 28
10.30am, City Centre

DOVER - Mon, April 4
7.30pm Discovery Centre

EXETER - Tues, April 5
6.00pm, 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