

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

DRUGS & ALCOHOL WHAT ARE THE RULES?

RMT campaigns for national standards

Rail Against Privatisation
4 page pull-out inside!

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'SAVE OUR RAILWAYS'**
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THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS**
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EDITORIAL



LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF LABOUR

“What you people have to understand is that the future is about service cuts and fares increases” This is how the Department of Transport’s director of rail, Mark Lambirth, reportedly described the future to senior industry figures.

At the same time, a “strategic review” of Northern Rail has been launched which threatens to slash essential local services.

These are just some of the reasons why RMT launched the Rail Against Privatisation campaign to bring Britain’s railways back into public ownership.

The overwhelming majority of people want to get back on track to reduce pollution by increasing the use of rail, bus and other environmentally friendly transport modes at affordable fares.

We have seen the benefits of public ownership since South Eastern Trains was taken back into public ownership, after Connex was kicked off the franchise.

Services on SET have improved steadily, staffing levels and morale are up and it’s costing the taxpayer £1 million a month less in subsidy.

Rail privatisation continues to be a disaster and is leading to a continuing spiral of lack of investment and service cuts. The government’s Railway Act now poses a threat to the very existence of rural branch lines with the imposition of so-called Community projects.

RAP got the arguments for renationalisation into the public arena during the recent general election and put candidates on the spot.

The results of that election should give a sharp warning to the government that it is time to listen to the concerns of working people – the genuine voice of labour.

Britain has clearly shown that it doesn’t want a Tory government, but the huge dent in Labour’s majority and the huge number of voters staying at home show that Britain doesn’t want a Labour government pursuing Tory policies either.

Labour’s vote went down to 36 per cent due to the illegal war on Iraq and the implementation of Tory policies of privatisation and cuts. The time has come

to look at fairer electoral systems such as proportional representation to ensure that peoples opinions are reflected in who gets elected.

The time has also come not just to listen to but to act on the concerns of working people.

That means the only legitimate war is a war on poverty.

It means public services in public hands and no more taxpayers’ money to subsidise privateers’ profits.

It means taking action to reverse the dangerous decline in UK shipping jobs that threatens Britain’s status as a maritime nation.

It means ditching for good any plans to privatise Scotland’s lifeline Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services.

It means ensuring that working people get a decent standard of living in retirement and acting to end attacks on pension rights

And it means making real progress on workers’ rights and bringing Britain’s labour legislation back on the right side of international law.

Drug and alcohol testing has been a controversial issue since its introduction over ten years ago. This union does not condone the use of drugs and alcohol on the job, yet the number of incidents involving incapacity due to drugs and alcohol remains very low.

Nevertheless, increased testing is being aggressively pursued by employers without consultation with this union, and there are worrying signs that it is being increasingly used as a stick to beat staff and even to target and intimidate union reps.

The time has come for national standards which take into account the reality on the ground. Employers need to support staff, not treat them like criminals.

Finally, in line with our policy of continually improving services, I hope you enjoy your new-look RMT news.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

LONDON CALLING!

Interested in paid voluntary telephone work?

RMT is looking for people to undertake paid telephone work at Unity House to encourage people to contact lapsed members to encourage them to rejoin the union.

Earlier in the year, the union made use of a trade-union friendly call centre, based in Edinburgh, to contact lapsed members. This proved to be a great success, with a large number of members rejoining the union.

As a consequence, RMT wants to carry out a trial in-house call centre, based at Unity House, outside of normal working hours, operating a few evenings each month. The

service will also be used to contact members on various issues including missing membership detail etc.

Anyone applying should have a knowledge of RMT and possess strong telephone communication skills. The work will be on a casual basis for around £10 per hour for a three-hour shift each night, although this has yet to be finalised.

The Call Centre will be set up with advice from a manager at the centre in Edinburgh and full training will be provided.

If you know of anyone who would be interested, please write to either of:

Alan Pottage
RMT National Organising Manager
Maritime House (Side Entrance)
Clapham Old Town
London SW4 0JW

Peter Waters
RMT Membership Manager
Unity House
39 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD

RECOGNITION DEAL FOR EUROSTAR SECURITY GUARDS

RMT has just been awarded full union recognition for 200 security guards working on the Eurostar contract located at Waterloo International, the North Pole depot and Ashford.

They were employed by Securitas until recently when they were TUPED over to Chubb.

RMT won recognition thanks to a lot of great work by local rep Billy Kelly and Eurostar Passenger Services branch secretary Mick Lynch.

"They never gave up during this two-year battle to win RMT recognition for guards performing security in the rail industry," said Alan Pottage of the union's organising unit.



Members Helpline

Freephone 0800 376 3706

Open six days a week 8am until 6pm

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516
Seven days a week



INITIAL CITY LINK STAFF STRIKE AGAINST LOW PAY

HUNDREDS of RMT members at Initial City Link took strike action for 24 hours earlier this month after the company compounded low pay in the company by imposing a below-inflation wage increase.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the company had rewarded members' contribution to the growth of its profits with a "shameful, indecent and frankly unacceptable pay cut".

"Our members have indicated

that they are no longer prepared to tolerate City Link pay rates that in some cases barely register above the minimum wage," he said.

RMT's drive to end low pay has struck a chord among Initial City Link workers, and membership levels have grown substantially.

The union has made it clear to the company that it was happy to talk, but imposing a pay cut would not help.

"If Rentokil-Initial really is committed to high standards of behaviour in relation to all its employees,' as it claims to be on its website, then it will make sure that City Link management accept the need to abolish below-subsistence pay, get

round the table with us and thrash out a decent settlement," Bob Crow said.

The dispute involves Initial City Link staff at Ashford, Cardiff, Carlisle, Exeter, London Central, London North, London South, Heston, Norwich, Park Royal, Plymouth, Rochester, Swansea, Tonbridge and Sunbury.

Current basic pay rates for drivers range from £4.97 an hour – which will be below the new national minimum wage of £5.05 due in October – for the lowest-paid at Swansea to £6.71 an hour for the highest paid at Ashford, Norwich and Tonbridge. In London the rates are between £6.09 and £6.50 an hour. ■



Transport for London staff strike

HUNDREDS of RMT members at Transport for London took strike action earlier this month over the breakdown in industrial relations after voting by a margin of six to one for action.

Around 230 members working in TfL's call centre and information centres, the London Transport Museum, office staff and as revenue control inspectors, bus controllers and staff instructors took action following the failure to resolve a series of disputes.

These include the introduction of a new attendance and disciplinary code without consultation; failure to consult call-centre staff over a move to a temporary new base – which members believe is the first step to exporting the call-centre work overseas; redundancy of Transport Museum staff and failure to resolve outstanding safety issues concerning revenue control inspectors.

RMT made it clear that it was prepared to talk to resolve the situation and told TfL that it would achieve nothing by "burying its head in the sand".



PICKET: TfL staff picketed TfL headquarters at Windsor House, Victoria Street, and LUL headquarters at 55 The Broadway

STRIKE AT 'ONE'

NEARLY 300 conductors ticket examiners and revenue protection inspectors at train operating company One will strike on Saturday May 21 and Tuesday June 7 over the company's failure to offer a new technology payment for the introduction of new Avantix ticketing machines.

The company accepts that the machines will initially slow revenue collection, and that will affect staff income.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a mystery why One was refusing to agree a deal as other National Express subsidiaries had already made payments for the introduction of these machines.

"In the long run the company stands to make enormous gains and it is only right that the workforce should share in them.

"The company's offer of one per cent on commission for 12 weeks is unlikely to cover our members' lost income, and means that the workforce is effectively being asked to subsidise the introduction of new technology," he said.

The union has been negotiating since last October, and has already suspended a ballot to allow further talks to take place, but One have not budged so far.



TOM DOES A MARATHON



VETERAN RMT member Tom Angus ran the London Marathon in five hours 45 minutes last month in aid of the union's orphan fund.

After months of training, Tom completed the gruelling 25 mile event in order to raise hundreds of pounds for the orphaned children of union members.

Tom complained, with a hint of irony, that it had not been a fair race as Paula Radcliffe had started nearly an hour earlier.

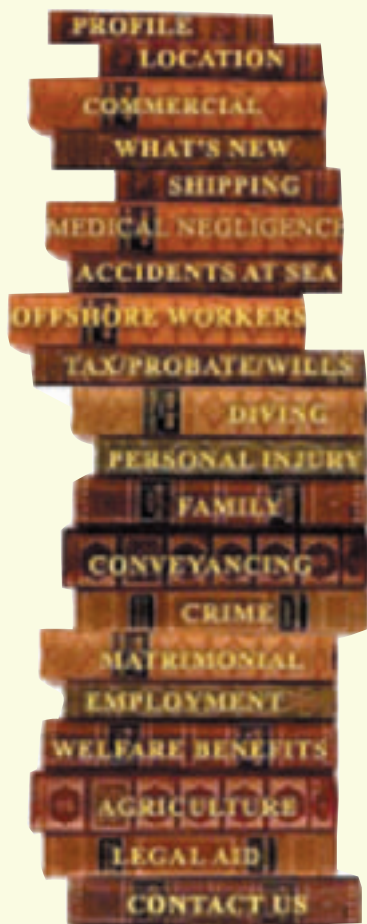
"I had no chance of catching her up after that," he said.

If you or your branch wants to donate to the orphan fund make cheques payable to RMT orphan fund and send to Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Yvonne's personal best

RMT member Yvonne Scarrott ran the London marathon for 'Kith and Kids', a London based charity for disabled children and young people.

This was her third Marathon and she achieved a personal best of three hours 18 minutes, beating her previous personal best of three hours 54 minutes.



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STUC congress condemn Scottish Executive's attempts to privatise the essential lifeline ferry services operated on the Clyde and to the Western Isles by Caledonian MacBrayne

RMT SCOTTISH regional organiser Phil McGarry said that maritime unions and the STUC are working tirelessly along with the island communities to halt the tendering process.

"There are clear alternatives to tendering the services, as shown in the report by economist Jeannette Findlay of Glasgow University," he noted.

"Let's send a clear message from this congress. CalMac is not for sale - lifeline public services must stay in public hands."

On the launch of the RAP campaign, congress also unanimously backed calls for renationalisation and for specific powers for the Scottish Executive to take the country's passenger services back under public control.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow recalled that rail privatisation had been carried out in line with an EU directive on separating infrastructure from train operations and forcing "competition" on to the railways.

This approach had also been behind the demand to privatise the CalMac ferry services in Scotland, Mr Crow pointed out.

He told conference that he felt that he had to lie down in a dark room after hearing Transport Secretary Alistair Darling's speech.

"Yesterday, Alistair Darling told you he wasn't going to renationalise the railways - and you applauded him at the end of his speech," noted Mr Crow.

"You should have told him to go and get stuffed," he added, to laughter and applause.

Rail nationalisation was agreed at Labour conference last year, Bob pointed out.

"If it's Labour Party policy, how come it doesn't go in the manifesto?" he asked, stressing that it would help Labour's other policies and bring in more money to invest in health and education. ■



STUC delegation at Dundee

You have the right to be accompanied at Investigatory Hearings

AN article in a Labour Research publication recently cast doubt on whether members could insist on being accompanied at an investigatory hearing.

However, the right to be accompanied was established by RMT at an Employment Appeal Tribunal and as far as the union is concerned this right still exists.

Some managers may now refuse to allow members to have a representative in attendance. Therefore, the memorandum reproduced here has been sent to branches so that members can use it if necessary.

Copies of the letter can also be obtained by phoning the RMT helpline.

MEMORANDUM TO..... (insert name of manager)

COMPANY..... (insert name of Company)

Dear Sir or Madam

SUMMONS TO FACT FINDING INTERVIEW ON..... (insert date of interview)

Please confirm that this Investigatory Hearing will not lead to formal disciplinary proceedings.

Should you be unwilling to confirm the above then this is to certify that I am formally requesting that you accept my right under the 1999 Employment Relations Act to be accompanied at the above interview by an RMT representative. If you fail to allow me to be represented, I will only take part in this interview alone under protest, as I believe to be forced to do so is a breach of legislation.

Please acknowledge receipt of this memorandum and advise me in writing, prior to the Investigatory hearing, of your decision.

..... Signed

..... Name (print)

..... Grade

RMT REVEALS THE FACTS ABOUT FARE PRICES UNDER PRIVATISATION

Fares in London and South East up to three times as expensive as other European conurbations

SEASON TICKETS and travel cards in other European conurbations cost a fraction of those in London and the South East, a new RMT study has revealed.

Released during the RMT Rail Against Privatisation campaign, the study shows that in the Netherlands and Germany, commuters can buy an annual go-anywhere ticket for £1,382.68 and £2,046.90 respectively – compared with cost of a season into London from Milton Keynes, at £3,284, Huntingdon at £3,432, or Brighton, at £2,952.

London travelcards also compare unfavourably with European neighbours, with the cost in London, for travel in an approximate 15-mile radius from the centre, at £1,580, compared to Madrid (40-mile radius) at £510, Berlin (40-mile radius) at £829 and Paris (20-mile radius) at £950.

In the report, widely covered by the media, the union pointed out that the private sector was taking out a billion pounds a year from the railways and £2 million a week from the Tube.

“Is it any wonder that commuters are paying through the nose for their season tickets?” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

“Commuters in European countries where the railways remain in public hands pay a fraction of season ticket costs here.

“The time has come to draw the line under privatisation and bring our rail and Tube back into the public sector where they belong,” Bob Crow said. ■

ALL COUNTRY ANNUAL SECOND-CLASS FARES

Netherlands	£1,382.68	2,026.5 Euros, all zones in the Netherlands
Germany	£2,046.90	3,000 Euros, unlimited travel throughout Germany

CITY REGIONAL FARES

Paris 'Carte Integrale' approx 20 miles radius	£946.49	£1,387.2 zones 1-8 approx 20-mile radius
Madrid Annual C2 Zones	£507.36	£743.6 approx 40-mile radius
Berlin	£818.76	c£1,200, approx 40-mile radius
London Zones 1-6	£1,580.00	approx 15-mile radius

ANNUAL SEASON TICKETS 2005

STATION	MILES	COST	Yearly £ per return miles	% Germany	% N'lands
Apsley	23	£2,400.00	£52.2	117%	174%
Arlsey	36	£2,904.00	£40.3	142%	210%
Ashwell & Morden	40	£3,012.00	£37.7	147%	218%
Baldock	35	£2,924.00	£41.8	143%	211%
Basildon	24	£1,860.00	£38.8	91%	135%
Bayford	15	£1,784.00	£59.5	87%	129%
Berkhamsted	27	£2,628.00	£48.7	128%	190%
Biggleswade	41	£2,968.00	£36.2	145%	215%
Bletchley	46	£2,840.00	£30.9	139%	205%
Bracknell	32	£2,412.00	£37.7	118%	174%
Brighton	50	£2,952.00	£29.5	144%	213%
Brookmans Pk	14	£1,560.00	£55.7	76%	113%
Bushey	15	£1,692.00	£56.4	83%	122%
Cambridge	55	£3,264.00	£29.7	159%	236%
Crawley	30	£2,952.00	£49.2	144%	213%
Cuffley	12	£1,308.00	£54.5	64%	95%
Downham Market	86	£3,724.00	£21.7	182%	269%
E Grinstead	28	£1,692.00	£30.2	83%	122%
Ely	70	£3,324.00	£23.7	162%	240%
Foxton	50	£3,136.00	£31.4	153%	227%
Garston	18	£2,100.00	£58.3	103%	152%
Grantham	105	£5,560.00	£26.5	272%	402%
Gravesend	24	£1,692.00	£35.3	83%	122%
Grays	19	£1,512.00	£39.8	74%	109%
Hatfield	17	£1,920.00	£56.5	94%	139%
Haywards Hth	37	£1,740.00	£23.5	85%	126%
Hemel Hempstead	23	£2,504.00	£54.4	122%	181%
Hertford N	18	£2,024.00	£56.2	99%	146%
Hitchin	31	£2,748.00	£44.3	134%	199%
Huntingdon	58	£3,432.00	£29.6	168%	248%
Kempston Hardwick	58	£3,264.00	£28.1	159%	236%
Kings Lynn	96	£3,956.00	£20.6	193%	286%
Knebworth	25	£2,340.00	£46.8	114%	169%
Leigh-on-Sea	32	£2,224.00	£34.8	109%	161%
Leighton B'd	40	£2,816.00	£35.2	138%	204%
Letchworth	33	£2,924.00	£44.3	143%	211%
Littleport	76	£3,452.00	£22.7	169%	250%
Maidenhead	24	£2,140.00	£44.6	105%	155%
Maidstone	39	£2,492.00	£31.9	122%	180%
Meldreth	47	£3,136.00	£33.4	153%	227%
Milton K'nes	49	£3,284.00	£33.5	160%	238%
Newark	120	£6,068.00	£25.3	296%	439%
Northampton	65	£3,536.00	£27.2	173%	256%
Peterborough (incl GNER)	76	£4,988.00	£32.8	244%	361%
Peterborough (WAGN only)	76	£3,740.00	£24.6	183%	270%
Potters Bar	12	£1,480.00	£61.7	72%	107%
Purfleet	15	£1,512.00	£50.4	74%	109%
Reading (any co)	35	£2,916.00	£41.7	142%	211%
Royston	43	£3,136.00	£36.5	153%	227%
Sandy	44	£2,996.00	£34.0	146%	217%
Shepreth	48	£3,136.00	£32.7	153%	227%
Shoburyness	39	£2,392.00	£30.7	117%	173%
Southend	35	£2,300.00	£32.9	112%	166%
St Albans Aby	23	£2,224.00	£48.3	109%	161%
St Neots	51	£3,220.00	£31.6	157%	233%
Stevenage	27	£2,560.00	£47.4	125%	185%
Thorpe Bay	37	£2,392.00	£32.3	117%	173%
Tilbury Town	21	£1,512.00	£36.0	74%	109%
Tring	31	£2,816.00	£45.4	138%	204%
Waterbeach	61	£3,264.00	£26.8	159%	236%
Watford Jctn	17	£2,064.00	£60.7	101%	149%
Watlington	90	£3,788.00	£21.0	185%	274%
Watton-at-Stone	22	£2,208.00	£50.2	108%	160%
Welham Grn	15	£1,728.00	£57.6	84%	125%
Welwyn Garden City	20	£2,060.00	£51.5	101%	149%
Welwyn N	22	£2,172.00	£49.4	106%	157%
Westcliff	34	£2,300.00	£33.8	112%	166%
Woburn Sands	50	£3,264.00	£32.6	159%	236%
Wokingham	36	£2,932.00	£40.7	143%	212%
Wolverton	52	£3,284.00	£31.6	160%	238%

Prices converted at Euro = £0.6823

MERSEYRAIL GUARDS SET FOUR STRIKE DATES IN 35-HOUR WEEK DISPUTE

RMT GUARDS at Merseyrail are to strike on Saturday May 21, Saturday May 28, Friday June 10 and Saturday July 9 after decisively rejecting unacceptable strings attached to the company's 35-hour week proposals.

In a ballot of the 170 members, the company's offer was rejected by 104 votes to 13 – a margin of eight to one.

"Our members have once more voted decisively to reject an offer from Merseyrail that gives with one hand and takes away with the other," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"The offer that emerged from the mediation process was essentially no different from the one they have already taken strike action over.

"Merseyrail still want our members to pay for their 35-hour week by losing rest days and they have found that just as unacceptable now as it was in March.

"We have been waiting for four years for this issue to be resolved, and the company has no-one to blame but itself for the disruption its intransigence is causing," he said.

Centra Buses breach health and safety rules to break strike

RMT reported 'serious breaches' of safety rules by Centra Buses in the company's attempt to break strike action in south London earlier this month by employing unqualified agency staff.

The union asked the health and safety inspectorate to pay an emergency visit to the Croydon depot over fears that agency drivers without appropriate passenger carrying vehicle licenses (PCVs) are being used by Centra.

There were also reports that agency drivers have been instructed to remain with vehicles and available to drive

for up to 24 hours, in clear contravention of driving hours regulations.

The union fears that Centra is placing the public in serious danger by flouting safety rules rather than negotiate a settlement to the dispute behind the stoppage.

The RMT claim is for a basic £500 weekly wage, equal contracts and pay for all employees, no zero-hours contracts, adequate annual leave, sick-pay from day one of employment, full rostered earnings for victims of assaults, fair allocation of overtime and an end to victimisation.

SUNDERLAND RAIL SERVICES UNDER THREAT

RMT reacted angrily to the Strategic Rail Authority's insistence that halving rail services linking Sunderland and the Metro shopping Centre at Gateshead are 'a good idea'.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow slammed the drastic cut to an important rail link, and questioned how the SRA could describe it as a 'good idea'.

"It is even more astonishing because the latest cut is due to

happen exactly a year after the Trans-Pennine Express services from Sunderland to Manchester York, Leeds and Liverpool were axed.

"I am not sure what the city has done wrong, but it appears that the SRA is determined to send Sunderland to Coventry, because year on year it is being isolated from the rest of the national rail network," Bob said.

Parliamentary column



Back to campaigning in Parliament

When you examine the details of the election results constituency by constituency you will find that on average members of the RMT Parliamentary group gained better results at the polls than most other Labour MPs.

The reasons are obvious. In addition to the fantastic campaigning support from the union and its membership, RMT parliamentary candidates were campaigning on a clear programme of the union's policies which included public ownership of the rail industry, an end to privatisation, and decent pay, conditions and pensions.

As the union's national march proved, the demand for bringing rail back into public ownership and control proved to be a popular issue on the doorstep. Opinion poll after opinion poll have demonstrated not only widespread support for this policy but also large scale opposition to privatisation not just in the rail industry but public services overall.

The question in this new Parliament is whether the government is listening. In his first speech after the election result, the Prime Minister said that he would listen and learn from what was being said on the doorsteps in the campaign. However, within days he announced that his third term in office would be "unremittingly New Labour" and he went on to appoint a series of ministers who are drawn from a narrow circle of what can only be described as New Labour zealots, transferred in from the SDP or the Tory party.

The Prime Minister's programme for the new session of Parliament set out in the Queen's speech does not provide much evidence of a government listening or learning.

Not only does it fail to address the question of public ownership of the rail industry but it has a continuing and underlying theme of privatisation of public services. Even the justice system is now not immune from the privatisation threat as the government has committed itself to further privatisation of the prisons and probation service. In health and education services the use of the private sector and the promotion of private control of services threatening to gather momentum in the coming period.

Within the long list of legislation proposed in this session of Parliament which is to last 18 months there is little sign of the Warwick agreement reforms promised to the trade unions before the election. Lurking behind the legislative programme is the continuing fear that the Government is to press ahead with the mass job cuts in the civil service and the planned reduction in public sector pension benefits. In addition, the government is proposing changes to incapacity benefits which will require close scrutiny if we are to head off cuts in benefits and the introduction of a regime which will penalise the sick and disabled.

Throughout this new session, the RMT Parliamentary group will continue to work with the union to monitor legislation and issues as they progress through Parliament and will be speaking up to represent the interests of RMT members, seeking to amend the legislation wherever possible and if necessary oppose anything which in our judgement and the judgement of the union undermines the rights and quality of life of RMT members and their families. RMT members can rest assured that our union will have once again a strong and powerful voice in this Parliament.

John McDonnell MP
For Hayes and Harlington
RMT Parliamentary group convenor

TESTING

Time for national standards for drug and alcohol testing



TIMES

The application of drugs and alcohol testing has been seen as a controversial issue since its introduction on the railways back in 1992.

It is an offence under sections 27 and 28 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 for employees to carry out, and for employers to allow employees to carry out safety critical tasks while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The union endorses the view that coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol is unacceptable. However, it should also be recognised that the number of incidents involving drugs and alcohol at work are very low.

Moreover, it has been widely reported that testing has been used as a stick to beat and intimidate staff. Drug and alcohol policies are also reported to be applied in a draconian manner with little attention being given to education and treatment.

Positive drug tests resulting from over the counter medications that create little or no relation to work performance have also led to knee-jerk dismissals.

Last year's report of the Independent Inquiry into Drug Testing at Work concluded, following an 18-month investigation, that some drug testing methods were a "costly and divisive" way of managing employees, and was an "inappropriate use of managerial power".

The TUC reported to the inquiry that while appropriate for staff in safety critical posts it "should be part of a comprehensive safety strategy that includes support for staff who test positive".

This is clearly not the case at

Network Rail as a positive result invariably results in instant dismissal. Moreover, six Tube maintenance workers that tested negative were still sacked by Metronet last year after empty beer cans were found in a widely-used mess room.

Excessive waiting time for screening has also led to staff being held against their will after the end of their shift and the withholding of food and drink.

Other issues include a routine lack of facilities for urine samples to be taken with dignity in private, leading to unhygienic practices.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that transport workers face some of the most stringent testing around, including unannounced testing which was imposed by Network Rail 18 months ago without consultation with the union.

He said that the problem was not testing as such but the arbitrary and uneven way the company had imposed the policy.

"The puritanical and heavy-handed zeal with which these tests are carried out are causing problems for staff," he said.

Mick said that it appeared the principle driving Network Rail D&A policy, including the imposition of unannounced testing was the need to save money.

"Previously, staff were booked off in order to have testing carried out but now testing is carried out on the job.

"This can clearly affect staff performance as they may be distracted by such a trauma and their mind might not be on the job," he said.

There have also been widespread complaints that some employers have not issued

appropriate guidelines, leaving staff ignorant of procedures and dangers.

The selection process for random testing is also open to question as private healthcare providers often attend the nearest depot and test all the staff that happen to be around rather than employing a more systematic method which would be less open to abuse. This lack of an objective process has also led to allegations that trade union activists are being disproportionately targeted for drug and alcohol testing.

FAIR TREATMENT

The union has requested meetings with Network Rail to discuss all these concerns. RMT general secretary Bob Crow has made clear that the manner in which drug and alcohol policies were being carried out created a lot of anger and undermined confidence in the system.

"The present situation is leading to a breakdown of consensus on this issue.

"What is required are national standards underpinned by fair treatment of staff," he said.

Bob said that if there is no satisfactory outcome to the talks then members will be consulted and industrial action would not be ruled out.

ALTERNATIVE DRUG TESTING METHODS

In response to proposals a few years ago for the use of mouth swabs to collect oral fluid for drug screening purposes, the RMT called upon the rail industry to commission independent research to evaluate the various drug testing methods.

Our aim was to ensure that whatever method of screening

was used, it must provide an accurate result so as to avoid any member being falsely accused and possibly losing their jobs. This was eventually agreed and a contract awarded to the Health & Safety Laboratory to carry out a study of the various methods of drug testing, and in particular the efficacy of oral fluid/saliva testing.

The outcome of that study was recently considered by the General Grades Committee. They noted that the accuracy of oral fluid testing was largely equivalent to that achieved through urine testing, but as the introduction of oral fluid testing could raise other concerns, it was felt that Branches should be sent a summary of the study findings and their views sought on the matter.

In particular, the study highlighted the fact that the adoption of oral fluid testing could also affect the time normally needed to obtain samples which may be far quicker and, therefore, may not need staff rosters to be altered. Also, the time window for the detection of most drugs in oral fluid is shorter than in urine, and so may indicate a closer relationship with actual impairment at the time of testing.

The different time windows could also have implications where staff from different companies may work alongside each other, but each of those companies have different methods of testing. In such a situation, it is possible that workers having ingested the same amount of drug/medication at the same time, could obtain different results

Branches are advised that their views in this matter should be submitted before the end of July and in the meantime local or company level representatives should not engage in any discussions with management on the possible introduction of oral fluid testing. Any such proposal by an individual company should be reported to head office immediately. ■

Towards national



Engineering grades meeting in Sheffield agreed to convene a special two-day conference to discuss the need for national collective bargaining

DELEGATES agreed that the union should campaign for a "comprehensive and meaningful" collective bargaining machinery for grades covered by conference, including those still outside Network Rail.

Steve Smart, March and District said that harmonising the myriad of different pay rates and conditions would be a long and difficult task, but it had to be done.

"In Network Rail we are looking at a clean sheet of paper on which to create a system for the betterment of all," he said.

Mark Farrington, Warrington District warned that the use of 'role clarity' could be used to "blur grades" and undermine conditions.

"We need to protect grade structures in this process and stop management abandoning competency levels," he said.

John Boyle, Wishaw and Motherwell said that those private companies not brought back in-house under Network Rail were ignoring procedures and making people redundant.

"We need one standard across the industry ensure the protection of jobs, pay,

conditions and the health and safety of all our infrastructure members," he said.

Bill Rawcliffe, York and District reminded conference that being brought back in-house was not a cure-all.

"Network Rail is not British Rail, it is driven by cost and profit," he said.

Danny McNicol, East Midlands warned that the sort of harmonisation required would "come to nothing" if PT&R arrangements were not protected and abuses investigated thoroughly by the union.

Conference resolved to convene a special two-day conference at the earliest opportunity.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

Drug and alcohol testing methods should be reviewed and those tested should not be kept beyond their normal hours of work, conference agreed.

Steve Wallace, Fort William said he had been held for hours after work for a drug and alcohol test.

"This is false imprisonment and constitutes a breach of human rights," he said.

Doug Hammersley, Signal,

Electrical and Track London Underground said that the computers being used to pick out staff for testing were very impressive as very often they chose RMT reps.

Dave Hobbs, Newport said that testing was being carried out by "shoddy" contract firms and that there was clearly a need to inform members what their rights are.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that increasingly Network Rail was bringing in random screening.

"This is being done without consultation with the union and the consensus on the issue is breaking down," he said.

Greg Hewitt, Brighton reported that staff were being forced to give urine samples on the track without "dignity of privacy".

Willie Devlin, SET London Underground said it was necessary to find out what was going on in each area in order to establish national standards.

"In LUL we had the case of the Farringdon Five where staff were found to be negative and were still sacked" he said.

Barry West, Cornwall Mid West reminded conference that

Network Rail's own code stated what drugs rendered workers unfit for work under rule 3.2 and this information should be more widely distributed.

IMPLEMENT WELFARE RULES

Conference agreed that it was time that Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommendations for provision of welfare facilities at infrastructure maintenance and renewal sites.

Brendan Kelly, Bristol Rail said that some contractors ignore health and safety recommendations for welfare facilities for transient workers.

These facilities include adequate washing, toilet, rest and changing facilities and somewhere clean to eat and drink during breaks.

"Now many people have been transferred over to Network Rail it is time for a new start and start spending some profits on decent facilities for the workforce.

"If we are still discussing this issue next year with no improvements we will have failed as a union," he warned.

Gerry McCann, Ayr added that many female workers were coming into the industry, making it even more important "to get this sorted out once and for all".

Peter Trend, reporting for the Council of Executives, said that the union had made representations to Network Rail over the issue and the union's

bargaining

position was being moved forward.

Barry West said that under health and safety rules there was a clear duty of the employers to provide welfare.

"There is a need to educate members on the dangers of unhygienic practices and inform them of their rights," he said.

He suggested that welfare

provision rules should be published in the union journal to ensure the widest possible distribution of information.

END PPP

Conference called on the union to continue to campaign for London Underground Limited engineering infrastructure to be brought back into the public

sector.

Doug Hammersley said that Tube privatisation had resulted in engineering workers going over to the profit-driven private contractors Tubelines and Metronet.

"What has happened to mainline staff following privatisation is happening to us now.

"Now whenever there is a problem they do not talk about safety, they ask if it a case of 'variance of contract', in other words are they liable," he said.

Willie Devlin said that these infracros were lining their pockets at the expense of the workforce and the taxpayer.

"They are disbanding gangs and handing the work over to sub-contractors.

"This union should not rest until Tube infrastructure is back in-house where it belongs," he said.

RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

Conference agreed that it was necessary to encourage members and local reps to pro-actively recruit members and build the union at the workplace.

John Boyle outlined the

importance of a strong and united membership in securing the protection of jobs and improvements in pay, conditions and health and safety.

He said after a local audit he was shocked to find the how many people were not members of the union.

Peter Skelly, Bridgend Llantrisant and District said the union had agreement from Network Rail for the union to attend induction courses to explain the benefits of RMT membership.

"We have a right to attend all induction courses and where this isn't happening the union should be informed," he said.

Gerry McCann said that one key area was the need to recruit health and safety reps which represent a very important of the union's work.

Gerry Hitchins of the RMT organising unit highlighted the problems at Grant Rail, where the company will presently only recognise the union for those staff recently transferred from Jarvis.

"We should have recognition rights for all infrastructure members," he said. ■



Martin Valente

GRANT RAIL RMT MEMBER MARTIN VALENTE GIVES HIS THOUGHTS ON HIS FIRST GRADES CONFERENCE

This gives me the opportunity to thank everyone at the conference for their support for every RMT member at Grant Rail. I will be informing them that Grant Rail workers have the support of so many in our fight for recognition.

I will be telling them about the hard work being done by Gerry Hitchin and the organising team on our behalf.

I will be telling them about the speech made by our secretary Bob Crow and how he referred many times

to Grant Rail RMT members and his determination to achieve our goal of recognition.

How every delegate showed, by the way they spoke to me, that they are all behind us.

I'll try and make them feel as I do that we are now part of a strong transport union, a union that will always be there for us.

So going to the conference has made me stronger as a union rep. As I left I felt that I could take on Grant Rail any day, but don't tell them that.

SAVE OUR

A packed RMT train crew conference in Edinburgh called for the defence of national rail services and the role of the guard

CONFERENCE agreed that the Railways Act, Community Rail partnerships, the re-privatisation of South Eastern Trains, contingency plans and the Northern Rail review all represented threats to jobs, services and the role of the guard.

Craig Johnston, Carlisle City said it was appalling that train operating companies were undermining the rulebook by imposing secretive so-called "contingency plans".

"On Northern Rail this has meant that trains can remain in service with no emergency brake systems or TIS, undermining safety on the rail network and representing a threat to passengers and staff," he said.

Conference demanded the withdrawal of such contingency plans and for action to be taken if companies refused to do so.

ROLE OF THE GUARD

Conference agreed that rule book changes, the introduction of new stock, refranchising and timetabling were undermining

the role of the guard.

Greg Tucker, Waterloo said it was necessary to develop an industry-wide strategy that clearly defines the role of the guard and restricts companies from diluting safety responsibilities in the pursuit of profit.

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that the new revamped guard's charter outlined the role of the guard, including in the event of the failure of on-train safety devices.

"We cannot allow the imposition of rule changes and contingency plans without consultation," he said.

DEFEND NORTHERN RAIL

Conference agreed that the ongoing review of Northern Rail services taking place just months after the creation of the new franchise threatens cuts, the replacement of services with buses and line closures.

Alex Holden, Manchester Victoria said that a massive campaign was required to defend these services involving

passenger groups.

Craig Johnston, Carlisle City said that if the government really wanted to reduce subsidies and save money it should bring the railways back into public ownership and "kick the profiteers off the network".

Growing uncertainty over Northern Rail has been heightened by comments made by Director of Rail Strategy and Resources Mark Lambirth who warned senior industry figures that: "What you people have to understand is that the future is about service cuts and fares increases."

These comments were even more alarming given the powers in the new Railways Act making it far easier for the government to cut rail services.

Conference called on the union to fight any closures or substitution plans that may come out of the review of Northern Rail services.

DEFEND RURAL LINES

Plans to introduce nearly 60 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) by the government

represented a serious threat to the very existence of many rural lines Ed Fontaine, Plymouth warned conference.

"Handing these lines over to rail enthusiasts would be a prelude to closure or the creation of small private rail societies.

"This means fare increases, replacing services with buses and job losses and this union should not stand back and allow branch lines to close without an almighty fight," he said.

Pat Sikorski said that the current crisis was due to government policies that allowed the drive for profit to be put in front of the interests of the industry.

"Community Rail represents Beech-style cuts that leaves rural and regional lines to be run by enthusiasts as long as it lasts, bearing in mind that there will only be short-term subsidies.

"All these issues are encapsulated under the Rail Against Privatisation campaign which points to the need of an integrated public transport network," he said.

NATIONAL PAY BARGAINING

The time has come to put into practice union policy of one national pay system for all train crew grades, conference agreed.

Greg Tucker, Waterloo said the union should work towards common pay claims, based on common terms and conditions in all companies as part of a campaign for national collective pay bargaining.

"Before World War Two this union achieved one national set of job descriptions, pay and conditions for all train crew when the network was in private hands.

"It has been done before and we can do it again," he said.



RAILWAYS

Steve West, Manchester South said that ending the current fragmentation of terms and conditions was part of the wider campaign to ending the chaos caused by rail privatisation.

FOR A FAIR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Conference called for a fair, welfare-based drug and alcohol policy to replace the arbitrary policies presently in place which was based on pre-judgement and prejudice.

Craig Johnston, Carlisle City said that conference supported RMT policy in not condoning being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at work.

"However, the policies have only one consistency, 'if positive, you are guilty', which always results in dismissal, and that mitigating circumstances are never taken into account," he said.

He described cases where staff have had their drinks spiked then tested and sacked.

"Such policies have resulted in staff being branded as drug takers or alcoholics, degraded, humiliated and stripped of their dignity," he said.

Pat Sikorski said that the new union health and safety



structures were looking for a unified policy and standard procedures.

He said that testing was not "random" on London Underground as claimed.

"In order to make up the numbers they test the spares in the depot.

"But it is clear they won't employ more spares to allow a proper random procedure due to cost," he said.

RECOGNISE RMT DRIVERS

Conference agreed that RMT drivers working for C2C deserved representation rights.

Danny Owen, North Thames said that the company was refusing to negotiate with the union and had entered a single union deal with ASLEF.

"This is an infringement of basic human rights to join a union and these single union deals should be scrapped," he said.

Susan Marshall, Shrewsbury said that the same situation existed at Central Trains and she was "sick and tired" of being dictated to by another union.

Greg Tucker, Waterloo pointed out that under British Rail the union had negotiating rights for drivers. "All we are asking is to have them returned to us," he said.

ID CARDS

Conference agreed that should ID cards be introduced by the government, the union must resist any attempts by train operating companies to use staff as part of police, immigration or security structures.

Brendan Glenn, Manchester South said that identity checks were not the job of train crew and never should be.

Bob Law, East London Line said that staff could be exposing themselves to violent attacks if they were coerced into carrying out such duties.

SSP leader addresses conference



Scottish Socialist Party leader Colin Fox reminded delegates why the RMT in Scotland opted to affiliate to the SSP.

"We share the same principles, policies and aspirations," he said in a well-received speech.

"These principles are more relevant than they have ever been, including the need to combat poverty, low pay and

inequality," he said.

He outlined plans for a demonstration in Edinburgh on July 2 to 'Make Poverty History'.

"As the local Scottish Parliament member, I invite you all to come along and campaign for democracy against undemocratic organisations like the G8, the World Trade Organisation, the IMF, the World Bank and EU commissioners," he said.

YOUNG MEMBERS MEET

The second young member's conference, held in Nottingham, proved to be another successful step towards firmly establishing this new RMT group, writes Nick Quirk

ALTHOUGH THE conference attendance was small, it still proved that the young members in this union are passionate about improving their pay and conditions as well as their voice in the union.

The predominant theme among the motions this year was the need for serious recognition and rights for the young members section.

Dave Giles, Jubilee South & East London Line said: 'I hate being referred to as 'the kids', it's about time the RMT treated the young members respectfully.'

In order to advertise the young member's movement, many motions called upon the RMT news and recruitment departments to produce propaganda aimed specifically at young members.

There is a need to increase of activists amongst young people

not just within the union but in social society as well, Tony Donaghey stated.

"The need to attract young activists is vital for the future of this union.

"There is still a lot of work to be done in shaping this young members conference, but this is a great attempt to involve young members within the union," he said.

Tony wanted to find out why young members are not as active as in the past, he claimed that Thatcherism and now Blairism within the New Labour party had set back introducing young activists into politics and indeed trade unionism.

The words socialism is deemed to be "bad" with the current trend being not to be politically motivated which is why the young member's movement needs to be

supported by all RMT members.

Gerry Hitchen of the RMT organising unit agreed and said that "its disappointing to be here in South Yorkshire, an area full of trade union history and achievements only to discover that many young people don't even know what a trade union is," he said.

It seems clear that the motions from the conference need to be taken very seriously for the future of the union.

Education for the young members was another big issue at the conference. The media has been dominated by pension problems within the public sector which has led to all members, particularly the younger members, confused and worried about the future of their pension.

A motion submitted by Plymouth No.1 branch urged

RMT to introduce a pension education programme.

Young members need to gain the knowledge required to understand pension issues and how the government is dealing with the question.

Jubilee South & East London line branch requested that young members should be targeted for education so that they can learn about the union due to the negative image that the media have inflicted on trade unionism.

Plymouth No.1 branch introduced a motion calling on the union to investigate ways of giving financial assistance to young members to ensure a better attendance at conference.

Without this support, it would make the continual growth of this section increasingly difficult and put off potential activists from attending future conferences.

Delegates agreed to finish conference early to support the recent Central Trains dispute. We achieved a lot at this conference and hopefully it can develop to attract more activists to have an even better conference next year. ■



SAVE THE OLDHAM LOOP RAIL ROUTE!



Train crew conference delegate Alex Holden outlines the case against handing the Oldham loop line over to tram privateers

FOR MANY years railways and tramways operated happily side by side. However, in the middle of the last century, tramways in our towns and cities were dismantled, with only the Blackpool tramway remaining.

That was until a new generation of tramways came along with names like Supertram, Tramlink and Metrolink. In greater Manchester, Metrolink won widespread support and a campaign was launched for the system to be expanded.

Part of this 'phase three' expansion takes in the heavy rail route known as the Oldham loop, running from Manchester to Rochdale. This route forms the bulk of work at Manchester Victoria depot as well as Wigan Wallgate.

It is true that the route is in need of investment. But that can be said for whole swathes of the rail network. Moreover, a lot of the problems on the Oldham loop come about as a direct result of the uncertainty surrounding the route.

Now, no RMT member is going to argue against more public transport. However, converting the Oldham loop to light rail would not provide additional public transport. It would simply replace one mode of transport with another. Furthermore, an objective look at the options available reveals that there are few benefits for conversion.

In fact, less money would be better spent on improving existing rail infrastructure, rather than wasting millions on chucking trains off the loop and replacing them with trams.

Metrolink is essentially two very good former rail routes with a bit of on-street running linking the two. The Bury and Altrincham lines were regarded as good paying routes, with trains regularly full of passengers. Both were snatched from British Rail in 1989 and turned into the separate privatised edifice called Metrolink.

Since then, very little has been spent on infrastructure and

the system is showing signs of age. It is estimated that it will cost around £100 million to bring the infrastructure back to 1990 standards. This is money they have not got, yet they want to take more railway.

The powers that be are desperate for the expanded route. In 2002, when the closure of the Oldham Loop was granted, a document supporting conversion claimed that journey times on trams would be far quicker than trains and there was far more capacity.

However, these figures were somewhat distorted.

The rail capacity comparison was only for a single 142 set and did not consider the 130 per cent figure of seating capacity, a figure that is routinely broken.

The tram capacity figure was for a seating and standing capacity of four persons per square metre of floor space. This translates to 25 square centimetres per passenger, probably less as the seats are larger.

Despite these distorted

figures, the money needed to build the extensions has not been forthcoming and there is a local campaign called 'Get our Metrolink back on track'.

The company even re-liveried one of the trams with a huge logo carrying this message. Ironically, that tram derailed in the city centre on old and shoddy 'phase one' track.

With a closure order granted on the Oldham Loop, the route is living on borrowed time.

A pre-Metrolink timetable of only two trains an hour from Victoria to Rochdale, stopping at all stations, has led to passenger numbers dropping like stone.

The service is due to revert to the faster four trains per hour in each direction when the summer timetable comes into force, with through trains to Wigan and Merseyside also returning.

Hopefully, passengers will return as well but how long will the service remain?

What is clearly required is an end to the uncertainty once and for all and for the closure order to be repealed. The Oldham Loop could become part of an integrated transport network which utilises the present infrastructure and provides a decent rail service. ■

RMT BATTLE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SEAFARERS

The RMT campaign to end the continued discrimination against seafarers under the above Act is gathering pace

DISCRIMINATION against seafarers is permitted through an exemption in the 1976 Race Relations Act. The government have now been forced to concede a further review of sections eight and nine of the Act and a consultation document is expected very soon.

However, RMT has sought legal advice and the union have been advised that the discrimination on pay rates is not permissible under the EU

Free Movement of labour provisions. This confirms a recent statement made by the EU Transport Commissioner.

AMMENDMENTS

In 2003 the government amended the 1976 Race Relations Act and the exemption allowed for seafarers who are recruited abroad to work on UK ships. Despite attempts by the government to pretend that the legislation was being brought

up to modern day standards, it still permits shipowners to utilise foreign national seafarers on UK ships on exploitative rates of pay and long tours of duty.

The amended Race Relations Act made clear that the exemption is based on domicile as opposed to race, colour or ethnic origin which was previously permitted. In practice the discrimination is still based on nationality but the seafarers

have to reside and be recruited abroad in order for the exemption to apply, discrimination on other grounds is not allowed.

RMT has continued to raise this discriminatory legislation when campaigning for UK seafarers employment. The issue was recently highlighted by the TUC Deputy General Secretary Frances O' Grady at the RMT Parliamentary Biennial General Meeting.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Arising from a statement by the European Commission transport spokesperson, government lawyers have been forced to examine whether UK



SHIPPING

legislation complies with EC law.

European Commission officials stated that any EU seafarer should be paid according to the home rate of the flag of the ship they serve on, regardless of residence. In effect, this would mean that Spanish, Polish or any other EU nationals could not be discriminated against on pay when compared with resident UK seafarers employed on board UK flagged ships.

Following questions from unions in the Shipping Task Force Working Group the Department of Transport have now stated that, after receipt of legal advice, they have concluded that sections eight and nine of the 1976 Race Relations Act will have to be reviewed.

The advice from government lawyers apparently states that if a close enough link (to be defined) existed between an EEA seafarer and the flag state of the ship on which they are working, they could not be paid at a differential rate from resident seafarers of the flag state.

The government will later

this year issue a consultation exercise and the crucial question will be how the link referred to above will be defined. If as a result of the consultation exercise the law is changed to outlaw discrimination against EU seafarers on EU ships this could significantly reduce the ability of shipowners to utilise low cost seafarers at the expense of UK seafaring nationals.

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that the union is determined to ensure that the reforms to the legislation are carried out effectively.

"We have sought senior legal opinion and I am pleased to report that we have been advised that the discrimination under the 1976 Race Relations Act falls foul of the EU Freedom of Movement provisions," he said.

The union will be guarding against the possibility that the discrimination is allowed to effectively continue without formal complaints being lodged by individual seafarers. A further update will be given in next month's RMT News. ■

The RMT case is based on the following key points:

- Seafarers are in practice being discriminated against on the basis of their nationality even if they are domiciled abroad.
- The discrimination is being applied in British workplaces. Other industries employing workers from abroad would quite rightly be expected to pay UK rates of pay when in UK workplaces.
- Despite all the arguments about being competitive in a global industry the UK shipping industry should not be able to escape these minimum standards.
- The arguments of residence are not valid, and for seafarers permanently engaged they are actually living abroad the UK vessels for approximately 10 out of 12 months in any one-year. This is because of the more intensive work patterns on which foreign nationals are engaged.
- The Race Relations Act and other equality legislation should in principal be universally applicable.
- The arguments used by the shipowners are of course very similar to the arguments that have been used by employers when seeking to avoid other legislation on minimum standards and equal rights.
- It is not acceptable for the government to be blackmailed from implementing equality legislation on the basis of threats to flag out vessels.
- Employment for UK seafaring ratings continues to decline. The Chamber state that ships will desert the UK Flag but the simple reality is that currently ships are joining the UK register without any UK seafarers employed.
- Because of the cloak of respectability of the UK Flag, shipping companies are taking advantage of the lack of minimum standards (compared with other North West European states), and engaging seafarers on rates of pay below the minimum wage.
- Contrary to statements made by the Chamber of Shipping, if the government allow the legislation to continue in its current form the future for the remaining UK seafarers will become increasingly precarious.



Homage to an anti-fascist fighter

GLASGOW RMT shipping branch recently helped put on a play recalling the experiences of James Maley, who fought in the British battalion of the anti-fascist International Brigades to defend Spanish democracy in 1936.

The branch put £500 towards production costs to stage 'From Calton to Catalonia'. This prison drama tells the story of how James travelled from Calton, in the east end of Glasgow, to Spain. After being captured during the battle of Jarama, he spent six months in a fascist prison in Salamanca. The play relates how James' mother recognised him from a newsreel in a local cinema and convinced the projectionist to make a photo from the film negatives.

Written by John and Willy Maley in 1990 as a tribute to their father, the play was brought to the attention of KAYOS theatre company by RMT member Jim McKnight.

Play director Mark Barclay ensured that the production recognised the courage and conviction of those that went to Spain because "they could see no other way" to alert the world to the dangers of fascism. ■



RMT member Jim McKnight(left) with director Mark Barclay and Willy Maley.

TRADE UNION

The Tolpuddle Martyrs

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were transported to the penal colonies of Australia after forming a trade union. Tim Lezard examines their legacy and discovers we have a lot to thank them for.

As the sun rose on February 24 1834, Dorset farm labourer George Loveless set off to work, saying goodbye to his wife Betsy and their three children.

They were not to meet alone again for three years, for as he left his cottage in the rural village of Tolpuddle, he was served with a warrant for his arrest.

Under an obscure 1797 law, Loveless and five fellow workers – his brother James, James Hammett, James Brine, Thomas Standfield and his son John – were charged with having taken an illegal oath.

But their real crime in the eyes of the establishment was to have formed a trade union to protest about their meagre pay of six shillings

a week – the equivalent of 30p in today's money and the third wage cut in as many years.

With the bloody French Revolution still very much in the minds of the British establishment, landowners were determined to stamp out any form of insurrection.

And so when Loveless' landowner, James Frampton, caught wind of a group of his workers having formed a union, he sent a spy to infiltrate their meetings.

These gatherings, held under a sycamore tree in the village or in the upper room of Thomas Standfield's cottage, were prefaced with the swearing of an oath of secrecy – and it was this act that led to the men's arrest and subsequent sentence of seven years' transportation.

By handing out such a harsh sentence, the government hoped to frighten the nascent Labour movement into submission, but they achieved precisely the opposite and were quite unprepared for the public outcry that ensued.

As the men were being led back to prison to await their transfer to the prison hulks, their hands manacled together, their heads shaven like common criminals, George Loveless scribbled some words that were to change the course of British law.

In desperation, he wrote what

was later called his 'Song of Freedom'. Its emotive and rousing chorus of 'We raise the watchword, liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!' underlined the Martyrs' determination and has inspired generations of people to fight against injustice and oppression.

"If it hadn't been for that song, I don't think the Martyrs would have had such a big impact," says Jan Pickering, curator of the Tolpuddle Museum. "After all, thousands of people were being transported, so what made them martyrs? I think it was because the words were so simple, so moving."

"Loveless was laying out what they were trying to do and telling people they had done nothing wrong, questioning why they were being transported for trying to get better pay."

The song had an immediate impact for the working class rose up in support of the Martyrs, delivering an 800,000-strong petition to Parliament protesting about their sentence and demanding their pardon and release.

After three years, during which the trade union movement sustained the Martyrs' families by collecting voluntary donations, the government relented and the men returned home as heroes.

Every year their contribution is remembered at the Tolpuddle Festival, held in the village where it all began.



Wreaths laid on the grave of martyr James Hammett

ON HEROES

The annual South West TUC event attracts over 8,000 people who enjoy the mixture of politics, theatre and music. There is also a procession of colourful trade union banners through the village, which passes the aging sycamore under which Loveless convened the historic meetings.

Their legacy – to establish in law the right to belong to a trade union – was a key step in the fight for workers' rights.

"They weren't the first trade unionists, but their victory meant the act of forming a trade union became not only legal, but part of British society," says Nigel Costley, Regional Secretary of the South West TUC.

"They are still relevant today because the extreme problems they faced are still being experienced in some parts of the world.

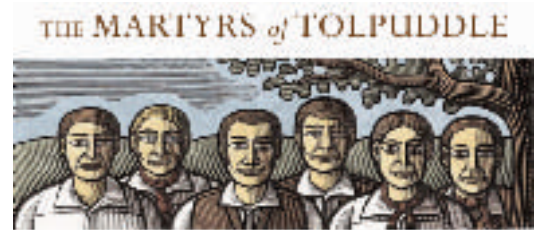
"We remember them and share our solidarity with workers who are facing the same battles for the fundamental rights to gather together, to speak with one voice and to advance their lives."

George Loveless was a Methodist lay preacher and as such was determined to keep to the law and not take violent steps of the machine-wreckers or rick-burners, protesting about unemployment caused by the advance of the industrial revolution.

"In those times there was no full democracy – you couldn't vote unless you were a landowner – so for many people, their only response was through violent means but the Martyrs were religious men and wanted to protest peacefully," says Nigel Costley.

"They set out to defend their basic rights for them and their families and to do it legally. Because they wanted to work within the law to reform the system, rather than bring it down, they were a more potent threat to the establishment's vested interests."

And, as the establishment continues to try to protect those interests, it is worth recalling what might have lain in store had it not been for the six brave men of Tolpuddle. ■



The Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival takes place on Saturday, July 16 and Sunday, July 17.

Speakers include Tony Benn and TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber.

There are also international speakers: Burmese TUC general secretary Maling Maung and a leading member of the Fensuagro, the Colombian Agricultural Union.

Artists playing include Billy Bragg, Hank Wangford and the Lost Cowboys and The Sidekicks. : Information 0117 947 0521 or www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle.

The event is free.



The Grand Procession at the Tolpuddle Martyr Festival

WILTS AND DORSET LEARNING BUS LAUNCHED



Members at Wilts and Dorset Bus Company will feel right at home when they pop into their new learning centre - it's a bus! The new mobile facility will drive to depots, bringing learning closer to bus workers



Union Learning Reps Kevin Saunderson, 'Baggy' Bagwell, Dave Wyatt, Brian Lewis

FOR A FEW years now learning has been on the agenda at Wilts and Dorset Bus. It started with Poole and District Bus RMT branch secretary Peter Gale and Salisbury 3 branch secretary Joe Hayes getting trained up as Union Learning Reps. They then recruited other reps, the first of whom was Brian Lewis. Brian took on the responsibility of being the 'lead' Union Learning Rep.

Early in 2003, the reps, RMT's education officer Ray Spry-Shute and the TUC met with the company and local

colleges to discuss creating learning opportunities in or near the workplace and the idea of a learning bus took form.

To turn the idea into reality was going to take a lot of hard work and money.

Teresa Williams, Regional Development Worker from the Rail Union Learning Programme, was brought in to coordinate the project.

The company donated a bus and agreed to pay the running costs, and Teresa managed to secure funding for refitting and laptop computers.

After a nearly a year of hard work the bus had two open days, one at Poole and one at Salisbury. Over 120 bus workers visited the open days, where they had the opportunity to talk to tutors and reps, and to have a go on the laptops.

Wilts and Dorset learning reps are now busy setting up courses and workshops based on what members have asked for, including computing, languages and sign language.

There has already been an IT course at Poole and learning rep Kevin Saunderson was on hand

to help out and answer questions.

Courses are being designed to fit in with shift work and the Learning Bus is currently timetabled to visit Poole and Salisbury each week, although reps 'Baggy' Bagwell, at Ringwood, and Dave Wyatt, at Lymington, have been inundated with requests.

The learning reps at Wilts and Dorset are hoping that the project goes from strength to strength to providing opportunities to learn and making a real difference. ■

Adult Learner's Week

2005

May 21-27

WHAT IS ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK?

ADULT LEARNERS' Week is the UK's largest festival and celebration of adult learning celebrated every year in over 40 countries. It is an opportunity for adults to have a go at something new by trying out one of the hundreds of free taster sessions that happen across England during the week, and an opportunity for colleges to show adults what is on offer.

Learning is not just what you did at school. It doesn't have to involve classrooms, assignments or exams.

In England, colleagues in colleges, libraries, museums, businesses, voluntary and a range of other sectors hold thousands of events to inspire adults to try their hand at something new. Anything up to 100,000 people take part, encouraging activity through publicity distributed by national and local organisers. Twenty thousands enquiries to learndirect and routinely around 2,000 press articles appearing in national, regional and local press testify to the success of the campaign.

HOW IS RMT AND THE RAIL UNION LEARNING PROJECT GETTING INVOLVED?

The Rail Union Learning Project is organising various Adult Learner Week activities throughout the week at different locations across the country. Activities range from French and Spanish classes in Brighton, courses to help you get to grips with your personal finances in London, and IT courses in York. All free of charge.

If you want to find out about courses or activities in your area you can call the Rail Union Learning Project office on 0207 317 8610/8611/or 8613 for more information. Alternatively, if you know who your local Rail Union Learning Representative (RULR) is, you could ask them if they can point you in the direction of local events.

For general information about Adult Learner's Week, if you have internet access you can find out more at <http://www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2005/>. ■

You may also want to look at these websites:

Rail Union Learning Project

More information about how the RMT is working with other transport unions to promote lifelong learning and education for its members - www.rul.org.uk

Campaign for Learning

Details about Learning at Work Day, Family Learning Weekend. www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

Time to Learn

The on-line version of City & Guilds directory of learning breaks and study tours. www.timetolearn.org.uk

Workers Educational Association

The national website of the WEA, the UK's largest voluntary provider of adult learning opportunities. www.wea.org.uk

ENJOYING A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

RMT member Keith Skivington works as a Groundsman at Eurostar in Ashford, Kent. He is the latest Eurostar employee to benefit from the Rail Union Learning Project. In February this year, Keith's switched from working as an OCS contractor to being a Eurostar employee at Ashford International.

Within a few weeks of his Eurostar contract starting, his local Rail Union Learning Rep (RULR), Wendy Dale, had already been in touch to find out if he'd be interested in doing various courses on offer

at local colleges.

Keith responded straight away saying that he'd like to do French, IT and maths.

Keith has already started a maths course at the local Adult Education college with a view to sitting a National Certificate (Level 1 numeracy) in June and he is signed up to start French and IT in May.

Having left school at 15 and joined the army before working for Eurostar, Keith had passed army certificates and a City and Guilds qualification in numeracy but he found that these skills had

got a bit rusty over the years.

In his job as a groundsman at Ashford, Keith needs to use maths on a daily basis.

"If I'm painting a room it saves waste and money if I can calculate the area and the necessary volume of paint correctly before I get underway," he says.

Getting back into learning has given Keith a good deal of personal satisfaction and confidence.

"It's nice to feel like I'm using my brain again.

I reckon there are a lot of people like me on the railways

who could do with brushing up their skills but they don't make the time for it. I would encourage anyone to do the same, whatever level they are," he says.

Keith says his rep, Wendy, has been really supportive and helpful and the tutors at the college have been great too.

"No one there takes the mickey. Everyone else in the workshop is just like me: people who've got off their backsides and made the effort to better themselves and get their brains into gear," he said.

TRADE UNIONISTS M NO TO THE EU CONST

Tony Benn explains why...

I have just finished reading a little pamphlet produced by the campaign Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution and it is one of the best things I have read on the subject.

It brilliantly and concisely exposes the fundamentally undemocratic nature of these plans and should be read by anyone who wants to find out more about the subject.

An at-a-glance guide at the front of the book neatly exposes how wide-ranging this assault on democracy really is.

For instance, articles turn the liberalisation – a polite term for privatisation – of services and industries into constitutional principles.

This is of great importance for all transport workers as it would preclude governments from owning or investing in transport services.

Road, rail and shipping industries across the EU must develop only on the whims of the so-called “free market”.

This approach has already seen the decimation of transport industries in Britain, with shareholders taking precedence over the travelling public.

How can anyone describe a document that elevates right wing neoliberal economic policy into a legal requirement claim this Constitution is an exercise in democracy?

It also militarises the EU and creates a single foreign policy, develops a European police force which will be immune from prosecution, increases unfair trade with the world's poor and hands massive powers to those we do not elect.



DEMOCRACY

The fundamental problem is that the Constitution takes away democratic rights to remove those who govern us.

This represents a massive transfer and centralisation of power in the hands of institutions that are not accountable or transparent.

This would increase the number of laws being imposed on Europeans from highly diverse countries that had no democratic mandate within those countries.

There are many things that need correcting with the UK constitution, including the unelected second chamber and the way in which the prime minister can use Crown powers to by-pass parliament.

However, these more local democratic deficits would not be aided by the emasculation of power from Westminster to Brussels.

The trade union and labour

movement have been central to the struggles waged by generations of pro-democracy campaigners, from the Chartists to the Suffragettes, to ensure that ordinary citizens could hold their rulers to account.

So it shall have to be again as future generations will not look kindly on us if we stand by and allow our democracy to be taken away.

REFERENDUM

Later this month the French will be voting in a referendum on this crucial issue.

French opposition to the Constitution is growing as more and people discover what is actually contained within this huge and virtually unreadable document.

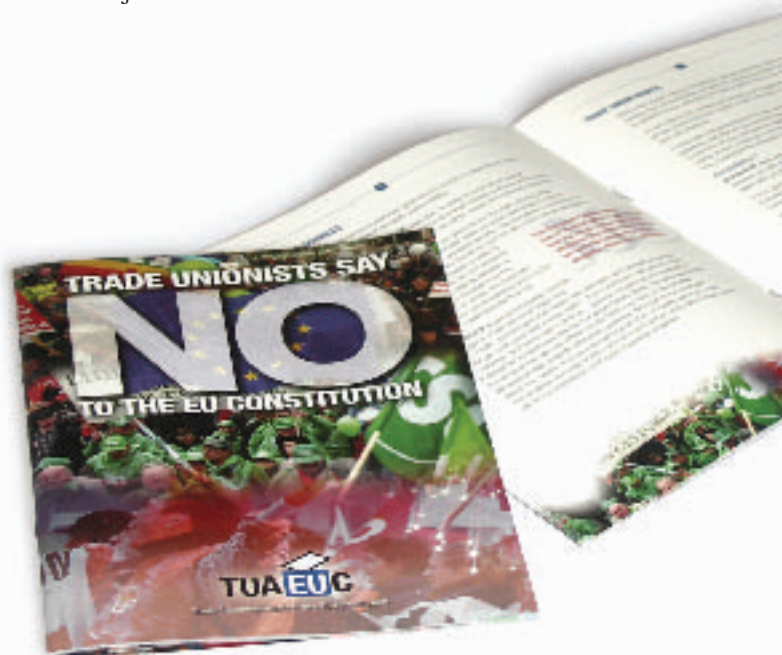
If it is rejected it would

damage this attempt to create a superstate and centralise power in Europe. However, if not we must be prepared to fight for a no vote here in a referendum expected next spring.

It will be a hard fight as the pro-constitution side will have huge funding from the government and Brussels.

However, if the labour movement does not campaign loudly on this issue then the siren calls of the far right will gain ground and the poison of racism and chauvinism will spread.

This is one of the crucial questions of our times and TUAEC have done us a service by producing this easy-to-read guide and I heartily recommend it to you. ■



Trade Unionists Say No to the EU Constitution is available free from RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

JUST SAY TITUTION

EU CONSTITUTION AT A GLANCE

THE POWER TO PRIVATISE

Article III-147 gives the EU powers to enforce privatisation in any area of economic activity: "A European framework law shall establish the measures in order to achieve the liberalisation of a specific service."

A THREAT TO PUBLIC SERVICES

Article I-15 gives the EU new powers to 'co-ordinate' economic, employment and social policies. Article III-210 lists the almost unlimited areas of social policy where the EU will have the right to 'support and complement' the activities of member states.

UNELECTED IN CHARGE

Article 1-26 confirms the sole right of the unelected European Commission to draw up new laws and Article 111-188 orders member states "not to seek to influence the...European Central Bank", the unelected body that decides economic policy for the eurozone.

ANTI-UNION LAWS TO REMAIN

Article II-88 states that workers have rights to collective bargaining and to take strike action only "in accordance with national laws and practices".

THREAT TO CIVIL LIBERTIES

Article II-112 allows "limitations" of basic human rights "if they are necessary and genuinely meet objectives of general interest recognised by the Union". Article II-114 forbids any political campaigning to reverse any aspects of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

MILITARISATION

Article I-16 states: "Member states shall actively and unreservedly support the Union's common foreign and security policy in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity".

BIG BROTHER

Article III-276 gives the EU the right to extend the "structure, operation, field of action and tasks" of its police force, whose agents, like other EU officials, enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution.

DEATH PENALTY

Article 1-62 says no-one shall be condemned to the death penalty. However, the article "explanations" allows the death penalty "in respect of acts committed in time of war or of imminent threat of war".



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

AT TIME of writing, the Rail Against Privatisation campaign is in full swing. On behalf of the union, I would like to express thanks and appreciation to those members who volunteered to take the long journey from Scotland to London and the many others who turned out to support them at meetings along the way.

Thanks should also go to Geoff Revell and Larry Cotton for all the hard work they put in organising this huge task.

Some have asked why did RMT carry out such a campaign when it is clear that rail privatisation has been a failure. Well, RAP has exposed just how disastrous this experiment has been and how much the travelling public has been ripped-off.

For instance, before privatisation in 1994 over 90 per cent of trains on the publicly-owned railway ran to time. By comparison, in the year to 31 December 2004, the privatised network could only deliver just over 80 per cent of services on time.

Moreover, the £4.5 billion in public subsidy now paid to the railway is more than three times the public subsidy paid to British Rail.

A recent report by the Independent think tank Catalyst calculated that £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.

Last year's Labour Party conference voted overwhelmingly to return the railways to the public, an aspiration contained within the first Blair government manifesto in 1997.

Two consecutive Labour governments have ignored these realities and the three major parties made no serious mention of the wider issues on transport. Yet transport is the lifeblood of the nation and is too vital to be ignored.

So RMT had to take to the streets to get the message out that re-nationalisation makes political, economic and moral sense.

According to the think-tank

Catalyst the small transitional costs of taking the railways back into public ownership would subsequently reap huge savings for the taxpayer.

Savings would be accrued from reduced bureaucracy and an end to leakages to private providers of finance.

On a conservative estimate overall immediate cash savings of taking Network Rail, TOC's and Roscos in public ownership would be £500 million a year. In addition, taking renewals back in house would save £400 million per annum.

So public ownership would deliver total savings of £900 million a year, £4.5 billion over the lifetime of a Labour government.

Private sector investment would also not be threatened, as some politicians have claimed, as all private sector investment is ultimately paid for by taxpayers and farepayers.

Catalyst warn "without direct public control over costs, money spent in support of the rail industry will prove unsustainable, creating pressure to shift the burden to passengers through fare rises and cuts to services".

Indeed, the new Railways Act will make it easier to reduce the size of the network raising concerns over line closures, service reductions and job losses.

The SRA's Community Rail Development Strategy could also result in further cuts to our rural and branch lines.

Closing lines and services will further prevent the government from reaching its domestic emissions targets.

In addition, the Royal Academy of Engineering has recently estimated road congestion costs the UK £15 billion a year.

Therefore, the campaign to defend and expand our transport network must continue.

This is part of the wider campaign for taxpayers' hard-earned money to be spent on public services, including hospitals, education and pensions and not on illegal wars in Iraq.

“ENTREPRENEURS” AND THE NHS

A health service nightmare from SSP leader Colin Fox

I nearly fell out of bed recently when I woke up with John Reid. My clock radio alarm goes off, and on comes Today on Radio Four for a while before its time to get up and get the kids out to school.

‘What the National Health Service needs most’ said Labour’s Health Minister, ‘is greater entrepreneurial spirit.’

At first I wasn’t sure if I had heard him right as I had just woken up. But like all government spokesmen programmed to return to his ‘on message’ mantra it was just a few seconds before I heard him say it again.

He was chastising GPs and dentists for their lack of ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ in the way they run their small businesses.

Now, to me, the NHS is based completely upon a simple formula – ‘If you are ill, you get treatment.’ As soon as anyone starts to talk about ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ I begin to hear the ‘ting-ting’ of cash tills and the compromising of an ideal. The formula is suddenly amended to ‘If you are ill and can afford £6.50 for a prescription; to see a private dentist; to consult a health entrepreneur- you can get treatment.’

I know the terms of this debate inside out. For 50 years the same entrepreneurs



have been trying to rip off our NHS. They occasionally succeed. Just take a look at the profits of the pharmaceutical companies over the decades for examples.

Yet here was John Reid with proof plain that the same ‘entrepreneurs’ and businessmen we had been striving to keep at bay for half a century were now past the NHS security gates and sitting in the head office.

To me this episode also began to answer

an apparent new Labour conundrum on the NHS.

Labour repeats again and again that ‘spending on the NHS is at record levels’ and that ‘we [new Labour] have embarked upon the most ambitious hospital building programme the NHS has ever seen’.

If this is the case, then why are worries about the state of the NHS not at the top of their list of concerns right now?

Could it be that their experiences are at odds with Labour claims?

After all finding an NHS dentist, for example is proving more difficult than finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Or could it be that people are furious that all these new hospitals are owned, not by the NHS, but by ‘entrepreneurs’ who rake in a fortune over the lifetime of the contracts?

Edinburgh’s new flagship hospital, the Royal Infirmary, is a case in point. Owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland, it was built for less than £300 million, yet will cost the NHS nearly £700 million over its 25 year life.

If Labour is spending record sums on the NHS it is shameful that so much of it is wasted on profits for those with ‘entrepreneurial spirit.’ ■



THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

RMT member Janine Booth looks at the threat to abortion rights following the general election

STATEMENTS MADE during the General Election campaign suggest that women's abortion rights could soon come under attack.

One in three women in Britain has an abortion. Think about how many women you know - family, friends, workmates. One third of them will at some point terminate a pregnancy.

Every one has her reason. For many, it is a difficult choice. But it is her choice.

The film 'Vera Drake' reminded us what happened before 1967, when abortion was still illegal. Women went to backstreet abortionists, and some were injured or died.

In our society, there will always be women facing a crisis pregnancy who choose abortion. The choice that society faces is not between abortions and no

abortions - it is between illegal, unsafe abortions, safe, legal ones.

Before 1967, rich women could usually buy their way around the law and pay a doctor to carry out a termination. It was working-class women who suffered in the backstreets. This is why the trade-union movement supports women's right to choose free, legal abortion.

Leaders of several religions - including a Catholic archbishop, the Chief Rabbi, and a representative of the Muslim Council of Britain - have recently called for restrictions on women's abortion rights.

These religious authorities want to impose their views not just on their own congregations, but on all women. And despite the low level of religious observance in this country,

politicians of all shades seem willing to help them. This is not right or democratic.

As a long-standing pro-choice slogan says, "Not the church, not the state - women must decide our fate".

We may well see an attempt in Parliament to cut the time limit for legal abortion from the current 24 weeks to 20 weeks.

Relatively few abortions are carried out between 20 and 24 weeks, but there are several good reasons why a woman might leave it this late:

- She may have been obstructed by an anti-abortion doctor.
- Her circumstances might have changed - her partner might have left her, or may have started to beat or abuse her (more common in pregnancy than you might think).
- A young woman might have been afraid to come forward earlier.
- An older woman may have mistaken the signs of pregnancy for the menopause.
- Serious foetal disability may have been discovered by tests

that can only be carried out after a certain time.

The pretext for cutting time limits is usually that medical advances have made it possible for foetuses to survive outside the womb at an earlier stage.

These advances are welcome, and should be used to help premature babies, to spare parents the heartbreak of losing a baby they love and want - not to force women to bear children they do not want.

The best ways to reduce the number of late abortions is to reduce unwanted pregnancy and to improve access to earlier abortions.

This could be achieved by better sex education, free effective contraception and the removal of the need for two doctors' permission to have an abortion.

Ironically, the religious authorities that attack abortion rights usually also oppose these measures. We have to reject their moralising and defend women's right to control our own bodies. ■









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BOOK REVIEW



STOP THE WAR

The story of Britain's biggest mass movement

Tessa Jowell's bizarre attempt to prevent Britain's biggest-ever demonstration from trampling the Hyde Park lawn is one of the many gems retold in *Stop the War: The story of Britain's biggest mass movement*.

The pro-war Culture Secretary's attempt to protect Hyde Park's grass from a million protesters was foiled, of course, by the organisers' refusal to budge, Michael Foot's offer to lead the march into the park and massive public derision.

The irony of a member of a government unleashing a war that has cost in excess of 100,000 lives being so concerned about the well-being of the grass is not lost on the book's authors, *Stop the War* Coalition chair Andrew Murray and convenor Lindsey German.

"Ms Jowell once said she

would throw herself under a bus for the Prime Minister," they recall. "But she thought better of throwing herself in front of a million marchers."

This is a superb book that tells the story so far of the anti-war movement with clarity, passion and wit.

It is powerfully illustrated and punctuated with recollections, verses and testimony that demonstrate the movement's diversity and vitality.

They include RMT general secretary Bob Crow's speech at that record-smashing demonstration, as well as Tube Workers Against the War activist Unjum Mirza on how the London Underground's PA system was used to announce anti-war demonstrations.

The authors use the warmongers' own words to

demolish the lies about weapons of mass destruction, alleged Iraqi links to al-Qaida and the supposed desire to "liberate" Iraqis and to show that the Bush regime was planning an attack on Iraq long before the September 11 attack on the New York World Trade Centre.

They show the centrality to the drive to war of oil – or, rather, the ability to profit from it – and the strategic desire to bolster Israel at the expense of the Palestinians.

And they describe how the seeds of the movement were sown, how it caught, articulated and mobilised the popular anti-war mood, and how it stood against the racist backlash and in defence of civil liberties.

Murray and German take us through the immediate post-September 11 days and the war on Afghanistan, the build-up to

war in Iraq, the dodgy dossier of lies about Iraqi weapons, the first great demonstration on September 28, 2002 and the historic, global events of February 15 2003.

They describe the extraordinary people's assembly the following month, school students' revolts and the strikes and protests around Britain when the Iraq war was unleashed.

This is a remarkable historical document, but it is not a wistful look back at something past and gone: it is the taking stock of a vital work in progress. ■

Derek Kotz

Stop the War by Andrew Murray and Lindsey German

Available to RMT News readers at the reduced price of £12.99 from Bookmarks on 020 7637 1848, or in person at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3QE – quote 'RMT offer'



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PROPERTY ABROAD

I would like to introduce fellow RMT members to TAYCASA VILLAS, Spanish Property specialists. We can now offer members our cashback scheme on selected properties which are already amongst the best quality and value. For details call QUOTING RMT 01674 678 7255

OTHER

Excellent Potential. This could be the way to the extra earnings you may have been looking for. For details visit www.visionincome.com

The Travellers' Prayer

Your sandwiches weren't curly, that was just a joke,
Your tea, somewhat insipid, was drunk by many folk,
But came a time when government thought it was going broke,
Sell you off, make money, was indeed their hope,
So you were broken into pieces by the secretary of state,
And sold off as regions that we soon began to hate,
Their safety record is a sheer disgrace,
For accidents seem common place,
As I stand upon this platform, among the dirt and grime,
I soon begin to realise that my train won't be on time,
That's the third time this week I hear commuters wail,
Dear Lord, all is forgiven, please bring back British Rail

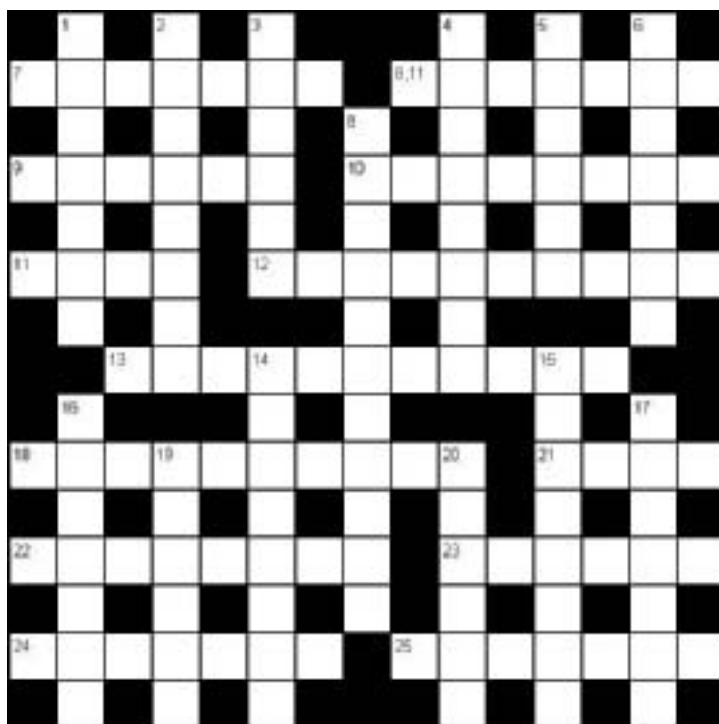
RLF Cox

Dear editor,
I had an accident at work (Onllwyn washery nr Neath, South Wales) on 6/7/2000 and had to go sick due to my injuries. Eventually, EWS freight company terminated my employment through ill-health in 2003 after 43 years service. Through the RMT magazine I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to John Kilmister, solicitor for Patteson and Brewer, who took up the case against EWS. His excellent work finally brought my claim to a successful conclusion. I would also like to thank Swansea No1 branch secretary Ken Thomas for his excellent help, guidance and support.

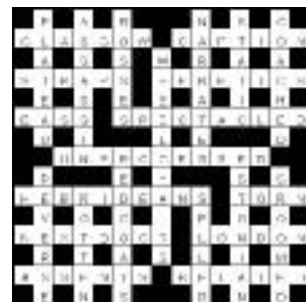
Yours sincerely
Jeff Bromfield

RMT £25 prize crossword

No. 15. Set by Elk



Last month's solution...



Winner of last month's crossword was Brian Ferguson from Darlington, County Durham.

ACROSS

- 7 Predating; before (7)
- 8,11 Parcels firm, part of 22group, in low-pay dispute with RMT (7,4,4)
- 9 Withhold food (6)
- 10 See 8 (4,4)
- 11 Bans -- from licenced premises? (4)
- 12 Even (or smarmy) quality (10)
- 13 To incorporate into the basic wage (11)
- 18 Takes or breaks apart (10)
- 21 socially inept, anorak wearer, perhaps (4)
- 22 Other half of 8,11 parent company (8)
- 23 Those delegated to transact business -- could be estate or secret (6)
- 24 Conducted oneself (well or badly) (7)
- 25 small axe -- could be buried (7)

DOWN

- 1 pertaining to reality - not fictional (7)
- 2 In the open air (8)
- 3 Headgear, worn stereotypically by French people (6)
- 4 Not said, implicit (8)
- 5 Thieved (6)
- 6 Arrangement of straps for attaching equipment to body, or vice versa (7)
- 8 Pupil (11)
- 14 One who adheres scrupulously to the rules (8)
- 15 Inclination, or party faction (8)
- 16 Scrubbed, erased, no longer listed (7)
- 17 Male sibling or fellow union member (7)
- 19 One who is on the run or banished (6)
- 20 Sailor, as in NUS (6)

HOW TO JOIN THE CREDIT UNION

To join the RMT Credit Union you need to fill in an application form and supply us with proof of **your identity** and **address**. Being an existing RMT member, you may wonder why we need proof of who you are and where you live. It is because the Financial Services Authority, in an

attempt to combat Money Laundering, has imposed strict identification rules on anyone wishing to open a Bank or Building Society account. Unfortunately, it has applied the same rules and regulations to Credit Unions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

2 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

3 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

4 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐

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

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

7 Next of Kin

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date



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



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and
Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



RMT fight back:

Our personal injury lawyers won't let bad employers get away with it.

The law says workers have a right to safe conditions – and RMT is here to defend that right. That's why our Personal Injury Service is free – and even covers non-work related accidents for family members. So if you, or a member of your family, have suffered an illness or injury due to someone else's fault, call us now.

FOR FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE CALL THE HELPLINE

0800 587 751? in England, Wales and Ireland

0800 328 1014 in Scotland

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS.



WOW

7.2%
APR (TYPICAL)

The **COÖPERATIVE BANK**

Customer led, ethically guided

Customers of Unity RMT

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

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

Amounts shown may vary by a few pence.

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

Phone
0800 591 682
quoting 791/1265

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

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

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

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

current
accounts

savings and
investments

credit cards

mortgages

loans

insurance

business
banking