

Essential reading for today's transport worker

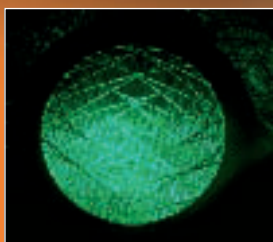
RMT *news*

RECOGNITION AT LAST!

Grant Rail recognises RMT



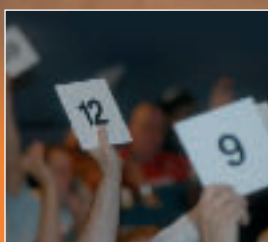
INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



DEAL AT NETWORK RAIL
PAGE 5



THE FUTURE OF BUSES
PAGE 12



AGM REPORTS
PAGES 15-21



www.rmt.org.uk

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

If you have suffered an avoidable injury or illness, our team of expert lawyers can help you

The law says you're entitled to compensation for illnesses or injuries caused by the negligence of others. And because the RMT only uses expert personal injury lawyers, you can be sure of a service that is second to none.

Contact us now for fast and efficient advice – even for your family members.

FOR THE BEST LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR RMT MEMBERS CALL FREE ON 0800 587 7516 (0800 328 1014 in Scotland). Lines open 8.00am-8.00pm Mon-Fri (except public holidays) and 9.00am-5.00pm Sat and Sun. For the 24 hour criminal law line call 0800 587 7530 (0800 328 1014 in Scotland)



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



contents

Page 4
RMT WINS RECOGNITION AT GRANT RAIL

Page 5
DEAL AT NETWORK RAIL

Page 6
RMT WINS SETTLEMENT FOR
'REDUNDANT' RMT REP

Page 7
HEATHROW EXPRESS WORKER 'UNFAIRLY
DISMISSED'

Page 8
RAIL ROLLING-STOCK PROFITEERS FACE
INQUIRY

Page 9
PARLIAMENTARY COLUMN

Page 10
THE ENERGY CHALLENGE

Page 11
THE TROUBLE WITH PASSENGER
RAIL FRANCHISES

Page 12
THE FUTURE FOR BUSES

Page 13
WHERE HAVE ALL THE RATINGS GONE?

Page 14
CHALLENGING FOR LABOUR

Page 15-21
AGM REPORT 2006

Page 22
YOUR UNION

Page 23
TAKING TRACK SAFETY SERIOUSLY

Page 24-27
SEAFARERS AND THEIR SHIPS DURING
WORLD WAR II

Page 28
THE NEW CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER
BILL: WORTH THE WAIT?

Page 30
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Page 31
PRESIDENTS COLUMN

Page 32
BOLIVIA'S STRUGGLE

Page 34
WEST LOTHIAN IS THE NATIONAL
QUESTION

Page 35
EQUALITY IN DIVERSITY

Page 36
CROSSWORD/CLASSIFIED ADS/LETTERS

Page 30
HOW TO JOIN THE CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

WINNING A VOICE AT WORK



It is always a great pleasure to see workers standing together to win a voice at work.

RMT members at Grant Rail have done exactly this by taking action to demand their employer recognizes and negotiates with their union.

This victory could not have been won without the hard work and determination of the officers involved and the local reps who selflessly built up the organisation and confidence of the membership.

The threat of strike action at Central Trains also yielded a revised offer to conductors on a range of issues including working hours and disciplinary and new technology matters.

Network Rail has also brought forward the implementation of the 35-hour week for operational staff and a vastly improved pay offer following the threat of a national strike.

Over 80 per cent of NR members backed the deal which will bring in the 35-hour week and increase hourly pay rates by 10 per cent by next April.

All members involved should be congratulated for standing solidly together and for backing their union with the superb ballot results that brought these companies back to the talks table.

Bus workers at Stagecoach have also blocked swingeing cuts the company had planned to impose to their final salary pensions.

When the Tories privatised our rail network they famously split infrastructure and operations, in line with EU directive 91/440/EEC.

Now they have finally admitted that splitting 'wheel and steel' was a fundamental error.

Yet that has not stopped them unveiling plans to re-privatise the track and break up the national network further.

David Cameron's New Tory Party now wants to break up Network Rail and hand the track over to profit-hungry train operating companies who would simply 'sweat the assets' to boost shareholder dividends, just as occurred under Railtrack.

Instead of more dangerous 'horizontal fragmentation' in the private

sector we need to see the 'vertical' re-integration of the rail industry within the public sector.

Train punctuality has vastly improved since rail maintenance was brought back in-house over two years ago and Network Rail should take over train operations as well.

According to research, if the TOCs were taken back too, over £800 million every year would no longer be lost from the industry in profits and interest payments.

This privatisation 'scam' can be seen on London Underground where a third report on the public-private partnership says the private sector has "unacceptably failed" to deliver on key targets.

The PPP remains a means for doling out guaranteed, risk-free profits to the lucky contractors, and Londoners and Tube workers are suffering as a result.

Taxpayers' and Tube users' money that should be invested in improvements is being taken out at the rate of £100 million a year, and it has to stop.

That is why we are demanding an end to PPP and for Transport for London drop its madcap plan to privatise the extended East London Line when it re-opens in 2009.

All our experience and report after report have shown that privatisation has failed by every measure, and it is unbelievable that TfL should throw the East London Line to the wolves as well.

This theme arose at our AGM in Dublin as delegates discussed the problems of deregulation and fragmentation in all transport sectors, be it buses, shipping or rail.

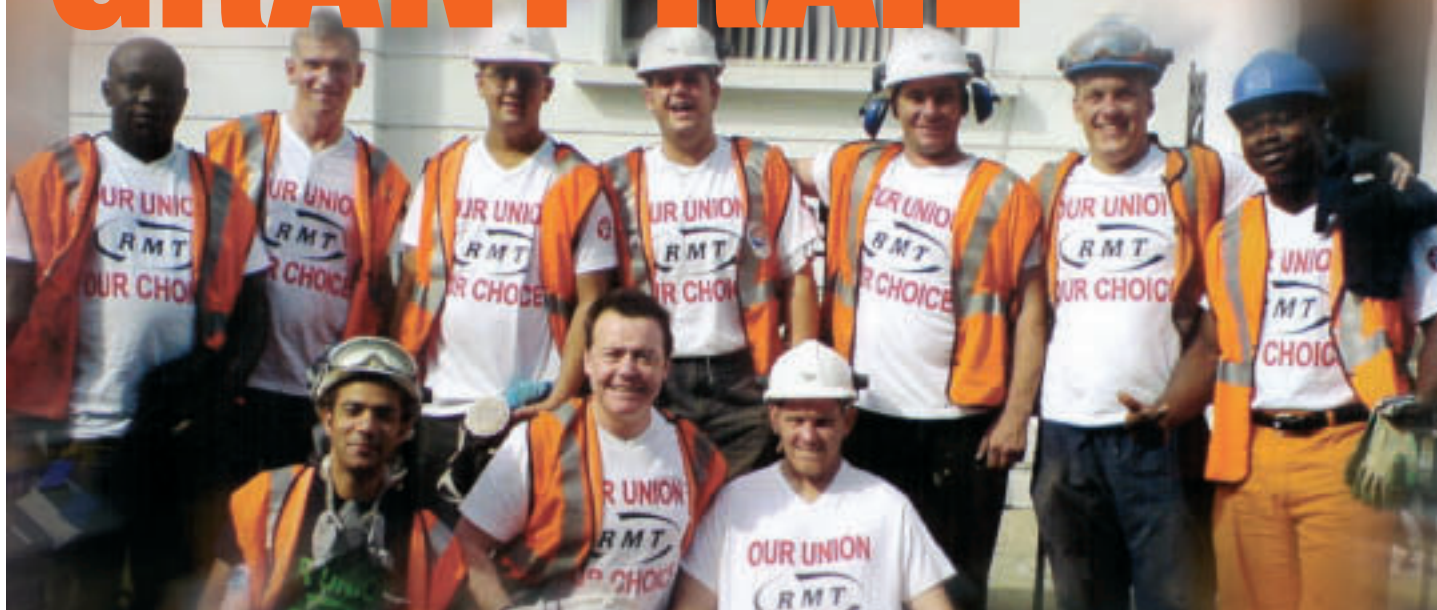
The AGM, which was broadcast live on the web is the parliament of this union which sets out objectives for the coming year. This democratic heritage is something we can all be proud of.

Finally, I hope you can all enjoy a well-earned break this summer.

Best Wishes

Bob Crow

RMT WINS RECOGNITION AT GRANT RAIL



Following a lengthy dispute, including strike action, rail infrastructure company Grant Rail has agreed to recognise RMT.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow congratulated Grant Rail members for their resolve and urged them to recruit workers in the company to the union to strengthen RMT's bargaining power.

"Following this acrimonious dispute it would be more productive to look forward and build good industrial relations with the company in order to achieve much-needed improvements in pay and conditions," he said.

The company has agreed that no employee will be discriminated against on account of RMT membership

and to time off for staff for trade union activities.

It is committed to agreeing the number of union reps required and the groups for which each rep is responsible.

Following an overwhelmingly yes vote in a ballot, Grant Rail members took 24-hour strike action in June and suspended further action pending talks regarding

recognition.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that over 50 per cent of employees are RMT members and the union deserved to be recognised by the company.

"This is a very positive development which means we can get down to what we do best, representing the interests of our members," he said. ■

Victory at Central Trains

Six days of strike action at Central Trains services were suspended recently after emergency talks yielded breakthroughs in two separate disputes involving more than 1,000 members.

The RMT executive agreed to accept a revised offer to more than 570 senior

conductors on a range of issues including the introduction of a 35-hour week and disciplinary and new technology matters.

It also agreed to accept in principle a separate offer to more than 500 supervisory, station, clerical and retail workers, pending the outcome of a further meeting with the

company.

"After extensive talks with Central Trains our negotiating team concluded that sufficient progress had been made in both disputes to recommend them lifting the strike action," RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

Senior conductors voted

overwhelmingly for strike action and six days of action were scheduled over three consecutive weekends.

More than 500 supervisory, station, clerical and retail grades members also voted to strike in a separate dispute over disciplinary and new-technology issues. ■

NETWORK RAIL BRINGS IN 35-HOUR WEEK

RMT operational and customer services staff at Network Rail have voted by over 80 per cent to accept a revised pay deal and the introduction of the 35-hour week by August 6 2006, 18 months ahead of the company's original schedule.

Following the union's initial call for strike action, Network Rail tabled a revised pay deal and the introduction of the 35-hour week in October, which members rejected.

The pay element of the offer involves a 21-month deal with no strings attached, with the next anniversary date being January 1 2008. Year one of the offer is a 3.2 per cent increase on base salaries while from April 2007 there will be an increase of RPI+0.75 per cent.

It has just been announced that the new RPI figure is 3.3 per cent so that if this figure remained constant until next February, staff would receive an increase of 4.05 per cent next year over a nine month period.

This equates to more than five per cent over 12 months. However, with the current situation in the Middle East and the possible effect on oil prices and inflation, it is possible that the 2007 pay increase will be even higher.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union had persuaded the company to move

Grade	Current salary	Current hourly rate	Hourly rate backdated to April 2006	Hourly rate from August 2006	Salary from April 2007 assuming current RPI figure	Hourly rate from April 2007	Total increase in hourly rate between now and April 2007
2	£17,920	£9.54	£9.84	£10.13	£19,242	£10.54	10.5%
4	£21,280	£11.33	£11.70	£12.02	£22,850	£12.52	10.5%
6	£24,920	£13.27	£13.70	£14.09	£26,759	£14.66	10.5%
8	£28,563	£15.21	£15.70	£16.15	£30,671	£16.80	10.5%

a long way.

"The first offer made in February was for a three-year deal that gave only 0.5 per cent in year one and the 35-hour week would not have been fully introduced until 2008," he said.

35-HOUR WEEK

Initially, rostered employees will continue to work a 36-hour roster with the additional hour being paid as overtime at the basic rate. Non-rostered employees, such as office-based staff, will start working the 35 hour week from August.

From October 1 onwards, and no later than December 31 2006, the 35-hour week will be fully implemented with revised rosters and rest days. This will be subject to local agreement as is always the case with rosters.

Once new rosters are agreed, staff working eight hour turns, for example, will benefit from six additional rest days per year while staff on 12 hour turns will get four rest days.

Network Rail will be taking on an additional 180 staff to

provide cover for these extra rest days and there will be no reduction in annual leave as a result of the additional rest days.

TRAVEL

The offer on travel subsidy remains the same, i.e. 40 per cent from this year and 45 per cent from April 2007. The union will continue to pursue its goal

of 75 per cent travel subsidy and leisure travel for all staff.

PAY

As a result of the deal, hourly basic rates will increase by over 10 per cent between the August 2006 and April 2007.

Examples of what the whole package will mean for a selection of grades are given above. ■

WHEN VISITING LONDON, WHY NOT STAY WITH RMT?

RMT members visiting London can now take advantage of affordable accommodation at the union's Maritime House building, Clapham. Single rooms are available for just £24 per night to members and close family. Couples can have a reduced rate of £36 for two rooms.

Maritime House is a few minutes walk from Clapham Common station for quick access to central London.

To book a room, or for further details, contact Denise Craig at RMT on 020 7529 8840 or email d.craig@rmt.org.uk.



RMT WINS SETTLEMENT FOR 'REDUNDANT' RMT REP

The union has successfully won enhanced redundancy payments for RMT rep Peter Woods after his employer Transport for London claimed his job had been abolished despite advertising for his replacement.

Pete Woods was 'over the moon' when he landed his dream job as a curator at London Transport Museum.

However, following his election as the local union representative, Pete faced a barrage of homophobic abuse, malicious accusations and damage to his property, which his employer did little to investigate or prevent.

Regional organiser Bobby Law and Executive Committee member John Leach successfully defended Pete on no less than five occasions against malicious charges initiated by TfL managers.

Peter's case was amongst a number of issues that triggered two days of strike action by RMT members, closing offices across TfL.

The final straw for Pete came when his desk was broken into where RMT members' case files were stored.

"Management refused to call the police

when the break-in was discovered and they didn't properly investigate the homophobic and fascist graffiti scrawled on my desk and union posters," he said.

Bobby Law said that it was one of the worst cases of anti-trade union and homophobic discrimination he had ever seen yet TfL's employee relations team were not interested.

"TfL's shameful lack of response was all the more surprising as the company is an equality partner for the gay rights group Stonewall," he said.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow represented Pete following his selection for redundancy and secured a settlement without the need to go to tribunal.

"Within a few weeks of telling us that there were no jobs for curators anymore, TfL put out an advert for one," said Pete.

"Being in RMT was like having family around me when I most needed it.

"I had the very best representation all the way through and would advise everyone to join up," he said.

Pete continues to work on behalf of RMT members as a volunteer assistant organiser. ■



'One' forced to pulp adverts

Rail operator One has been forced to pulp adverts after RMT member Ray Knight complained to the Advertising Standards Agency that the company was misleading customers.

One was ordered to remove advertising which claimed it could take passengers 'straight to the heart of the city every 30 minutes' after Ray complained that the assertion was untrue.

He pointed out that, in fact, the service from Cheshunt to Liverpool Street in London often runs at one-hour intervals in the

week and the service from Enfield Town was hourly at weekends.

The company admitted that it had 'made a mistake' and 'forgot' to change the advertising when it cut services last December.

Ray said that the new timetable with gaps of one hour between trains was confusing to passengers.

"The company constantly claims to be getting better but the level of service is often appalling," he said.



HEATHROW EXPRESS WORKER 'UNFAIRLY DISMISSED'

A Heathrow Express worker who was dismissed after suffering bouts of stress-related illness as the result of a 'needle-stick' injury sustained at work has won her claim of unfair dismissal on the grounds of disability.

The Employment Tribunal ruled that RMT activist Sally Jenkins (right) should be re-instated after Heathrow Express failed to consider reasonable adjustments to her duties to help her return to work from illness, in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Tribunal also awarded Sally a total of £14,862 for loss of earnings and injury to her feelings.

Sally suffered panic attacks, anxiety and depression following the May 2001 needle-stick incident and the months of uncertainty waiting for the result of an HIV test.

After her most recent period of sickness leave, Sally's GP and her occupational health doctor recommended that she was fit to return to work.

However, despite a recommendation in September



2005 from the company's own consultant psychiatrist that Sally could be eased back into work, she was dismissed on health grounds last December.

Sally said that the ruling had lifted a massive weight from her and felt relieved and completely vindicated.

"It has been a long haul, but RMT backed my case all the way," she said.

Charlotte Moore, Sally's solicitor at RMT law firm Thompsons, said that it was rare

for an employment tribunal to order reinstatement, even where a finding of unfair dismissal is made.

"This decision sends a very strong message to Heathrow Express, and to all employers, about their duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments to enable workers with disabilities to work," Charlotte Moore said.

"Sally has been through a

long and difficult ordeal, and it is clear that Heathrow Express needs to review its equal opportunities policies," said RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

"It is breathtaking that Heathrow Express treated her so badly when the injury that sparked her problems were sustained at work," he said.

The company is expected to appeal against the decision. ■

TRIBUNAL FINDS MEMBER 'RETIRED' FOR UNION ACTIVITY

A Chubb Security Personnel worker on the Eurostar contract compulsorily retired because of his RMT trade-union activities has won the first stage of his battle to win re-instatement.

An employment tribunal has awarded assistant supervisor Billy Kelly 'interim relief' after hearing that the RMT rep was 'retired' on his 65th birthday despite the company's normal practice of allowing staff to work on until the age of 68.

The tribunal ordered that Billy should be re-instated

pending a full hearing in September.

It agreed that Billy Kelly was forced to retire for no other reason that he was an effective union rep who was instrumental in winning union recognition.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the company argued that retirement at 65 was expressed in Billy's contract of employment, but they never invoked the clause before and even taken on workers over that age.

"When Chubb took over the Eurostar security contract they

told the union that it would never be recognized.

"However, it was largely thanks to Billy that the company has been forced to negotiate with us and that the vast majority of the workforce are members," Bob said.

Even after the Central Arbitration Committee ordered Chubb Security Personnel to recognise RMT, the company refused and it took them six months to talk to the union.

Billy had already suffered victimisation when the company demoted him and cut his pay

after last year's successful pay strike, in which he also played a leading role.

However, their transparent bid to get rid of a trade union activist cut no ice with the tribunal.

Richard Arthur of union solicitors Thompsons said that the company cannot be allowed to get away with victimising trade union representatives.

"RMT has won the first round and we are confident of securing full re-instatement for Mr Kelly at the tribunal in September," he said. ■

RAIL ROLLING-STOCK PROFITEERS FACE INQUIRY



TAKEN FOR A RYDE: Publicly-subsidised train companies that run services on the Isle of Wight have paid out well over £1 million in the last ten years to lease 1938 ex-London Underground trains. Island Line runs between Ryde and Shanklin and pays £140,000 a year to HSBC Rail for the six pre-World War Two trains that don't even have scrap value.

The government has finally taken the first step towards an inquiry into the excessive profits made by the three companies that lease the rolling stock on Britain's railways.

The Department for Transport believes the charges are uncompetitive and has referred the matter to the Office of Rail Regulation after holding talks with the rolling-stock companies (Roscos) since last year.

The firms, Angel Trains – owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland, HSBC Rail – owned by HSBC, and Porterbrook – owned by the Abbey Group, lease trains and carriages to rail operators for about £1 billion a year for a combined profit of over £165 million.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the rolling-stock companies had been making a mint out of leasing public assets back to the

PUTTING THE CASE FOR RAIL

RMT put the environment at the heart of the campaign to protect and expand the railways with an agenda-setting “sustainable case for rail” parliamentary seminar where keynote speakers included Rail Minister, Derek Twigg.

Over 100 participants from a wide range of backgrounds participated including rail workers, members of parliament, trade unions, civil servants, passenger groups, environmental organisations and rail companies.

RMT Parliamentary Convenor John McDonnell MP set the context for the seminar stating that, in advance of next year's rail white paper, it was important to make the environmental case for rail.

TUC Deputy General Secretary Frances O'Grady said she was glad that RMT had brought together a broad-based campaign.

She said transport policy and rail are central to the debate on climate change.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow made the point that RMT

represents bus, road, shipping and freight workers and believes in a fully integrated transport system where groups complement each other rather than compete.

Rail Minister Derek Twigg argued that a busy railway is a sustainable one and the network was very busy last year.

He said the government was committed to long-term planning and areas that were being looked at include the use of different fuels, regenerative braking, lighter trains without compromising safety, hybrid trains, more efficient driving and the case for further electrification.

There were still challenges ahead and he said he was willing to listen to ideas and suggestions.

Stephen Joseph, the Director of Transport 2000, told the seminar oil-based travel was expensive, suffered from supply shocks due to weather and political instability and fluctuating prices.

He said railways need to be at the centre of sustainable land

use patterns.

Kelvin Hopkins MP made the case for dedicated UK freight routes. He said we were at the beginning of a new railway age and needed the capacity to cope with increased numbers of passengers and volumes of freight.

Chief Executive of the Rail Safety and Standards Board Len Porter gave a detailed presentation of the extensive research the RSSB was undertaking to ensure that rail

was a sustainable form of transport.

There was time for debate and discussion and the meeting concluded with a commitment to share information and influence the government and to reconvene in a year's time. ■

A more detailed note of the seminar and supporting paper work can be found by visiting the political section of the RMT website.

IEEP STUDY

The seminar saw the publication of the “sustainable case for rail” a research paper commissioned by RMT and produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research.

The paper argued that fragmentation and a lack of coherent policy-making are preventing Britain's rail network playing what should be a key role in delivering a healthier environment and sustainable development.

The ‘modal share’ of the car is higher in Britain than in any other European country, yet a “far from coherent” policy framework “tends to ignore the potential role that rail could play in the development of more sustainable communities and transport”.

The paper says that the environmental edge held by rail over other transport modes provides an opportunity for the development of a sustainable transport system that is being missed by a lack of joined-up government.

public at exorbitant rates.

"The banks that own our trains have sweated assets paid for by taxpayers, made hundreds of millions of pounds at rates that would make the mafia blush and have helped push rail fares to ludicrous levels.

"The notion that there is any sort of healthy competition or functioning market among the Roscos is absolute nonsense, as is the idea that they have been investing their own money in new rolling stock," he said.

Bob pointed out that if the hundreds of millions the Roscos have taken out of the industry had been invested in building new stock, the thousands of people who had lost their jobs at Eastleigh, Crewe, Washwood Heath, and Derby might still be building and maintaining trains.

There are about 12,500 trains and carriages on lease, with roughly 60 per cent pre-dating the privatisation of British Rail.

Last year's Railways Act was supposed to hand back control of the rail industry to ministers, but the government effectively ducked the opportunity even to regulate the Roscos. ■

HIGH FARES DETER RAIL USE

Findings by Passenger Focus confirm RMT's view that fares are too expensive and act as a disincentive to rail travel.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that fare regulations introduced following privatisation are being eroded, allowing fares to rise above inflation.

He called on the government to institute a review to reduce fare levels, simplify ticketing structures and encourage a shift from private car use to environmentally-sustainable rail use.

"Season ticket prices can now increase by RPI plus one per cent and the restrictions on the use of saver tickets continues to grow, leaving rail users out of pocket and not out of their cars," he said.

A House of Commons Transport Select Committee report on fares released in May also concluded that the present fares system was driven by profit rather than the needs of passengers.

*More information on Passenger Focus research website:
www.passengerfocus.org.uk

Parliamentary column

CAMPAIGNING FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT



One of the most intriguing things to come out of the Tory Party head office recently was their bout of self-loathing over their chaotic privatisation of the railways ten years ago.

New Tory leader David Cameron now maintains that splitting operations from infrastructure was a disastrous mistake.

While this admission is welcome, only the Conservatives could plan to further fragment our railways.

One of the more positive steps this government has taken was to allow the re-integration of railway maintenance back "in house" under Network Rail which has reduced costs and improved punctuality.

The Conservative proposals would once again break up our rail infrastructure and hand it over to private Train Operating Companies. As we saw in the past with Railtrack, these companies would seek to make even more money out of the infrastructure by cutting corners and sub-contracting, a situation that led to disasters like Hatfield.

A better idea would be for Network Rail to take over the running of the train services as a first step towards a publicly-owned and accountable railway.

With railways back in the public sector, independent reports have already estimated that such a move would save the taxpayer a least £500 million a year.

The railways need to be publicly owned which is why RMT's Parliamentary group is lobbying the London mayor to retain the East London Tube line in the public sector.

As a Hackney MP, I welcome the fact that we will finally become part of the London Underground network.

Not least because of the important role that the extension will play in creating a world class transport infrastructure in preparation for the

2012 Olympic Games.

However, if the extension is put into the private sector when it opens in 2010 this will mean that much of the public subsidy and fares will be used pay for shareholder profits which could otherwise be invested in further improvements to London's railway system.

I would also like to remind RMT seafaring members that the campaign to remove section 12 of the Race Relation Act, which allows ship owners to discriminate against foreign ratings, is not over.

We are expecting a new government consultation on this issue and we will be returning to this pernicious 'opt-out' in order to get it abolished once and for all.

Finally, I would like to congratulate RMT and other unions who are working to highlight the complete lack of argument for replacing Britain's nuclear weapons system, Trident. Such expenditure would not only be immoral but a scandalous waste of money that could otherwise be invested in health, education, pensions, transport and manufacturing.

I would remind the government that Britain is a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has made 'an unequivocal undertaking' to accomplish the total elimination of its nuclear arsenal.

At the very least it is important that the government does not to reach a final decision on Trident before issuing a consultative Green Paper on all the options for replacement, including non-replacement and a policy of arms diversification, followed by a White Paper and a vote in Parliament. Let that debate begin.

Diane Abbott

Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington

The Energy Challenge

RMT has submitted evidence to the government's energy review report arguing for a shift from road to rail, the need for renewables as well as clean coal and carbon capture technologies and against more nuclear power.

It began by pointing out that the 'liberalised' energy market could not deliver government targets to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, combat fuel poverty or maintain reliable energy supplies.

Moreover, support and investment should be given as alternatives to a new round of nuclear power stations.

Yet in the review, TUC calls for the creation of an Energy Agency to coordinate and direct energy policy have been ignored.

TRANSPORT

In relation to transport, the energy review has not delivered.

Apart from plans to move towards more environmentally forms of transport and support for biofuels, there is little recognition of the huge environmental benefits of rail over car and aviation.

Given that transport currently accounts for around 25 per cent of all UK carbon emissions, the vast majority of which from road transport, government should encourage modal shift from road to rail for both passengers and freight.

Such a shift will have to be planned and not simply left to the market.

NO NUKES

Controversially, the review supports the building of a new



round of nuclear power stations.

This year's RMT AGM in Dublin opposed to this course of action and unanimously agreed that nuclear power is "dirty, dangerous and expensive".

Greenpeace has argued that a new round of nuclear power plants would add a massive 400 per cent to the UK stockpiles of intensely hot, highly radioactive nuclear fuel and create 100,000 tonnes of depleted uranium waste as part of reactor fuel processing.

The resolution argued that the government should bring forward plans to diversify the nuclear industry so that the highly skilled work-force could transfer their skills to other less environmentally damaging sectors.

In order to meet the UK's energy needs and to deal with climate change the government

should invest in environmentally sustainable and renewable energy sources including wave, wind, tidal and solar power.

Since 1974, successive governments have spent almost £7 billion in research and development funding for nuclear fission compared to only £540 million in renewables.

COAL

The UK has 300 years of un-mined coal available to help meet energy needs so why not commit substantial and sustained investment in clean coal technology?

"Thousands of jobs would be created in the mining industry and a safe, clean resource would be produced to meet both the challenge of climate change and our future energy needs," the AGM resolution argues. ■

GREENING THE WORKPLACE

Over 80 trade unionists, including RMT delegates, took part in the third TUC Greenworks conference recently to discuss how unions could assist in 'greening the workplace'.

Delegates discussed issues including green travel plans, how to tackle energy issues and waste at work and the need for fully accredited workplace environmental reps.

GREEN TRAVEL PLANS

Discussions focused on how unions could reach agreements with employers which encouraged workers to use public transport in their journeys to work rather than use the private car.

Ideas included interest-free loans for train and bus season tickets, encouraging local authorities to provide accessible and reasonably-priced bus services and ensuring that companies used hybrid fuel vehicles in company fleets. However, reps had some concerns about employers charging for car parking spaces and discriminating against poorly paid staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPS

Many companies waste energy and resources through lack of effective planning and by poor environmental practice.

Environmental reps should have the power to call environmental audits and hold the employer to account for the release of harmful greenhouse gases.

RMT and the TUC have been pushing for environmental reps to be accorded the same legal rights as industrial, health and safety and learner reps.

In the next few months the TUC will be organising Greenworkplaces courses which will focus on TU reps can contribute to promoting environmental sustainability in the workplace.

For more details on this course contact RMT education officer Ray Spry-Shute on 020 7529 8820 or e-mail on R.Spry-Shute@rmt.org.uk

THE TROUBLE WITH PASSENGER RAIL FRANCHISES

RMT recently gave evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee inquiry into 'Passenger Rail Franchising'

The current franchising regime is fragmented, financially opaque, poor value for money and provides the train operators with no incentive to invest in station upgrades, improvements and enhancements, RMT told the Transport Committee inquiry.

The current arrangements have failed the travelling public and passenger franchises should be returned to the public sector as they expire.

In the meantime, there should be greater transparency in the franchising process and Invitation to Tender documents should be made publicly available.

Moreover, the recent 'cap-and-collar' franchise awards continue to expose the public purse to inappropriate levels of risk. Under this strategy up to 80 per cent of any large shortfall – or excess profits – will be borne by government not the private sector. In relation to Greater Western, the formula is that the operator (First) takes the whole risk of the first two per cent shortfall, then half the risk of the next four per cent, but only 20 per cent of the rest.

The policy of indemnifying train operators from losses incurred as a result of industrial action should also be scrapped.

To date over £23 million has been spent by government in

compensation payments. Such financial incentive will only encourage franchise holders to dig in their heels in the hope that they will be indemnified should industrial action result and does not encourage good industrial relations.

RMT supports vertical integration of the rail network in the public sector. It is opposed to the private sector taking over Network Rail's safety and operational powers over the rail infrastructure.

Train operators would simply 'sweat the assets' for profit, particularly when franchises were coming to end and the existing operators were not on the short-list for the replacement franchise.

The union does not want to a repeat of the catastrophic degradation of the rail infrastructure which occurred when Railtrack systematically underinvested in the industry in order to maximise shareholder profits.

POOR VALUE

A series of reports have supported RMT's view that the current franchising arrangements are fragmented, heavily subsidised by the public purse, poor value for money, with fare and ticketing structures that are too expensive and complex.

A September 2005, Catalyst

paper, *The Performance of the Privatised Train Operators* also pointed out that initial government estimates of the level of public subsidies required to fund the private franchisees had proved to be "hopelessly optimistic".

"These companies (TOCs) are totally dependent on subsidy for their financial survival. They could not cover their operating costs, let alone provide a return to the providers of finance, without generous public subsidies," it concluded.

A May 2006 Transport Select Committee report: How fair are the fares? On train fares and ticketing policy confirmed the RMT's longstanding view that,

10 years after the break-up of passenger services, the franchises operate a ticketing regime that has been an "abject failure" which is "not fit for purpose".

The time and energy expended drawing up bids to retain franchises is also a distraction from the task of providing a good service to the travelling public. This process has proved expensive as over £60 million has been spent on franchising and re-franchising passenger services.

Ultimately, the current franchising arrangements have failed to provide value for money for the tax-payer or the fare-payer. ■



THE FUTURE FOR BUSES

RMT recently told the House of Commons Transport Select Committee that bus deregulation had failed on every count, particularly in meeting passenger needs

Excluding London, the bus industry is in decline with the number of bus passengers in England declining by 15.7 per cent over the last ten years.

If private bus operators wanted to meet the needs of the public the number of passenger journeys would be expected to increase.

A belief that competition can improve bus services has proved false. When a private operator enters into transport provision, the company is responsible to its shareholders. Private contractors are not accountable to the public and yet they receive subsidies from the taxpayer.

The experience in London, where passenger journeys rose by 5.3 per cent in 2004/5, shows what can be achieved when a public authority which has the powers of regulation, marries investment with a reasonable fare structure.

Transport for London (TfL) has shown that only a public body, unencumbered by shareholders, would also be prepared to make the necessary investment to encourage people to get out of their cars.

TfL committed substantial money to fund extra buses, in advance of the extra people using them. It is inconceivable that a private operator would take a similar decision.

Outside of London, authorities have no such powers and struggle to contend with transport conglomerates operating in a 'free-market' bus environment.

Buses aid social-inclusion when lower income groups don't have access to cars. However, those reliant on buses have faced above-inflation fare increases since deregulation in 1986. Bus regulation would allow local authorities to help social inclusion by making fares more attractive.

BIG PROFITS AND LOW PAY

Employment in the bus industry under deregulation is characterised by poor wages and conditions of service. RMT is

still campaigning for an end to 12? hour shifts, a 37-hour week, paid meal breaks and a decent sick pay scheme. Bus drivers' average hourly earnings of £7.71 are 57 per cent below the hourly All Occupations average earnings of £12.12.

Despite dramatically increased fuel costs, the major transport conglomerates secured huge profits in the last year including £108.6 million at First Group UK bus division, £52.4 million at Go-Ahead UK bus division (12.7 per cent profit margin), £30 million at Arriva UK bus division.

Stagecoach's UK bus division delivered an operating profit of £41 million in just six months last year. As on the railway, public control would allow money to be reinvested to improve services.

RMT concluded that, as a first step, local authorities should manage services and fare levels. Ultimately, only the regulatory model similar to London, supported by sustained investment, can ensure that the bus industry is fully integrated and run in the public interest.

STAGECOACH PENSION CUTS BLOCKED

RMT has reversed plans by bus company Stagecoach to make deep benefit cuts to the final salary pension scheme.

The union has also negotiated to keep the fund open to existing members and to current employees upon completion of the three-year waiting period.

This will mean over 5,000 employees will be eligible to join the scheme.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash welcomed the deal as a big step forward.

"The initial plans to close the scheme were simply unacceptable. We have been able to protect existing benefits for current fund members and also those waiting to join," he said.

Under the deal, the three levels of pension provision, known as 'benefit routes' have been preserved but with increased member contributions of three per cent, to nine per cent, 12 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. Employer contributions will be increased to 12.80 per cent.

Current employees at March 31 2006 will be permitted to join route one, or a new route with the current contribution rate of 6.5 per cent, when the three-year period has expired. Employees commencing after that date can join a stakeholder scheme and after three years they will be eligible to join the Stagecoach defined contribution scheme. Employer contributions will match employee contributions up to 5.45 per cent, subject to an overall employer cost, including death in service pay, of 10.3 per cent.

© John Harris/reportdigital



SHIPPING

WHERE HAVE ALL THE RATINGS GONE?

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd outlines the jobs crisis in the shipping industry

There is no doubt that the shipping industry is in crisis. On the one hand, we can't get jobs for our members, on the other we can get members for the jobs.

Over the last six months or so I have been inundated by requests from employers to supply ratings. Even the agencies such as Sealife and more prominently Clyde Marine are frequently requesting our assistance to find suitable ratings for employment.

We circulate these requests to all shipping Branch Secretaries and all Regional Offices with little or no response.

One has to be cynical and ask the question is there a huge shortage of ratings, or is it a deliberate attempt to further encourage the demise of the British seafarer. Don't tell me that in the last three years those 3000 seafarers made redundant in various companies have suddenly disappeared into thin air, I think not!

The real danger we face is that if our seafarers don't come forward for these jobs, we are giving the employers carte blanche to employ other EU nationals.

If there is a genuine shortage it further

underlines our claim that not enough training and recruitment is taking place. We cannot stress any stronger our concerns to the shipping minister, Steven Ladyman.

General Secretary Bob Crow and myself take every opportunity to remind him that its time for action not words. We produced our views in a submission to the government in October last year and it looks like it will be October this year until we get the findings published. In the meantime the industry continues to thrive financially but ratings jobs are beginning to disappear.

If you are a seafarer looking for work, please contact Clyde Marine direct and you will be provided with the details of employment opportunities.



Foreland Shipping (Guernsey) Limited

Following the introduction of Time On / Time Off, Foreland Shipping (Guernsey) Limited are able to offer employment opportunities in the following ranks/grades.

SG1A / Motorman / 2ndCk/Stwd

Competitive consolidated salaries and other Company benefits are offered.

Employment is on vessels operating the UK MOD Strategic Sealift Service and therefore permanent employment is conditional on seafarers obtaining and maintaining Sponsored Reservist status, certain benefits are paid for this requirement.

Interested applicants must have sailed in the substantive rank shown above and superior Certificates of Competency together with experience on Ro-Ro vessels will be a distinct advantage.

For security reasons applicants must be either British or Commonwealth Citizen's permanently resident in the UK.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact our *Agents and Crew Managers*, forwarding full CV by post or email to:

Bibby International Services (I.O.M.) Limited

Shearwater House, Nunnery Mills
Old Castletown Road, Douglas
Isle of Man
IM2 1QA
(ref: FSL/06)

Email: enquiries@bisiom.com
Web site: www.bisiom.com

ACTION ON RACE RELATIONS ACT AND THE TONNAGE TAX

RMT's Parliamentary Group has tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) incorporating both the Race Relations Act and the National Minimum Wage and attracted 62 signatures.

EDM 2191, proposed by Gywn Prosser MP seeks to highlight the continued exemption for seafarers rates of pay contained in the 1976 Race Relations Act and the fact that the National Minimum Wage is only applied in UK internal waters and not UK territorial waters.

Early Day Motion 200 on the tonnage tax, which was tabled last year, is also still current and has now received 92 signatures.

Shipping Minister David Ladyman has also agreed to participate in a Parliamentary Group Maritime Seminar on addressing low pay on UK ships to be organised at the start of the autumn Parliamentary session.

RMT proposed to the previous Shipping Minister that as a way of breaking the deadlock on this matter a tonnage tax training and employment link could be concluded just for the domestic sector. The union has written again setting out this proposal which would involve companies entering the tonnage tax scheme within the domestic sectors committing to at least retain the existing number of UK seafaring ratings on the same number of ships for the duration of their time period in the scheme.

For those companies that do not employ UK seafaring ratings, they would commit to a minimum training and employment as discussed within the employment sub-group.

CHALLENGING FOR LABOUR

John McDonnell MP explains why he is standing for the leadership of the Labour Party

It is becoming increasingly apparent that Tony Blair will announce his resignation as Leader of the Labour Party over the next 12-18 months.

Some have argued that instead of an open democratic election for the leader of the party, there should be a smooth transition or virtual coronation of his successor.

This would deny party members the opportunity of openly debating the issues facing our party and the future direction of the country.

An election for the Leader of the party will allow for a democratic debate on the future of Labour.

Therefore, following increasing demands from various sections of the movement, I have decided to declare myself as a candidate for the leadership of the Labour Party as soon as the present incumbent retires.

To be clear, this is not a so-called "stalking horse" candidature but a serious challenge for the leadership of the party when a vacancy occurs.

Democracy

I am standing to ensure that thousands of Labour Party members and supporters have the chance to participate in deciding

not only who should be the next leader of our party but more importantly what policies the party should be pursuing.

There are many that feel the party has lost its way. Many of the policies being pursued in Government have broken up the broad coalition of support Labour has relied upon throughout its history to bring it to power.

New Labour has systematically alienated section after section of our supporters – teachers, health workers, students, pensioners, public service workers, trade unionists and people committed to the environment, civil liberties and peace. Spin and allegations of sleaze are causing decent people to lose trust in our party.

This is reflected in lost votes, lost elections, lost members and a Labour Prime Minister having to rely upon Conservative votes in Parliament to force through legislation.

There are growing calls from across the party for change. We need to rebuild a progressive consensus, inspiring and giving people hope that another world is possible. We need those who have turned away from Labour to come back home.

For the first time in decades people no longer feel they have a political voice. This



campaign is a challenge to the present political consensus.

From September, this campaign will be travelling the country, convening meetings face to face with party members, supporters and the general public to discuss the issues facing us. We will be urging those thousands of Labour Party members who have left the party to rejoin and those who are no longer active supporters to re-engage.

A campaign web-site has also been launched and we will use every possible means of communication and new technology to stimulate this debate and get our message across.

The campaign will be waged in an open, comradely and friendly manner based upon a debate on the policies not personalities.

E-Mail: info@john4leader.org.uk

Web Site and Blog: www.john4leader.org.uk

RMT renews call for end to Tube privatisation 'scam'

RMT has called for an end to the 'public-private partnership' that is failing to deliver promised improvements to the capital's Tube network.

The union also demanded that Transport for London drop its 'madcap' plan to privatise the extended East London Line when it re-opens in 2009.

The call came after as London Underground's third report on the PPP says the private sector has "unacceptably failed" to deliver on key targets.

It said that Tubelines and Metronet, which between them sucked £84 million out of the industry in profits last year, "continue to disappoint in many aspects".

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said the problem wasn't about companies needing to

try harder, but about the need to end an expensive scam that has lined the privateers' pockets with £2 million of public money every week.

"The PPP doles out guaranteed, risk-free profits to the lucky contractors, and Londoners and Tube workers are suffering as a result.

"Taxpayers' and Tube users' money that should be invested in improvements is being taken out at the rate of £100 million a year, and it has to stop.

He said that report after report had shown that privatisation had failed by every measure.

"It is unbelievable that TfL should even consider throwing the East London Line to the wolves as well," Bob Crow said.

Get your MP to sign Early Day Motion 2398 on the East London Line

That this House notes that London Underground's East London line is due to close in December 2007 in order that work on the phase 1 extension project can be completed by 2010; welcomes the important role that the extension will play in creating a world class transport infrastructure in preparation for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games; further notes that the East London line is currently operated by London Underground; welcomes the fact that, once the line is re-opened, there is the option for the East London line to continue to be operated by the London Underground; and calls for East London line passenger services to remain in the public sector.

AGM REPORT

DUBLIN 2006

RMT News reports on another successful AGM

DEFENDING PENSIONS

HALT CUTS AND LINE CLOSURES

KEEP EAST LONDON LINE PUBLIC

GIVE US A BREAK

TRANSPORT WORKERS AT RISK

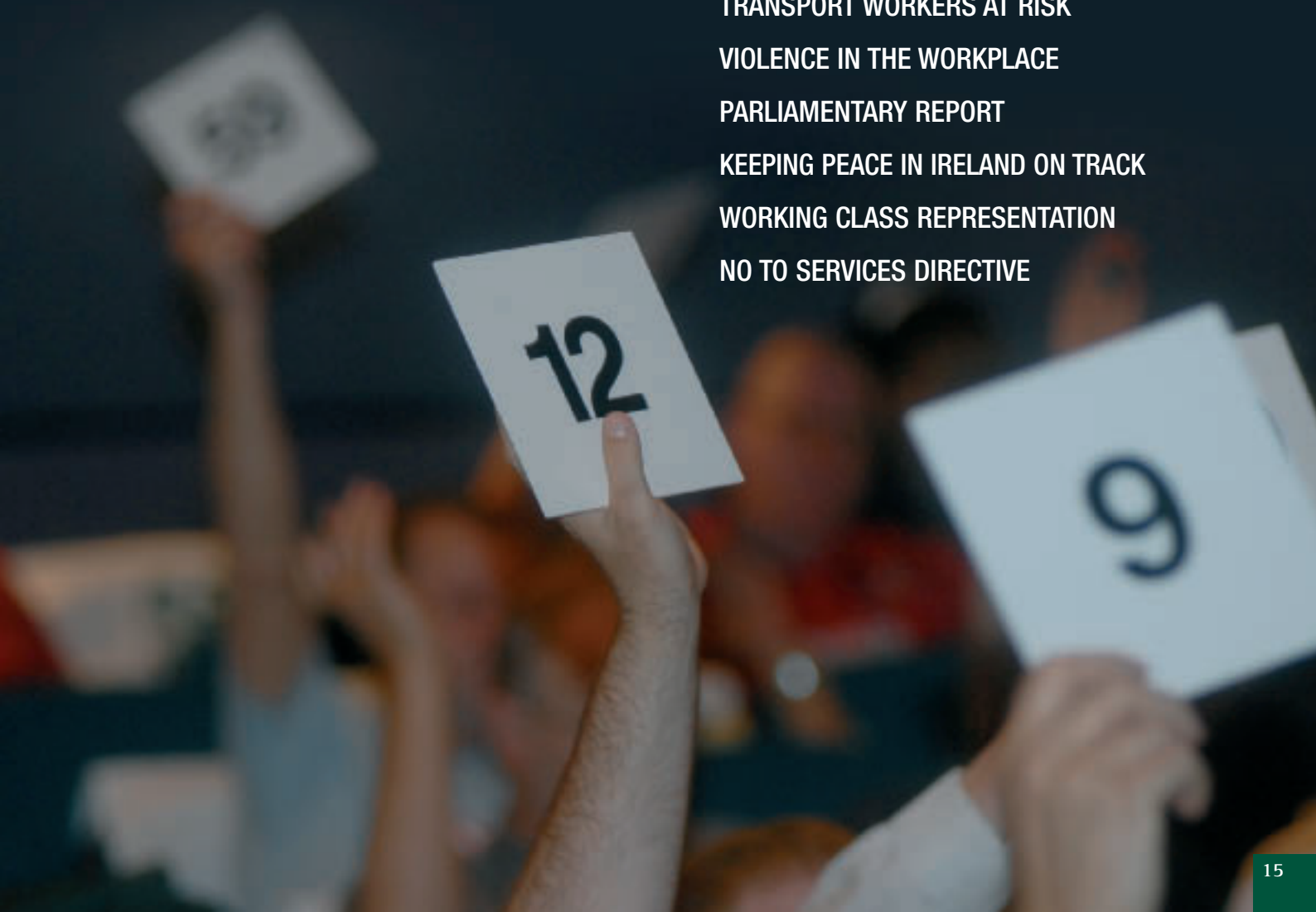
VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT

KEEPING PEACE IN IRELAND ON TRACK

WORKING CLASS REPRESENTATION

NO TO SERVICES DIRECTIVE



AGM 2006

DEFENDING PENSIONS

DEFENDING FINAL SALARY PENSIONS

AGM unanimously agreed to fight employers' attacks on final salary pension schemes across the transport industry.

Newcastle Rail and Catering delegate Mick Thompson

insisted that "we must remain resilient in our pensions campaign as this will ensure that unscrupulous employers are unable to close and weaken this hard fought for condition."

Manchester South delegate Michelle Rogers urged the AGM to ensure that "no one should be sold down the river due to their pensions – due to employers taking monies that wasn't theirs.

"And let's make sure that the people who deserve this money get it back and they get it back in the right way, and that's through their pension," said Michelle.

"Let's not have anyone in the rail industry, bus industry, road transport or any other industry suffering and worrying about how they're going to deal with

old age."

Bassetlaw delegate David

Gott rejected employers' claims that they could not afford final salary schemes because "they've got big current problems."

"They've got very big current problems mainly due to five, ten years ago employers having pension holiday after pension holiday when we had big surpluses," he said.

David urged the union to "campaign along every avenue we can" to make it illegal for companies to take pension holidays.

DEFENDING BUS PENSIONS

Delegates unanimously agreed that RMT has to make it clear to all bus companies that it will strike in defence of its members' pension rights.

Poole and District delegate

Pete Gale noted that the subject of pensions had transformed in the last year from one that caused "eyes to glaze over" to "big news."

Pete said: "It's the big thing, it's the club that employers are

beating the workers with at the moment."

He warned that the issue did not just affect bus workers but was a major threat across the transport industry – but bus privateers such as Stagecoach, First Bus and Go Ahead were all trying to slash benefits.

East Midlands Bus delegate Graham Geliher said that pensions were "deferred wages" and not a gift.

"We contribute towards pensions and lower wages are tolerated in order to get a decent pension.

"Young and old need to fight to retain our pensions," he said.

South Devon Bus delegate Paul Rossiter blamed the Blair government for the crisis, noting that "the writing was on the wall" when Chancellor Gordon Brown introduced "stakeholder pensions" and reduced the need for bosses to offer an adequate scheme.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash agreed that pensions were "a big issue across the country".

He hailed the union's good track record in defending pension rights, but agreed with Pete that "if we don't get members' support we can't defend pensions."

RESTORE THE PENSIONS LINK

AGM backed the TUC campaign for the immediate restoration of the link between the state pension and average earnings and called for the cost of higher pensions to be met by a tax on excessive profits and high earners.

LUL Signal Electrical and Track delegate Paul O'Brien rejected the big business claim that the only way out of the "pensions crisis" was for people to work longer, or for people to make individual arrangements.

Paul said that the root of the crisis lay with the bosses, who neglected to pay into schemes when the stock market was booming – only to "cry poverty" when the market fell.

"They had the option but they chose not to, now they want us to pay for it," he said.

Graham Geliher



Peter Gale



AGM 2006

HALT CUTS AND LINE CLOSURES

Delegates attacked the ongoing programme of line cuts and closures taking place at the behest of the government.

AGM unanimously condemned the 2005 Railways Act, which seeks to cut the level of government subsidy by replacing rail services with bus services. Under the Act, the retention of existing services is subject to the same skewed "cost-benefit analysis" as new builds.

Manchester Victoria delegate Alex Holden also noted that its criteria for "minor changes" includes station closures and the axing of signaling equipment.

"The cuts already happening – in South West England, services in the branch lines of Devon and Cornwall were slashed," he warned.

"Cuts do not encourage service use – quite the contrary."

Jubilee South and East London Line delegate Bob Law pointed out that the more rail services that get cut, the more incentive there is for people to

drive – increasing pollution levels and road deaths.

"Even under privatisation, the railway is safer than car travel, there are some 3,000 deaths a year on the roads. That is the cost of not having a proper transport system."

Cinque Ports delegate Mike Sargent recalled last year's Rail Against Privatisation march, in which he participated.

"One of the main things people asked us about was line closures," he said.

Preston No. 1 delegate Trevor Jordan noted that the notorious Beeching cuts of 1963 were preceded by the decimation of Ireland's rail services.

Trevor showed himself to be a mine of knowledge on railway history, detailing many line closures that have occurred since the 1960s.

He warned that England faced the prospect of another swathe of cuts and closures, adding that Labour governments had a worse record for closures than the Tories.

Trevor also warned against

government support for "micro-franchises", run by rail buffs and enthusiasts, stressing: "It is no substitute for fully integrated, nationalised British railway".

He warned that there is "a Beeching" every few years nowadays, with services axed and "closures by stealth" – the steady running down of lines until they can be painted as "unviable".

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski noted that rail subsidy is five times what it was before privatisation – some £5 billion a year.

"It is no secret that the Treasury wants to get rid of £1 billion of that subsidy as soon as possible," he said.

Pat said that the union had made some progress in preventing cuts over the past year – as RMT activists had united with local people to oppose closures – but agreed that vigilance was necessary and said that the fight goes on.

Bristol Rail delegate Robin White condemned former Transport Secretary Alistair



Pat Sikorski



Robin White



Mike Sargent

Darling for complaining that many rural services were merely "carting around fresh air".

He asked "whose fault is it?" that rural services were underused, arguing that, rather than disparaging the rail network, the government should be encouraging rail use, through subsidised fares and better services.

General secretary Bob Crow added that privatisation must be brought to an end and replaced with "real public control" – with rail workers having a real say in the running of a publicly-owned and publicly-accountable network

FORMER RMT STAFF MEMBER ADDRESSES CONFERENCE

Owen Doogan of the Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Union is no stranger to RMT. In fact, he worked at Unity House in the industrial relations department for six years from 1984 to 1990.

His experiences as an active RMT member stood him in good stead when he relocated to Queensland, Australia and went to work for the RTBU.

Owen joined the union at a difficult time when it was losing members due to restructuring of the transport sector in Australia, including privatisation, contracting out and the

casualisation of labour.

"We experienced a 20 per cent drop in membership and we had to go out and become an organising union.

"Now our membership has stabilised and we have created a new pro-active and positive outlook," he said.

The sheer size of his beat, including a 3,000 mile trip to service one particular branch, is staggering.

His members are involved mainly in freight, moving huge amounts of coal and other minerals

extracted from the mines that dominate the region as well as various commuter services.

He says that the experience gained with RMT had proved invaluable and it was always a pleasure to visit.

"The way RMT has adapted itself to the new, more hostile environment is very similar to our own experiences," he says.

New draconian anti-union laws brought in by the Conservative government has also made it difficult for the Australian trade union movement.



Owen says that the response of the Australian Council of Trade Unions had been to go out and fight.

"Instead of hiding behind illusions of 'social partnership' with bosses, the ACTU has launched a high-profile campaign to mobilise the membership to fight for trade union" he said.

AGM 2006

KEEP EAST LONDON LINE PUBLIC

AGM threatened strike action across the entire network unless Transport for London (TfL) shelves plans to privatise the East London Line.

Unanimously backing an emergency resolution, delegates condemned the scheme, which would see the line handed over to privateers when the line re-opens in 2010 after extension work is completed.

When the line is closed for extension on December 2007, staff are to be forcibly transferred to other depots, with no say in where they are to go.

Jubilee South and East London Line delegate Bob Law warned: "Privatisation is dangerous - we've all seen the

disasters on the mainline railway and more recently the problems caused by PPP on the Tube".

He questioned why London Mayor Ken Livingstone was backing the privatisation plans when he had been such a vociferous opponent of PPP during his campaign for mayor - but he also blamed the privatisation-obsessed new Labour leadership.

Bob said that a campaign was already underway, involving local councillors and community groups - plus the RMT parliamentary group - but warned that strike action might become necessary.

Such action would have to

involve the entire network, he said, warning that "if we go down then the next attack will be on your line".

Plymouth No 1 delegate Nick Quirk urged the union to write to every branch secretary in Britain and mobilise them for a massive national campaign.

He said that such a campaign should include a demonstration outside London's City Hall, pledging: "We'll stay there all day if we have to."

General secretary Bob Crow promised a national campaign to save the line from the privateers, on the grounds of safety and affordability.

"We don't want this cancer spreading on the London Underground," he said.



Nick Quirk

Give us a break

Swansea No. 1 delegate Mandy Evans said that catering staff on trains find themselves working up to 11 hours with no opportunity for a break - although legally they are entitled to a 20 minute break.

"There's a health issue here, and it is taking away our human rights," she said, pointing out that employers are ignoring the provisions of the Working Time Directive.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT needed to fight this issue on two fronts - firstly by fighting industrially to prevent the problem arising and secondly by making challenges under working time legislation.

Mick argued that the first way was the most effective, as the EU directive allowed for a whole range of exemptions.



Mandy Evans

YOUNG WINNER

General Secretary Bob Crow presented LUL customer services agent Priscilla Dada with this year's John Cogger award for young members.

Priscilla is already a learning rep and a member of the Young Members Advisory Committee. She is also a trustee of the

Jubilee South and East London branch and attended this year's Young Members' Conference.

In her spare time she helps with the running of the local youth football team.

Bob presented her with the award in the form of a clock, as well as a cheque.

"There's no doubt that the caliber of candidates we had was excellent.

"We have future generations who are going to take this union forward," he said.

Priscilla thanked the union and said how proud she was to win the award.



TRAVEL FACILITIES FOR ALL

AGM backed calls for clerical and supervisory staff to receive the same "safeguarded" travel facilities as other staff.

Manchester South delegate Michelle Rogers said: "When the railways were government-run we all had free travel - since privatisation we now only get travel with our specific companies.

"It's more than poor - it's diabolical," she said, adding that even this was denied many grades.

AGM 2006

Like father, like son

AGM witnessed a new first this year as father and son team Pete and Steven Skelly both attended as delegates.

Steven, age 29, works as a guard and is a member of Cardiff Rail branch while his dad Pete of Bridgend branch is a full-timer convenor at Network Rail.

Pete, a veteran of six AGMs, was even more shocked when he discovered that Steve topped the

poll in the election for delegates in his region to go to Dublin.

He said he was "very proud and happy" to see his son addressing conference, seconding a motion for a campaign to fight rail cuts and on defending the rights of Iranian trade unionists.

Steven took the whole experience in his stride after six years in the union and a mother who is also involved in the PCS civil service union.



TRANSPORT WORKERS AT RISK

AGM condemned the counter-productive "war on terror" and accused it of placing transport workers at risk.

On the anniversary of the July 7 bombings, delegates warned that the Iraq war and threats against other countries had greatly increased the risk of another terrorist atrocity on the network.

Bakerloo Line delegate Brian Munro attacked government attempts to interfere with the safe operation of the Tube during the second wave of attacks on July 21.

Brian noted that the entire Tube network was evacuated on July 7, but two weeks later a "secret mob" – the government security committee COBRA – overruled London

Underground and insisted

that only three lines needed to be closed.

"They seized operational control from London Underground to create the impression that everything was normal," said Mr Munro.

"It is a disgraceful way to treat both the Tube workers and the people of London".

Hammersmith and City delegate Josie Toussaint-Pinnock observed that many trains still did not have radios – leaving them dangerously incommunicado in an emergency.

General secretary Bob Crow warned: "Until this country stops going around and bombing other countries – unleashing our own terrorist attacks on them – we will face more terrorism."

NORWEGIAN FIGHT FOR DIGNITY

OIL union Norway NOPEF president Leif Sande told delegates how his members enjoy some of the best conditions in the sector across the world – but are being forced to take strike action to defend those conditions in the face of 'globalisation'.

"We are in the middle of a strike right now to defend

conditions won over a long period," he said.

He praised the Venezuelan and Bolivian governments for resisting the privateers by refusing to let them operate unless they pay proper taxes in those countries and urged unions everywhere to fight for their country to adopt the same policies.

Violence in the workplace

Swansea No. 1 delegate Mandy Evans led calls for more protection for workers after warning that "in recent years the overall number of reported incidents of violence towards staff within the transport industry has steadily been on the increase."

She noted that employers had a legal duty to protect their staff, but were falling down on this – with workers facing verbal and even physical abuse

almost every day of the week **North Clyde delegate Janet Cassidy** complained that staff who tried to defend themselves against attacks often found themselves facing disciplinary action or even assault charges – "the victim becomes the perpetrator."

Janet also warned that the increasing tendency to centralise the British Transport Police was leaving dangerous gaps in police cover.



AGM 2006

BOB DOYLE – ANTI-FASCIST FIGHTER

RMT delegates honoured Bob Doyle - the last surviving Irish member of the International Brigades which fought in defence of Spanish democracy in 1936- and pledged to continue the fight against fascism.

Mr Doyle was born in 1916 and grew up in conditions of great poverty. Sporting his International Brigade beret, he told conference how he had become politicised as a merchant seaman and felt compelled to travel to Spain to fight the fascist armies of General Franco.

He thanked RMT for its hospitality and for its ongoing progressive campaigns.



Replying, general secretary Bob Crow saluted Mr Doyle, noting that the National Union of Railwaymen and National Union of Seamen had sent over 130 members to fight in the International Brigades.

"These people gave up everything - including their lives - for democracy," he said.

REMEMBERING THE 1966 SEAMEN'S STRIKE

Delegates heard an address from veteran communist Gordon Norris, who told spoke movingly about the 1966 seamen's strike for a 40-hour week.

Gordon revealed how the "reactionary" leadership of the National Union of Seamen had agreed to a 56 hour week - despite huge opposition from seafarers.

Mr Norris was expelled from the NUS for campaigning against the move, but readmitted in time to become one of the "politically-motivated men" named by the then prime minister Harold Wilson as the source of the 1966 dispute.

After six weeks of action, which saw over 28,000 seamen take action and over 900 ships tied up, the men returned to work.

"However, there were no

scabs and it was the first national seamen's strike which changed the union for the better," he said.

After the strike undemocratic practices, such as multiple votes for longer serving members, were abolished.

Mr Norris had advice for today's trade unionists: "Without struggle there is no progress, nothing is given to you, you have to fight for it".

Gordon invited delegates to find out more about the dispute by looking up the parliamentary debate in Hansard for June 28, 1966.

"There you will find illuminating debates which tell the story of the 1966 seamen's strike," he said.

He won a standing ovation and was presented with a commemorative badge to mark the 40th anniversary of the strike.

Parliamentary report

RMT Parliamentary Group chairman John McDonnell gave his report to the AGM along with a warning that new Labour is giving the Tories an open goal at the next general election.

He said that he was proud to represent the union's "voice in parliament", but warned that fresh battles lay ahead - such as the plot to privatise the East London Line.

John went on to warn that new Labour is leading the party to disaster.

"They talk of a smooth transition from Blair to Brown - but the danger is that we will see a smooth transition from Blair to Brown to Cameron," he said.

John revealed worrying data gathered by pollsters MORI. Its analysis of the May

local election results found that after losing support, Labour's "bounce back" in subsequent general elections has decreased every time since 1997.

The latest indications are that the next general election will see "either a hung parliament or Labour out of office," he warned, adding that MORI had found deep anger and dissatisfaction over the NHS, schools and levels of basic trust in the government's honesty.

The public now trust the Tories over Labour to protect the NHS and the education system, found MORI - a situation which Mr McDonnell called "unbelievable."

AGM ON THE WEB



RMT broke new technological ground at this year's AGM by broadcasting the conference live on the Internet.

Proceedings have since been archived and can be viewed at www.rmt.org.uk and logging on to the members area.

Once logged on, simply choose Conference Webcasts from the options in the members menu to begin.

The initiative forms part of RMT's commitment to making internal union democracy and decision-making more accessible to the members.



AGM 2006

KEEPING PEACE IN IRELAND ON TRACK

Sinn Fein leader and MP Gerry Adams invited RMT to join a new British campaign to win support for a united Ireland in an historic address to the AGM.

Mr Adams thanked the union for its long tradition of support for the cause for Irish unity, recalling that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants first organised in Ireland in 1885 when the country was still ravaged by the effects of "The Great Hunger" and British imperialism.

Later, in 1953, RMT recognised the right of Irish workers to organise themselves and withdrew from Ireland, but continued to offer solidarity with the civil rights movements.

"Since then RMT has been foremost in pressing for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. That is why I am here, to thank you," he said.

Mr Adams offered conference a "challenge" - to help build support for a united Ireland across Britain.

"This is something that republicans have overlooked until now," he admitted, but stressed that trying to influence British public opinion would place pressure on the British government to do the right thing.

He argued that the campaign will succeed eventually, but stressed: "It will succeed more quickly and with less trauma for those who fear change if we all get involved".



WORKING CLASS REPRESENTATION



RESISTING BRUSSELS NEO-LIBERAL AGENDA

RMT delegates unanimously condemned infamous EU "liberalisation" directives which force EU member states to hand over vital public services, such as railways, to privateers.

Bristol delegate Robin White warned that the proposed services directive was designed to hand pension provision, healthcare and other services over to the private sector.

He said that it was attempting to give bosses the ability to move production where it was cheapest regardless of the consequences for workers.

He warned that it was recipe for "rampant privatisation and social dumping" across the continent.

Bob Law said that the failed EU constitution had sought to undermine democracy and turn

Europe into a "fat cats' playground".

He welcomed the French and Dutch people's rejection of the neo-liberal charter - but warned that the EU was reintroducing many parts of it by other means.

General secretary Bob Crow recalled the myths which surrounded the introduction of the EU 'single market' in 1992.

"We were told that the single market would solve all our problems - we'd get better pay like the Germans and better pensions like the French," he said.

"The reality is that it meant the wholesale sell-off of our public services.

"Our railways were first to be sold off - we were an experiment for the rest of Europe," he said.

Delegates voted to continue a flexible policy of giving support to political organisations that reflect the aims of the union and to hold further conferences to address the crisis in working class representation.

Delegates welcomed the RMT conference in January, which discussed the crisis and backed plans for further national conferences and meetings via regional councils and branches.

They also backed calls to develop a new national shop stewards' movement to bring the trade union rank and file into campaigning around various issues.

Bakerloo Line delegate Brian Munro launched an attack on new Labour's support for big business, privatisation and war.

"We are not calling for a new party right away, we are just saying that we deserve better than new Labour," he said.

However, EPS delegate Mick

Lynch warned against falling into the "trap" of tying the union to yet another new socialist party, noting that there was already a plethora of such organisations that "pointlessly contests elections".

"I carry the current RMT policy into the voting booth and vote for the candidate that is closest to this union's policy," he said.

Dorset Rail delegate Peter Brown said that his branch was affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee which was fighting inside the Labour Party for socialist policies and a change of direction.

General secretary Bob Crow insisted that the resolution merely restated current RMT policy - support for any candidate that backs the union's aims.

"The present policy allows to give support to the LRC and other organisations that support us," he said. ■

Your Union

This month RMT News looks at the role of Industrial Relations department and the RMT helpline

Any member that has ever used the union's freephone helpline will have spoken to a member of Industrial Relations department based at Unity House in London.

'IR', as it is commonly known, represents the hub of the union, dealing with issues that effect members on a day-to-day basis.

This frontline department will deal with anything to do with a member's terms and conditions and will give advice on such a multitude of issues that is impossible to list here.

Some of the issues the department can assist with includes rosters, rates of pay, leave, disciplinary matters, the difficulties around PT&R (Promotion, Transfer and Redundancies), severance and ill-health severance (an area management are using more and more to get rid of staff).

In short, anything that is work-related this department will deal with.

It also co-ordinates all pay claims and conducts and counts all referendums. It conducts all industrial action ballots up to the despatch and counting of ballot papers, which is undertaken by an independent scrutineer, the Electoral Reform Society (ERS).

HELPLINE

The RMT helpline is entirely staffed by the Industrial Relations department and is open 08.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday and 09.30 to 16.00 on a Saturday.

A majority of the questions to the helpline are on work matters and are dealt with by the industrial relations officer who answers the helpline phone.

However, where necessary they will pass a member on to the relevant department to deal with questions relating to membership contributions, financial matters, etc.

The staff profiles will help members put names to faces and give you an idea of who you are speaking to when you contact the helpline.

This is for guidance only as any member of the Industrial Relations Department is more than willing to assist any member irrespective of their grade or company.

THE STAFF



Kevin Carey
Head of Industrial Relations

Kevin is the manager of the department and the helpline. He has worked for RMT for nearly 34 years and has been with the union throughout all the upheavals the transport sector has seen including privatisation and re-structuring.

Having worked at the union for such a long period of time, he can draw on a wealth of experience to assist members and colleagues in his department with strategies and arguments.



Dave Ling
Deputy Head of Industrial Relations

Dave also oversees the department and having worked for RMT for over 25 years has also built up a wealth of knowledge in relations to members' terms and conditions. At present Dave's main area of expertise is Network Rail Operations (Signallers).



Chris Philips
Industrial Relations Officer

Chris's main area is Network Rail Engineering and Infrastructure matters and all other Engineering, Infrastructure, S&T and Workshop matters. Chris has three years experience and now has a good knowledge of the complicated terms and conditions that exist within this group of grades. Dave and Chris work closely because of the Network Rail Connection.



Craig Stewart
Senior Industrial Relations Officer

As the Senior Industrial Relations officer Craig also has managerial responsibilities and steps in to the breach whenever Kevin or Dave is away. Craig has worked for the union for over 17 years and also has a wealth of experience. Craig's main areas of expertise are Train Operating Companies, Rail Freight and all ancillary rail employees, eg cleaning, catering, etc.



Alex Reid
Industrial Relations Officer

Alex has nearly four years service and his areas of expertise, along with Craig, is Train Operating Companies, Rail Freight and all ancillary rail employees. Alex's main area is the Train Operating Companies – a mine field of different terms and conditions.



James Murza
Industrial Relations Officer

James has over four years service and his area of expertise is Docks and Shipping. James works directly with the Shipping Officer Steve Todd. Because legislation is different for our seafaring members and they are away at sea for extended periods of time it can be extremely difficult to service these members. James also deals with pay.



Pauline Akrill
Industrial Relations Officer

Pauline has over three years service and also works on Docks and Shipping. However her main area of expertise is pay. Pauline, who works closely with James, ensures that all offers are placed before the General Grades Committee. Pauline also conducts the referendums on pay and gives the members details of pay settlements.



Arthur Richardson
Industrial Relations Officer

Arthur is a long-time RMT activist who has worked in the bus and rail sectors. He now also has over three years service directly employed by the union and is our London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, Light Rapid Transit Systems and 'rubber wheels' man. Arthur deals with all the underground issues including the infrastructure companies, Metronet and Tubelines. He also looks after our bus members and road freight members where necessary.

Taking track safety seriously

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash responds to an attack by rail newspaper *Railstaff* on RMT's view of the proposed extension of the Railway Rulebook T12 protection procedures for track staff

In a piece inexplicably entitled 'Silly Season', regular *Railstaff* contributor Graeme Bickerdike has decided to criticise my views published in the April edition of RMT News under the headline 'Performance Above Track Safety'.

Graeme claimed my article was a 'grand exercise in table-thumping without any obvious grip on reality', but I would suggest that it is his criticism that lacks a semblance of reality.

The proposed extension of T12 would not be 'largely cosmetic' as he describes it, but a major shift in the way many staff are currently protected from the danger of trains while working on the track.

Network Rail estimates the rule change will lead to an extra 60,000 occasions per year when staff will be required to use T12 rather than T2 as a means of protection.

My concerns about the risks from such a proposal derive from the industry's own research findings and safety data statistics which have led Network Rail to confirm the change will create at least one additional T12 irregularity every month.

However, as they also acknowledge, being a single failure method of protection as opposed to a T2 which is a double failure method, any one

of those T12 irregularities has a much higher potential of causing a multiple fatality accident.

It only needs one thing to go wrong with a T12, and the only hope for the track staff then is if they manage to spot the train and jump clear in time.

There is no back-up or double check, and that is of course the reason why this form of protection will not be allowed where the work could endanger a train.

For some strange reason Graeme felt it was 'utter claptrap' for me to suggest that double standards were being applied, and that staff working on the track should be entitled to the same degree of protection as the passengers on a train.

He also questioned my assertion that the proposed extension of T12 was motivated by a desire for improved productivity.

In their defence, Graeme said the leading lights of the group who devised the changes had years of practical experience 'on the tools', but I would equally like to remind him that I also have 20 years experience of working on the track.

No one has denied that a T12 is far quicker to arrange than a T2, and I find it hard to understand his argument that reducing the protection arrangements will provide the



staff with greater safety.

Graeme also criticised the union's previous objection to the introduction of the COSS handbook, which he was personally involved in.

The reason given for the production of this handbook was that the current rule book was not user friendly because the rules for a COSS were scattered over several hundred pages, and so were difficult to find.

However, the same argument applied to a far greater extent to the rules for a train driver or signaller, but no-one was proposing a handbook for them.

RMT's view was that if it was agreed the current rule book

was not user friendly, the right thing to do would be to re-write it, not issue a publication for just one set of staff that grouped and expressed the rules in a different way.

This flew in the face of the 1999 public inquiry into the Southall train accident which recommended that the use of more than one document (whether rules, group standards or otherwise) to cover a single operational issue should be avoided, save where proper reasons exist for use of multiple sources.

In the case of the COSS handbook, no such justification was ever forthcoming. ■

SEAFARERS AND THEIR SHIPS DURING WORLD WAR II

*Former RMT shipping secretary
Tony Santamera recounts experiences of
some of the many thousands of seafarers,
including his father, who made such a huge
contribution towards the defeat of fascism
during World War Two*

The liner Aquatania at anchor



Whilst writing this article, I was conscious that many thousand of our members both in the merchant navy and armed forces were involved in many arenas during the Second World War.

Over 28,000 seafarers on British merchant ships were killed and 4,800 ships were lost due to enemy action and we should be eternally grateful to all of them for the sacrifice they made to keep Britain supplied throughout the war.

JOE ARCHER

Now 85 years young, Joe Archer was a cook on the “Basset Hound” which was docked in Milford Haven in 1939. Aged 18, Joe and his shipmate Charlie Chin, a Liverpool-born Chinese professional boxer, decided to go ashore for a few drinks. They forgot to bring their identity papers with them but they managed to blag their way out of the oil terminal and proceeded to the nearest pub.

They sat down to a well-earned pint but their stay was short lived because the local cops burst in and arrested them as spies. They were held for several hours before their

identities had been established and they were released into the custody of their captain, alas too late to re-join their pints.

Joe also recalls joining the Cunard-managed “SS Western Land” a Dutch ship in Liverpool in 1940 carrying French Foreign legion troops for the invasion of Dakar in French West Africa.

The ship also picked up West African troops to take them to Mombassa in East Africa and on to Suez canal to pick up Italian POW's to ship them to Bombay to be incarcerated into POW's camps.

Next port of call was Cape Town to take Australian troops back to Suez to fight the German nazi war machine in the desert. These trips were repeated for several months, Suez to Bombay with Italian POW's and on to Cape Town or Durban with Australian troops bound for Egypt and desert war.

On one of these trips some of the crew had a sit-down strike about the quality of the food. The captain sent for a Royal Navy destroyer for back up and a navy officer was dispatched to “Western Land” with an armed escort. The threat to take out the leaders of the dispute seemed to

work, however, the incident was repeated on the following trip and a navy boarding party took six of the ringleaders to their ship and the crew were never to see them again.

The rest of the crew were put ashore in Bombay and fifty or so so-called ‘undesirables’ were put up in the Seaman's mission.

Every day a messenger from the shipping office came to us with jobs on a piecemeal basis. Married men got first choice and Joe and about 10 others were last to be picked up for a ship the “City of Paris” which was docked in Karachi.

“It took us two days to get there by road, we were put up in an army camp for the night and just before the ship was to sail, we were escorted to the ship and boarded as third class passengers for the trip home via Cape Town and Trinidad and picked up by a convoy bound for Liverpool in Halifax Canada,” Joe recalls.

“Nobody ever heard anymore of the strike leaders or indeed the undesirable tag,” he says.

This strange episode became even stranger as the Cunard company kept all the crew on full pay whilst in Karachi and

also on the voyage home in the City of Paris.

“When our crew travelled home as passengers if we had been undesirables we would have been put off pay. So our members were exonerated by the companies actions,” he says.

DON NEW

At the age of 16 years of age Don New joined the Commandante Dorice. A captured French ship, she was loading war materials in Southampton to take to Suez. The night before we sailed, Southampton was heavily bombed she sailed to Cardiff to pick up coal then on to Milford Haven to form a convoy of 30 ships.

14 ships were lost on the way to Freetown due to enemy action before the convoy then split up to go their own destinations.

The Commandante Dorice sailed down to Walvis Bay for food stores, then on to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London, all in South Africa.

“In East London, I met my brother who I hadn't seen him for three years and he was in the Royal Navy,” Don recalls.

continued overleaf...



continued from page 23

The ship went on to Cape Town then to Biarra in East Africa, which was a Portuguese colony and was not involved in the war.

"My mate and I had to go to the dentist who was German, I got my teeth extracted but my mate ran away," he says.

The ship went on to another Portuguese enclave Lourenço Marques, now Maputo the capital city of Mozambique, where Don and three other seamen were invited to dinner with the British Consul.

Don continued his voyage around South African ports and on the way back to Freetown a U-boat torpedo crossed the bow but luckily the ship made it to her destination and joined the convoy for Liverpool.

Don then joined a Norwegian ship the Norvark in 1942. She docked at Philippeville in Algeria then onto Casablanca stopping over night Gibraltar in order to shelter from U-boats. The Royal Navy was dropped depth charges before Norvark then went back to Casablanca to

load phosphate bound for Ipswich.

"I received news that my mother was dying, so I asked to be paid off and went home, she died ten days later," he says.

Don's next ship was the Moreton Bay, sailing to New York in 1943, she picked up 3000 US troops and joined a convoy. On the voyage to England several of ships were torpedoed.

He left the Moreton Bay and joined the Mauretania and sailed to Boston to join the Aquatania to disembarked 10,000 US soldiers.

"We sailed to Goureck, Scotland with no escort and then went back to Hailfax, Canada for 10,000 troops to bring back to Goureck," Don says.

He signed off the Aquatania in 1944 and joined the Queen Mary as a first class steward. The ship carried 10,000 troops in winter and 15,000 in the summer. The troops only had two meals a day and a chef suggested selling egg and bacon sandwiches and they sold about

30 or 40 a day.

Don went to the ship Carnarvon Castle for one trip before joining the Atlantis to take 700 war brides to Perth and Melbourne.

TONY SANTAMERA SNR

My father appears in Tony Lane's book The Merchant Seaman's War. Tony interviewed my Dad in 1989 and he has given me his kind permission to reproduce this passage.

Ratings, especially firemen, were, of course, aware of the contempt in which many officers hold them and could be quick to respond.

Tony Santamera snr and two other firemen were going back aboard the Fort Bourben late one night in New York, the mate and chief engineer were standing on the top of the gangway.

"They made audible comments about us being the sort of people that got the British a bad name and so we got stuck in and there was trouble we ended up in the nick.

"We got tried that night – this

particular beak in the states would try you any time of the night.

"The skipper was away with friends and there was only the mate there in court and he'd been involved in the trouble the judge said he did not want to impede the war effort and so he fined us twenty-five dollars plus costs each.

"We had money in the ship but the mate wouldn't pay the fines so we had to go in the nick for 17 days," Tony recalled.

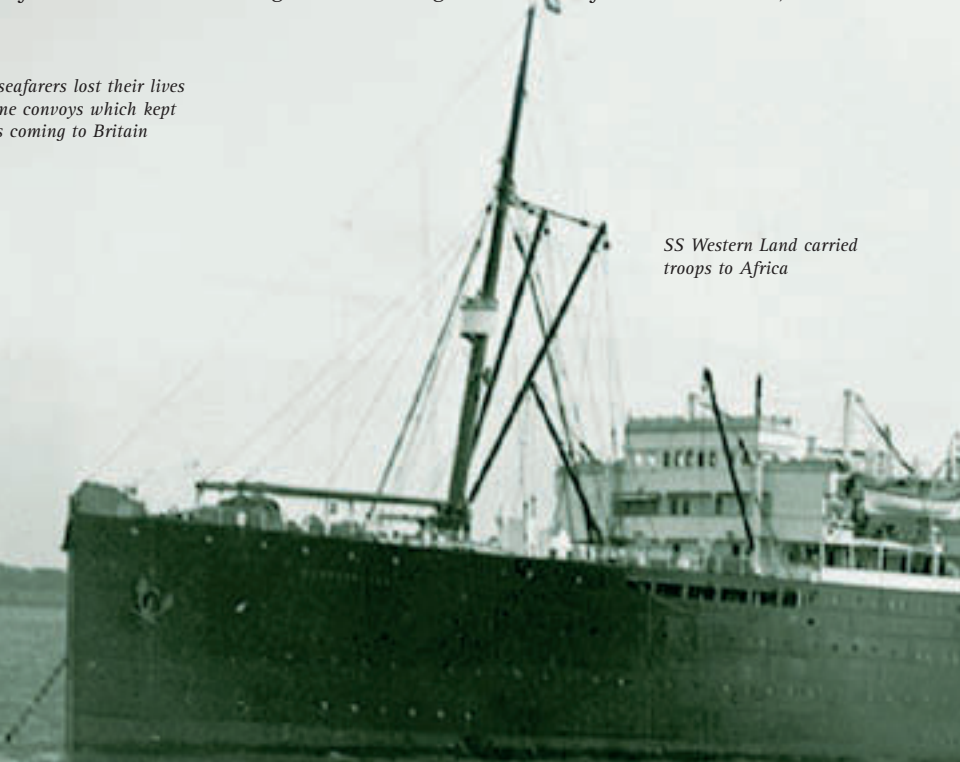
Tony Santamera, with his patriotic credentials in good order, was resentful as he had been sunk on the King Robert in the North Atlantic in January 1941 and sunk a second time in April 1942 when the Harpasa ran into shellfire from a Japanese warship in the Bay of Bengal.

Tony Lane's book gives an insight into the sinking of the King Robert, my Dad in interview recalled:

"There was five of us on the starboard side, one was a galley boy from Birkenhead, he went



CONVOY: Many seafarers lost their lives during the wartime convoys which kept essential supplies coming to Britain



SS Western Land carried troops to Africa

down the Jacobs Ladder, the boat had drifted away so it took them a while to tow it back to the side of the ship side so that he could get in.

"But he got petrified and he wouldn't go up or down so the second mate had to go down and give him a belt, him and the second mate more or less fell into the boat," he recalled.

FERRY BOATS

The ferry Colonel J.A Moss was one of eleven such vessels leased by the British Ministry of War and Transport to replace the cross channel and short sea passenger vessels lost during hostilities.

The vessels were used as troop transports on the Irish Sea cross between Scottish and Northern ports to Belfast and other ports.

Some were intended to be put into service in other auxiliary duties, in home waters and the Mediterranean. The management of all the vessels was placed in the hands of Coast Lines Limited, Liverpool (now swallowed up by shipping giant P&O).

The CJA Moss proceeded to Halifax Nova Scotia but on the way there she had to pull into Boston, USA with damage bulkheads after a battering at sea and the voyage was abandoned.

Of the other 10 ferries, two more were taken out because of structural problems, and sadly three, the New York the Yorktown and the Boston were sunk by enemy action on September 25/26 1942. Out of a total of 188 crew and gunners of the stricken ships, 142 paid the supreme sacrifice and only 46 survived.

The remaining five ferries, the President Warfield the Naushon the New Bedford the the Northland and the Southland came through the convoys safely and carried out there assigned voyages for the remainder of the war. They were handed back to their original owners at the end of the war.

PASSENGER LINERS

These huge ships made a massive contribution to the war effort, carrying US and Canadian troops to the war in Europe.

The huge Cunard passenger liner "Aquatania" sailed to Honolulu to pick up the US armed forces personnel and their families who had survived Pearl Harbour attack by the Japanese air force.

The evacuees were first taken to San Pedro in California where some of them disembarked. The ship then passed through the Panama Canal for the voyage to New York when the rest of the evacuees were landed.

At the time the Aquatania was the largest ship ever to pass through the Panama Canal and the ships sides almost scraping both of the sides of the canal. The ship was also the only passenger liner to take a full part in both World Wars.

The liners Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary carried upwards of 15,000 troops each and they were very fast, too fast for the U boats, and they didn't always need to be escorted in convoys.

Winston Churchill said that the 'two Queens' probably shortened the war by a year. There was, however, one major tragic incident involving the

Queen Mary on a trip from New York in 1942.

She picked up an escort the light cruiser HMS Curacao with four destroyers. When she reached the waters around Scotland, the Curacao was four knots slower and could not match the precautionary zig-zags of the 'Mary'. The cruiser had tried to keep ahead, but in clear visibility the 'Mary' struck her amid ships and the Curacao sank in five minutes with the loss of 329 out of its 450 crew.

The Queen Mary's Captain Commodore Sir Gordon Illingworth decided that, with 10,598 troops aboard, he could not risk stopping to help. The incident was kept secret at the time but a judgment on January 21 1947, five years after the tragic collision, held the Curacao entirely to blame. However, a later judgment apportioned one-third of the blame to the lookouts of the Queen Mary.

A number of graves of the men of the Curacao can be found at Lower Breakish in Skye, Arisaig and Morar. ■



Queen Mary and other liners shortened the war by transporting tens of thousands of Allied troops

The new corporate manslaughter bill: worth the wait?

Maggie Robins of the Centre for Corporate Accountability asks whether a new bill will make bosses pay for workplace negligence



MANSLAUGHTER: P&O ferries was acquitted of manslaughter charges over the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, which capsized after leaving the port of Zeebrugge, Belgium on March 6, 1987.

Health and Safety Executive research indicates some 70 per cent of incidents that kill workers are due to failures of employers.

When a person is killed at work, about 30 per cent of the time a company is prosecuted for health and safety offences and about 85 per cent of them are convicted and pay a fine.

But what about manslaughter? Shouldn't employers who show an utter disregard for safety and kill be charged with manslaughter?

The reality is only a few small employers are prosecuted and found guilty of manslaughter for killing workers, like the two men involved in the four rail worker deaths at Tebay.

Larger companies, whose negligence can typically cause the greatest devastation, remain immune to the charge of manslaughter under the current law.

CONTROLLING MIND

The technical obstacle is the principle of 'identification'. A company cannot be held criminally liable for a death unless a senior individual within the company can be identified who has knowledge of the danger and the responsibility and authority to address it.

In other words, this high-level individual must represent the company and be responsible for the death before the company can be found guilty.

But, companies disperse decisions and responsibility across the organisation and it has proved impossible to find anybody who represents the 'controlling mind' and is directly responsible for a death.

This is what led to the acquittal of P&O ferries in September 1990 over the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, in which 193 people died, and the acquittal of South Coast Shipping in 1992 over the sinking of the Marchioness, in which 51 people died.

In 1996, the Law Commission recommended that the law be changed so a company can be charged with manslaughter without having to identify a single senior person in the



NEGLIGENCE: A judge threw out manslaughter charges against Balfour Beatty for the Hatfield train crash in which four people died, despite describing the company's actions as "the worst examples of sustained industrial negligence in a high-risk industry".

company who caused the death. The court would be required to look at the management systems of the company that led to a death. The Labour Party, then out of power, supported the call for a new law.

Dragging Their Feet

Once the Labour government was elected in 1997, it was in no hurry to act. It took until 2000 for the first consultation document to be published and, in the meantime, Great Western Trains was cleared of manslaughter in July 1999 for the Southall train crash in which seven people died.

Nothing more happened until 2002, when the Home Office surveyed companies in some of the most lethal UK industries to ask if such a law would impede their freedom to go about their business, make them 'risk averse,' or affect their reputation.

We can guess how they responded or how workers in those industries might have responded if the Home Office had bothered to ask them. 'Risk aversion' has a different meaning when it's your own life on the line.

Then again nothing happened, despite renewed promises by the government and continued campaigning by Unions, the Hazards Campaign, the CCA, and sympathetic MPs.

2005 DRAFT BILL

A draft bill was finally published in March 2005 that recognized that management

systems of a company can cause deaths. The most significant flaw in the bill was the 'senior manager test.' It required a "senior manager" must be linked to a specific "management failure" that contributed to a death. While not as rigid as existing law, it is similar and appeared to undermine the purpose of the bill.

The bill failed to put clear legal duties on company directors to ensure safety and health to make it easier to prosecute directors.

It also did not allow individual managers to be charged with aiding and abetting the crime, no matter how significant their role in the management failures that cause a death. Penalties for the crime would again be fines, not jail. It lifted Crown immunity, meaning that public bodies could for the first time be prosecuted for manslaughter. But it broadly exempted "public policy decision-making" and "exclusively public functions".

In July 2005 the judge threw out the manslaughter charges against Balfour Beatty for the Hatfield train crash in which four people died.

Justice Mackay described Balfour Beatty's actions that led to the crash as "the worst examples of sustained industrial negligence in a high-risk industry" that he has seen.

A Select Committee called for significant changes to the bill, including condemning the senior manager test.

In March this year, the

government agreed to reconsider the 'senior manager' test and some less significant issues, but remained firm on everything else. On July 20 they introduced a revised bill, just days before Parliament went into summer recess.

WHY THE DELAY?

While there are technical issues that make drafting the law difficult, this is not insurmountable, as legislation in Canada and Australia on corporate manslaughter make clear.

Perhaps the answer lies in the Prime Minister's own words that he aims "to make the UK the most business-friendly environment in the world".

We could argue that a business that negligently kills is not the kind of business the UK should be helping with lax laws. Moreover, why should companies with responsible management and good health and safety be undercut by corporate killers? And the public has been clear that they want more accountability for deadly companies.

WILL IT HOLD COMPANIES TO ACCOUNT?

The new bill looks much like the 2005 draft. The offence and the 'senior manager test' are the same. No legal duties are put on directors. It prevents individual managers being charged with aiding and abetting. The only penalty is a fine. The lifting of Crown Immunity is spelled out in more detail, as are the exemptions.

The real test of the draft bill is how it would have affected Balfour Beatty after the Hatfield deaths. Or P&O Ferries? This is what MPs need to think about when they debate this bill, and consider amendments to give it more bite. Would these companies be convicted by this bill? Would the penalty for a conviction be any different than being convicted for the health and safety offences? Will it bring justice to the families of people killed? Will the law make the most negligent companies and their managers pay attention? ■

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

EUROTUNNEL FACES BANKRUPTCY

Anglo-French tunnel operator Eurotunnel has been holding last ditch talks to stave off bankruptcy.

The group sought protection from French courts with the French equivalent of US "Chapter 11" bankruptcy protection, which allows firms to continue to operate.

If approved by the courts, the "Procédure de Sauvegarde" would give Eurotunnel a six-month window of protection from creditors while a court-appointed administrator restructured the company's debts.

The company agreed a preliminary restructuring plan with its priority lenders and Goldman Sachs, Barclays, Axa and Macquarie back in May, which would see Eurotunnel's

debt cut by more than 50 percent to £2.9 billion.

They have given Eurotunnel a waiver to allow it to have talks with a group of bondholders who have rejected the deal.

If an agreement is reached, Eurotunnel has said it will withdraw its application for court protection.

But if it fails, Eurotunnel chief Jacques Gounon has threatened to put the group into insolvency.

The bondholders are the lowest-ranked debt holders, who would be very unlikely to get any of their money back if Eurotunnel is declared insolvent.

They have complained that they are being offered too little money to allow the restructuring to go ahead, and



BANKRUPT?: Eurotunnel workers' demonstrating outside last year's annual meeting in Coquelles, northern France. Placards read "Our Lives Are Not For Sale", left, and "No to the Death of Employment".

are seeking a different deal which would leave them with cash and shares in the company.

The crisis at Eurotunnel has its origins in the construction of the channel tunnel, completed

in 1994 at a cost of about £10 billion.

Traffic has never been nearly as heavy as was originally forecast, hitting Eurotunnel's revenues. ■

DEUTSCHE BAHN SEEKING PORTS

German national railway company Deutsche Bahn (DB) has been seeking to acquire majority stakes in port companies, moves that have been met with fierce resistance.

The rail operator even offered terminal operator Hamburger Hafen-und Logistik AG to transfer DB headquarters from Berlin to Hamburg – a deal which has so far been rejected.

The rail company has attempted to take a stake in the port of Duisburg, Europe's largest inland port and a huge freight transport hub with a pan-European significance, particularly for intermodal transport, maritime containers and overland transport.

The carrot that DB offered in this particular case was the concentration of all of its freight transport subsidiaries and divisions in Duisburg (i.e. Railion, Schenker, DB Logistik,

Stinnes Intermodal and Stinnes Freight Logistics).

One third of the port of Duisburg belongs to the town of Duisburg, another third to the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the remainder to the German state.

Berlin is rumoured to want to dispose of its one-third share, but North Rhine-Westphalia and Duisburg's plans are not yet known.

The Bremen-based terminal operator Eurogate has also been targeted by DB.

Hartmut Mehdorn, head of the railway company, cites the need for access to ports to complete the transport chain but Deutsche Bahn does not just want to take a stake, it wants the majority – 51 per cent or nothing.

DB wants to operate ship, rail and road options in the ports and handle facilities themselves

– to the disadvantage of all other port service companies.

Mehdorn has also ruled out complying with EU rail directives which demand the break-up of the company and the separation of infrastructure

and train operations.

"An integrated railway is absolutely essential to ensure continuing technological development of the wheel/rail system," he said. ■

ASIAN BANKER WARNS AGAINST RAIL PRIVATISATION

Asian Development Bank vice-president C Lawrence Greenwood recently addressed a meeting in Manila warning that full divestiture (privatisation) of rail assets may not be feasible or desirable, given railway's role as a public good.

"Even mature economies such as the United Kingdom have found full divestiture to have substantial risks and unintended negative consequences," he said.

British Rail was privatised on the basis of EU directives which are now being rolled out across the European Union. However, Estonia has recently partially re-nationalised its rail network, a move praised by Mr Greenwood.

"In Estonia, for example, the government maintained a minority share in a new railway company while retaining regulatory oversight for safety and monopolistic abuse," he said.

TRAIN CRASH IN SPAIN KILLS 41

The Spanish Valencia underground train involved in a crash that killed 41 was travelling at twice the normal speed when it derailed.

It was doing 50mph at the spot where it came off the tracks, data from the train's black box has shown.

Officials say evidence from the black box, which was recovered from the wreckage by emergency workers, suggests the train was speeding on a curved part of the track, where the speed is limited to 25mph.

Railway Union general secretary Fernando Soto said that the speed of the train was the main cause of the accident.

He suggested that something may have happened to the driver - perhaps a heart attack - to explain this unusual and excessive breach of the speed limit.

Valencia's authorities have discounted a tunnel collapse or a ruptured wheel as possible factors in the crash.

The four-carriage train was travelling on Valencia's Number One underground route, close to a junction with another line.

It came off the rails between Plaza de Espana and Jesus stations and smashed into the walls of a tunnel near Jesus station in the eastern Spanish city.

The train had passed a safety inspection just one week before the crash.

Unions say the train line where the accident happened is the oldest in Valencia's metro network.

Last September, three underground trains collided in Valencia on the same line, injuring 29 people. ■



CRASH: The two crashed wagons stored in a subway depot, outside Valencia, Spain following a derailment that killed 41 people in this Spanish coastal city.

President's column



Defending workers' rights

I was proud to chair this year's annual general meeting in Dublin. Not only because I hail from Donegal, but also because it was my last AGM as president of this great union.

We welcomed international delegates from all over the world and there was a common theme that united them all and that was the increasing attacks by employers and governments.

Over the past year, we as a union have been defending our members to the best of our ability given the difficult circumstances that still exist.

Despite the election of a third Labour government, the lack of workplace justice for working people is a scandal.

These anti-union Tory laws are robbing workers of basic democratic rights to defend themselves against greedy bosses.

If proof was required, we only need to note that there has been a two-thirds reduction in workers covered by collective bargaining agreements since these laws were enforced. This situation that can no longer be tolerated and a trade union freedom bill to be enshrined these rights into law is imperative.

It is unbelievable that workers had more rights one hundred years ago under the Trade Disputes Act than we have today. It is wrong that in this, the 21st century, trade unions are still hampered from protecting their due to draconian anti-trade-union laws.

That is why this union initiated the campaign for such a bill, which is now Trade Union Congress policy.

It is vital that the whole trade union movement starts fighting for the enactment of this bill as a

beginning of the struggle to abolish all of these anti-trade union laws.

It is clear that this new Labour government will not defend working people unless it is forced to change policies.

That includes stopping the privatisation of our national health service, the education system, our prisons, fire services and, of course, the return of our transport systems to public ownership.

Pensions are another area where workers are under attack. The privatisation of our railways and bus industries has meant massive profits for some yet our pension schemes have been fragmented into chaos and deficit.

These companies are not prepared to fund decent contribution levels for our members but don't mind funding massive increases to company directors.

A similar situation exists in the seafaring section where members do not have secure pensions and the government's latest pension legislation is just not good enough.

Britain is one of the richest countries in the world so why should workers have to work until they drop?

The real answer is the attack on workers' pensions funds are part of a systematic attack by the European Union on government spending. This is combined with demands to reduce expenditure by privatising transport, health, education and public services under the guise of so-called "liberalisation".

It is clearer by the day that diktats from Brussels are the root cause of many of our problems.

BOLIVIA'S STRUGGLE



Felicity discusses the ongoing situation at the Huanuni mine.

RMT member Fliss Premru reports from a Bolivia Solidarity Campaign delegation which recently visited the South American country



In the last six years largely indigenous grass-roots movements in Bolivia has kicked out US multi-national Betchel, which had privatised the local water supply, launched powerful uprisings known as the tax and gas wars, removed three corrupt presidents and elected the first indigenous president Evo Morales.

Inspired by this incredible struggle, the Bolivia Solidarity Campaign organised a multi-union delegation to the country to make links with social movements, trade unions and Bolivian people in their struggle against privatisation and to reclaim their national resources.

In a taste of things to come, we discovered a week before we travelled that the Bolivian airline was on strike.

The privatised airline had been asset-stripped and nearly bankrupted by the major shareholder, Asbun, but the workers at Lloyd Aereo Bolivia (LAB) weren't having it. With an admirable show of solidarity by the four unions from pilots to baggage handlers, the 2,200-strong workforce decided to run part of the company under workers' control with the aim of saving and renationalising the airline.

Unfortunately, a blockade of Cochabamba airport on March 30 by trade unions and social movements had been met with tear gas and rubber bullets by the new government.

The airline (LAB) unions showed us round the airport and workers were delighted to have support from British transport and other unions.

On an encouraging note, President Morales came to talk about possibilities for saving the airline. But sadly one of the pilots' stewards was shot in his home during an alleged burglary and is currently in hospital. The LAB workforce believes the incident to be intimidation by the owner and their response has been to take the bold step of running the whole airline under worker's control.

PRIVATISATION

Since 1985, public transport in Bolivia has been systematically destroyed by privatisation. National and international rail routes have disappeared as children and stray dogs play on the overgrown track. Privatised buses compete for passengers with some being just a little economic with the truth on routes and timetables in their anxiety to get their hands on fares.

In the harsh climate of the Andean "altiplano" (high plateau) we learned that the coca leaf is central to the culture of the indigenous people, which is essential to dealing with the altitude.

We met the collective, self-organised Aymaran people of Achacachi who explained how

their unarmed community managed to turn away the army during the 'gas wars'.

This was followed by illuminating meetings with Fejuve, the neighbourhood committees in El Alto, the Landless Movement, and the Miners union. Bolivian mines share a parallel history with the British mines as their industry was also decimated in the mid 1980s.

Thousands of unemployed miners became "cocaleros" or moved en masse to El Alto above La Paz, a community which virtually sprang up overnight.

A moving meeting was held with the 'Relatives of Those Who Died' - families who had loved ones murdered by former President Lorenzo De Sanchez, known as 'Goni', are seeking justice and trying to get him extradited from his luxury life in New York. UK trade unions can help by petitioning the US.

Higher than El Alto, at over 4,100 metres near the dustbowl of Ouroro, the Huanuni mine is run under workers' control but also nearing bankruptcy.

We were welcomed as the first British trade union delegation to visit in 20 years to see the harsh conditions. The mine is notionally owned by a corrupt British company, who claimed to be contesting ownership in British courts. The delegation met with COD (local trade unions), miners, the Mayor of Oruro.

The delegation undertook to investigate the existence of a court case in Britain but none has been traced. We have since learnt that the mine has been saved and is now administered under workers control.

In Cochabamba, we also met members of the Coordinadora (Coalition in Defence of Water and Life), who so successfully fought the "Water in 2000.

Their spokesperson, Oscar Olivera, will be on a speaking tour in Britain from July 7. He explained that the four key issues in Bolivia today under the new government were the renationalisation of oil, gas and other industries, the Constituent Assembly, the landless movement and reversing immunity from prosecution for government's and companies.

The trip, which we hope will be the first of many delegations, was fascinating and frustrating, scratching the surface in such a short time, fighting through tiredness and altitude sickness trying to make sense of the situation there. Many thanks to the branches and individuals who helped make my trip possible. ■

**If you would like further information, a speaker at your branch or a "Bolivia is Not for Sale" DVD, please contact the Bolivia Solidarity Campaign www.boliviasec.org.uk or Fliss Premru, TfL No 1 branch e-mail fliss.premru@onetel.net*

Felicity is applauded as she arrives to address a meeting of striking Lloyd Aero Boliviano engineers in dispute over the privatisation, asset stripping and mismanagement of the country's national airline.



WEST LoTHIAN IS THE NATIONAL QUESTION

It seems 'the West Lothian question' is never out of the news for long.

The now famous conundrum posed by Tam Dalyell the former Labour MP for West Lothian [hence its name] asks why, in 'post devolutionary' Britain, Scottish MP's at Westminster should be able to vote on English education, health, housing and transport matters for example, but English MP's have no similar influence over these issues north of the border?

I must confess whenever I hear mention of 'the West Lothian question' I can't help recall the comedian at the Edinburgh Festival a couple of years back who suggested the real question Dalyell meant to ask was 'Who the f*** wants to live in Bathgate anyway?'

The original, however, has been posed afresh by Tory MP's at Westminster recently whose clear motive it seems to me is to unravel the devolution

referendum of 1997.

This strategy contains many a risk for those keen to hold onto the 'United Kingdom'. A devolved parliament for Scotland was the least concession defenders of the union could offer to hold back the drive for independence.

It remains to be seen whether devolution will, in fact, sate the desire for independence as George, now Lord Robertson, originally forecast, or whether, in the view of Dalyell himself, establishing the Holyrood Parliament meant full blown independence became inevitable for Scots.

What is agreed is that behind the 'democratic deficit' which existed in Scotland for the best part of 20 years, where Scotland voted Labour but had a Tory government foisted on us, lay a deep and profound sense of injustice.

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's we were governed by a

party with virtually no support here which treated Scotland like a test laboratory for all sorts of hideous experiments, most notably the poll tax, introduced, lets not forget, one year before the rest of the UK.

And the Tories solution now to the West Lothian question? That Scottish MP's should be banned from participating in Westminster debates. Defensive Labour MP's respond saying it would mean two different classes of MP.

For me the question arises because devolution represents unfinished business. All decisions affecting Scotland should in my view be debated and decided upon here at Holyrood, in our national parliament. Most Scots agree that had we the power to decide, then no Scots troops would currently be fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Should pro-independence parties win a majority in next

year's Holyrood elections we are all agreed that a referendum would be held immediately to decide the issue.

Equally, the more the Tories look like winning the next Westminster elections, the greater the likelihood of a constitutional crisis.

It seems inevitable that a conflict would erupt between governments at Holyrood under pressure to follow one political course and Westminster set on quite another.

As we approach the 300th anniversary of the highly unpopular Act of Union when Scotland and England were first politically joined together, it is the national question itself with all its complexities that may well dominate the news rather than the relatively abstract 'West Lothian' one.

By Colin Fox MSP
National Convenor, Scottish Socialist Party



RMT Cancer Plan

Up to £50,000 cash for you when you need it most

The very last thing you need if you're diagnosed with cancer is money worries. Take out this simple plan today and you could receive up to £50,000 to help see you through.

**No medical – no fuss
just up to
£50,000 cash
if you're ever diagnosed
with cancer**

It may come as a surprise, but as Macmillan Cancer Support said in 2006: "the actual cost of having cancer can run into tens of thousands of pounds..." The same organisation reports that more than 7 in every 10 cancer patients suffer financial hardship as a result of their illness.

But now there's a plan that pays you up to £50,000 cash in the bank to help you through this difficult time. The RMT Cancer Plan:

- Pays the cash directly to you to spend as you choose
- Covers both smokers and non-smokers
- Lets you pay affordable monthly premiums. For example, a male non-smoker aged 40-44 would pay only £9.95 a month for £50,000 of cover
- Covers your partner and children if you wish
- Includes free, confidential counselling

To find out more – without obligation – or to join today, call us now!

020 8662 8102
quoting reference 060702

Lines open 8.30am to 5.30pm
Monday to Friday

For your security calls will be recorded
and may be monitored

EQUALITY IN DIVERSITY

RMT is calling on members to contribute to a new book *Diverse Britain 2007* on the past, present and future challenges to creating a truly diverse nation

Old photos have a deep fascination – we look into the faces of those who have long gone. Why do their faces haunt us?

Why do their eyes stare at us, causing us to wonder what they were thinking, what were their lives like, how did they cope with what were invariably hard and often short lives?

There are so many questions that arise. The picture below

was taken in Cardiff during the national seamen's strike of 1911. It may surprise readers to see so many black faces.

But were our black members subjected to discrimination? We will probably never know for sure.

RMT has been asked to contribute to a book, *Diverse Britain 2007* that will form part of next year's commemoration of the bicentenary of the

abolition of the slave trade.

The aim of the book is to reflect on the struggles of the past, the progress made and the challenges that remain to create and sustain a truly diverse nation.

For the book, we have been asked to outline our achievements, past and present, and our future objectives in an article of up to 1200 words, with photographs.

A circular has already been sent to branches asking for their input to our article. If you have any thoughts on this or have a story to tell, why not go along to your branch and share it with them.

Perhaps someone can tell us what happened to the men in the photo? ■

If you have information you want to share please write to:
Pat Wilkinson

Unity House
39 Chalton Street
London
NW1 1JD

Or e-mail
p.wilkinson@rmt.org.uk



Seafarers, black and white, voting in Cardiff during the 1911 strike

LETTERS

Letting members decide

Dear Editor,

I read with some interest the article in the last issue of the RMT news entitled, 'Aslef accuse RMT of poaching'.

For many years now the argument has been who is poaching from whom, but I personally feel the argument is now rather moot.

It is not sufficient for Aslef to consider themselves to be 'the union for drivers' and just expect all drivers to gravitate to them.

In our currant climate we demand value for money from any product. The argument surrounding membership of a union is even more prevalent given that it is an individual's livelihood we are talking about.

The loyalty that Aslef demand from its members is not something that can be simply accepted anymore, it has to be earned.

At Heathrow Express, I have seen the drivers despair as Aslef have sold them 'down the river' with secret deals and agreed terms behind closed doors.

How can they possibly demand loyalty

from their members when they are disloyal to the very principals on which trade unions were founded.

All the pamphlets and handouts in the world will not win over a satisfied member. However, give that same pamphlet to someone who has had his pay deal decided for them and he or she will think twice about moving to another union. That's not disloyalty, that's plain common sense.

Failure to be led by your members is the fault of individual unions and not of another union that has those concepts at its heart.

Bob Crow has made great strides for this union, supporting the membership and placing in our hands the strength and ability to see any problem through. Is it, therefore, RMT's fault that members of other unions desire that kind of support for themselves?

Dinosaurs died out because they were unable to adapt to the changing environment around them. RMT, as the strong and united force it has become under the present leadership, has nothing to fear from an old dinosaur blindly stumbling towards the graveyard.

Sally Jenkins

Dear editor,

It seems like every issue of RMT News carries an article in praise of Cuba or North Korea.

Of course RMT News should cover international issues, but to me, 'internationalism' means solidarity with workers and trade unionists, not with the governments that rule over them.

I would like to see reports from independent trade unions in these countries. But they do not exist, because the regimes do not allow them.

Cuba's improvements in health and literacy are welcome, and I completely oppose the USA's blockade. And I am sure we all oppose a war against North Korea. But that does not mean that we have to delude ourselves that these states are socialist paradises. Far from it.

Think on: In Cuba or North Korea, the union could not even publish RMT News without the state having a veto over its contents. I think most readers want a trade union magazine that sticks up for workers whatever country they live in and whichever government or employer attacks them.

Yours in solidarity

Janine Booth



RMT members like our principled approach to home insurance.

Our mutual status is something we are very proud of. But it would count for little if we couldn't deliver where it matters most – with low prices.

Happily, as a RMT member you and your family get the best of both worlds with UIA. Solid principles, together with home insurance premiums that really will suit your pocket.

All-round great value

Home insurance from UIA offers you all this:

- Interest-free monthly payments at no extra charge
- Up to £25 if your mortgage lender charges you for switching your buildings insurance to UIA
- 5% discount for combined buildings and contents cover
- Free accidental damage cover for audio and computer equipment at home
- Free emergency helpline
- Hassle-free claims
- We also offer travel and motor insurance – call for details

Yeah That and the online discount of 15%!



Go online and save an extra 15%*

Now RMT members can save time and money by buying insurance online. Visit www.uia.co.uk to see how quick and easy it is.



*Compared to the standard price you would be quoted if you called us. This only applies to home (buildings and contents) insurance. **If you are charged by your mortgage lender for switching your buildings insurance to UIA (subject to a maximum payment of £25). **Lines are open from 8.30am - 8pm Mon - Fri, 9am - 1pm Sat. For quality and protection, your call will be recorded. We exchange information with other insurance companies and the police to prevent fraud.

The RMT is an Introducing Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd and UIA (Insurance Services) Ltd who are both authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER
for RMT members**Annual European and
Worldwide Multi-trip
Travel Insurance**

Annual Premiums

Single £59, Couple £69, Family £79

Up to age 64

0870 460 7801

U.K. Call centre

Competitive rates available for winter sports,
single trips and long stay holidays.Maximum 31 days any one trip, acceptance subject to underwriters' criteria. Provided by AIS
Insurance Services, Authorised and regulated by The Financial Services Authority No. 307746**CLASSIFIED
ADS****FLORIDA**

INDIAN WELLS KISSIMMEE Villas
10% discount on rates for RMT
members. Beautiful 3 bedroom 2
bathroom villa in Florida 5 minutes drive
from Disney. Exceptionally central
location. Own pool with screen porch
and overlooking a lake. Will sleep 8 and
cot facilities are available.
Tel. 01202 427854
www.indianwellskissimmeevillas.co.uk

AIRPORT

AIRPORT CAR PARKING. 5%
additional discount for RMT members
www.flypark.co.uk/discount
0870 733 0545. Get a quote and see
savings

NEW FOREST

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

TENERIFE

TENERIFE, LAS AMERICAS.
Apartment in 3 star hotel on seafont.
Quiet area. Golf nearby. From
£75ppw.
Tel: 01803 526168

RADCLIFFE ON TRENT. Superbly
presented, large detached bungalow. 4
bedrooms, 2/3 receptions, fitted
breakfast kitchen, large bathroom &
2nd wc. Delightful landscaped garden.
Highly regarded location near centre of
village. £325,000. Wonderful family
home. Early viewing recommended.
Please call Jan on 0 1159 332845

THREE PEAKS RAIL CHALLENGE

Places are still available for
teams of four to take on
the Three Peaks climbing
challenge on September 21/23,
the only one that does it by
train.

Climb the highest
mountains on the UK
mainland, Snowdon (Wales),
Scafell Pike (England) and Ben
Nevis (Scotland), in under 36
hours, travelling on a special
train between the mountains.

The event is now in its
third year and last year raised
a magnificent £132,000 to
help the work of the Railway

Children charity.

The event is said to be the
equivalent of running three
half marathons in under 36
hours. One mountain will be
climbed at night and the other
night will be spent on the
train.

All competitors are well
looked after with all food and
drink provided and even a
team of doctors and masseuses
on board!

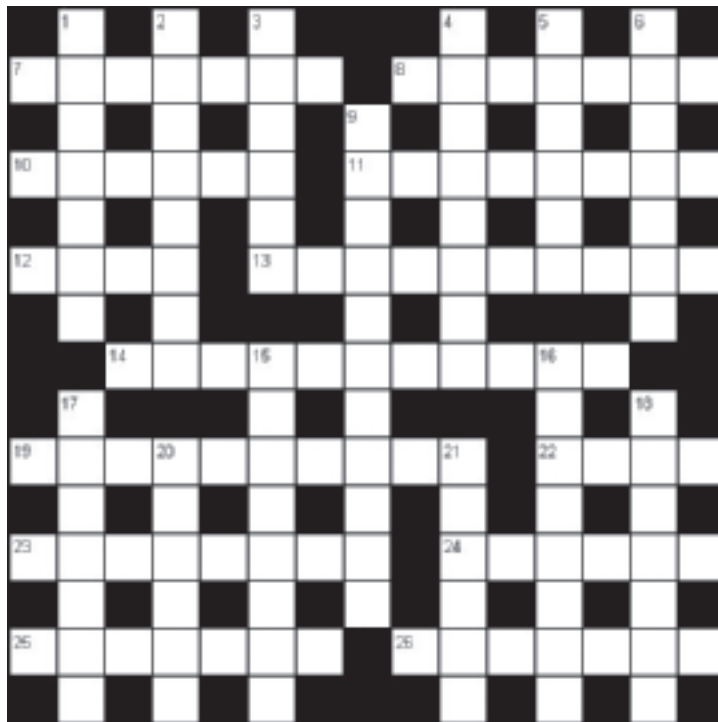
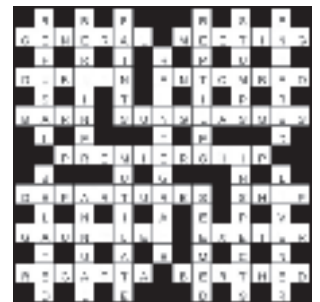
For more information contact the
events team on 01270 251571 or
email
events@railwaychildren.org.uk



Exclusive Offer!
PET INSURANCE
for RMT members
This is a special offer available to RMT members only. It is a pet insurance policy for a Cat or Dog. The policy is for 12 months and costs £2.95 per month for a Cat and £5.75 per month for a Dog. It also covers the cost of vet fees. For more information call 0870 402 2067. U.K. Call centre. Open 9am-5pm.

RMT £25 prize crossword

No. 27. Set by Elk

Last month's
solution...

The winner of prize
crossword no. 26 is
Mr R Jones of Carrickfergus.

Send entries to Prize Crossword,
RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton
Street, London NW1 1JD by
August 29th with your name and
address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 7 Physical examination (7)
- 8 Home of Pontiff (7)
- 10 Number 1 priority - should come before 24 (6)
- 11 Not compulsory (8)
- 12 Common bean protein (4)
- 13 First step to being elected (10)
- 14 Filled again or re-stocked (11)
- 19 Part played by right-wing California governor (10)
- 22 Not the whole (4)
- 23 Put off (8)
- 24 Privatisation puts this ahead of 10 (6)
- 25 Reduced in rank or grade (7)
- 26 Officer - not specific! (7)

DOWN

- 1 Member of upper house in USA (7)
- 2 Free (8)
- 3 Deep gorge or ravine (6)
- 4 Drinks favoured by 007 (8)
- 5 Overeat, commonly (3,3)
- 6 Killer of bulls (7)
- 9 Groups of people who live in the same locality or who share interests (11)
- 15 Capital person! (8)
- 16 Blew up (8)
- 17 Dedicated or strongly attached to (7)
- 18 The act of reaching a place (7)
- 20 Lump of rock travelling through space (6)
- 21 Knocked; performed hip hop (6)

RMT Credit Union

Our Own Savings and Loans Co-operative

Our RMT Credit Union is a great new benefit for members. It exists, not to make a profit, but to provide help and support to all our members for their savings and credit needs. By saving together, and lending to each other, we take the profit motive out of savings and loans. All the surpluses created by the Credit Union are recycled as benefits to members through cheap loans, and the ability to pay dividends on savings.

The Right Balance

CHEAP LOANS

Decisions on interest rates are made by our members. This year our AGM decided to offer very cheap loans to members. This means we can now offer loans at **9.9 per cent APR**, equivalent to **0.825 per cent per month** on the declining balance. See our great rates below.

We strike a balance between low interest rates on loans and paying a dividend on savings. We enable members to have ready access to cheap loans while building up a substantial and useful savings account. We can do this because our Credit Union is run on the same principles of mutual support and members' democratic control as our trade union, so you can be sure that it's run in the interests of us all.

DIVIDEND ON SAVINGS

We don't exist to make profits. With the surplus we make from interest on loans we can collectively decide to pay a dividend. We recently paid a dividend of 3% on savings – a very healthy dividend rate compared to banks' interest rates



Because we're a members' organisation with a democratic structure, we're able to make the decisions that provide a virtuous circle of saving together, providing credit at low interest rates and sharing the benefits by paying a dividend on savings.

Loan term (months) 9.9% APR (0.79% per month)					
Amount	12	24	36	48	60
500	43.93	23.05	16.11	12.66	10.60
1000	87.87	46.1	32.22	25.31	21.2
1500	131.80	69.15	48.33	37.97	31.80
2000	175.74	92.20	64.44	50.63	42.40
3000	263.61	138.30	96.66	75.94	63.59
4000	351.48	184.40	128.88	101.26	84.79
5000	439.35	230.49	161.10	126.57	105.99
7500	659.02	345.74	241.65	189.86	158.98

Joining Our Credit Union

The Financial Services Authority requires us to comply fully with money laundering regulations. It's a bore but we have to do it. It means that before we can open your account we have to verify your identity and your address.

You need to complete the application form opposite along with the Direct Debit. You'll also need to get your ID verified and send it with the application to us. If you're near a regional office or Unity House you can bring it in and we'll process it there.

ID REQUIREMENTS

Getting your ID verified is quite straight forward. You need two separate forms of ID such as the following:

PROOF OF IDENTITY

- Personal Cheque used for your first month's savings if drawn on an account that includes your name
- Current valid full UK Passport; EU member state ID card
- Current valid full foreign passport
- Current UK full Photo Card Driving Licence
- Current UK provisional, Photo Card Driving Licence (Old styles not accepted)
- ID pass from Network Rail, Trans Pennine Express, Central Trains, Eurostar
- Discharge book (shippers)
- Inland Revenue Tax Notification (current year)

PROOF OF ADDRESS

- Current UK full, signed driving licence (if not used for Proof of Identity)
- Current UK provisional, driving licence Photo Card (if not used for Proof of Identity)
- A current [within last three months] Utility Bill (not mobile phone bill)
- Recent Bank, Building Society or Mortgage statement
- Current Council Tax bill
- Pension or benefits book
- Tenancy or rent book/agreement
- Recent Inland Revenue notice of coding or tax demand

The list above is not exhaustive and other documents will be considered.

You can get your branch secretary or regional office to verify and sign photocopies of the documents. As an alternative, you can also get another person of authority such as your employer, doctor, Solicitor etc to verify the forms of ID. The copies of the documents must have an official stamp and signature on them and a contact name and address. Or, you can send originals to us at the address below. Send completed verified copies of documents or originals to: RMT Credit Union, Unity House, FREEPOST NW3706, London NW1 3YD. If sending valuable documents by post you should send them recorded delivery. For assistance: Tel: 020 7529 8835

Authorised and Regulated By The Financial Services Authority FRN: 228612

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM — please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

2 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

3 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

4 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐

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

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

7 Next of Kin

Address

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

Your signature

Date



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

9 7 4 2 8 1

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.



JOIN RMT TODAY!



Visit www.rmt.org.uk to join online
or call the helpline on freephone

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline

Open six days a week

Mon to Fri - 8am until 6pm, Sat - 9.30am to 4pm

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516
Seven days a week

