

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

Time

Destination

Plat

Why Privatise?

20/06 GNER - Edinburgh to Kings Cross
Franchise in crisis - overhead probs at Sea Containers

20/10 - East London Line
Privatisation expected - against public opinion

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www.rmt.org.uk

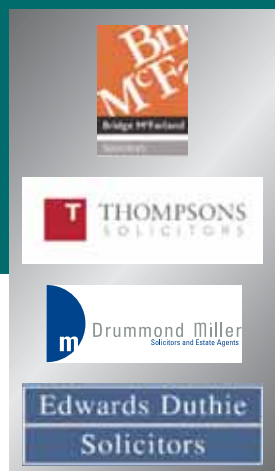
RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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.

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



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EDITORIAL

WHY PRIVATISE?



The financial crisis engulfing the east-coast rail franchise GNER and its Bermuda-registered parent company SeaContainers has once more exposed the chaotic nature of privatisation.

SeaContainers' desperate attempts to squeeze a profit from GNER rail operations will mean further sharp fares hikes, service cuts and a wholesale attack on jobs and conditions.

It gives me no pleasure to say that we warned when the new GNER franchise was handed out that it would raise just such a scenario.

It is clear that GNER should be brought back under public control immediately to stop jobs and rail services falling victim to the crisis created by privatisation.

What is more, it is staggering that Transport for London is even considering throwing the East London Line to the wolves and putting it in the hands of privateers as well.

Opposition to the privatisation of rail services is fully supported by the rail unions, the TUC as well as being Labour Party policy. A number of Labour MPs have already signed early day motion 2398 to keep the East London Line in the public sector.

TfL's justification for the privatisation is that it wishes to link the East London Line with the North London Rail. However, there is no reason why this cannot be done by retaining the line within London Underground control.

Private train operating companies have been a disaster for Britain's railways. Whilst subsidy and profits have increased, services remain worse than those provided under public ownership. This mistake should not be repeated with the East London Line.

So write to your MP to ask them to sign EDM 2398 to halt this gradual privatisation of the Tube network because your line could be next.

Report after report on the Tube infrastructure privatisation, known as PPP, has also shown that it has failed by every measure.

Yet still the private sector is being allowed to suck the lifeblood out of the industry in profits.

For instance, how can it be that Tube Lines can make no profit from operating

the Northern Line during the past financial year because of appalling performance and still increase overall profits by 17 per cent from the Jubilee and Piccadilly lines?

Tube Lines made increased pre-tax profits of £63.3 million for the year to March 31 despite its dreadful overall performance. If that is not rewarding failure, then what is?

Despite the negative role played by the privateers in the transport sector, RMT is tirelessly working to defend and improve your pay and conditions.

This union is prepared to use all possible weapons at our disposal in that fight, including balloting for strike action.

Whether you are a diver, a bus worker or in the shipping or rail sector you are a valued member who is entitled to the representation you deserve.

An RMT delegation recently attended the International transport Federation Congress in Durban, South Africa where delegates from around the world discussed a wide range of matters relating to transport workers.

Delegates unanimously backed an emergency RMT motion condemning the continuing violence in the Middle East and the invasion and destruction of Lebanon by the Israeli government.

It called on all governments to support an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and to cease the supply of weapons to all parties involved in the conflict.

The motion paid tribute to those in the Royal Fleet Auxillary and all transport workers who have supported the humanitarian effort in the region.

However, it is a scandal that the British government is allowing the use of UK airports to airlift weapons of mass destruction to Israel in the midst of the carnage.

The feeling amongst delegates was clearly a desire for peace and a political settlement in the region. The only war we want is the one on poverty and hunger.

Best Wishes

Bob Crow

RMT NORTH SEA DIVERS VOTING ON PAY STRIKE

Nearly 700 diving personnel employed in the North Sea oil and gas industries are voting in a process that could lead to strike action that would have a massive impact on production.

RMT is recommending rejection of an offshore diving industry offer which fails to address more than two decades of pay erosion.

"For too long our members have been expected to swallow sub-inflation pay deals and suffer real-terms pay cuts, and the time has come to put that right," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

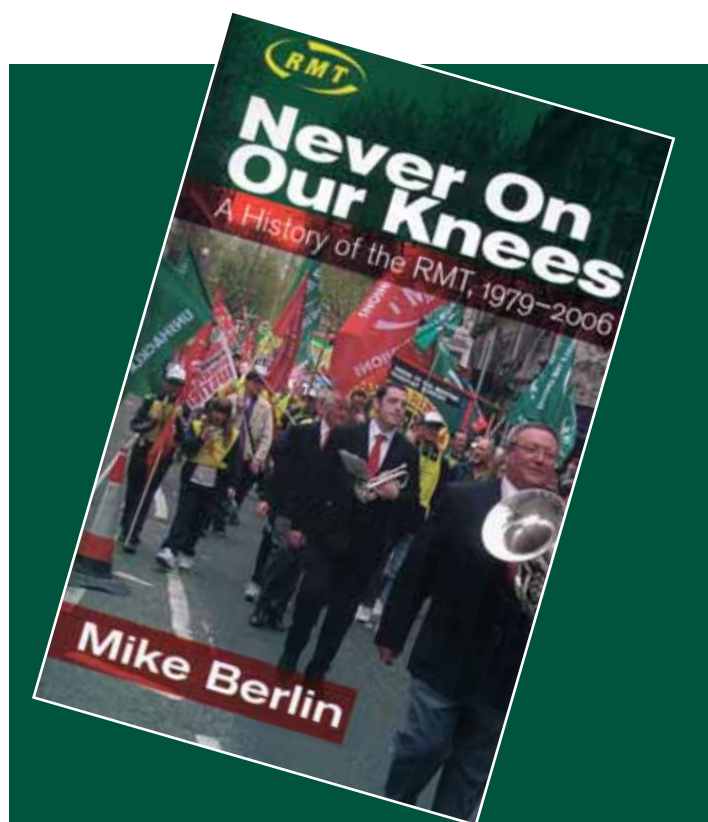
Since 1984 members have seen their pay lag by nearly 20 per cent behind UK average earnings, and the employers' offer of just 15 per cent over

three years will not resolve the problem.

Oil producers are leapfrogging each other's record profits and their earnings are measured in millions by the day it is clear that our 50 per cent pay claim is entirely reasonable and completely affordable.

"Diving is among the most demanding and short-lived of jobs in a particularly hazardous industry, and our members are telling us that they are in no mood to accept more offers of jam tomorrow," added national secretary Steve Todd.

"We are ready to talk, but when the oil companies are raking in massive profits it's time that the people at the sharp end got a fair share," Steve said. ■



A new history of the union, *Never On Our Knees* is available from Unity House at the reduced rate of £5.99 to members.

Unity House, 39 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD

NORTHFIELDS VICTORY

RMT fleet maintenance members at Northfields have stopped plans by their employer Tube Lines from imposing roster changes.

Following a failure to agree on the rosters local managers threatened to impose them so a ballot for strike action was held.

Lead negotiator and Council of Executives rep John Leach (right) held talks with management and an agreement was reached that the previous rosters would remain in place and negotiations with local reps would continue.

John said that the involvement of local reps was vital in settling the dispute.

"The members had had enough of being pushed about and stood firm.

"They were clearly prepared to take action to defend themselves and the proposed rosters were withdrawn," he said ■



PUBLIC NOT PRIVATE

The widely-supported Public Services Not Private Profit campaign has produced a highly informative pamphlet detailing the case against privatisation.

It deals in depth with the chaos wreaked within the transport sector including the privatisation and fragmentation of rail, ferry and bus networks.

There are also chapters on the damage 'liberalisation' is inflicting on the health and education sectors as well as on the fire service, broadcasting and utilities such as water and energy.

The authors, which include respected writers like professor Allyson Pollock, conclude that privatisation is more expensive for the taxpayer and represents a worse deal for the public.

RMT is already affiliated to this broad campaigning coalition which is united in one purpose – to end the sell-off of public services that millions of working people rely on.

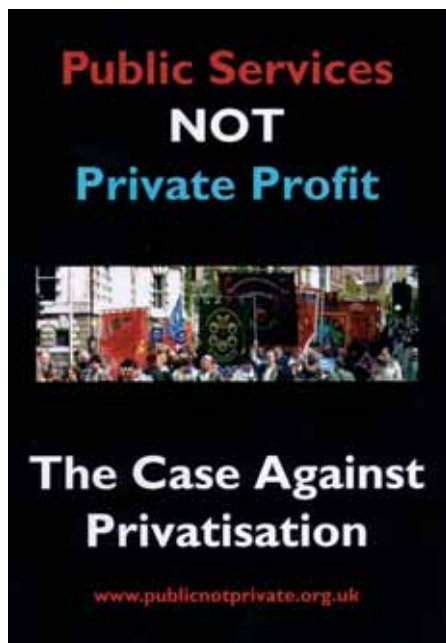
Campaign chair John McDonnell MP points out that official Labour Party policy is against further sell-offs and in support of rail renationalisation and it is time these widely-backed policies were implemented.

This is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand how the private sector does not provide safe or efficient services as claimed and how the privateers rip off the taxpaying public. ■

To order pamphlet or for more information on the PSNPP campaign go to website: www.publicnotprivate.org.uk or e-mail info@publicnotprivate.org.uk

Tel: 020 7219 1626

Address; Public Services Not Private Profit, c/o G10 Norma Shaw South, House of Commons, London SW1A 2JF



Unshackle the unions!

The 2006 RMT AGM passed a motion requesting that the union organise a National Shop Stewards Conference with the initial focus being support for the Campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill.

Saturday October 28 2006, 12 – 3pm

Camden Centre
Bidborough Street, London WC1

All trade unionists welcome
More information ring 020 7387 4771,
info@rmt.org.uk



**BRIDGEND & LLANTRISANT
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER SOUTH

BASSETLAW BRANCH

NOMINATES

DAVE GOTT

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
REGION 5

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

**LONDON UNDERGROUND
ENGINEERING BRANCH**

SUPPORTS

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR
THE JOB

**LONDON UNDERGROUND
ENGINEERING BRANCH**

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER SOUTH

THREE BRIDGES BRANCH

NOMINATES

PAUL COX

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER SOUTH

**JUBILEE SOUTH AND EAST
LONDON LINE**

SUPPORTS

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
TRIED AND TESTED CANDIDATE

**BRIDGEND & LLANTRISANT
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
TRIED AND TESTED CANDIDATE

BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

SUPPORTS

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER SOUTH

LU FLEET BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

LU FLEET BRANCH

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER - SOUTH

**JUBILEE SOUTH & EAST
LONDON LINE BRANCH**

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER (SOUTH)

THE BEST AND MOST
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

CAMDEN 3 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER (SOUTH)

HE DESERVES YOUR SUPPORT

CAMDEN 3 BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE
JOB

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER
SOUTH

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES

BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

THE TRIED AND TESTED
CANDIDATE

BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER SOUTH

THE EXPERIENCED
CANDIDATE

BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR C OF E (REGION 7)

THE COMPETENT AND CONFIDENT
CANDIDATE

(SOUTH WEST REGION 8)

SOUTHAMPTON NO 5 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETE GALE

AND RESPECTFULLY SEEKS
SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS FOR
THIS PROVEN AND EXPERIENCED
CANDIDATE

(SOUTH WEST REGION 8)

SOUTH DEVON BUS BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

PETE GALE

AND SEEKS SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FOR THIS
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

SOUTH WEST REGION 8

EXETER NO 2 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETE GALE

(SOUTH WEST REGION 8)

NEWPORT (IOW) NO 2 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETE GALE

AND RESPECTFULLY SEEKS
SUPPORT

(SOUTH WEST REGION 8)

PLYMOUTH NO 5 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETE GALE

**POOLE & DISTRICT BUS
BRANCH**

HAS PLEASURE IN NOMINATING
OUR BRANCH SECRETARY

PETE GALE

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
REGION 8

AND ASKS MEMBERS IN THE
REGION TO SUPPORT HIM

EASTLEIGH WORKSHOPS

HAS NOMINATED

PETE GALE

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
SOUTH WEST REGION 8

BASINGSTOKE NO 1

HAS NOMINATED AND SUPPORTS

PETE GALE

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
SOUTH WEST REGION 8

AND URGES MEMBERS TO GIVE
THEIR SUPPORT

MID-CORNWALL RAIL

HAS NOMINATED

PETE GALE

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
SOUTH WEST REGION 8

(SOUTH WEST REGION 8)

SALISBURY NO 3

NOMINATES

PETE GALE

AND SEEKS SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FOR THIS
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

ELECTION OF NATIONAL
PRESIDENT

SOUTHAMPTON NO 5 BRANCH

NOMINATES

RAY KNIGHT

AND RESPECTFULLY SEEKS
SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS FOR
THIS PROVEN AND EXPERIENCED
CANDIDATE

ELECTION OF RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER (SOUTH)

SOUTHAMPTON NO 5 BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

PAUL COX

AND SEEKS SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FOR THIS
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

**PICCADILLY & DISTRICT
WEST BRANCH**

NOMINATES

PETER SKELLY

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL
ORGANISER - SOUTH

**PICCADILLY & DISTRICT
WEST BRANCH**

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN LEACH

FOR PRESIDENT

JOHN HAS INTEGRITY, RESOLVE
AND PRINCIPLES AND DESERVES
YOUR SUPPORT.



Inspiration from Africa

I have just returned from the 41st International Transport Workers Federation Congress held in Durban, South Africa.

Over 1,200 delegates from all over the world attended the first ever ITF Congress to be held in Africa.

Congress consisted of preliminary sessions and also section meetings on seafaring, railways, docks, road transport, urban transport and aviation and our delegation participated in all except of aviation.

The RMT delegation consisted of myself, the general secretary, Neil Keith from our Annual General Meeting, Mark Carden and Peter Trend of the union's Executive.

Congress started with an emotional rendition of the country's national anthem – Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika (God Bless Africa) sung by the workers choir of the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu).

This was an appropriate way to open the congress, showing the solidarity of international transport workers during the long struggle to end apartheid and call for renewed campaigning for social justice for workers worldwide.

What a breath of fresh air to hear the Minister of Transport for South Africa Mpumi Mpofu offering her strong support to congress and stating that "any threat to the rights of workers anywhere in the world is a threat to workers everywhere".

She outlined how public transport improvements could bring better access to essential services for the rural poor and how the South African government wanted to keep transport in public hands. That is a lesson for our New Labour government.

The theme of the Congress was *Organising globally – fighting for our rights*.

Delegates from country after country from all continents complained bitterly

about the adverse affect on transport workers caused by deregulation, sectorisation and the privatisation of all modes of transport.

Coming from Britain, of course, we illustrated the disaster of privatisation here as we were first to experience it.

It was emphasised by delegates that whilst stating international solidarity is important; expressing it in practice is vital, as 'globalisation' is being inflicted by multinational companies attacking workers internationally, playing off one country against another.

Therefore, the ITF needs to do more by recognising and, more importantly, explaining that these huge companies are politically-motivated and profit-hungry organisations. Their aim is to turn back the clock to remove hard-won improvements made by workers over a long period.

It must be also recognised that that The World Bank, the International Monetry Fund and the World Trade Organisation are the power engines of 'globalisation' and neo-liberalism worldwide and must be combated head-on rather than the "we must work with them" approach.

Congress condemned terrorism that was causing death and injury to transport workers and a minutes silence was held for rail workers who lost their lives in Mumbai, Madrid and London over the last year.

RMT submitted an emergency motion calling for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon which was carried unanimously, and there was a call also for the Iran government to immediately release bus workers imprisoned for going on strike.

I came away from this congress with renewed inspiration that despite the worldwide problems being experienced by transport workers – workers of the world united will win in the end.

Tony Donaghey

WHY WE DON'T NEED NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament chair Kate Hudson explains why Britain should not spend billions on a new generation of nuclear weapons

Tony Blair says Britain needs nuclear weapons. More than that, he now seems to be committing us to spending billions of pounds on a new generation of nuclear weapons.

This is to replace the existing Trident nuclear weapons system when it passes its sell-by date in about twenty years time.

Debates about whether Britain actually needs nuclear weapons have been raging for decades. But with the Cold War over, more and more people are coming to the view that there is no conceivable purpose in having them. We do not face a nuclear super-power rival, and even Mr Blair agrees that they are no use against the threat of terrorism. Neither those attacking New York on September 11, nor those bombing London on July 7,

were deterred by US and UK nukes.

So if they don't meet our most urgent security purposes, what is their point? Government ministers have argued that irrespective of current security issues, Britain may face nuclear threats in the future and that we need to plan accordingly – that nuclear weapons are a kind of insurance policy. But CND argues that pursuing new nuclear weapons will actually increase the risks that we are trying to avoid. If Britain argues that it needs nuclear weapons for its security, then other countries will conclude that they need them too. A new nuclear arms race will follow, with countries rushing to achieve nuclear weapons in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world. Better by far,



in our view, to try and break out of this vicious circle now. Britain can play a role in promoting disarmament, as required by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which we and the other nuclear weapons states are signatories. Through deciding not to replace Trident, we can help kick start a process of multilateral disarmament which will prevent the development of a new nuclear arms race and potential nuclear catastrophe. Abolition of nuclear weapons is the only way to ensure that they aren't used. Treaties exist to outlaw chemical and biological weapons – now is the time to make nuclear weapons illegal too.

There is also the question of the cost of our nuclear weapons. The full cost of developing a replacement, including missiles, submarines and base facilities is estimated to be as much as £25 billion. This same sum of money is the equivalent of building about one thousand new schools at today's costs. And that's before we pay for its regular upkeep every year thereafter.

So what else could our money buy for us, if we didn't choose to spend it on weapons of mass destruction?

Thinking about the rail industry, the money spent on Trident could bring about a major transformation. The cost of re-nationalisation of the railways, for example, is put at around £25 billion – more or less the same figure as the overall cost of replacing Trident. That breaks down into around £4.5 billion to acquire trains currently owned by rolling stock companies, plus around £21 billion of nominal debt transfer in reconstituting Network Rail as a public corporation.

Consider what could be done to enhance state pensions, or to alleviate global poverty and inequality. These are choices that should be made by the British people about our spending priorities, and not behind closed doors.

We have a once in a generation possibility to get rid of Britain's nuclear weapons.

Now is the time to reassert the values of Britain's labour and trade union movement – for peace, justice and equality, not only at home, but internationally.

Helping to prevent a new nuclear arms race, and the criminal waste of resources that would go with it, would be a big step in the right direction.



JUBILEE LINE TUBE DRIVERS BALLOTTED OVER UNFAIR SACKING

Tube drivers on London Underground's Jubilee Line are being balloted for industrial action over the "blatantly unfair" sacking of a fellow driver.

RMT member Raj Nathvani, a driver with eight-and-a-half years' experience who had never previously passed a signal at danger or been involved in any safety-related incident, was dismissed after reporting that he had overrun a signal.

When Raj over-ran a signal he reported it to his controller and proceeded at caution.

"Ahead of him were green signals and no points, but he was sacked without mercy," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

The union pointed out that other drivers who had made similar errors are still driving, and some managers who have made errors have not been disciplined at all.

"LUL has breached their own procedures by refusing Raj a union rep until the actual disciplinary was heard, and by collecting evidence against him in casual emails from other staff members," Bob said.

London regional organiser Bobby Law said that RMT branch secretary and Wembley Park rep Les Bruty has now also been put on a gross disciplinary charge for a minor incident while he was driving an empty train.

"Les Bruty is being disciplined for a procedure used by Jubilee Line drivers every day, and without which no train would ever leave the depot," he said. ■

Parliamentary column

CAMPAIGNING FOR YOU

RMT works with its Parliamentary Group and regularly meets Ministers across Britain to lobby on your behalf



As RMT News goes to press, the union will be meeting the new Secretary of State for Transport Douglas Alexander MP. He has overall responsibility for transport policy and RMT representatives will discuss areas of mutual interest. The union will be seeking to raise concerns such as the structure of the railways, the future rail white paper, the environmental case for rail, bus regulation and the continued exploitation of seafarers.

The union is continuing to hold a series of meetings with Minister for Transport Dr Stephen Ladyman MP. His primary responsibilities include the shipping industry and the union is pressing the minister on key issues such as the tonnage tax, work permits, the exemption of non-UK seafarers from the Race Relations Act and minimum wage and boat master regulations.

Derek Twigg MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, has day-to-day responsibility for the railways.

RMT has already assisted in successfully arguing the case for Northern rail, for union involvement in transport security and against the fragmentation of Network Rail operations in Merseyside.

While the union has had a constructive dialogue on railway pensions and the environmental case for rail, it is still vigorously arguing for public ownership of the railways and an end to powers that give the government the option of

supporting train operating companies during disputes.

Angela Smith MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government, has responsibilities that will decide the future of the fire safety regulations introduced after the Kings Cross fire.

RMT had successfully lobbied her predecessors to delay the abolition of the regulations and for further discussion before a final decision is made. The union is seeking an urgent meeting to continue to make the case for the retention of these essential regulations.

Following devolution, the Scottish Parliament and Executive has responsibility for most of Scotland's transport policy. The union, together with the STUC, has an on-going dialogue with the Scottish Transport Minister Tavish Scott MSP on issues such as a new transport strategy for Scotland, the role of the Scottish Executive in industrial relations and the future of Caledonian MacBrayne lifeline ferry services.

RMT representatives have also been working with the Wales TUC to lobby Andrew Davies AM, the Welsh Transport Minister, and to discuss the new devolution of powers under the Government of Wales Act.

You can find out how you can support RMT campaigns by visiting the "Events and Campaigns" section of the RMT website.

ORGANISING FOR T

It's been another good year on the organising front for Britain's specialist transport union, says Gregor Gall

This last year has seen steady, secure and sizeable progress across an array of areas in terms of organising for RMT.

The most obvious measure of this has been the year-on-year increase in membership which now stands at just under 75,000.

This was a task made all the more notable by the hits the union took when the Eastleigh engineering works were closed and P&O made significant redundancies. The union has set itself the target of 100,000 members and on present performance is well on the way to getting there within its 'ten year plan'.

ORGANISING

At the same time, RMT has also set itself the goal of an organised presence in every workplace where it has members in order to knit together its growing membership.

This is the basis of what RMT means by industrial unionism -

workplace reps being the foundation of the union in the workplace.

Such recruitment, retention and organising of members has been based on an explicit strategy of putting resources into the Organising Unit which then, in turn, are focussed upon deploying the energies and participation of RMT activists and reps to recruit and organise.

In this sense, Organising Unit officers are a small cog helping to turn a much bigger cog.

Led by national co-ordinator, Alan Pottage, the Organising Unit gives structure and direction to the activists and reps' work without doing that work for them.

This has been done by establishing organising campaigns throughout RMT's eleven regions and by arranging a series of 'organising weeks' throughout the year for each region.

Organising Committees

within distinctive internal union constituencies have also been set up to allow elected RMT representatives to focus on particular recruitment and retention issues. And every union course now has a strong organising emphasis in it.

A key function of the Organising Unit has been to provide the reps and activists with the tools to do their jobs.

To this end, the union commissioned four DVDs that show RMT in action in a variety of settings. These are very much campaigning DVDs that help inspire existing, new and potential members by highlighting the campaigning, fighting, democratic and participative nature of the union.

Other tools include material to help new reps speak about

the virtues of membership at induction weeks for new employees as well as badges, pens, safety jackets and so on to make the union highly visible.

Whether the material is company/grade specific or general material, the message is always that workers can solve their problems if they combine together and use their organisational strength.

The increase in membership over the last four years has allowed RMT to invest in a state-of-the-art education centre in Doncaster which opens in early September this year. Around twenty reps will pass through it every week and demand is so great that the union has courses planned to cover the next year and a half.

Although most of the union's organising efforts are concentrated on 'in-fill' work on 'brownfield' sites, it has continued to build a presence in 'greenfield' sites and has campaigned for and won new union recognition agreements in the industry.



THE FUTURE, TODAY



CALL CENTRE

Another aspect of the Organising Unit directing and facilitating organising but not substituting itself for that organising has been the launch of the 'London Calling' RMT call centre.

Based at RMT's London headquarters at Unity House and staffed by RMT activists, the work of the call centre has led to over 1,000 lapsed members agreeing to rejoin.

The call centre is a good example of where RMT is not just concentrating on being organisationally effective and efficient – important as though that is. The call centre is also a good example of how RMT is a union based on mobilising its members to flex their collective muscle.

So, it's been used to build support for ballots for industrial action as well as gather and update member information so employers are less able to challenge the validity of industrial action ballots in order to gain injunctions.

So, organising is only one part, albeit a vital part, of what RMT does. The union is very conscious of there being a bigger purpose to the recruitment, retention and organising. Per thousand members, the union continues to be the union that has organised more ballots for industrial action and more industrial

action than almost any other union in recent years. Victories have consistently been won, whether mandates for action have had to be implemented or not. This makes real the slogan RMT uses: 'never on our knees'.

CAMPAIGNING

RMT is acutely aware that what happens outside the workplace has a critical bearing on the workplace.

To that end, it has thrown its weight behind the campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill, ensuring it had a big delegation on the London May Day march for the Bill.

It has also taken the initiative by mounting the campaign 'Rail Against Privatisation' and has strongly supported the 'Public services, not private profit' campaign led by the PCS union.

More widely, it has expanded and reinvigorated its parliamentary group, hosted a conference on the future of political representation of the working class last January and plans to hold another national conference on shop steward organisation.

So, RMT can look forward to the challenges it faces ahead not just with confidence. Crucially, it can also look forward to those challenges with the solid groundwork of organising and mobilising its members being firmly established as the way RMT does its business. ■

RMT MEMBERSHIP

Year	Number of members
2000	57,869
2001	59,277
2002	63,084
2003	67,476
2004	71,544
2005	73,477
June 2006	74,659

ORGANISING SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND

The numbers of new members recruited during the review period for the second Scottish Regional Council Organising week in June, hit an all time high of 175, between nearly four times higher than comparative periods in previous years.

These figures show how effective activity during these weeks can be and a good insight into how well the Organising Strategy is working on a day-to-day basis.

Targeted areas during the week included Initial City Link, Forth Bridge Contractors, Scotrail employees, along with others.

All showed increased membership due to the massive efforts of activists, reps, retired members

and officials all working together to cover targeted areas effectively.

RMT Organiser Donald Graham pointed out that the rise in membership in the Scottish region was not only due to the four organising weeks but also the focus being placed on recruitment. "That means having planned recruitment campaigns at branch and regional council level, RMT attendance at inductions and an awareness amongst reps of the importance of recruitment.

"The support, training and materials for activists to get out there and do it in a coordinated and effective way is working on a day-to-day basis," he said.

* Gregor Gall is Professor of Industrial Relations at Centre for Research in Employment Studies at the University of Hertfordshire.

RMT tells LUL to talk seriously about pay

London Underground must stop stalling and table an acceptable pay offer, or face the prospect of a ballot for industrial action by over 6,500 RMT members.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that more than three months after the pay anniversary there remained a massive gulf between what LUL is insisting on and what is acceptable to members.

From the start the union told London Underground that it would prefer a one-year deal but is prepared to negotiate around that, but LUL are insisting on a rigid four-year deal that members will not accept.

"LUL are also insisting that any deal, is conditional on train operators agreeing to an extra half-hour late running.

"They have even told us that they will not guarantee not to impose draconian new attendance and disciplinary measures, even if we accepted a four-year deal," Bob said.

London regional organiser Bobby Law said that the union had been asked to submit its pay claim in good time and had done so in a flexible manner but the company responded with intransigence.

"Even the private-sector Tube infrastructure companies have settled with us for better shorter-term strings-free deals, yet what LUL have put on the table would see the pay of operational staff begin to lag behind.

"Our LUL members' patience has run out and the RMT executive has therefore agreed that if LUL fails to address our concerns and table a serious offer we will ballot for strike action," Bobby said.

London Underground's four-year pay offer:

Year 1	4 per cent
Year 2	RPI plus 0.5 per cent
Year 3	RPI plus 0.6 per cent
Year 4	RPI plus 0.75 per cent

The LUL offer is also conditional on train operating staff accepting an extra half-hour late running. The company has also refused to undertake not to impose draconian new attendance and disciplinary procedures.

By contrast, in an unconditional deal, Metronet has already settled for:

Year 1	4 per cent
Year 2	RPI plus 1 per cent (subject to minimum 3.5 per cent)
Year 3	RPI plus 1 per cent (subject to minimum 3.5 per cent)

The Metronet deal also includes a minimum £1,000 pay rise to help the lowest paid which, if applied to LUL station assistants currently on £21,500, would give an increase equivalent to 4.7 per cent to the lowest-paid operational staff.



LONDON CALLING FOR LUL HARASSMENT REPS

For a number of years the union has had hard working harassment reps on LUL who have done an excellent job in assisting members subjected to harassment.

Unfortunately, harassment has not gone away and the union needs more harassment reps to assist members.

A circular has been sent to all branches within the London Transport Regional Council area asking for nominees – not just for London Underground but for Metronet and Tubelines.

Vaughan Thomas has been a harassment reps for five years and he is encouraging others to take up the challenge of

defending the rights of staff at work.

"I would urge anyone to step forward for this rewarding position that really is making a difference at the workplace, where it matters," he said.

Anyone appointed will be given training on the nature and context of harassment, the legal position, the policy and procedures, etc.

RMT believes that proper training is essential in equipping harassment reps to deal with members' problems. The very nature of harassment, means that not only is the victim subjected to stress but the harassment rep can also find



Vaughan Thomas

their role demanding. RMT aims to provide reps with proper backup to ensure they can carry out their role as best as possible.

Are you employed by the Underground, Metronet or Tubelines? Do you want to help other members? Why not contact your branch secretary or South East regional office on 0207 529 8853 to find out how to be nominated.

CANARY WHARF TUBE STAFF BALLOTTED

Station staff in London Underground's Canary Wharf station group have been balloted for industrial action over a catalogue of issues including systematic harassment and the victimisation of union reps.

The union has noted that new attendance procedures have been imposed outside existing agreements and without any pretence of negotiation.

London regional organiser Bobby Law said that the Canary Wharf group is supposed to be LUL's showpiece station group, but managers seemed to be out of control and industrial relations have broken down.

He said that one RMT member has been medically terminated from employment despite being passed as fit to return to work by LUL's own occupational health people.

A female member of staff was sexually assaulted on the barrier only to suffer constant harassment from management and gay staff members are routinely discriminated against.

A RMT learner rep has been harassed, along with the workplace colleagues who have supported him, and management have refused to release the union's health and safety rep to undertake duties.

"Each of these problems is unacceptable, but taken together they are an appalling catalogue of harassment and victimisation that must be stopped," Bobby said.

Your Union

This month RMT News looks at the role of the union's executive committee



PARLIAMENT: The union is run between annual general meetings by the executive committee and the general secretary.

The "supreme government of the union", the Annual General Meeting, meets for one week in the year.

So what happens for the other fifty-one weeks?

The union is run by the Council of Executives (or 'the Executive'), which consists of the president, the general secretary, two assistant general secretaries and fifteen representatives: eleven from the General Grades (ie former NUR) and four from the Shipping Grades (ie former NUS).

A detailed list of the powers and responsibilities of the Council of Executives can be found in the Rule Book in Rule four: broadly speaking, it is responsible for the general administration of the union.

WHO'S WHO?

The general and shipping grades representatives stand for election in a geographical area and get elected for a three-year term of office.

During this time, the General Grades representatives are released from work, paid a salary by the union and work from Unity House for most of the week.

Shipping Grades representatives do not get

release other than to attend specific meetings, conferences or other events, subject to negotiation with their employers.

Under rule, the Council of Executives is required to meet four times a year. These are known as the statutory meetings, or 'stats', and take place every quarter.

Additional meetings are held as necessary. In addition, the General Grades representatives and the Shipping Grades representatives have their own meetings, dealing with items relevant to the grades they represent: the Council of Executives is the only body that can deal with matters affecting the whole of the Union's membership.

A record of the decisions made in all these meetings is sent to branches every month. Branches can appeal to the Annual General Meeting against decisions made by the Council of Executives.

This sounds like a lot of meetings, and it is. However, this is the way in which the business of the union is dealt with, whether it be discussing the progress of a particular set of pay negotiations, formulating recruitment strategy, deciding

what motions to put on the agenda of the TUC Congress or setting the membership subscription rates.

ELECTIONS

Donny Shannon of Glasgow No's 1 & 2 branch was recently elected to the General Grades position on the Council of Executives representing Scotland, to fill the vacancy created by Frank Cochrane's untimely and tragic death.

Donny has worked in the rail industry since the age of 16, when he started work as a junior in a signal box.

He is currently a stores team leader at Glasgow Queen Street, working for ScotRail.

He has always been active in the union, and is secretary of the Scotland Regional Council, chair of his branch as well as a Company Council and local level representative.

Donny sees being on the Council of Executives as a new challenge and is looking forward to making decisions on behalf of the Union's membership.

"It is a great responsibility," he says, "and with that responsibility comes accountability to the membership".



Donny Shannon of Glasgow No's 1 & 2 branch

Members of the Council of Executives are elected by all the members in the geographical area they represent and, as such, they are accountable to that membership.

They attend and make regular reports to their Regional Councils, as well as being involved in their Region's recruitment activities.

It is at these meetings that they can be asked for further details about issues that have been dealt with and, if necessary, called to account for their decisions.

As Regional Council secretary, Donny is well aware of the importance of having one of the people taking the decisions present at the meeting to make the report.

He also makes it clear that, like other members of the executive, he will be more than willing to attend branch meetings to talk about issues of particular interest to that branch.

ACT NOW TO STOP THE EAST LONDON LINE SELL-OFF

Privatisation has proved an unmitigated disaster for Britain's railway network.

The Public Private Partnership on London Underground has also created a fragmented network with frequent service disruptions.

That is why RMT is

campaigning against moves by Transport for London to privatise the East London Line by 2010.

RMT believes that privatisation will exacerbate fragmentation and will be the thin end of the wedge, with other lines and services being threatened with sell-off in future.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Write to Mayor Livingstone expressing concern at the plans and to your MP to ask them to sign early day motion 2398 against the sell-off of the East London Line. Model letters are below and can be downloaded from www.rmt.org.uk under campaigns.
- Become a supporter of the campaign to defend the East London Line. Email: info@rmt.org.uk.

Ken Livingstone
Mayor Of London
City Hall
The Queens Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mayor Livingstone

East London Line Privatisation

As you will be aware the 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. Despite the opposition of senior London Underground management, Transport for London has announced that they wish to see the East London Line Extension operated by a private train operating company.

On 7th June TfL announced that four private sector bidders (National Express; MTR Laing; NedRail; and Govia) had been short-listed to operate the North London Railway and the extended East London Line.

I welcome 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, but I think that the needs of London will be better served by the line remaining in the public sector.

Opposition to the privatisation of rail services is fully supported by the rail unions, the TUC and Labour Party policy. A number of London Labour MPs have already signed an early day motion to keep the East London Line in the public sector.

TfL's partial justification for the privatisation is that it wishes to link the East London Line with the North London Rail. However there is no physical or technical reason why this cannot be done by retaining the East London Line within London Underground control.

Private train operators have been a disaster for Britain's railways; whilst subsidy and profits have increased, services remain worse than those provided under public ownership. This mistake should not be repeated with the East London Line. I want all public subsidy and fare box revenue spent on improvements to train services, not profit for greedy train operators.

The Public Private Partnership on the London Underground has already created a fragmented network with frequent service disruptions caused by late running engineering works. Any moves to privatise the East London Line will exacerbate that fragmentation.

There may be a view that this is a one-off privatisation of Underground passenger operations but the proposals could be the thin edge of the wedge. Once one line is privatised it's easier to argue for the privatisation of more tube lines.

I look forward to hearing from you on the points I have raised.

Yours sincerely

XXXXXX MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1A 0AA

Dear XXX

East London Line Privatisation

The East London Line, used by 10.4 million passengers a year, is currently part of the London Underground network.

In December 2007 the line will close in order that phase 1 of the East London Line Extension project can be completed. The line will extend north into Hackney and South to West Croydon and is due to re-open in 2010.

However, once re-opened, it is proposed that the Line will no longer be operated by the publicly owned London Underground Limited but will instead be privatised and run by a private sector rail company.

Already the Public Private Partnership on the London Underground has created a fragmented network with frequent service disruptions caused by late running engineering works. The decision to privatise the East London Line will exacerbate that fragmentation and could be the thin-end of the wedge with other lines and services being threatened with sell-off in the future.

Furthermore, the privatisation of the national rail network has proved to be an expensive failure. Subsidies and unit costs have soared and in 2004/05 the private train companies made operating profits of more than £300million. I believe that it would be wholly wrong to make the passengers and staff who travel and work on the East London Line suffer the same failed privatised experience.

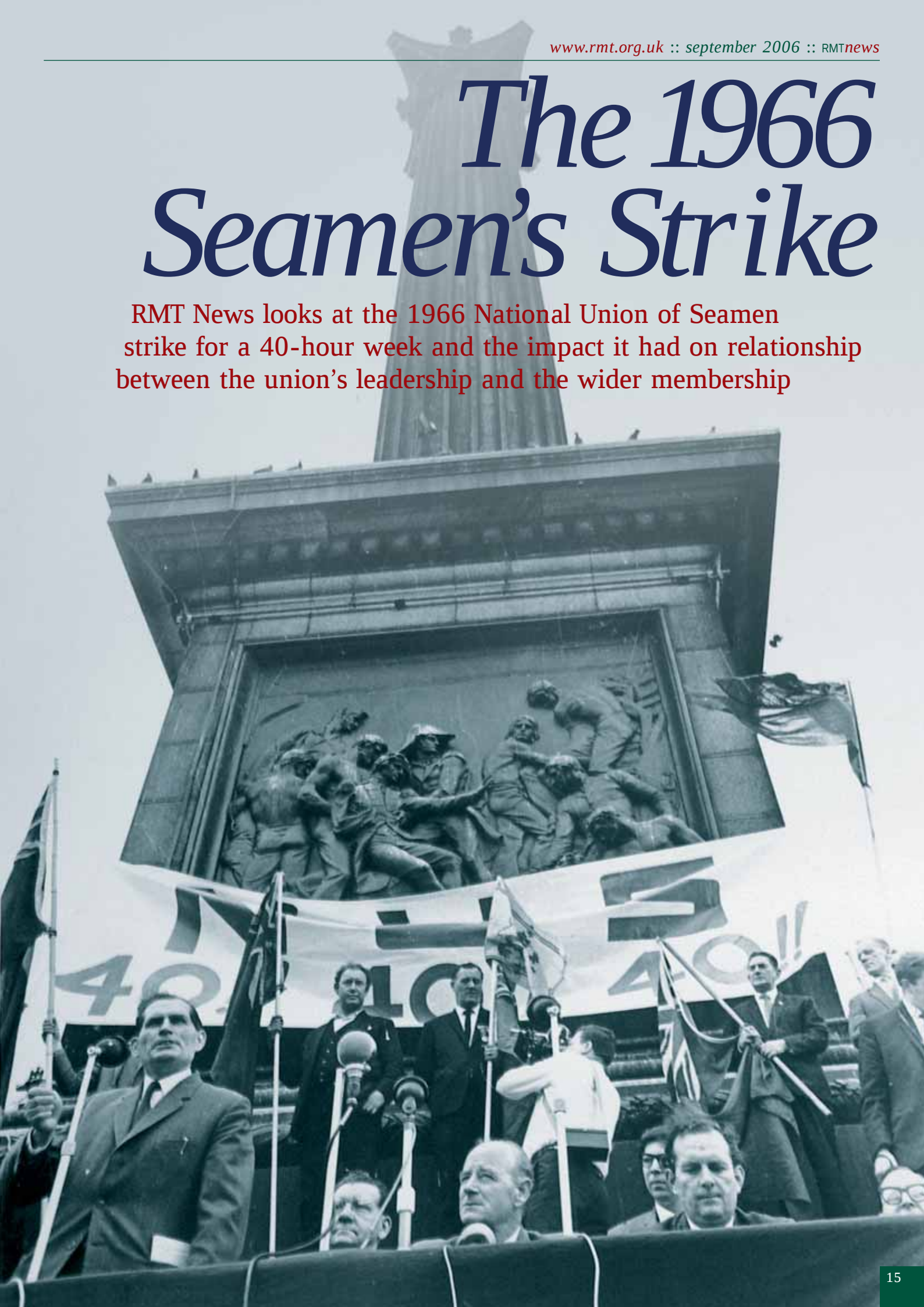
Early Day Motion 2398 has recently been tabled in the House of Commons and as one of your constituents I would urge you to sign the motion and support the retention of the East London Line in the public sector.

I look forward to your reply.



The 1966 Seamen's Strike

RMT News looks at the 1966 National Union of Seamen strike for a 40-hour week and the impact it had on relationship between the union's leadership and the wider membership



After the Second World War workplace bargaining started to become more common place.

However, in industries such as UK shipping, where authority had traditionally been centralised, the move to more fluid systems of bargaining was more difficult.

The National Maritime Board laid down uniform rates of pay and conditions of service for seamen, and in the 1960s all negotiations were conducted by paid full time officials.

The union played little role in relationships on-board ship and matters relating to discipline were still governed by the antiquated laws of the 1894 Merchant Shipping Act.

Seamen had no rights to joint representation as absolute authority rested with the Master with very limited rights for seamen to seek redress.

The system built by the former NUS General Secretary, Havelock Wilson, was protected not just by the shipowners but also the NUS leadership. Indeed it was felt that officials together with the headquarters of the NUS were unresponsive to the many legitimate grievances of members on board ship.

DISCONTENT

It was against this background of growing discontent that 1960 saw the formation of the National Seamen's Reform Movement (NSRM) and two unofficial stoppages.

The second stoppage, over the inadequate pay increase negotiated by the leadership, involved thousands of NUS members and spread throughout ports up and down the country.

The dispute led to growing support for the NSRM whose core demands were for improved pay, reduced working hours, Sunday work to be paid as overtime, elected shipboard representation, increased annual leave and no victimisation from the shipowners or disciplinary action from the NUS.

Unfortunately, following the dispute, many NSRM activists were blacklisted from future employment in the industry, with several being sent to prison, and with no protest from the NUS leadership.

The general secretary at the time of the 1966 strike was Bill Hogarth. Like his predecessors, he was elected on the plural voting system that gave four votes to members with fifteen

years membership of the union. This cast doubt as to whether Hogarth actually received more individual votes than Jim Slater, the NSRM candidate, in the 1962 election.

The dispute in 1966 was the first official NUS strike since 1911 and at the time was the third longest strike in British industrial history.

It lasted for seven weeks and sent tremors throughout the labour movement.

It also led to Prime Minister Harold Wilson shamefully denouncing certain NUS activists as 'politically-motivated men' who sought to bring down the government's prices and incomes policy.

FOR A 40-HOUR WEEK

The 1966 dispute came about due to the determination of members to end the 56-hour working week at sea.

The length of the working week had been reduced to 44 hours in 1961, and Saturday afternoons and Sundays were classed as overtime. However on-shore the norm was 40.

In 1965, Hogarth negotiated a significant pay rise for seamen but in return weekend working would no longer be paid.

The resulting National Maritime Board agreement resulted in a 56-hour working week with no extra pay for Saturdays and Sundays.

The executive deemed that a narrow majority of branch meetings had voted to accept the 1965 agreement being sold to them by the NUS leadership and it was accepted in March 1965.

However by the end of the year membership opposition to the 56-hour working week was growing and at the start of 1966 the NUS Executive sought to recover the situation. At its first meeting with the shipowners tabled the following claim:

- A weekly wage of £14 for an AB for a 40-hour week based on five days out of seven, with a maximum of seven hours in any one day.
- Strike action to be used if necessary to achieve these aims.



At the end of negotiations the shipowners final offer was for the achievement of a forty hour week but only in three 12 month stages. However, the shipowners also proposed that payment for Sundays at sea would be withdrawn and instead compensatory leave granted.

This would have resulted in an overall reduction from 53 to 36 days leave with a consequent financial loss. In addition, the union would not be able to negotiate any further pay rises for the next two years.

STRIKE

The NUS Annual General Meeting held at the beginning of May in Worthing unanimously endorsed the Executive Council decision to call a national stoppage starting on May 16 1966. In the intervening period, desperate attempts were made by the government to persuade the NUS to leadership not to go ahead including a personal meeting with Harold Wilson.

Once the strike started it did not take long before hundreds of ships were tied up.

The strength of the dispute grew towards the end of May and throughout June so that by June 28 nearly 900 ships and 26,000 NUS members were on strike, 40 per cent of the NUS membership.

Six days after the strike began a State of Emergency was declared and the Ministry of Labour set up the Pearson Inquiry to examine the shipping industry and the conditions of merchant seamen.

On June 7 the NUS called for the International Transport Workers Federation to embargo all British flag ships throughout the world and for the TUC to do the same for all vessels trading on the British Coast.

The report from the Pearson Inquiry recommended that the 40-hour week be achieved within two years as opposed to the three that the shipowners offered, and for a further three days leave to be granted.

This would still have resulted in the loss of paid leave due to the withdrawal of payment for

Sundays at sea, and crucially the 40-hour week was not forthcoming, and its findings were therefore rejected.

The union also believed that the report had been compiled in haste for political reasons in an effort to get the strike called off with insufficient account being taken of the NUS evidence, in particular that relating to shipowners profits and the poor conditions at sea which seamen endured.

This was all the more disappointing due to the fact that the Chair of the TUC Finance and General Purposes Committee, Joe O' Hagan, was on the inquiry.

The NUS demand was simple, a 40-hour week now, not in two years.

After the rejection of the Pearson report and the predictable rejection by government of a TUC proposal to agree funding for a subsidy to fund the introduction of the 40-hour week earlier, the TUC withdrew support for the strike on June 22 with the ITF following soon after.

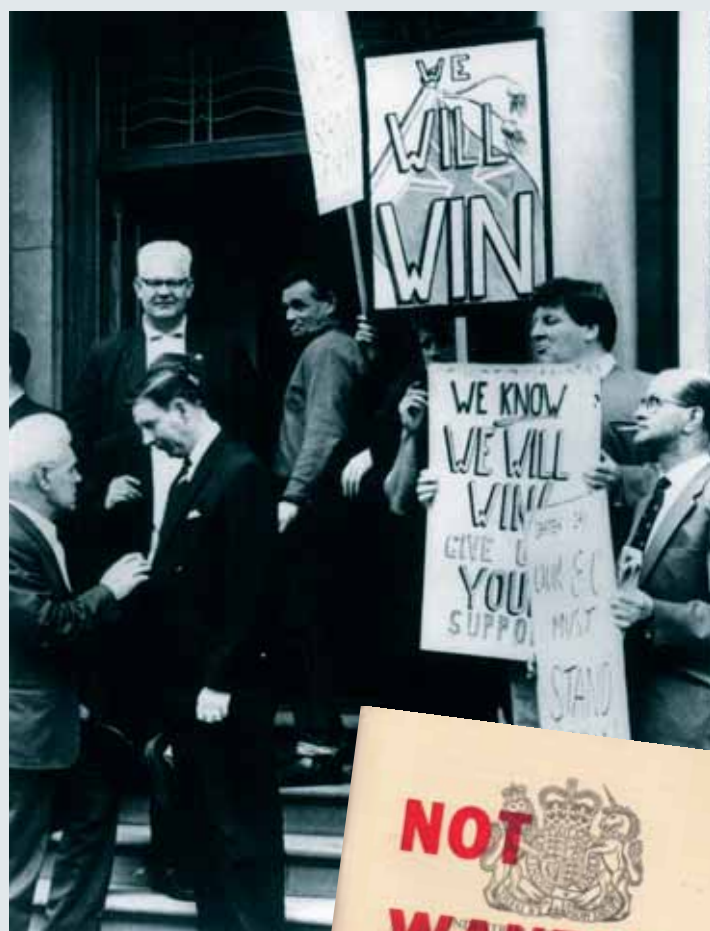
Yet, the determination of the seamen to achieve a just settlement remained and there was strong support from across the country and abroad with trade union and Labour Party branches passing resolutions and raising collections around the country.

However, support from leading figures in other transport unions, was not forthcoming.

After the dissatisfaction with the Pearson Report, NUS activists published 'Not Wanted on Voyage', the Seamen's reply, which eloquently set out the NUS case and sought to expose the bias in the Pearson Report.

On June 20 Wilson made his famous speech on 'politically motivated men' in the House of Commons. The national press made the most of Wilson's remarks to pile pressure on the union to call off the strike.

Bill Hogarth began to seek a way out of the dispute and the executive agreed to a TUC suggestion that a meeting be held with the shipowners.



At the meeting the shipowners proposed an increase in annual leave, from thirty nine days as proposed by the Pearson report to forty eight days, although there was no further movement on progress towards the 40-hour week.

The Executive Council initially sanctioned the offer as a basis for negotiation and voted by 29 votes to 16 to suspend the action for one year to allow for the Court of Inquiry to investigate the NUS claim and allow for more negotiations.

The decision to go back to work was greeted with anger by members.

However, the Inquiry did subsequently examine the role of the 1894 Merchant Shipping Act in shipboard relations and changes were made.

The strike is remembered fondly by NUS activists. For a long time seamen had been treated as second class citizens and today there are still many employment rights taken for



Available free from Unity House

granted by shore-based workers and denied to seamen.

The strike showed that the seamen were prepared to fight back and reclaim their union. No member of the NUS broke the strike and collectively the membership went out on strike and returned to work as one.

The struggle for increased democracy and effective representation carried on after the 1966 strike and culminated in the election of Jim Slater as general secretary in 1974. ■

GORDON NORRIS AND THE 1966 STRIKE

NUS member Gordon Norris was a thorn in the side of the NUS leadership for many years as a participant in the National Seamen's Reform Movement

Originally, Gordon had gone to sea when he resided in Australia in the late 1940s and 1950s.

He had become involved in the Australian seamen's union and the experience served to prepare him for the struggle in the UK shipping industry.

When he returned to the UK he had intended to stay for only one year but he got sucked into the fight for improved pay and conditions for British seamen.

The general secretary at the time of the unofficial strikes in 1960 was Sir Tom Yates. His attitude, and indeed that of his successor Jim Scott, was to slam the NSRM as seeking to promote disruption and the overthrow of worthy constitutional procedures.

The involvement of Gordon Norris and other Communist Party members such as Jack Coward served to confirm their distrust of the reform movement.

At the time there was no shipboard representation and the position of activists seeking change was very difficult.

They faced opposition from the shipowners and a leadership of the NUS which sought to crush dissent.

If they raised issues in shipboard meetings they could be singled out and blacklisted from the industry.

This was the fate of many activists following the unofficial disputes in 1960.

It is also evident that individuals within the NUS headquarters assisted in monitoring the activities of Gordon Norris, even in collusion with the secret services.

The imposition of the 56-hour week then served as the

catalyst which started the 1966 strike. After four weeks of action there were facing difficulties discharging cargo due to all the ships tied up side by side in key ports.

On June 20 1966 PM Harold Wilson made his famous speech about 'politically-motivated men'.

He stated that in his view a few individuals had sought to bring pressure on a select few on the NUS Executive who he believed dominated the majority and together with their organisation in port strike committees kept the dispute going.

Eight days later he went on to name individuals:

"I have referred to the numerical weakness of the communists in the NUS. Yet, despite this, as soon as the strike began, they were successful in ensuring that the chairmanships of the strike committees in the country's two major ports, London and Liverpool, were taken by two communists, Mr Jack Coward and Mr Roger Woods.

"Again, in the unions negotiating machinery, a leading member of the negotiating committee, not himself a member of the executive council, who was elected from the floor at the annual general conference, was also a highly articulate and effective communist, Mr Gordon Norris....."

A handful of Communist party members and sympathisers were prominent during the strike but it could hardly be said that they kept the dispute going when the determination of the



Gordon speaks at the time of the strike



Gordon addressing this year's AGM on the history of the strike

membership was so evident up and down the country.

However, the press made the most of Wilson's remarks to pile pressure on the union to call off the strike and this was one of the main reasons why Wilson made this unprecedented intervention.

At the 2006 RMT's Annual General Meeting in Dublin, Gordon gave delegates an interesting insight into the strike and the use of the state against the seamen during the dispute.

He referred to the involvement of the secret services and it is evident from

parts of the speech by Wilson (Hansard June 28 1966) that the government had extensive knowledge of Gordon and other key activists that could only have come from government surveillance.

With the state also playing such a prominent role in the 1984/85 miners strike, this will not come as a surprise.

After the dispute ended Gordon served on the NUS Executive for a period of time before taking up employment on-shore and he has remained active in the trade union and labour movement. ■

Bring GNER back in-house to save jobs and rail services

The union has demanded that East-coast mainline franchise GNER be brought back under public control immediately to stop jobs and rail services falling victim to the financial crisis engulfing its parent company SeaContainers.

RMT made the call as SeaContainers' implemented an effective freeze on recruitment and announced that it wants to get rid of half of the 300 ticket office staff. There are similar concerns over the future of station staff, on-train personnel and maintenance workers.

The company has been struggling with a huge debt burden and if SeaContainers runs aground, the government will be forced to effectively re-nationalise the flagship service.

The company had seen GNER as a cash cow and is making desperate attempts to squeeze a profit from GNER's rail operations including further sharp fares hikes, service cuts and a wholesale attack on jobs

and conditions.

"SeaContainers were only ever interested in this franchise to wring as much money out of it as possible, but their current financial crisis makes matters even worse and it is absolute madness to allow a supposedly profitable franchise to be butchered," said general secretary Bob Crow.

GNER's passengers have already had to endure a massive 8.8 per cent hike in unregulated fares this year, but now the company plans to slash staff as well.

"RMT will resist with every means at our disposal job cuts that are aimed solely at squeezing profits to satisfy SeaContainers' debtors and shareholders.

"We hope that passengers will also resist the attacks on their services and support the only sensible course, which is to bring the franchise back into the public sector, and keep it there," Bob said. ■



RMT DEFENDS SAFETY STANDARDS ON THE RIVER THAMES



RMT has been campaigning against proposals to remove standards for licensed Thames watermen and lightermen introduced following the Marchioness disaster in 1989, which claimed 51 lives.

The union's parliamentary group has put down Early Day Motion 2266, which has been signed by 55 MPs, pointing out that Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) proposals will devalue the safety knowledge and experience needed to work on the river.

The revisions are being made in order to comply with a new European Union Directive on harmonising boatmasters licences which does not allow for the application of higher standards.

Parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell MP has urged the government to

ensure that competency standards and qualifying service time for boat masters operating on the Thames are no less than the current standards for time-served watermen and lightermen.

RMT Thames watermen representative Paul Baker has made representations at meetings of the MCA Working Group supported by general secretary Bob Crow, shipping secretary Steve Todd and John McDonnell.

A meeting has also been held with the Minister responsible for the proposed changes Stephen Ladyman and a group of London Labour MPs have now written to the Minister expressing their concerns.

You can help the campaign by asking your MP to sign Early Day Motion 2266. ■

AGM REPORT DUBLIN 2006

More RMT News reports from AGM

FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM

AGM backed the campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill and demanded the complete repeal of the Thatcher-era anti-union laws.

General secretary Bob Crow condemned Prime Minister Tony Blair for boasting that Britain had the most restrictive labour laws in the Western world.

Bakerloo Line delegate Brian Munro said that the massive demonstration in London on May Day showed the depth of support for workers' rights – based on the slogan “workers’

rights are human rights”.

Brian said that the bosses were determined to “shackle” workers, with the connivance of government.

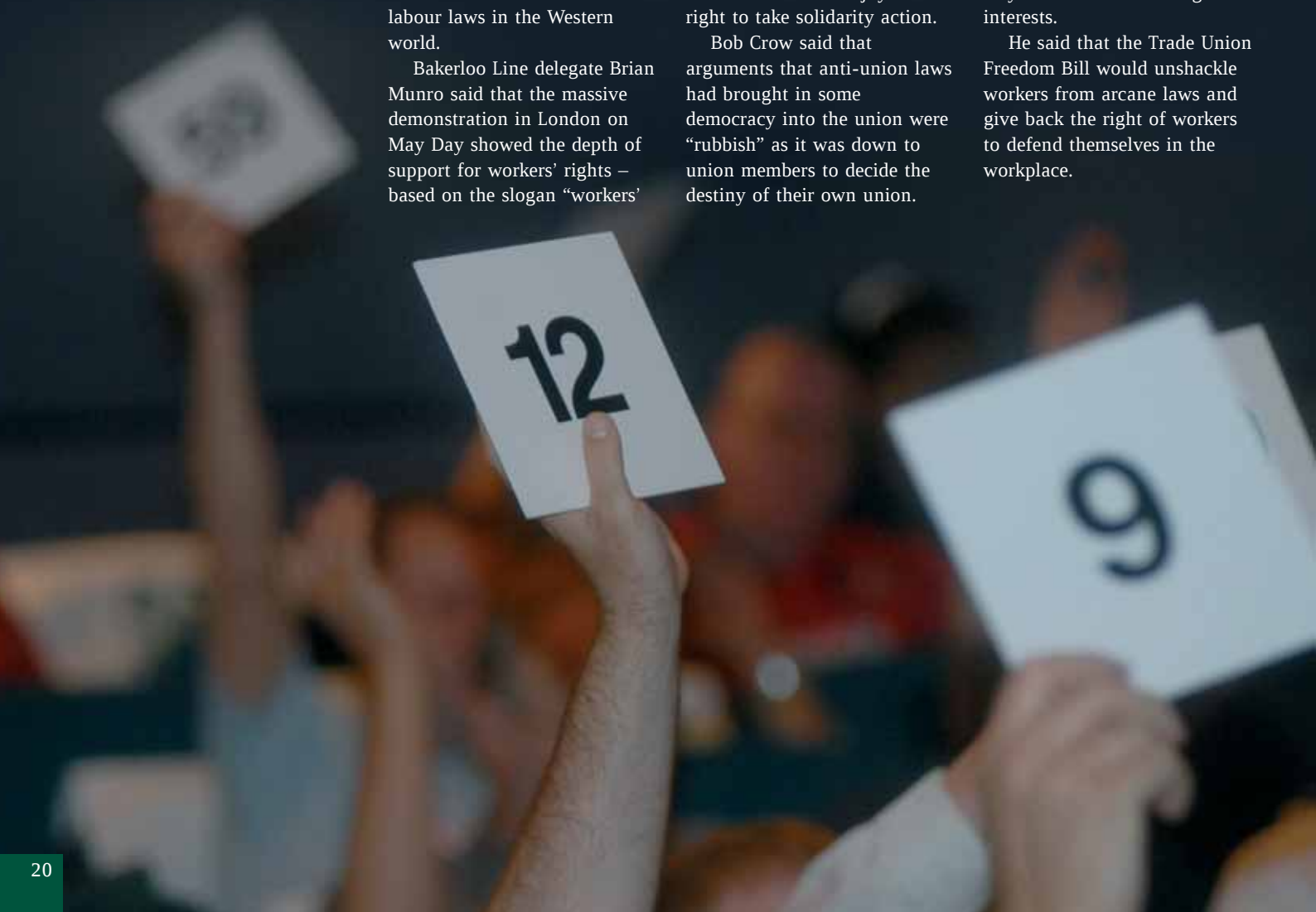
He argued that everyone should have the right to join and participate in a trade union – and should also enjoy the right to take solidarity action.

Bob Crow said that arguments that anti-union laws had brought in some democracy into the union were “rubbish” as it was down to union members to decide the destiny of their own union.

“It’s alright for bosses to get together to break strike action by bringing in labour from elsewhere, but if trade unionists do the same thing it is deemed illegal,” he said.

He said that the laws were designed to put obstacle in the way of workers defending their interests.

He said that the Trade Union Freedom Bill would unshackle workers from arcane laws and give back the right of workers to defend themselves in the workplace.



AGM 2006

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Delegates voted to step up the battle against privatisation and called for the renationalisation of the railways and all other public utilities.

AGM condemned the immense profits being made on the back of PPP and PFI schemes, even as public services continued to decay, and noted that the government appeared determined to ignore Labour conference calls for an end to privatisation.

Camden delegate Mick Crossey said that “everything that moves these days seems to be privatised”, with the government never learning that it does not improve services.

Mike revealed that of the £40 billion being spent on investment by the government, a massive £26 billion is “privatisation money”, going to PFI projects and company profits.

Bridgend delegate Peter

Skelly noted that this is happening in the face of public opinion – citing a recent poll which showed that only 17 per cent of British people wanted more private involvement.

General secretary Bob Crow said: “We want to take the industries back for the many out there. Why should a few take these profits when we can give them to all the people of this country?” ■



Mick Crossey



Mick Cash

We are not porters!

Delegates called for a full review of the disabled passenger assistance booking system after hearing that it was vague and open to abuse.

Hull Rail delegate Pete March said that he was concerned at the growing minority of cases where able-bodied passengers demanded help carrying their luggage.

Pete revealed that the wife of a “certain Hull MP” frequently turned up at his station demanding a “porter” – even though such grades no longer existed.

“She doesn’t need any help, she just wants a lackey to carry her shopping,” he said.

Pete called for a national template for the booking system and for information on its requirements to be made available to all passengers.

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski agreed that there was no coherent national programme for the system, which he said was merely a fig leaf to give the impression that the privateers were fulfilling their requirements under disability discrimination laws ■

INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE

LUL Signal Electrical and Track delegate Paul O’Brien led calls to improve the minimum wage.

AGM backed demands for an end to the lower rate for 18-21 year olds and for 16-17 year olds to enjoy the protection of a minimum wage – and for the rate to be set at an increased level for all.

“You shouldn’t be discriminated against just because of your age,” Paul argued. ■

PROTECTING TIME OFF

AGM called to protect the right to time off among docks and shipping workers.

Dover shipping delegate Chris Fuller warned that seafarers were often exempted from EU legislation on working hours, noting that he was required to hang around without pay while bosses used his certification to run the ships.

He said that forcing workers to remain at post while waiting their relief to turn up was unacceptable and the AGM agreed to campaign to end this practice. ■

DEFEND COUNCIL HOUSING

Delegates condemned the government’s ongoing refusal to tackle the housing crisis yesterday and reaffirmed the union’s support for the Defend Council Housing (DCH) campaign.

AGM attacked new Labour’s “tinkering” with the crisis by offering initiatives for “key workers” such as doctors and teachers in cities. It argued that transport workers should also be considered key workers.

Bakerloo Line delegate Brian Munro said that new Labour is decimating council housing stocks through privatisation and “holding tenants to ransom” through its refusal to fund

repairs and improvements unless they vote for “stock transfers.”

“RMT must fight for all its members but must also realise that only council housing can solve this crisis,” he insisted.

RMT senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that the union will continue to support DCH and oppose stock transfer.

He said that it was already urging transport workers to be included in the key workers scheme by placing pressure on the London Assembly and in Westminster through the RMT Parliamentary Group. ■

AGM 2006

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

AGM voted unanimously to affiliate to the Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO).

MOJO was established to assist innocent people after their release from prison and to provide an advocacy service for those unfortunates still languishing in jail.

It is committed to

establishing a retreat to help "depressurise" victims and prepare them for their return to society.

Camden No 3 delegate Mick Crossey said that high-profile cases such as that of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six received much press coverage, but there were

also hundreds of less well-known cases.

"MOJO gives those people hope, help and support. This is in many ways more important than compensation – you cannot truly compensate people for time wrongly spent inside," he said. ■

NORDIC SOLIDARITY

Swedish seafaring union SEKO leader Thomas Abrahamsson told AGM that a more internationalist labour movement is vital to counter the threat of globalisation.

Thomas said that Swedish workers are facing the same threats as their British counterparts from privatisation, deregulation "and a wide system of public tendering where the public pay twice over for what they once owned."

"Maybe we must think the unthinkable and organise internationally - signing international collective bargaining agreements," he suggested.

"It is easier said than done, but I think we have to do it - this international globalised capital, if left alone, will eventually destroy the planet and we are the only counter-force," he said. ■

IN UNITY WITH TSSA

TSSA general secretary Gerry Doherty pledged to fight alongside RMT in its campaign for justice.

Gerry said that he could not find any reference of a TSSA representative addressing an NUR/RMT conference.

However, he said that although differences between the unions had caused problems in the past now "the iceberg is melting".

He urged RMT and TSSA members to recognise that there was more that united than divided them, insisting: "The bosses are the enemy".

"Unity is strength and if we don't stand together we will fall together," he said.

He described the recent

battles over the future of the railway pension fund and how he and Bob Crow had agreed they would stand "shoulder to shoulder" over the issue.

He said that the privatisation had proved a disaster and pledged to work with RMT to

defend the terms and conditions of transport workers.

Bob thanked Gerry for addressing AGM and reiterated that a real opportunity existed in which to leave the past behind and build a more united workers movement. ■



Gerry Doherty

Danes fight

Danish seafaring union Fagilt Dfaelles Forbund general secretary Henrik Berlau launched a stinging attack on globalisation.

Henrik warned that shipping bosses' tactic of farming out work to the "so-called new economies" left millions unemployed in the developed world and caused super-exploitation in the developing world.

"Protection that took the trade union movement a hundred years to build has been destroyed in a matter of years – and there is more to come," he said.

"The lowest common denominator is what is ruling the world today. The one that is prepared to work the cheapest is the one that will get the job. It is again worker against worker," he said.

Far from helping the developed world, Henrik added, globalisation is about "cheap labour and the freedom to treat your workers however you please."

He called on RMT to back the fight against exploitation – particularly in the shipping industry – and to participate in the creation of an international sea ratings' forum. ■

BELGIAN FIGHT AGAINST EU 'LIBERALISATION'

Belgian public service union BGGSB president Michel Abdissi brought fraternal greetings from Brussels.

Michel stressed that he was not hailing from "the Brussels where the European Commission is doing its damage, but the social Brussels, the heart of the Belgian trade union movement".

He revealed how the EU is trying to break up and privatise the Belgian rail network and stressed that "we have to fight the monster of liberalisation – we have to fight for safety and workers' rights". ■

LATVIAN FIGHT AGAINST 'SOCIAL DUMPING'

AGM gave a warm welcome to Latvian Railway Transport Industry union leader Savelijs Semijonovs.

Speaking in Russian through an interpreter, he said that the Latvian rail industry faced the same problems as its British counterpart, particularly since its entry into the European Union.

Savelijs pointed out that a harmonised labour market paid no attention to the fact that wages were much lower in Latvia, leading to workers moving abroad for work and "social dumping", where cheap east European labour is being used to drive down wages in the west. ■

AGM 2006

OZ DOCKERS' RESIST

Maritime Union of Australia national secretary Paddy Crumlin brought fraternal greetings to AGM and detailed the challenges facing his country's seafarers.

Paddy said that the only way to reverse the attacks on workers' rights was to develop strong unions – both nationally and internationally.

"That's what the bosses are doing – they are all pulling together," he noted, pointing out

that publicly-owned assets are being sold off to transnationals who then sell them back to "customers".

Condemning the war in Iraq as "stupidity upon stupidity", he said that Tony Blair and his Australian counterpart John Howard's economic ideals were equally stupid.

He said that such people hated unions because they stand for the values like justice, democracy, community values

and fairness – while Blair and Howard build up their empty claims into a "tower of bullshit".

"They resent the fact that our unions not only stand for those values but we are prepared to get out into the workplace and the community and do something about it," he said.

He insisted that the only way to turn the tide was to unite globally against the forces of "corruption". ■

REPARATIONS

AGM backed calls for the British government to acknowledge and pay reparations towards the victims of the African slave trade.

On behalf of the black and ethnic advisory committee, **Glenroy Watson** said that "no nation that enslaves another is free. The legacy of our enslavement as Africans permeates through the world".

He said that the trade union movement was an essential part of the campaign for recognition and understanding.

Bristol delegate Robin White said that the biggest gesture that European countries could do in terms of reparations was to abolish third world debt. ■

SOLIDARITY WITH LATIN AMERICA

Delegates hailed the progressive developments taking place across Latin America including the Hugo Chavez government in Venezuela and the newly-elected Evo Morales regime in Bolivia.

AGM praised the governments for their refusal to "kow-tow" to US imperialism and unfair "free trade"

agreements.

Bridgend delegate Peter Skelly noted that the Caracas government had poured millions into health and education programmes, virtually wiping out illiteracy in Venezuela and saving many thousands of lives.

He observed that "Operation Miracle" – which provides free eye treatment – was on course

to restore the sight of 4.5 million people over the next decade.

Peter praised the Morales government for wresting control of its natural gas and oil resources back from rapacious transactional companies.

AGM unanimously agreed to affiliate to the Bolivia Solidarity Campaign. ■

SUPPORTING IRANIAN WORKERS

Delegates declared their solidarity with Iran's embattled trade union movement yesterday and pledged to offer their assistance in the Iranian labour movement's struggle for the right to organise.

Bristol delegate Robin White noted that the union has "historically supported oppressed workers around the world" and explained the dire situation

facing members of the Sherkate Vahed – the Tehran Bus Company Union.

Robin said that Sherkate Vahed's president was still in jail after being arrested in January for organising a bus workers' strike in Tehran. Since then, hundreds of Iranian trade unionists have been persecuted.

He said that on May 1 another 13 trade unionists were

arrested. They were released soon afterwards, following protests from the international labour movement, but a month later were charged with acting against the nation's security.

Despite Iran being a signatory to the International Labour Organisation, workers' rights were still heavily restricted and strikes remained illegal, added Robin.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that the Iranian government was repeatedly "sticking two fingers up" at international labour standards and constantly "brutalising" working people.

He promised unstinting support for Iran's trade unionists and pledged to send a letter to Sherkate Vahed offering solidarity and assistance. ■



AGM 2006

YOUNG MEMBERS IN DUBLIN

The annual young member's course this year was held in Dublin on the margins of the AGM in the SIPTU building on the 12th floor overlooking the city.

This allows young members to witness the work of the union's parliament at first hand.

RMT was inundated with applications this year and 16 people took part in the course which covered various subjects from the role of young members and how to get young people involved in the union.

Classes, led by RMT education officer Ray Spry-Shute, were also held on the work of the branches and regional council and how to make use of them.

During the week the course

saw various AGM debates and noted that every time they attended members noted the same people seemed to be at the rostrum!

The course also gives members the opportunity to have their own mock AGM where students write their own resolutions and debate them with the rest of the course. It was good fun and some lessons learnt.

AGS Mick Cash and general secretary Bob Crow also addressed course members, giving the course an insight into the important role of the AGM and the executive committee.

Delegates came from across the country from the north of

Scotland to the south west coast of England.

Conductor Melanie Smith (above) from Aberdeen number one branch is already an assistant branch secretary but it was the first union course that she had attended.

"It is interesting to see the union at work close-up rather than just reading about it and to see that the AGM is not just a shouting match," she says.

Jo Parry (above) is already chair of the Transport for London branch and points out that the union needed to bring on new talent.

"Branches should be encouraging young people to get involved and give support to

those coming into the industry and the union," she says.

Craig Mills of Plymouth number one branch was encouraged to attend by work colleague Nick Quirk who attended the youth course himself a few years ago.

Ray also reports that others that attended the course have already gone on to take up positions in their branch or as union learner reps.

If any member wishes to attend next year's young members' course in Edinburgh, places are advertised through your branch nearer the date. ■



Jo Parry



Melanie Smith



The London girls

Transport for London AGM delegate Linda Wiles, Hammersmith & City delegate Josie Toussaint-Pinnock and youth award winner Priscilla Dada represented a significant part of the London delegation to conference this year.

This was Josie's first AGM and, as a Tube train operator, she took part in debates the safety situation since the London bombings last year.

"We still have unsafe practices on the Tube network, including a faulty radio system which can prevent basic

communications. That is just not good enough," she says.

Linda, TfL branch chair, was also at AGM for the first time after attending grades conferences and the women's advisory conference.

She says AGM is more formal but enjoyed the large array of international speakers that gave interesting perspectives to different struggles.

Linda took part in debates on the minimum wage, pensions, women and combating distortions in the media when it came to RMT members



Linda Wiles, Josie Toussaint-Pinnock and Priscilla Dada

defending their interests.

"The media loves to portray us as being 'strike-happy' when in fact it is a last resort in the face of employers that do not

want to negotiate.

"We need to be getting that simple message across all the time," she said. ■

POVERTY'S NOT YET HISTORY: THE BAND IS BACK

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber looks at the ongoing campaign against world poverty and the relaunch of the famous White Band

Last year, many people wore the white Make Poverty History band in solidarity with the world's poor and powerless for the Edinburgh demonstration before the G8 Gleneagles summit last July.

And it made a difference - at least in the promises made by world leaders in Scotland.

But world poverty will never be abolished by summit pronouncement.

It is going to take years of determined action, and unless we keep the pressure up then people will start think that wristbands, rather than poverty, are history.

So the campaign to abolish world poverty - and the white band - is back.

And this time it gets personal with a call to world leaders to "keep your promises".

We know they made those commitments because the eyes of the world were upon them. Now we need to make sure that they know we're still watching.

The demands that unions and others raised last year are unchanged. The world's poor need trade justice; more and better aid; and their debt cancelled.

Some progress has been made, but it could be a lot better. Debt cancellation is happening. Aid levels are increasing, but not nearly fast enough. And when it comes to world trade, progress is agonisingly slow.

RIGHTS

These demands matter to unions not just because we care, but because our goals of workers' rights and decent work for all are integral to making poverty history.

Economic development is not enough on its own. Its fruits need to be shared fairly. That is why trade unions put rights at work at the heart of the campaign for global economic justice. We want to see the basic decent minimum standards of the International Labour Organisation made universal. These core labour standards are freedom from child labour, no forced labour or discrimination, freedom of association (the right to join a union) and collective bargaining. World trade agreements that undermine those rights won't Make Poverty History.

JUSTICE

And unions are not alone in seeing rights at work as a stepping stone to making poverty history.

The Trade Justice Movement, Jubilee Debt Campaign, UK Aid Network and Stop AIDS Campaign have come together with the TUC, representing all Britain's trade unions, to form the Global Economic Justice Network and carry on the work of Make Poverty History. All the well known aid charities are represented too, through the BOND network.



CAMPAIGNING: Last year's Make Poverty History demonstration in Edinburgh Scotland G8 Summit of world leaders in Gleneagles, Scotland.

Together, we will watch what British politicians say and, more importantly, do about world poverty. And with our international partners we will watch world leaders.

Before the St Petersburg G8 summit this July, I joined other world trade union leaders to urge President Putin to keep his fellow G8 leaders focused on world poverty. And on the weekend of the summit, British trade unionists marched to remember the Tolpuddle Martyrs who struggled for freedom of association when Britain was still a developing country.

I was not the only speaker to make a direct link with the Global Call to Action Against Poverty in calling on world leaders to keep their promises. The G8 summit next year in Germany needs to keep up the momentum.

This autumn we want union members to join a global month of action culminating on world poverty day, October 17, when we will once again be asking everyone to wear their white band and raise their voice again to Make Poverty History. The

TUC will be calling on union members to:

- Check the TUC website for action briefings and emails focusing on the workers' rights elements of development;
- Stand up Against Poverty (anytime during the 24 hours after 10am Sunday 15 October) in an official world record attempt for the largest number to stand up during one period of time around the world.
- Continue to wear the white band - particularly on October 17, the fourth global White Band Day.

I hope you will be able to join us as we campaign to keep the pressure up and make sure that world leaders keep their promises and more. ■

**For information on the month of action this autumn, and how you can join in, go to the TUC website at www.tuc.org.uk/international - and you can buy "Make Poverty History: Respect Workers' Rights" white bands there, or send £5 for 5 bands to TUC White Bands, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS (cheques to "TUC").*

BOB MEETS SPANISH WAR VETERAN

Bob Crow met life-long trade unionist and war veteran Howard Andrews at the Tolpuddle festival this year in Dorset.

Howard, who will be 100 years old next year and is known to friends as 'Andy', joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1924 and served in India.

After witnessing the grinding poverty in India, Andy returned to London and addressed street meetings about the reality of British empire.

As a life-long Communist, Andy took part in the struggles against mass unemployment and was beaten up by Oswald Mosley's blackshirts at a fascist rally in Earl's Court while the police stood by and watched.

Before the Spanish International Brigades were formed, Andy drove a donated ambulance to Spain in 1936 and worked in front-line hospitals for two years.

He carried out hard and dangerous work at some of the toughest battles of the war including Teruel and Ebro.

His hospital was attacked on many occasions by fascist aircraft and during the battle of Ebro he and other nurses had to be ordered to retreat across the river.

Andy rejoined the fight against fascism in 1939 by joining the Royal Artillery and only just escaped with his life at Dunkirk when Nazi planes were strafing the beaches with impunity.

After the war, Andy relocated to Dorset, established a branch of the health union COHSE and worked hard as a local trade unionist until his retirement in 1972.

Today he is a peace campaigner who is still fighting to stop the introduction of a new generation of Trident nuclear missiles.

Bob said it was an honour to meet someone who had done so much for the anti-fascist, labour and peace movements.

"Andy is a real inspiration and living proof that you can change the world for the better no matter how hard that struggle may seem," he said. ■



SCOTTISH BID FOR CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY



RMT has given its backing to the Scottish TUC's appeal to support a Private Members Bill being lodged by Karen Gillon Labour MSP for a new law covering Corporate Culpable Homicide.

Justice Minister, Cathy Jamieson MSP has maintained that she would introduce legislation on Corporate Culpable Homicide and the Scottish Executive set up an expert panel two years ago to report to the Justice Minister in taking forward legislation for Scotland.

However, the Lord Advocate, Colin Boyd QC has now taken the view that to attempt to bring forward Corporate Culpable Homicide on behalf of the Scottish Executive is not competent and not within the powers of the Scottish Executive contained in the Scotland Act.

This is despite the fact that a member

of the Justice Department sat on the expert panel and never indicated the views of the Lord Advocate.

Therefore, Karen Gillon MSP has now decided to lodge a Private Members Bill over the issue.

The STUC has been at the forefront of the campaign and the cost of the Private Members Bill and of employing the services of a Queen's Counsel to challenge the Lord Advocate is over £10,000.

Other unions have contributed and RMT has donated £1,500 to the fund as one of the most vocal trade unions in Scotland and one of the biggest supporters of the campaign throughout Britain following unsuccessful charges laid against directors of rail and ferry companies. ■

JIMMY AND ERNIE RECEIVE AWARDS

Ernie Evans and James Edwards were presented with their 40-year badges by general secretary Bob Crow recently after serving a lifetime in the rail industry.

The pair are both already recipients of British Empire Medals for services to the rail industry.

Ernie joined the railways in 1953 as a guard in the

Birmingham area and held many positions within the union including branch secretary.

James joined up in 1947 working for BRB First Engineering he played many roles within the union including Wolverhampton branch secretary from 1974 to 1992 and gained a TUC gold badge in 1995. ■



25-YEAR BADGE FOR RODDY

Merseyrail guard Roddy Traynor received his 25-year badge recently at a meeting of the Wirral branch.

Pictured left to right are Wirral branch secretary Stuart Harris, Roddy and branch chair Peter Kane. ■



MIKE'S 40 YEARS 'ON THE BUSES'

Mike Furneaux was presented with his 40-year RMT long service badge recently by assistant general secretary Mike Cash at a meeting of the South Devon bus branch in Torquay.

Mike joined Devon General, as it was known, in 1966 many years before privatisation, "when buses were buses and conductor was boss".

Mike has driven all kinds of buses in his time and after privatisation in 1986 he took

charge of "horrible little mini-buses". However, he finishes his driving days in charge of Olympians and Tridents around the bay.

Without moving from his beloved Torbay, he has worked in four different depots from Newton Road, Brixham, Regents Close and finally Paignton.

"It's been a great life on the buses and made many friends and hold even more memories," he said. ■

AWARDS AT ORPINGTON BRANCH

RMT president Tony Donaghey attended Orpington branch recently to award a 40-year badge to Brian Willoughby, a signaller from London Bridge ASC, and a 25-year badge to EC member Paul Burton. Also track worker Mark Messias, who was unable to attend due to illness, was awarded a 25-year badge. ■

FAREWELL TO ALLAN CRAIG

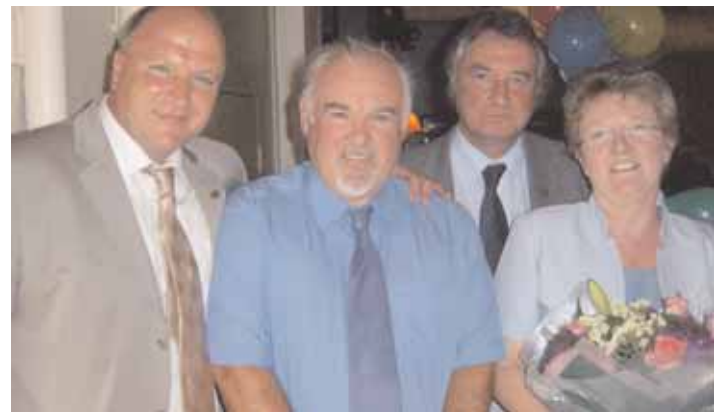
RMT said farewell to finance manager Allan Craig recently as he retired after 31 years with the union.

Allan started with the NUR as a clerk on April 7 1975 but first joined the union in 1964 when he joined British Rail.

Being a Scot, Allan was a regular contributor to many Burns Night celebrations.

Allan won't be sitting around in retirement as, apart from sitting on Tribunals, he now organises sports tours around Europe.

Alan is a keen bowls player and has already hosted bowls tours to Spain and Cyprus so in the future he will no doubt be spending many weeks sunning himself free of charge. ■



LETTERS

Dear editor,

Currently, I pay £10 every four weeks for my membership of RMT, which equates to £520 per annum. What do I get in return for that?

I had cause to ring RMT's 24-hour helpline which, because of the recorded message please try again later, I did several times over two days.

Then I rang my local rep and left a message on his answer phone. Then I rang our local headquarters at Bristol and spoke to someone about my problem. He told me someone would ring me back and no-one did.

The same thing happened last year. What is going on? The union is supposed to help me in time of need. Where are they? What am I paying for?

Yours sincerely,
Keiron Curtis

Editors note: RMT News is sorry to hear Mr Curtis is unsatisfied with the service the union has provided and hopes that this issue can be resolved. However, we would like readers to note that the four weekly membership rate is in fact £12 making an annual rate of £156, not £520. The RMT helpline is also not open 24-hours as suggested.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Janine Booth's letter in the last issue of RMT News and felt I should clarify a couple of things with regard to my article on my trip to North Korea.

Firstly, I'd like to say that I always enjoy the articles about international trade unionism in RMT News and I believe it's important to keep readers informed of what's happening around the globe.

However, I find it hard to see how Janine came to the conclusion that "every issue of RMT News carries an article in praise of Cuba or North Korea". I can quite confidently state that the only article on North Korea I've ever read in RMT News was the one that I wrote!

A number of colleagues expressed an interest and I thought that other transport workers may be interested to read about my experiences on the Pyongyang Metro and the friendship and solidarity I experienced.

I have just re-read my article and at no point did I refer to the DPRK as a "socialist paradise" or express any

sort of praise for the government there.

However, the welcome I received was extremely warm and friendly and most of the things I had read about the place in the western media turned out to be completely over the top or just downright untrue.

While I agree with a lot of what Janine says regarding certain freedoms in countries like Cuba and North Korea, I do not think that we should stop covering events there in RMT News.

Janine suggests that we should have "reports from independent trade unions in these countries but they do not exist, because the regimes do not allow them". Surely then, there is all the more reason to travel there, meet the workers and report back to our colleagues at home.

I will be travelling back to the DPRK in October and would be happy to discuss my experiences, in depth, with other RMT members. Feel free to contact me through my branch.

Yours in solidarity,

Paul Bowman

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Dear editor,

I'd just like to say how good our magazine is, compact glossy and full of colour. I have read other union publications and they just look tatty and bland and are too big too handle comfortably, keep this format it outshines others I have seen.

Trevor Munton-Willis

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077194 99335 Email
chiming2000@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Dear editor,

Just thought I would write you a quick note to say thank you for all the help I received from RMT.

When I first contacted the union I had been away from work for approaching a Year due to problems with my right arm (repetitive use).

During this time I had been pleading with Network Rail to take my problem seriously and for some action to help me return to work.

However, I often did not even receive a response.

This was becoming increasingly frustrating and I was beginning to think my career at Network Rail may have been over.

Since RMT representative Paul Burton took over my case there has been massive improvement in the way my department deals with me, my requests are being listened to and I returned to work within two weeks. Paul always returned my calls and always made me feel like I was supported.

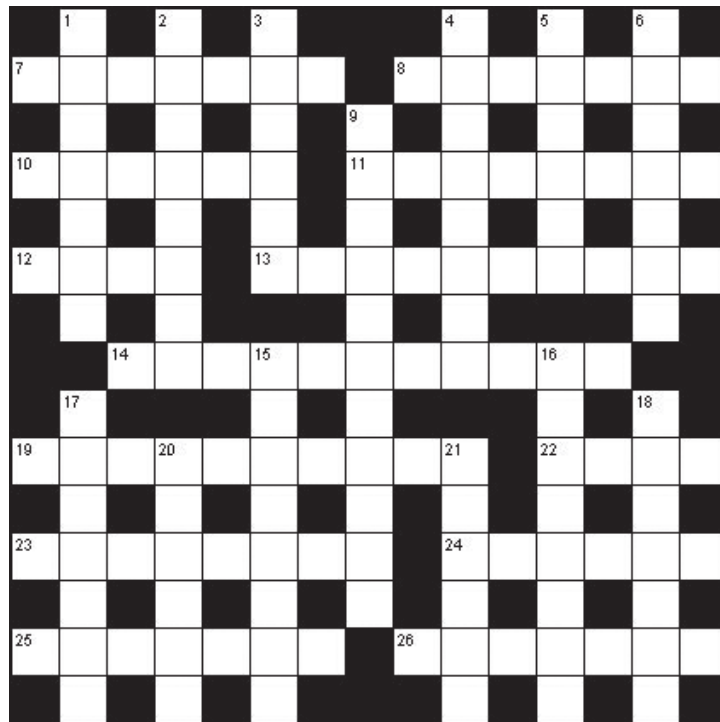
I cannot thank Paul or RMT enough for all the help and support during this very difficult period for me.

yours sincerely,

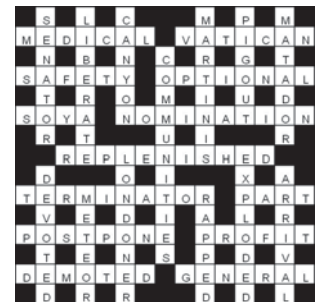
Brenda Vaz

RMT £25 prize crossword

No. 28. Set by Elk



Last month's solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 27 is M Harding, South London.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by September 26 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 7 Given freely (7)
- 8 Holiday home on wheels; land convoy (7)
- 10 Sculpted representation of person or animal (6)
- 11 Type of window (8)
- 12 James ____ Hardie, Labour pioneer (4)
- 13 Earliest powered vessels (10)
- 14 Left-wing Nicaraguan movement (11)
- 19 Rubbish! (10)
- 22, 23 RMT President (4,8)
- 24 Tended, looked after, fed (6)
- 25 Went back on word or agreement (7)
- 26 Rises, goes up (7)

DOWN

- 1 Containers, usually of liquid (7)
- 2 Germs, loosely (8)
- 3 Gems (6)
- 4 Trees bearing type of mandarin orange (8)
- 5 Moderate heat, or pleasantness (6)
- 6 Brief snoozes (7)
- 9 Written texts for films (11)
- 15 Where one might expire (8)
- 16 Vessels that carry blood from the heart; transport channels (8)
- 17 Official who presides over hearings into cases of death (7)
- 18 Means (7)
- 20 One trading in people, or vessel for that purpose (6)
- 21 Inflict penalty for offence (6)

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The Right Balance

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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

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.

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 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

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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

