

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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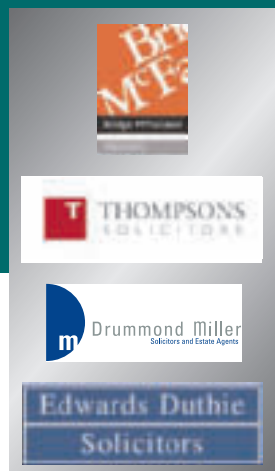
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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

RMT DEMANDS PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO GRAYRIGG



Following the fatal train crash at Grayrigg, Cumbria, our thoughts must be with the family of the passenger who died and with the injured and traumatised passengers and rail staff.

I visited the crash site and I would like to thank regional organiser John Tilley and John Boyle for driving me there. I spoke to emergency services and RMT members and it is amazing that there were not more fatalities and serious injuries.

I have written to Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander demanding a full public inquiry.

Due the similarity to the Potters Bar crash of May 2002, it is clear that normal industry inquiries are insufficient to prevent a recurrence of such accidents.

Any public inquiry should also examine management systems and the fragmented nature of engineering work that still afflicts our railways.

I am extremely concerned that there are still contractors, sub-contractors, labour-only agencies and one-man-and-a-trolley outfits let loose on the tracks under Network Rail.

That did not stop Virgin boss Sir Richard Branson turning up at Grayrigg to demand that responsibility for maintaining tracks be transferred to private train operators.

The idea of divvying up the tracks among the private train operators should appall everyone.

Handing the track network to the private sector was bad enough when it was done by a single organisation, but splitting it up and handing it to a host of operators whose sole aim is to make a profit would be a recipe for further disaster.

A perfect example of this is the fact that National Express alone has raked in over £49 million in rail profits. At the same time train operating company 'one', which is owned by National Express, has cut 32 ticket office jobs, meaning longer queues and frustration for the public.

These huge profits, which should be used to improve passenger services, are financed by hundreds of millions of pounds in public subsidies.

Increasingly, the public is demanding that every penny should be spent on improving our railways, not going into shareholders' pockets.

As we go to press, Network Rail is attempting to break solid strike action by signalling staff in Scotland by is staffing

signal boxes with people that do not have suitable local knowledge.

These reckless actions are likely to jeopardise safety on the rail network and I have written to HM Railways Inspectorate with concerns about these unsafe plans.

The 48-hour strike action follows the failure by NR to honour a 35-hour week agreement, the abuse of rostering agreements and the carrying out of rule-book testing in signal boxes, despite a commitment not to.

It is not too late for the management in Scotland to stop attempting to browbeat staff and to engage constructively with this union.

On the Tube, RMT has forced LUL to withdraw strings attached, such as late-night running, to last year's pay deal following an overwhelming mandate to take strike action from members.

Cleaning contractor ISS has withdrawn the threat of compulsory redundancies against cleaners on its Tubelines contract after successful strike ballot and last-ditch talks with the union.

However, more than 2,000 members at Metronet are being balloted for strike action after the company reneged on a hard-won agreement not to transfer staff to other companies.

We have just received news that ITF inspectors, Ken Fleming and Bill Anderson, have successfully negotiated the payment of wage arrears to the Russian crew on the Jamaican-flagged vessel Merchant Brilliant.

The crew, who are owed around £100,000 in wages, sailed from Belfast under protest only on condition that the ITF inspectors were allowed to accompany them.

In another bit of late news, RMT has won recognition at Truronian bus company, which is good news for those bus workers and the union.

Later this month, RMT will also be holding a special general meeting to discuss the proposed merger of the union with the offshore workers' organisation OILC. I believe this will be a positive move for all RMT members.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

ScotRail opens new maintenance facility



Engineers underneath a train at work after Tavish Scott MSP Transport Minister officially opened a new maintenance facility at First ScotRail's Haymarket Depot in Edinburgh last month.

ONE DEAD IN LEVEL CROSSING CRASH

One person was killed when a 100mph train hit a car at a level crossing in Norfolk earlier this month.

The 0622 One Railway service travelling from Norwich to Colchester collided with a car at the crossing at Swainsthorpe.

The train did not derail and there were no on-board injuries. The crossing was an automatic half-barrier type controlled by lights.

It was the scene of a crash in November 2005 when a car driver was killed by a passenger train.

The incident came one day after the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) declared that

level crossings represent the biggest risk of fatal train accidents.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that level crossings were a relic from a bygone age and must be phased out.

However, he pointed out that no RMT members currently operating level crossings would suffer job losses as a result.

"We have longstanding agreements with Network Rail dating back to British Rail that protect members' jobs, pay and conditions in the event of displacements.

"These would kick into force in the event of a level-crossing being closed," he said. ■



SIGNAL WORKERS IN SCOTLAND TAKE SOLID STRIKE ACTION

RMT supervisory and signalling members in Scotland took solid 48-hour strike action earlier this month over the failure to implement a 35-hour week and a number of other issues.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the strike went ahead following the collapse of talks with Network Rail.

"These issues have been resolved elsewhere, but in Scotland Network Rail managers

appear to want to make a name for themselves," he said.

The dispute centres on a failure to honour the spirit and intention of the signallers' 35-hour week agreement, abuse of rostering agreements and the carrying out of rule-book testing in signal boxes, despite a commitment not to.

As a result, the union is also in the process of balloting all signal workers for strike action over safety issues and the

failure to implement a 35-hour week.

Signallers in Scotland voted overwhelmingly for strike action in a ballot prompted by a flood of complaints that Network Rail is willfully misinterpreting last year's agreement in Scotland.

Signallers have been prevented from 'banking' additional hours as rest days.

The widespread abuse of rostering agreements and the continued insistence by

management in some locations on carrying out COGNISCO safety testing in signal boxes, despite promises that the practice would stop, has also led to serious industrial relations problems.

"We are always ready to discuss issues with Network Rail, but agreements are there to be observed by both sides, and these abuses have to stop," Bob Crow said. ■

TRAIN OPERATORS 'TALKING RUBBISH' ON RAIL ASSAULTS

Private train operators maintain violent crime on the railways has fallen despite rising assault statistics

RMT has told the Association of Train Operating Companies to confront the problem of assaults rather than claim that rising assault statistics were the result of changes in the way offences were recorded.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was no surprise to hear train-operating companies say that the figures are up because more are being reported.

"They've been saying that every year for a long time, but RMT members up and down the country are telling us that the assaults and abuse are getting worse, and the statistics tell the same disturbing story of a year-on-year rise.

"Our members are the ones who know, because they are the ones who have to get out there every day and night and face it – unlike the executives who are trying to kid us that it's just down to a change in the way things are reported," he said.

Staff are often left in fear of reporting incidents because of the worry that if they report too many they will be regarded as somehow unsuitable for their job, a source of trouble or even somehow responsible for the attacks upon them.

The vast majority of guards and station staff on Northern Trains last year signed a

petition calling for specific measures against violence, and for the company to enforce the railway bylaws fully.

RMT members on Southeastern and at 'one' are fighting to stop the companies de-staffing ticket offices, only a year after earlier attempts to close ticket offices were beaten back by passenger protests and strike threats.

The Railway Safety and Standards Board has consistently turned down RMT's requests for an operator-by-operator breakdown of assaults.

MORE STAFF, NOT LESS

Bob said that pressure to maximise profits meant constant attacks on staffing levels, but rail workers and passengers alike want to see more trained, uniformed staff on all stations every moment they are open, and a guard on every train.

"Rather than attempts to turn the truth on its head we need zero tolerance of violence, proper enforcement of the railway bylaws and an adequately funded transport police force.

"The private operators say they encourage reporting, but our members tell us that they often make life difficult for



those who report assaults," he said.

The union argues that bringing train operations back into public ownership as franchises expire would release cash currently removed from the industry as profits to help fund more staff.

"It is breathtaking to hear Tories bleating about railway violence, because it was they who handed the railways to the privateers who have been reducing station staff numbers ever since," Bob Crow said. ■



RMT AND ASLEF REACH AGREEMENT



Following a meeting at the TUC, the two unions' general secretaries, Keith Norman and Bob Crow, have put their names to the following statement:

'ASLEF and RMT are committed to building positive inter-union relations and fully accept their responsibilities as set out in principle one of the TUC's disputes principles and procedures.

Both unions recognise the value of positive inter-union relations and working together on behalf of people working in the rail industry. Both unions therefore agree to immediately refrain from publishing any recruitment, publicity or other material which may be perceived as hostile or derogatory towards the other union.

Further, both unions will take speedy and effective action to ensure that union officials and representatives at all levels also refrain from publishing such material.

Both unions have nominated senior officials who will liaise as a matter of priority to ensure that the spirit and intention of this agreement is maintained. Both unions are also committed to publicising this agreement widely through their unions, including through the union journal and branch mailings.' ■

RMT WINS RAILWAYS PENSION SCHEME TRUSTEE SEAT

RMT executive committee member Dave Gott has been elected to sit as an employee director on the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS).

Dave will join RMT assistant general secretary Mick Cash as a trustee on the board of RPS, which is an industry-wide scheme for railway employers.

It has around 230 private sector employers with pension arrangements in over 100 different sections with their own contribution rates and benefit structures. Its total membership is around 360,000 and the scheme's assets are currently worth around £18 billion.

You can learn more about the Railways Pension Scheme by visiting www.railwaypensions.co.uk ■

Never On Our Knees
A History of the RMT, 1979-2006
Mike Berlin

A 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 Chalton Street,
London NW1 1JD

Aid for Cuba Garden Party

June 19
7.00 to 11.00pm

Maritime House
Clapham Old Town
London SW4

RMT ★ CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Call James Croy on 020 7529 8822
or email j.croy@rmt.org.uk for tickets. £17 each

ISS WITHDRAWS REDUNDANCIES ON TUBELINES CLEANING CONTRACT



Cleaning contractor ISS has withdrawn the threat of compulsory redundancies against cleaners on its Tubelines contract after last-ditch talks with the union.

The RMT executive suspended a strike ballot of members at ISS and further talks with the company will take place shortly to resolve outstanding issues.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that substantial progress had been made at fresh talks with ISS and the company had confirmed that there will be no compulsory redundancies of

cleaners on the Tubelines contract.

"That is obviously very good news for our members and their families and a victory for common sense all round," he said.

ISS had wanted to sack 140 cleaners after Tubelines reduced the value of its train-and station-cleaning contract by more than 20 per cent.

The union had called on Transport for London to block the sackings pending an inquiry into how the companies have manipulated the PPP contracts to their financial advantage.

The union pointed out that at a time of heightened security concerns it was crazy to cut the people most likely to find something on the Tube network that shouldn't be there.

Tons of free newspapers are also being dumped every day on the Tube and only a fraction is being recycled.

RMT held a number of lobbies and RMT parliamentary chair John McDonnell MP put down early day motion 533 which had been signed by around 40 MPs against the job cuts. ■

LUL FORCED TO BACK DOWN OVER LINKING PAY WITH LATE-RUNNING

RMT called off a threatened Tube strike last month after management agreed to withdraw strings attached to last year's pay deal.

For the past 14 months, LUL has attempted to link the deal with productivity strings such as on late-night running.

But, following a three-to-one vote in favour of strike action by RMT's over 6,500 London Underground members, management has climbed down on the issue.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the breakthrough was due to the fact that LUL members had shown they were not prepared to be pushed around.

"Management's decision has, at last, opened the way for the implementation of last year's pay deal," he added.

"If London Underground management had not attempted to attach strings to the deal in the first place then we could have drawn a line under this matter more than a year ago," he said.

Despite recent press speculation, RMT has not reached any agreement on late-night running.

No such agreement will be reached until safety concerns are addressed including staff travel, additional police presence, adequate staffing levels and a suitable compensation package for train operators.

Bob said that the union was not opposed to late-running but had always made clear that a proper risk assessment must be carried out.

"The level of verbal and physical assaults rise late at night so more police would be required as the safety of our members is paramount.

"RMT will continue to hold talks with LUL on this matter and a common date will be agreed before any changes are brought in," said Bob Crow.

STRIKE ACTION SUSPENDED AT CENTRAL TRAINS

Strike action planned by 550 SRMT senior conductors at Central Trains was suspended last month after agreement reached with the company to resume talks through the conciliation service Acas.

The company's blanket ban on release of RMT reps for union activities and the overtime ban imposed on RMT members by the company have

both been lifted, and the company has also re-instated local-application leave arrangements.

Central Trains had put a ban on overtime and rest-day working against conductors, who are in dispute with the company over the imposition of centralised rostering, resulting in dozens of train cancellations and curtailed services.

Senior conductors had been planning to take strike action on February 24 for the fourth time in the dispute.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that he was pleased that the company had agreed to resume talks through Acas.

"We hope that a settlement can now be reached around the table," he said. ■

FIGHTING FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM

Labour Party leadership contender John McDonnell MP joined a trade union rally in the House of Commons recently to demand the removal of Tory anti-union laws.

John McDonnell MP, leader of RMT's parliamentary group, managed to get his Bill on the Commons agenda but it went to the back of the queue of private members' Bills because of arcane parliamentary procedures and lack of support from Labour MPs.

Rally chairman John Hendy QC recalled that, just over 100 years ago, the 1906 Trade Disputes Act was passed through Parliament, giving trade unionists, for the first time ever, the freedom to lawfully organise industrial action.

"Today, 100 years later, trade unions have less freedom to organise industrial action than they had then," he complained, adding that Mr McDonnell's Bill was, in fact, "a very modest and moderate" measure.

The rally was convened by the United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union

Laws. Speakers including Katy Clark MP, CWU general secretary Billy Hayes, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack and teaching union Christine Blower urged more MPs to support the Bill and to join the 79 MPs who have already signed Early Day Motion 532 backing it.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow was applauded as he castigated Labour MPs who have failed to support the Bill, yet "who come around looking for money" from the trade unions.

"They have the cheek to say that they are not even prepared to sign a trade union freedom bill, It's an absolute disgrace," he said.

T&G general secretary Tony Woodley urged a major campaign to push the trade union freedom bill through Parliament, despite the failure to secure a second reading for the bill promoted by John McDonnell.

Veteran activist Tony Benn quoted the famous communist MP Willie Gallacher, "who once said that the working class goes from defeat to defeat to defeat to final victory".

THE TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS BILL

If enacted the Bill would significantly strengthen trade union rights, including

- Better protection for striking workers
- Simpler and fairer industrial action balloting and notice procedures
- Reform of the use of injunctions by employers
- Allowing solidarity action in certain circumstances
- Prevention of the use of replacement labour during strikes
- Trade-union rights for prison officers.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Join the United Campaign and get your branch to affiliate - get the form from www.unitedcampaign.org.uk
- Invite a speaker from the campaign to your next union meeting
- Write to your MP asking them to sign Early Day Motion 532



John4Leader



John McDonnell MP is standing for the leadership of the Labour Party when Tony Blair steps down.

An effective coronation of Chancellor Gordon Brown as the Labour leader would deny trade unionists and party members the right to a vote on who should be leader of the party.

A leadership election would also ensure that there is a proper opportunity to openly debate the issues facing us and the future direction of our party.

POLICIES

John is the only candidate standing who supports the policies of the trade union movement. Many of these policies have also been democratically passed by successive Labour party and TUC Conferences including:

- Compulsory Gender Pay Audits to enforce equal pay across the public sector
- A Trade Union Freedom Bill restoring the rights taken away by the Tories, putting Britain back in line with International Labour organisation standards
- An end to the policies of privatisation and cuts in the NHS and our other public services
- A new Health and Safety regime with stricter powers, adequate enforcement resources and an effective Corporate Manslaughter legislation
- An increase in the basic state pension and immediate restoration of the link with earnings
- A Real Living Wage for all public service workers and an end to public sector pay freezes
- Direct investment in council housing
- Abolition of tuition fees and an end to Foundation and Trust schools
- Withdrawal of British troops from Iraq
- No £25bn replacement of Trident, instead investing the money into public services and fighting poverty both at home and abroad

A vote for John McDonnell will be a vote for trade union policies. John has pledged to strengthen the party-union link and ensure that trade unions are at the heart of policy-making.

Since launching his candidature, John has spoken to thousands of trade unionists and party members up and down the country and has been overwhelmed by the level of support he has received.

There is great enthusiasm for a democratic contest and the debate of a policy agenda which reconnects the party with our supporters, and re-unites the movement at all levels.

However, such a campaign costs money, and so far it has had to rely mainly on the generosity and solidarity of individual rank-and-file trade unionists, party members and supporters.

So you could consider:

- making a financial donation to the John4Leader campaign, cheques should be made out to: 'John 4 Leader' and sent to the above address or you can donate on-line via the web site at www.john4leader.org.uk]
- Join the Labour Party. New members can vote in the leadership election regardless of how long they have been a member. Get your friends and colleagues to join using the Join Labour for John leaflet - contact the office for supplies.
- invite John to come to speak to your branch to discuss the campaign
- assist in the distribution of campaign materials
- assist in approaching MPs to seek nominations

This campaign is about rebuilding Labour and its popularity. But that can only be done if Labour is restored as a party of peace not war, as a party of public service provision not privatisation, and as a 'people's party' not a party of big business and corporate globalisation. ■



Stop Southeastern ticket-office cuts

RMT urges watchdogs to oppose proposed cuts in Southeastern ticket office opening hours

RMT has told both London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus that proposals to reduce ticket office opening hours would hit service quality and passenger safety and could result in passengers deserting the network.

Passengers have been sending in RMT postcards registering objections to Southeastern's plans to impose 'major' changes to opening hours at 29 booking offices. It also wants to make 'minor' changes in a further 70.

It is less than two years since a huge public outcry and a concerted campaign involving passengers and trades unions forced South Eastern Trains, the former operator, to drop proposals to cut opening hours.

Today, RMT has received representations from local councillors, passenger groups, individual passengers, resident associations and RMT members, all of whom have voiced their opposition to the new proposals.

SUBMISSIONS

RMT's submissions to both watchdogs pointed out that inadequate staffing levels at stations is one of the key concerns for passengers and details the many reasons why ticket vending machines are an inadequate replacement for trained railway staff.

General secretary Bob Crow pointed out that rail workers and passengers alike want to see more trained, uniformed staff on stations, not fewer, and especially at night.

"At a time when the environment is crying out for more public transport use to cut emissions from cars, these cuts must be shelved," he said.

The 29 stations threatened with 'major cuts to ticket-office opening times are: Ashford, Beckenham Hill, Bellingham, Bickley, Chiselhurst, Crofton Park, Dover Priory, Eden Park, Farningham Road, Hastings, Hildenborough, Longfield, Lower Sydenham, Martin Hill, Meopham, New Beckenham, Newington, Otford, Queenborough, Rainham, Sandling, Sandwich, Sole Street, Staplehurst, Swanley, Swanscombe, Walmer, Westgate-on-Sea and Wye. ■

EARLY DAY MOTION 751, SUBMITTED BY GWYN PROSSER MP AND SIGNED BY 30 OTHERS TO DATE TICKET OFFICE OPENING HOURS

That this House notes proposals by the Southeastern rail franchise to reduce ticket office opening times at dozens of their stations; believes that such a move will lead to a lower level of service to the travelling public, act as a disincentive for the public to make use of the network, threaten revenue protection and potentially

make stations an unsafe environment for rail users; further believes that automatic ticket machines are an inadequate substitute for well trained railway staff; is therefore opposed to any loss in jobs which could result from the proposals; and calls on the Southeastern franchise to withdraw its plans.

RESIST EU RAIL DIRECTIVES!

Tens of thousands of European rail workers gathered in Paris last month to say no to EU rail directives and no to privatisation

Over 40,000 rail workers demonstrated on February 8 against rail 'liberalisation' directives intended to open up French and continental railways to market forces.

An RMT delegation recounted the disastrous results that the rail directives have inflicted on Britain since 1996.

Last year French rail unions called eight national rail strikes for improved pay and to defend their conditions, which are regarded as 'social rights' in France.

Since 1945, rail workers' conditions of employment, including pensions, retirement at age 50 for train drivers and 55 for other grades, medical care and union collective bargaining rights have been protected in law as 'statutory

rights'.

These hard-fought gains are now under attack from SNCF under pressure from the European Commission in Brussels, which wants to roll out rail privatisation across the EU.

RMT EC member Alex Gordon told the demonstration: "RMT supports your fight against privatisation and against the Brussels liberalisation directives.

"Ten years ago the Tories privatised British Rail, with the disastrous consequences we all know.

"We can't believe your government is now allowing the European Commission to tell you to copy our mistakes.

"It's time to say 'No' to rail privatisation and 'No' to Brussels diktats," he said to applause.

French rail union, SUD-Rail, also made a special call for equal rights for contract staff such as cleaners and catering

workers not currently covered by French employment protection legislation.

FRENCH CUTS

Rail workers from all grades also united to protest against SNCF's 2007 budget, which is leading to the break up of the company and a sharp reduction in staff.

SNCF-freight is being run down as a result of EU-imposed 'open access' for freight operators. These directives also represent renewed threats to the rail workers' pension scheme and an attempt to introduce an inferior collective bargaining agreement for privatised rail workers.

The demonstration showed the unity of the eight trade union federations in France and

foreign delegations, including RMT, CGT (Spain), ORSA, SDL, CUB (Italy) and activists from Germany.

In a sign of growing opposition, a controversial third EU package enforcing further rail privatisation is currently in limbo in the European parliament after hundreds of MEPs stayed away rather than vote for it.

New research by the International Association for Public Transport (UITP) also reveals that the application of ill-adapted and bureaucratic rules would hinder the development of the local transport sector crucial to helping European cities deal with congestion and pollution problems. ■

A postcard from Paris

Dear editor

Having been assured by the local lads at Dover Priory that the service was ok, I made it to Ashford to get the Eurostar to Paris for the demonstration.

I knew that most of our people were on the earlier train, but I had been ordered by Roz Fong to meet up with late-running activists.

So we got to the muster point eventually to be greeted by a wall of sound and colour - for as far as the eye could see there were flags waving in the smoke-filled breeze amid the sound of thousands of protesters. We had noticed how large the crowd was from the Metro three stations away so we knew it was going to be a 'biggy'.

Having our Hi-Fi orange gear helps and I was able to find the others by using mobiles and binoculars! There were many familiar French faces from previous occasions who were very appreciative of our attendance.

After some speeches (including a well received one from Alex Gordon), we set off to march to SNCF headquarters - where it promptly chucked down icy hailstones on the dispersing marchers! We made our way back to Gare du Nord in time for a quick bite then back to Blighty! Another good outing from RMT!

Mike Sargent



RECOGNITION CAMPAIGN FOR FORTH BRIDGE WORKERS

The campaign for recognition at Palmers, one of the contractors working on the Forth Rail Bridge, has been on going for eight months and is at an important stage.

RMT has already asked the company for a voluntary union recognition agreement and have involved ACAS to help verify membership levels. The union is hopeful that Palmers will voluntarily recognise the legitimate aspirations of the workforce to have RMT represent them for collective bargaining purposes.

Over the last few months, since the original approach to the union by workers who believed that their issues and grievances were not being dealt with the way they wanted by management, the union has been building RMT membership and organisation.

This has been done by leafleting the workers before and after work, holding regular meetings with workers to allow issues to be discussed and updates on how the recognition

claim is progressing and newsletters have been posted to keep members as up-to-date as possible.

The involvement of the branch, regional council, regional organiser and organising unit working together to help these new members organise themselves has been crucial in getting the union to the stage where it can be confident in being able to take the company through the formal recognition process if necessary.

Palmers is part of an alliance of contractors who work on the Forth Bridge and RMT has members with these other contractors and is campaigning to build membership amongst these companies.

It is important to remember that pre-privatisation all the work on the Forth Bridge was done by RMT/NUR members and the union must ensure that support is given to members in their campaign to get the employment protection they deserve. ■



Organising Road Freight

RMT organising meetings with LGV driver members have been looking at major issues and concerns regarding the current operation of the Working Time Regulations.

The way Periods of Availability (POA) are being used to cover all unplanned as well as planned stoppages is shocking and unacceptable to the union.

The extent to which this as happened tied in with the opt-out as meant that, for many members, the working week is as long as it was before the regulations came in.

The need for this evidence to be placed before the review is obvious and the regulations have not been effective in reducing the working hours of many of our LGV driver members.

RMT will raise these issues with employers to achieve change to the long hour's culture and abuse of POA through negotiation whilst

campaigning to have the legislation changed.

It is important that members let the union know of these abuses so that we can put forward a strong case as possible for change.

ORGANISING

Donald Graham from the Organising Unit reports that we have made a great breakthrough with Trunk drivers who work for City Link.

Many have now joined the other and many more are saying their going to join. Relief RMT regional organiser Brian Whitehead stood outside the company's Hub at midnight in the pouring rain with a team from the Org Unit to be on hand to give advice and support to members on the Drivers' staff council who were meeting management. This type of effort is necessary the length and breadth of the country to ensure the union is at its strongest.

ORGANISING WEEKS 2007

The union is gearing up for the next round of organising weeks and RMT needs the maximum possible input from members to make them a success.

National organising co-ordinator Alan Pottage said that it will be the fifth year running that the organising unit has helped regions to kick start campaigns and hoped all Regional Councils will build on their previous successes.

"The best outcomes come about as a direct result of the effort that's put into these important weeks," he said.

Alan said that full support is given to everyone getting involved so members who would like to help us recruit but are a bit nervous have nothing to fear.

"There is no better team than RMT activists pitching in together and we'd love to see loads of new faces getting involved.

"We especially want elected RMT representatives getting stuck in because our reps live and breath the union in the workplace so who better to get our positive message across?," he said.

TRAINING FOR NEW REPS

Training days have also been planned for new reps within their own regions. This training has been designed to give instant support and advice. "Workplace reps are vitally important to the building of our union and it is therefore essential that we continue to give them maximum support," said Alan

Organising Weeks and Training Days 2007

REGIONAL COUNCIL	ORGANISING WEEK	ONE DAY INTRO	TWO DAY TRAINING
Scotland	March 5-9	April 12	May 31/June 1
Man and NW	April 16-20	May 3	June 6/7
S.Wales and S.West	April 30-May 4	June 7	August 7/8
North East	May 14-18	June 18	July 25/26
Wessex	June 11-15	July 17	August 28/29
Yorks and Lincs	July 9-13	August 16	October 9/10
South East	August 20-24	September 27	October 30/31
London and Anglia	September 10-14	October 23	November 27/28
Midlands	October 15-19	November 20	December 18/19
N.West and N.Wales	June 25-29	July 30	September 4/5

RMT PROTECTS FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS

RMT forces government to step back from removing fire safety rules brought after the 1987 Kings Cross fire

Following a concerted campaign by RMT and its Parliamentary group, the government has stepped back from plans to remove 'Section 12' regulations covering 'sub-surface stations' throughout Britain.

The Fire Precautions (Sub Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 made up Section 12 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971, and were added on the recommendation of the Fennell Report into the 1987 King's Cross fire which claimed 31 lives.

The Regulations have been retained as a subsection of the Fire Safety Order which was introduced in October 2006 and cover 'sub-surface stations', including those on London Underground, underground systems in Glasgow, Tyne and Wear and also national rail stations including Birmingham New Street, London's Charing Cross and several in Liverpool.

The government's previous position was that the Regulations and the Order would be run in tandem for up to a period of 12 months to monitor the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

The Scottish Executive has now said that they will follow the arrangements that are put in place at Westminster.

WORKING GROUP

RMT's Parliamentary group had also persuaded the previous minister responsible for fire safety, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, to consider a working group and allow the union to demonstrate where the Fire Safety Order did

not provide the same protection as the 1989 Regulations. The new minister responsible, Angela Smith MP, subsequently agreed to this proposal.

The first meeting of the working group took place last month and was chaired by RMT Parliamentary convenor, John McDonnell MP. Civil Servants, London Underground and the London Fire Brigade attended the working group as well as the union side.

The remit of the working group was to consider whether there would be any gaps or loss of necessary protection were the 1989 Regulations to be removed and to make recommendations for a way forward.

The discussions at the working group were constructive and not long after this meeting direct discussion took place with the minister. At that meeting there was a welcome recognition from the government of the considerable public interest and awareness in respect of fire safety following the Kings Cross Fire. This awareness has been heightened by the increased security and safety concerns following the terrorist attacks in 2005.

The government also indicated that there was not necessarily a firm deadline to resolve this issue rather it was more important to identify what were the best arrangements to ensure fire safety at sub surface stations.

Arising from these discussions there are indications from the government that where

a clear case cannot be made that the Fire Safety Order will be as least as safe as the 1989 Regulations then those Regulations could be retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The position that the union has adopted during these discussions is that whilst some of the 1989 Regulations may no longer be relevant, necessary or are now covered by the Fire Safety Order, or by other legislation, it remains absolutely the case that a number of the 1989

Regulations need to be retained.

The union is currently consulting with safety and legal experts to produce recommendations detailing which regulations need to be retained and this will be submitted to the working group and then to the government.

In this, the year of the 20th anniversary of the Kings Cross Fire, continued campaigning has ensured that RMT has been able to make this progress to ensure a safe environment for transport staff and passengers. ■



SHIPPING

CALMAC TENDERING 'COST MILLIONS'

The process of putting Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services out to tender, as demanded by EU rules, has cost the Scottish taxpayer more than a staggering £17million.

The figure is more than half the annual subsidy for CalMac, which was the only bidder to run more than 20 Clyde and Hebrides routes after V-Ships to pulled out of the process.

The Scottish Executive claimed that it had no choice but to go ahead with the tendering process under EU competition law.

The figures break down to a cost to the executive of more than £2 million and £15 million to CalMac itself to cover the cost of preparing to defend itself against private competition.

RMT said that the tendering of lifeline ferry routes had been a colossal waste of money that could and should have been invested in more and better services.

The union argued that in the wake of the decision of V-Ships to pull out, the tendering

process should have been abandoned altogether and CalMac left to get on with providing an accountable public service.

"We warned not only that tendering was unnecessary, but that the process itself would only divert precious public money away from investment in more and better ferry services," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

Bob said that it spoke volumes that the private sector has cried foul over the building into the tender of protection for lifeline services, jobs, pay and pensions.

RMT had put pressure on the Scottish Executive to protect the jobs, pay and conditions of existing Caledonian MacBrayne workers.

The union has also been pressing the Scottish Executive to guarantee the continued employment of all existing Caledonian MacBrayne staff following tendering, irrespective of who wins the tender.

"The hard reality is that



private-sector's supposed ability to conjure up savings is an illusion achieved simply by slashing services and cutting jobs, pay and conditions, and the public ends up paying more for less," Bob said.

The tendering exercise was supposedly aimed at improving services and getting better value for money, but even before it started there were ample warnings, from Jeannette Findlay at Glasgow University and others, that the reverse was the most likely outcome.

The Scottish Executive was warned that even if CalMac won the tender there would be significant and unnecessary

costs associated with the fragmentation and wasteful extra tiers of management created by the process.

"The current publicly-owned and publicly-accountable set-up offers the best value for the public's money - but we didn't need a costly tendering process to confirm what everybody already knew," Bob said.

RMT and the Scottish TUC have pressed the Scottish Executive to build in safeguards for trade union recognition and to guard against a two-tier workforce. The union will also continue to campaign against calls to re-open the tendering process for CalMac ferry route ■

TONNAGE TAX TRAINING BREAKTHROUGH

The Chamber of Shipping has agreed to an increase in the number of ratings to be trained under the revised structure of the tonnage tax scheme, which has been the subject of discussions within the Shipping Task Force.

At the current time shipping companies entering the tonnage tax scheme have no mandatory commitment for UK ratings training.

However, companies have to train one cadet for every fifteen officers employed. The Chamber

of Shipping advised the Shipping Minister that shipping companies should now be allowed to train two ratings instead of one officer to fulfil their minimum training obligation as an alternative option.

This clearly falls short of a mandatory commitment for the training of ratings but is nonetheless a step in the right direction and is due to the relentless campaign RMT has fought on this issue.

The Department of Transport

will have to agree to change the scheme and amend the Minimum Training Obligation, but the union hopes that this can be done without too much delay.

In addition, the union has been having a separate dialogue with Clyde Marine and Maersk regarding voluntary training commitments for ratings.

This has also assisted the union campaign by defeating Chamber of Shipping arguments that no commitments could be made on ratings training.

MAERSK

The union has also held discussions with Maersk, which were facilitated by Gwen Prosser MP. The company has agreed to train twelve ratings and guarantee their employment.

The company wish to formerly approach the Department of Transport to seek their approval and to facilitate a scheme whereby other companies can run similar projects in return for financial support. ■

BON VOYAGE TO JOE

Liverpool shipping branch held a retirement party recently for long standing member Joe Dobbs. Joe started his career at sea as a 15 year-old deck boy with the Blue funnel line.

He went on to serve on every type of vessel in his 49 years as a seafarer. Joe was well respected activist who was

always willing to help his fellow shipmates.

Liverpool branch secretary Sam Brown said that Joe's retirement would be a great loss to the branch and the union and that he would be a hard act to follow.

He said that everyone in the branch wished Joe all the best in his retirement. ■



RMT LAUNCHES NEW SEAFARERS' RECRUITMENT BOOKLET



RMT has produced a new booklet introducing the union to seafarers, outlining what it can do for members.

Copies of the new booklet are available from the organising unit on 020 7819 9843 or e-mail org.unit@rmt.org.uk

RMT CALLS ON RFA TO MAKE LIFEBOAT SAFETY PARAMOUNT

Following proposals by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service (RFA) to replace davit-launched life boats, RMT successfully requested that all replacements must be compliant to safety rules.

The original proposals sought to change existing policy to allow new life boats to not necessarily be SOLAS compliant.

However, the union made

clear in a letter that RMT wanted to play a positive role in all discussions on the replacement of davit-launched lifeboats.

However, the union stated that cost should not be an overriding fact as suggested in part of the proposals.

Moreover, anything which improved safety and reduced potential hazards was always

welcome.

As a result RMT pointed out any solution should be SOLAS-compliant. As a result, RFA abandoned the "non SLAS-compliant" concept in favour of exploring other avenues to resolve the issue.

The RFA is a civilian staffed fleet, owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Its main task is to supply

warships of the Royal Navy at sea with fuel, food, stores and ammunition which they need to remain operational while away from base.

It also provides aviation support for the Royal Navy, together with amphibious support and secure sea transport for Army units and their equipment. ■



RMT DEMANDS PUBLIC INQUIRY

Following another fatal rail accident involving a faulty set of points, RMT calls for public inquiry



At just after 20.00 hours Friday February 23, 2007 a London to Glasgow Virgin Pendolino train travelling at over 95 mph derailed at Grayrigg, Cumbria killing Margaret Masson and injuring 22 others.

All nine carriages left the track just after passing the Lambrigg 2B points in a cutting.

Just like the Potters Bar rail disaster nearly five years earlier, the poor condition of the points were blamed for the Grayrigg crash in an interim report released by the Rail Accident Investigation Board (RAIB).

The report focused on the condition of the Lambrigg 2B points near the site of the derailment. It says: "indications are that these points were the immediate cause of the derailment".

"The immediate cause of the accident was the condition of the stretcher bar arrangement at points 2B at Lambrigg crossover which resulted in the loss of gauge separation of the point switch blades."

PUBLIC INQUIRY

RMT general secretary Bob Crow immediately called for a full public inquiry in a letter to Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander.

"I believe that the apparent similarity to the Potters Bar crash of May 2002 proves that, in incidents of this type, normal industry inquiries are insufficient to prevent a recurrence of this type of accident in the future.

"It is our contention that any public inquiry, in addition to establishing the facts of the accident, should also examine the adequacy of Network Rail's management systems because of the fragmentation of engineering work that still afflicts our railways," Bob Crow told the minister.

This call was echoed by Assistant Deputy Coroner Mr Justice Sullivan after he adjourned the inquest into the 2002 Potters Bar rail crash following the Grayrigg rail crash.

Sullivan, assigned to conduct the inquest, said that similarities

between the disasters at Grayrigg and Potters Bar could not be ignored.

The judge also wrote to transport secretary Douglas Alexander seeking his views on whether the investigation should proceed "by way of inquest or public inquiry or some other route".

RMT maintains that any inquiry should examine the benefits of drawing all railway activity under the control of one organisation to ensure the safety of the travelling public and rail workers.

FRAGMENTATION

Network Rail Chief Executive John Armitt said that Network Rail was 'devastated' to conclude that the condition of the set of points at Grayrigg caused the accident.

However, responding to questions over the interim report, Mr Armitt told Channel 4 News that all Network Rail's track maintenance and inspection work is carried out in-house. This is not the case.

In fact, Network Rail has current contracts with private engineering firms such as Amey, Balfour Beatty, Carillion and others which, its own press releases declare, "are an important part of the maintenance regime".

Bob Crow said that, in fact, Network Rail is intentionally failing to fill, and freezing, vacancies in a bid to cut costs, preferring to farm the work out to contractors.

"As many as 60,000 non-Network Rail workers have access to the trackside as part of their job. In many cases Network Rail has no idea who these workers are - an astonishing fact given the nature of the Grayrigg tragedy," he said.

JOB LOSSES

Bob also pointed out that at the time of the Potters Bar accident in 2002, there were 118,975 qualified track workers, today, there are just 90,170 working for over 1,200 different companies on the rail network.

"It is clear as day that the

loss of nearly 30,000 staff, which are the eyes and ears of the railways, has not made the network safer.

"Yet we continue to see huge bonuses handed out for some, alongside more demands for cuts and savings in what should be an expanding railway," he said.

Nevertheless, this did not prevent Virgin boss Richard Branson visiting the Cumbria crash site to demand that responsibility for maintaining tracks be transferred to private train operators.

RMT responded by saying that the idea of divvying up the tracks among the private train operators filled the union and the public with horror.

"The privateers like to call this idea vertical integration, but the reality is that it would mean more fragmentation, and it is fragmentation that is at the heart of the railways' problems.

"It is bad enough that there are still contractors, sub-contractors, labour-only agencies and one-man-and-a-trolley outfits let loose on the tracks under Network Rail.

"Trains and tracks should be operated by the same organisation, but that organisation should be publicly owned and controlled - maybe we could call it British Rail.

"Handing the track network to the private sector was bad enough when it was done by a single organisation, but splitting it up and handing it to a host of operators whose sole aim is to make a profit would be a recipe for further disaster," Bob Crow said. ■

NETWORK RAIL BUDGET TO BE CUT BY £4 BILLION

Shortly after the Grayrigg rail crash, the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) demanded Network Rail make over £4 billion in cuts by 2009.

However, in a new report, the ORR also said that it was concerned that infrastructure company Network Rail is underspending on the railways.

The ORR said that the firm was forecasting to spend £196 million less than its full budget for 2006-7 - or 3.4 per cent of the total - largely due to deferral of expenditure on enhancing the network.

The report said that, by the end of the October to December 2006 period, Network Rail had spent £281 million less than budget - or 6.5 per cent of the total.

However, the regulator then declared that the company may have to run the railways with less money in the future.

Network Rail had requested that it be allowed to spend £22.3 billion on the railways for the five-year period beginning in April 2009.

But the ORR came up with a figure of between £18.4 billion and £21.6 billion for the 2009-14 period.

Labour leadership contender John McDonnell, who chairs the RMT parliamentary group, said that the fiasco demonstrated the need for public ownership of the railways.

RMT MEMBERS ARE BEING ASKED TO WRITE TO THEIR MP TO ASK THEM TO SIGN EARLY DAY MOTION 1087 DEMANDING A PUBLIC ENQUIRY EDM 1087

That this House sends its sympathies to those directly involved in the Grayrigg derailment and their friends and families; further places on record our appreciation of the professionalism and courage of rail and emergency response staff; supports the view that the similarity to the Potters Bar crash of May 2002 raises concerns that the normal industry enquiries are insufficient to prevent a recurrence of this type of accident; therefore also supports the growing call for a public enquiry into the facts of both accidents; also believes that public enquiry should consider the impact of the continued fragmentation of engineering work and whether bringing all railway activity under the control of one organisation will ensure that the safety of the public and the railway workforce is best protected.

KENT RED STAR LEARNING CENTRE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A learning centre for transport workers in the Medway area of Kent opened its doors for business at Chatham station recently

The Red Star Learning Centre issued an open invitation recently to potential students from the rail industry, their families and friends, and other workers in the Medway area, to drop in for a taste of the many courses on offer.

The centre, which will offer free classes in a range of subjects including information technology and modern languages, was officially opened by RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

Supported by the TUC's Education Services and UnionLearn, the Red Star Rail Learning Centre is the first of its

kind to open in Kent. A similar centre has been thriving in Brighton for two years.

Bob said that he was delighted to open a learning centre which would give opportunities for workers in the Medway area to get back into education.

"Whether it is sign language, French or Spanish, or computers for beginners or more advanced IT, there are courses available here for everyone," he said.

Rail Union Learning project worker Mike Sargent said that the open day was aimed at giving potential students a taste of the courses already available



to them.

"But if there is sufficient demand for other courses we will do our best to provide them," he said.

A LEARNING RESOURCE

The centre was first identified as a potential resource by Mike back in 2004 when it was being used for dumping unwanted items.

After negotiating with local managers and obtaining a lease on the venue, local reps moved in and set about renovating the centre.

With a budget of just over £10,000, the group transformed the centre into a custom-designed learning centre fit to deliver further education to workers who have difficulty accessing courses because of shift patterns or other problems.

The centre was gutted by the volunteers and several skips were quickly filled.

Remedial and electrical works were carried out by approved contractors, followed up by the volunteers who came in to redecorate and make the place habitable.

Further money was spent on kitting out the centre, including laptop computers, printers, webcams and other learning aids.

Ivor Riddell, a conductor and learning rep who runs a sign language course, reported that the centre has been visited by Southeastern representatives, rail unions and learning providers.

"All of them praised the scheme and want to be part of its success and here seems to be a positive change in people's

attitude to personal development and getting involved," he said.

Rail Union Learning Reps plan to increase the number and scope of courses in 2007 starting with conversational French and Spanish.

The introduction of basic information technology courses have been followed by an introductory course in British Sign Language and Deaf Awareness around the rail industry.

There are also plans promote and facilitate online learning through the Open University and other providers as well as encourage use of the centre as a resource for family oriented clubs such as parent and child craft clubs, camera club, signing club and many other ideas.

Mike Sargent said that the strength of this particular project was that it is volunteered and run which gives the local users a sense of ownership.

"We are also grateful for the support of local branches, and the unflagging encouragement of the RMT education office," he said.

For further information please contact project worker Mike Sargent on 07715 323 793 or the Programme Support Team 020 7317 8612. ■

For more details about the Rail Union learning Project, the Union Learning Fund and the role of the Union Learning Representative, visit www.learninginunion.org.uk.

For further information regarding RUL Conference 2007, please contact Jen on 020 7529 8820 or email jenyork@rul.org.uk

R U L
RAIL UNION LEARNING

RUL CONFERENCE 2007
MAKING LEARNING WORK

The Third RUL Conference for Rail Union Learning Representatives

Venue
Institute of Education
University of London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL

Monday 16th April 2007
09:30 - 16:30

Speaker
Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary, TUC

UNION LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES

the way forward for unions and workplaces

Since the beginning of the trade union movement education has been a high priority from the founding of the Workers' Educational Association in 1903 to the more recent establishing of the Union Learning Rep.

Since 1999 these reps have been paving the way for members to be able to access the basic right of obtaining knowledge. RMT has put Union Learning Reps (ULRs) in place, and, working with other unions, has established the unique role of the 'Rail' Union Learning Rep (RULRs) – reps who work together for to improve learning opportunities for the members of all rail unions.

Currently there are approximately 350 Rail Union Learning Representatives in England, Scotland and Wales and over a 180 of these reps are RMT members.

For the past eight years RULRs have been working hard to create a culture of lifelong learning in the transport industries. These reps break down barriers to learning and empower members to address their own skills gaps and to continue to learn throughout their lives.

SKILLS FOR LIFE

The major focus of a learning reps are skills for life which are the Maths, English and IT skills needed to do our jobs, run our homes, manage our money and enjoy a social life.

They are key skills required to get involved in the community (including a trade union) and are essential to health and safety.

RULRs play a crucial role in the development of skills for life in the workplace since they are in a position of trust that makes them ideally placed to encourage colleagues to come forward and seek help.

Skills for life are the basis of all learning

and enable learners to gain confidence in their abilities, but the reps role does not stop there.

Reps support and encourage members in continuing to expand their knowledge and follow their interests and this could be anything from learning British Sign Language to undertaking a university degree.

The knock on effects of lifelong learning and the vital work of the Rail Union Learning Representative is that it enables members to use their newly learnt skills in going for promotions, solving problems and make sound financial decisions.

Ultimately, learning and knowledge enables individuals to lead happy, successful and healthy life, both at work and at home.

LEARNING AGREEMENTS

Together with employers, education providers and the TUC, RUL have made steps to overcome barriers to learning faced by members, in particular shift work, and have provided thousands of high quality learning and training opportunities.

RUL has also been successful in company based projects, such as P2L (Passport 2 Learning), Brighton Learning Centre, Wilts and Dorset Learning Bus and the newly-opened Red Star Learning Centre.

Rail Union Learning has started a new faze of the programme focusing on the following three areas Learning Agreement, Skills for Life and RULR Networks. The ultimate aim is to have the building blocks of a Learning Agreement, a network of learning reps and a Skills for Life initiative in all companies to enable members to access learning opportunities.

What exactly do learning reps do and what are their statutory rights?

Starting in April 2003, Union Learning Representatives were given statutory rights

at work equivalent to that of union health and safety representatives. These rights include reasonable paid time off for carrying out any of the following activities in relation to their union members:

- Analysing learning or training needs
- Providing information and advice about learning or training matters
- Arranging learning or training
- Promoting the value of learning or training
- Consulting the Employer about carrying out any of the above activities
- Preparing to carry out any of the above activities
- Undergoing relevant training

Employees are entitled to unpaid time off to access services provided by their ULR. Union Learning Representatives have an initial five-day training course and a further course in Skills for Life awareness. There are also further TUC training modules to provide on going training.

In April, the third RUL Conference will take place enabling reps from across England to unite and celebrate what has been achieved so far.

have been supported into learning. Rail Union Learning Representatives are now standing proudly side by side union and health and safety reps making the workplace a fairer, safer and now a smarter workplace.

If you want to make a difference and are interested in becoming a learning reps, talk to your Branch Secretary. For further information please contact your learning officer on 020 7529 8820 or email info@rul.org.uk ■

For further information on Rail Union Learning and Rail Union Learning Representatives follow the RUL links on www.rmt.org.uk or visit www.rul.org.uk



INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

ASBESTOS TEST CASE AGAINST JAPAN RAILWAYS

Last month Mai Omae, the grieving daughter of mesothelioma victim Susumu Kato, made legal history in Japan when she brought the country's first asbestos case against the privatised Japan National Railway for her father's occupational death.

Mr. Kato worked as an electrician at Ofuna Factory, Kanagawa prefecture from 1953-1987 and inspected and repaired railway carriages during which he was exposed to asbestos-containing fire-proofing products. No warnings were given or protection provided.

In July 2004, Mr. Kato was hospitalised for chest pain and was diagnosed with malignant pleural mesothelioma in September 2004. Through sheer determination he was able to lead his daughter Mai down the aisle when she married on November 6, despite the pain he was in. and he died less than a month later.

Compensation was approved for Mr Kato on January 20, 2005, six weeks after he died. However, the JNR Settlement

Corporation, representing the JRJT, remained unresponsive to requests made by the family and NGOs working with the family.

Despite the fact that Mr Kato resigned from the trade union in 1987 when he left his job, the Yokohama branch of Japan's National Railway Workers' Union (NRU) has been supportive of Mai's struggle.

The NRU hopes that the publicity generated by this case will embolden other members with asbestos-related conditions to come forward.

At a press conference, Mai spoke of her determination to obtain justice for her father and warned 100,000 other ex-railway workers of their asbestos exposure. Mai and supporters are hoping to launch an international solidarity movement for all former railway personnel who have contracted occupational asbestos-related diseases. For more information on this please contact: Rie Monika Ikeda, Kanagawa Occupational Safety and Health Centre, by email at: monika@jca.apc.org ■



Canadian rail workers strike

Striking Canadian National Railway workers walks the picket line in front of the company's head office in Montreal last month.

Over 5000 of the company's engineering, clerical and train crew workers walked off the job after contract negotiations over wages broke down.



FIRST VICTORY IN ZAMORA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

The first victory in the campaign to secure justice for murdered Guatemalan trade unionist Pedro Zamora was announced recently with the reinstatement of the nine sacked workers whose jobs he was fighting to save at the time he was shot.

The ITF is leading an international initiative to protect Zamora's colleagues who also face the threat of death as he was before his brutal killing. It has confirmed that the men, all members of the STEPQ union, are back at work at Puerto Quetzal.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said that the reinstatement couldn't have happened without an order from the very top following the pressure applied by trade unions and human rights organisations worldwide.

Pedro Zamora, general secretary of the STEPQ Dockers' union in Puerto Quetzal, was ambushed and gunned down as he collected his sons from a hospital appointment in January. ■



INDIAN RAIL BLAST

At least 65 people have been killed after a bomb attack aboard a train travelling from India to Pakistan.

Passengers said they heard two blasts as the train passed near Panipat, about 50 miles north of Delhi, and a fire then swept through two carriages.

The train is part of the "Friendship Express" service that takes passengers from Delhi to Lahore in Pakistan. Indian and Pakistani leaders denounced the attack as an act of terrorism aimed at disrupting their peace process.

The blasts happened a day before Pakistan's foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri was due in Delhi for talks with Indian leaders.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf called for a full investigation by the Indian authorities but said the attack would not undermine peace efforts between the two nations. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed "anguish and grief" at the loss of life.

The reaction from both governments suggests the prime suspects might be groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, the main Islamic terror groups who have been blamed for many high-profile bombings.

Recent attacks on Delhi, Mumbai and Varanasi seemed designed to damage India's image abroad and stoke anti-Pakistan feeling inside India.

The twice-weekly rail service from the Indian capital to Lahore was restarted in 2004 after a two-year gap as part of the peace process between the two countries.



For a green and democratic agenda

Every day we hear about the damage caused by global warming and the continuing growth in carbon emissions.

I believe that it is not an exaggeration to say that the long-term existence of our planet could be under threat.

However, the response from the politicians who govern us has so far left many people with an understandable level of deep scepticism. Media stunts and statements do not equate to a coherent policy on this important issue. The sight of politicians jumping on the band wagon and, in fact, saying very little always leaves a bad taste in the mouth of voters.

Growing levels of road traffic and the continuing cuts in rail services and staff are not seriously being addressed.

However, RMT has been arguing for a greener and more environmentally-friendly approach to transport issues for many years.

The union has, with others, been calling for the development of an integrated transport network that could utilise and co-ordinate all modes of transport from rail, buses to waterways.

The case for freight on rail and for the development of decent public transport to get people out of their cars is a core part of this union's work.

There always seems to be plenty resources and money to spend on bombing other countries and building weapons of mass destruction such as Trident.

If the same level of determination, effort and resources were spent on the war on poverty and to save our environment we all depend upon, we could achieve our aspirations.

However, the fatal rail crash at Grayrigg, Cumbria shows just how far we have to go.

Just hours after the tragedy, it was staggering to witness that Sir Richard Branson had made his way to the crash site to demand that profit-hungry train operating companies should take over control of the track.

It is becoming clearer by the day that the whole network should be re-unified, owned and operated in the public sector where it belongs.

I was privileged to speak at the union's well-attended health and safety conference last month in Blackpool.

The sheer dedication of our health and safety reps out there in the workplace night and day at sea, on the railways and in road transport is something we should all be proud of.

The debates were constructive and, at times, critical of the union. This open approach is vital if we are to represent the best interests of the members, which is what we should be all about. This is a young but growing conference and I was very pleased to attend.

The Council of Executives has called a Special General Meeting this month to discuss the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC) merging with RMT.

OILC was formed in 1988 in the aftermath of the Piper Alpha tragedy in which 167 offshore workers were killed. It has vigorously campaigned for better safety and conditions for offshore workers.

The democratic point here is that rank-and-file members will debate and vote on the future of the union and that is only right and proper.

John Leach

COLOMBIA: MURDERED FOR BEING IN A UNION

Justice for Colombia
explains why the Latin
American country is one of
the most dangerous
countries in the world to
belong to a trade union

*DEATH SQUADS: Ministers in President Alvaro Uribe's right wing
government are linked to paramilitary death squads*





PROTEST: Colombian trade unionists march against victimisation by right wing paramilitaries

Colombian trade unionists face daily attacks just for belonging to a union and it's getting worse.

New figures attained by Justice for Colombia show that, despite the Colombian government's claims that they care about human rights, the numbers being killed are still going up.

Over 80 trade unionists were murdered in Colombia last year compared with 73 in 2005. And the killings have continued into 2007, with at least six union members being murdered in January and February.

GOVERNMENT-BACKED DEATH SQUADS

The upturn in deaths came as the Colombian Government was unmasked for working with the right wing paramilitary death squads that do most of the killing. A large number of pro-government Congressmen have now been questioned for their links and in February the Colombian Foreign Minister was forced to resign after it became public that her family had close links to the death squads.

The paramilitaries have never made any secret of their support for one of the most hard right-wing governments in Latin America.

They recently sent out a new wave of death threats to trade unionists and human rights workers in which they said: "We identify with the security

policies of President Alvaro Uribe", another release from them in the run up to last year's election called the president "our candidate".

Colombia's paramilitaries are responsible for some of the worst abuses in a continent with an appalling record. Their vile crimes include killing people with axes and chain saws. People are 'disappeared' so that their families can never hold a funeral for them and unborn children have been cut from their mothers.

They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of trade unionists, progressive activists and political leaders.

WHY TRADE UNIONISTS ARE TARGETED

Trade unionists are targeted in Colombia for a reason. The country is one of the most unequal in the world, with enormous disparities between the country's powerful ruling class and the millions of people who live in poverty. According to the UN, around 64 per cent of Colombia's 45 million population live in poverty.

Colombia is a country rich in natural resources. It is a major exporter of oil and coal. It is an international centre for gem stones, such as emeralds. It also produces many agricultural products for American markets, such as cut flowers, and vegetable oil for bio-diesel.

Trade unionists have always

argued that the wealth of the country should be used to benefit the workers and less well off in Colombia. But many from the rich and powerful in Colombia fear losing their privilege and set up the paramilitary death squads as security organisations to kill the political opposition.

The US, which fears that a progressive Colombian government could be "bad for business", gives the current regime over \$600 million every year for their armed forces. And yet those same armed forces work with the death squads to kill trade unionists and have been criticised by the United Nations for increasingly using assassination to target innocent people.

IMPRISONED

Not only do trade unionists face the threat of death against them, they are also persecuted by the authorities, so that if they can't be killed, they are often imprisoned on trumped up charges.

Using a blanket charge of "rebellion", the police and army round up trade unionists, often torturing them before they are put in prison. They can then be held without trial, sometimes for years, and forced to go through a "virtual trial", which means they have to testify in their own trial from their cell rather than the courtroom.

Women who are imprisoned

with young children are often faced with the choice of either abandoning them or bringing them into prison with them. Once in prison, young children are not recognised by the authorities, which means that don't get any extra space in the cramped cells, they don't get any extra clothes or any food rations.

FIGHTING BACK

Despite the killings, the Colombian trade union movement is not scared. A new political party has been set up called the Democratic Alternative Pole, which is now the main opposition party in Colombia.

The scandal over the links between the government and the paramilitaries is also making it easier for the trade union movement to show the Colombian regime up for what it really is.

Unions continue to organise in a wide variety of sectors, from judicial workers, to coal miners, to teachers, taxi drivers and peasants. Despite the daily threats, ordinary people are standing up for their rights in Colombia.

To find out more about Colombia, or to affiliate to Justice for Colombia see www.justiceforcolombia.org or contact Justice for Colombia direct on 020 7794 3644 or info@justiceforcolombia.org

JOIN A DEMONSTRATION FOR COLOMBIAN TRADE UNIONISTS

On Tuesday March 20 at 10am, outside the Colombian Embassy, 3 Hans Crescent, London, SW1X 0LN (behind Harrods, Knightsbridge) Justice for Colombia is holding an event outside the Colombian Embassy to commemorate the deaths of Colombian trade unionists during 2006 and to call on the Colombian Government to respect human rights.

Bob Crow will be leading an RMT contingent and all trade unionists are invited to attend and show their support. ■

**HAMMERSMITH AND CITY
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES LT
REGION

NEASDEN BRANCH

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

C OF E LT REGION

*UNITY IS STRENGTH -
VOTE OLLY NEW*

LU ENGINEERING BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN MUNRO

COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES OF
THE LONDON TRANSPORT
REGION

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
NO1 BRANCH**

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

FOR LT EC MEMBER

*THE BEST CANDIDATE TO
REPRESENT TFL STAFF*

LU FLEET BRANCH

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
REGION 11 – LONDON
TRANSPORT

**PICCADILLY AND DISTRICT
WEST BRANCH**

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

FOR C OF E LT REGION

FOR EXPERIENCE AND UNITY

**CENTRAL LINE WEST
BRANCH**

SUPPORTS

OLIVER NEW

FOR LT REGION EC MEMBER

BIRMINGHAM RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

PAT COLLINS

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
REGION 6

BAKERLOO BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN MUNRO

COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES OF
THE LONDON TRANSPORT
REGION

**JUBILEE SOUTH & EAST
LONDON LINE BRANCH**

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

FOR C OF E SEAT LT AREA

SUPPORT THE BEST

**BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

PAT COLLINS

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
REGION 6

FINSBURY PARK

NOMINATES

OLIVER NEW

FOR LT C OF E POSITION

*TO PROMOTE UNITY AND A
POSITIVE AGENDA*

CAMDEN NO 3 BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN MUNRO

FOR THE COUNCIL OF
EXECUTIVES IN THE LONDON
TRANSPORT REGION

MORDEN AND OVAL BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN MUNRO

C OF E OF THE LT REGION

*VOTE FOR THIS EXPERIENCED
CANDIDATE*

UNION WINS COMPENSATION FOR TAMPING MACHINE OPERATOR

RMT member Frank Keltie from Tyneside in the north east has been awarded compensation for the condition of 'whole body vibration syndrome'. Frank received the award in an out of court settlement from Jarvis Rail.

Frank has worked in the rail industry since 1970 and most of that time was spent working on tamping machines. These delivered high levels of vibration to the operator, particularly during his earlier years.

One of the problems was the seat, which was not sprung, meaning that the vibrations caused by the machine were delivered directly to the operator.

Newer seats were eventually introduced in the last 10 years or so, but by that time the damage had been done. The condition of 'whole body vibration syndrome' is one in which medical knowledge and research is still at a very early stage and proving a connection

between Mr Keltie's work and his symptoms was always going to prove difficult.

The claim was pursued on behalf of RMT by union solicitors, Thompsons. The medical evidence obtained confirmed that the vibration exposure had worsened a pre-existing back condition.

Although Jarvis denied liability throughout they opted to settle the claim out of court. The compensation was paid by Jarvis both in respect of their own post-privatisation period of employment, and on behalf of British Rail to cover the earlier years of exposure.

Frank worked the tamping machines on nightshifts, putting in up to 72 hours a week, spread across six shifts. During an average shift he would spend up to seven hours actually operating the machine.

He operated these machines from the start of his time in the rail industry in 1970 right up to about 1999 when his job as a supervisor meant a reduction in



his exposure to vibration. Even after that, however, he continued to have occasional exposure.

Frank said that he was very grateful to the union for the support it had given to his claim which he would not have been able to pursue without RMT assistance.

"I imagine there must be many other tamper operators up and down the country who have done the same sort of work as I did and many of them might have similar problems.

"I hope my settlement encourages more of them to come forward to seek the compensation they are entitled to.

"It is only if more members

decide to pursue these claims that this condition will become more generally accepted," he said.

Frank's solicitor, Keith Patten, of Thompsons' Newcastle office said that it was a novel claim as there had been very few made for this condition in the rail industry. "Jarvis denied liability all the way but decided to settle the claim and must have accepted that the company was at risk of losing if the claim went to trial.

"As always every claim will depend upon its own facts, but this outcome shows that these claims can be successful if they are pursued vigorously," he said.



CREDIT UNION LAUNCHES NEW RMT ADVANCE ACCOUNT

The RMT Credit Union has launched a new RMT Advance account for union members.

The account acts like a Christmas or summer holiday club account by allowing members to make a regular premium payment which will payout a guaranteed lump sum each year.

But unlike a traditional Christmas club, your savings are not wiped out each year when you take your cash. Instead, your savings continue to grow over the years. So while you have a source of cash just when you need it most, your savings continue to accumulate.

Each year at Christmas or summer (or both if you wish) the Credit Union will make you an advance of the guaranteed lump sum.

This is a one-year loan for the amount advanced and over the next 12 months the loan will be repaid, which means that the following year you can have another advance loan.

The interest that you pay on the loan is

incredibly low – only £5.48 per year for each £100 that you borrow (9.9%APR). But you also continue to save at least £5 per month as part of your premium is added to your savings (shareholding).

DIVIDEND

These savings continue to attract the credit union dividend, the equivalent to interest, which in the past two years has been three per cent.

As this further offsets the interest paid on the Advance, you can see that the new account is a very cost effective way of gaining access to a guaranteed cash sum just when you need, it but also of building up a useful amount of savings over time.

For example, if you open an RMT Advance account with premium G, you would pay £93 per month. You would get a yearly Advance loan payout of £1000.

Provided you had paid 12 premiums before the first advance, after 3 years you would also accumulate savings (shareholdings) of at least £1,235. And to

this amount we would add the yearly Credit Union dividend.

Each year you have access to cash, you have paid off your Advance loan, and your savings have grown.

If you wish to pay extra savings on top of your premiums let us know and we can set up an individual premium for you.

NOT FOR PROFIT

The RMT Credit Union is able to offer this cost effective product because unlike the banks and loan companies we exist to serve RMT members not to make a profit and is run by RMT members.

For full details and application for the RMT Advance account please see the information at the back of this RMT News. If you have any questions or need to know more, please telephone the RMT Credit Union office on 020 7529 8835.

Please remember you will need verification of your identity and address as per FSA regulations before you can open your account. ■

LETTERS

Driving up membership

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read in my February 2007 issue of RMT News about the experiences of Ken Slade and Alan Pierson recently when they stood as RMT candidates in Southeastern Trains Drivers Company Council elections.

Firstly, congratulations to Ken and Alan for having run such a good campaign that they picked up 218 votes from train drivers on Southeastern looking for trade union representation. Those votes weren't wasted as Ken and Alan point out. Workplace elections prick the bubble of complacency and arrogance that have characterised some Train Drivers' Company Councils and remind our fellow drivers that the word 'represent' means 'to act or speak on behalf of somebody', not 'to pull the wool over their eyes and feather your own nest'. I'm sure that Ken and Alan's colleagues won't forget it was RMT that forced these elections to take place and that must be a good thing.

Drivers employed Arriva Trains Wales are currently taking part in Company Council and LDC elections as a result of relentless pressure from RMT to force elections to take place and from drivers themselves - 100 of whom signed a petition demanding the right to elect the people who negotiate terms and conditions on their behalf. It seems incredible in the 21st century that officials of some trade unions behave as if workers had never won the right to vote! Don't these people know where the labour movement comes from?

The RMT South Wales & West Regional Council Drivers Committee and RMT branches will be ensuring that our union's candidates for the Arriva Trains Wales Drivers Company Council get full backing for their campaign in these elections and we wish Steve Richards (Cardiff Valleys), Stewart Pritchard (Cardiff Mainline) and Angela Langton (Crewe) all the very best as well as RMT candidates standing for LDC elections.

We are also buoyed up by the success of RMT Driver candidates recently in LDC elections at First Great Western. Mick Hall topped the poll at Par depot in Cornwall, in January this year Andy Miller came top of the poll at Westbury depot in Wiltshire and Brendan Bailey narrowly missed top spot at Bristol. These excellent candidates won the respect and the votes of their fellow drivers because they are approachable, level-headed and genuinely interested in the welfare of their fellow workers.

We look forward with confidence to forthcoming Drivers' Divisional Council elections at FGW where RMT has consistently spoken for the majority of train drivers in recent years whether over the issue of pay and conditions harmonisation or the much - resented decision by FGW Driver's Divisional Council to pilot 'FirstCare' sickness reporting for train drivers - now withdrawn as a result of RMT representation.

Alex Gordon

Rail inspector acts over runaway vehicles

Dear editor,

Your article Tebay - three years on (February RMT News) mentions that we have threatened Network Rail with enforcement action over runaway road/rail vehicles.

Following our investigation into an incident at Copenhagen last October, we served an Improvement Notice in January requiring Network Rail to identify vehicles of the type involved in that incident and apply an engineering solution to the problem of not being continuous.

Reliance on people carrying out procedures in difficult working conditions is not acceptable and only an engineering solution will do. The Notice also requires acceptance procedures for new vehicles to be changed so that braking is available at all times.

Network Rail has not appealed against the breaches of Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 upon which the Notice was based. NR is, therefore, legally committed to compliance.

I hope this action by HM Railway Inspectorate reassures RMT members.

Yours faithfully,
Stephen Poole, HM Inspector of Railways

No to road-pricing

Dear editor,

Many RMT members have a motorcycle or a scooter for work or pleasure. The government is thinking of road pricing in which road users pay by the mile for the use of the road.

It has not been made clear if bikes or scooters would be affected by this. However, what congestion does a bike or scooter cause?

I feel road pricing is nothing more than a stealth tax. It's about time that this government knew what it was doing.

It has failed public transport and now we read in RMT News of the threat of bigger lorries on our roads which will cause a loss of freight from our railways and waterways.

Bob Taylerson

SANTAMERA AWARDED MERCHANT NAVY MEDAL

Former RMT shipping officer Tony Santamera received the Merchant Navy Medal recently after the union put him forward for the honour.

The Merchant Navy Medal was founded as a charitable initiative in order to recognise the meritorious service and acts of courage by British-registered seafarers of all ranks within the industry.

Tony said that he was very proud to be presented with this honour and thanked the union for its support.

"I will be eternally grateful for the comradeship and support I have been given over the years.

"Whatever I have achieved is due to the

members and the union," he said.

Tony also paid tribute to his late wife Carole who passed away last October.

"Without Carole's moral, political and loving support and guidance, nothing would have been possible," he said.

General secretary Bob Crow said that the union had put Tony's name forward for the award because of his services to the maritime industry.

"Tony hails from a family of seafarers and has fought tirelessly to improve the working conditions of his fellow workers," he said.

Recipients of the medal must have been serving as officers, ratings or shore-based

personnel within the shipping and shipping related companies, agencies, bodies, authorities or educational establishments ■



Medal: National officer Steve Todd, Tony Santamera, Admiral Sir Alan West GCB who presented Tony with his medal, Bob Crow and RMT president Tony Donaghey attend the ceremony.

THE 2007 GREAT RAIL CHALLENGE



Places are still available for the Railway Children's Great Rail Challenge in May.

This one-day event is an opportunity to raise funds to help children worldwide who are alone, at risk and living on the streets.

The charity is looking for teams of four to take part in a series of physical and mental challenges in Sunningdale Park, Ascot, designed to test teams to the limit in lots of different situations.

All the activities are designed to have objectives to encourage workplace skills: teamwork, strategic thinking, decision making, communications and negotiation.

Teams will be awarded points for completing each activity and there will be lots of unexpected twists and turns throughout the day to enable each team to gain more points.

The challenge starts before the event when additional points can be earned by raising funds for the charity.

The team which is most successful in combining

physical, mental, team building and fundraising skills will be the ultimate winner of The Great Rail Challenge Cup 2007.

Your investment will be £300 per head for the first team; subsequent teams will be allocated places at £250 per head.

So if you are interested in a great "team building" day out, with a chance to help vulnerable children, get in touch.

Railway Children is a registered charity, No. 1058991. It works in the UK and worldwide giving a point of contact for homeless children at railway stations, providing shelter, food, healthcare, education and above all, friendship.

The countries in which it provides support includes India, Mexico, Guatemala, Russia, Tanzania, Kenya and the UK.

For further information e-mail events@railwaychildren.org.uk or Railway Children, 1st Floor 1, the Commons, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1EG. ■

SOUTH AFRICA TREK IN AID OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE

RMT member Tony Bint will be taking part in a trek across South Africa this month in aid of St John Ambulance and is looking for sponsors.

The 10-day trek starts at Cape Town, passes through the Cederberg Wilderness and ends at the top of Table Mountain. Trekkers will also spend a day at a project run by St John Ambulance, South Africa.

Trekkers will visit one of two projects run by St. John Ambulance South Africa. The first project offers sustainable home-based care to HIV/Aids sufferers living in communities visited by the Phelophepa train, a 16-car train which travels the country providing health screenings, education and medical treatment.

The other is a community project aiming to increase the health of young children and reduce the mortality rate of under-fives.

Tony said that trekking 125 miles from Sandriffs near Cape Town to Table Mountain will be an adventure of a lifetime with for a worthwhile cause.

He has been a member of St

John Ambulance in Derbyshire for 12 years. Despite a full-time job at Bombardier in Derby, he still manages to give on average 500 voluntary duty hours a year – providing First Aid/ambulance cover at local events including the football at Pride Park and working with east midlands ambulance service.

"I would like to raise £5,000 and I am looking for sponsors who can help me reach my target. It is a long way – all uphill – to the top of Table Mountain," he says.

Trekkers will be raising sponsorship to take part and this money will be ploughed back into local and national St John Ambulance projects. Each trekker must raise a minimum of £2,700 and pay a registration fee of £300. Sponsorship money must be received before the end of April.

For further information on the trek or to make a donation visit website

www.justgiving.com/tonybint The site is totally secure and if you are a UK taxpayer a further 28 per cent in tax can be added at no extra cost to you. ■





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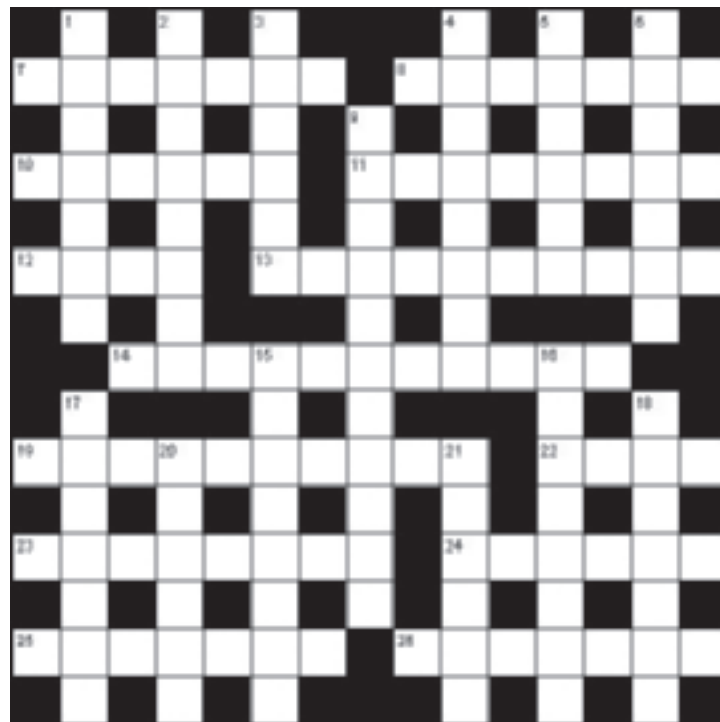
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Self-catering house for rent. 3 bedrooms, 1 with ensuite. Fully furnished with all mod-cons. Cable TV etc.. £250pw per person. Contact Lennox: **07831 862369** or **07771 830594** or leave a message on: **01132 628828**

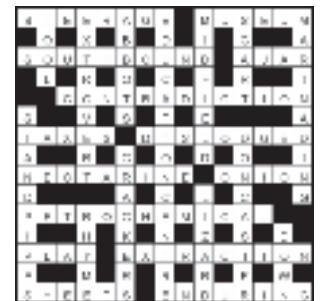


RMT £25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 33. Set by Elk



Last month's solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 32 is Alan Worth of Dorset.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 7 Cone-bearing tree, such as pine, yew, fir etc (7)
- 8 Market places (originally of the East) (7)
- 10 Involuntary expiration caused by irritation of nasal membrane (6)
- 11 Class of drugs commonly abused by athletes (8)
- 12 Small pressurised beer casks (4)
- 13 Natives of east European state (10)
- 14 Chemicals used to destroy unwanted vegetation, especially in gardens (11)
- 19 Sheets, blankets etc (10)
- 22 Base fruit for perry (4)
- 23 Paid killer, originally an eater of hashish (8)
- 24 Hugo, socialist president of Venezuela (6)
- 25 Light growth on bird; boxing weight; former TUC general secretary (7)
- 26 Sporting arbiter (7)

DOWN

- 1 Ball deliberately intended to rise towards batter's face (7)
- 2 One permitted - to sell alcohol? (8)
- 3 Hats worn by (caricatured) French folk (6)
- 4 Cuban national game (8)
- 5 Vessel recently grounded off Devon coast (6)
- 6 Britain's weapon of mass destruction (7)
- 9 Very surprising (11)
- 15 Thick wedge of bread - at house entrance? (8)
- 16 Substituted (8)
- 17 Infectious fever accompanies by red spots: kids get German ones (7)
- 18 Supplier of food and drink for functions (7)
- 20 Marine maps (6)
- 21 Small packet of, say, sugar (6)

RMT Credit Union

RMT ADVANCE

a great new savings & credit account for RMT members

The RMT ADVANCE account is a great new way for RMT members to have access to a guaranteed lump sum once or twice a year, while building up a savings reserve.

The key features of the RMT ADVANCE account are:

- A fixed monthly premium which guarantees a yearly cash Advance paid directly to you
- You can set up two schemes so that you have a payout to coincide with the Christmas and summer holidays
- Choose the premiums and cash advance to suit your needs
- Continual growth of a cash reserve which attracts a dividend to boost savings
- The premiums are structured so that in each 12 months you have repaid the value of your Advance in full.

By paying the regular premium of your choice you set up a credit agreement for the Advance that will generate an automatic payment to you at the following times:

- Christmas ADVANCE paid on the second Friday of December
- Summer ADVANCE paid on the second Friday of June

This will mean that you will have ready cash available for the Christmas spending spree or your summer holidays, or both.

The RMT Advance loan is at a very low cost 9.9% APR, which is extremely good value. For every £100 you borrow you will only pay £5.48 in interest over the 12 months. Of course your savings also attract our Credit Union dividend (equivalent to interest) which in the last 2 years has been 3%. This means that while you have access to a guaranteed lump sum, your savings will continue to accumulate.

The RMT ADVANCE account offers great value and benefits for RMT members. If you wish to apply for an account please complete the application form attached.

- You can still get a Christmas 2007 advance if you submit your application before 12th May 2007, but the savings accumulated in the first year will be reduced compared to those illustrated below.
- For a Summer ADVANCE 2008 we will need your completed application before 12th November 2007 so that we can get your premium payments established.

Don't forget to include your proofs of identity and address, which are required by law. We will return your documents straight away, or you can send us copies if they are verified by your branch secretary or employer etc.

Your savings accumulate year after year

You can have a Christmas or summer payout, or both

THE TABLE BELOW DEMONSTRATES THE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OF THE RMT ADVANCE ACCOUNT

To achieve the full savings benefits illustrated you will need to have been saving for 12 months prior to the Advance, so get your application in as soon as possible. The table demonstrates the savings accumulated for full payment of 12 premiums from year 1

Plan	Premium	Advance	Credit cost per year	Accumulated Savings		
				Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
A	£27	£250	£13.70	£324	£444	£564
B	£31	£300	£16.44	£376	£496	£616
C	£40	£400	£21.92	£482	£602	£722
D	£49	£500	£27.40	£587	£707	£827
E	£58	£600	£32.88	£693	£813	£933
F	£67	£700	£38.36	£798	£918	£1,038
G	£93	£1,000	£54.80	£1,115	£1,235	£1,355
H	£115	£1,250	£68.50	£1,379	£1,499	£1,619
I	£137	£1,500	£82.20	£1,642	£1,762	£1,882

All premiums are rounded to nearest £ for the purposes of illustration. You will be informed of the precise premium. The premium will repay the Advance within 12 months while you continue to save £5 per month. Let us know if you wish to save more. The accumulated savings illustrated assume premiums are paid for a full 12 months before the first Advance.

RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD
RMT ADVANCE ACCOUNT 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 RMT Advance Account Premiums & Payout**I wish to open a: ☐ Christmas Advance Account ☐ Summer Advance Account ☐ Both

Please tick the appropriate box(es) and indicate the appropriate Plan, Premiums and Payouts below

The account(s) I wish to open are:	Christmas Advance Plan ☐	Premium £	Payout £
	Summer Advance Plan ☐	Premium £	Payout £

(Please see table opposite. Write in the plan letter, premiums and payout amounts you require)

For 2007, Direct Debits for Christmas Advance will commence in January with a double payment. Summer Advance will be paid out in July 2008 with Direct Debits commencing in July 2007.

6 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.**7 I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted. For the RMT Advance Account I undertake to pay the monthly premiums indicated, and at the agreed time I will receive the appropriate payout which will consist of a part rebate of my shareholdings and a credit unions loan.**

Your signature

Date

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

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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	4	2	8	1
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Reference Number

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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.



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Seven days a week

