

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Employer*		Location	
Job Description*		Part Time	YES ☐ NO ☐

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EDITORIAL

WINNING AT WORK



It is welcome news that a Court of Appeal has ruled that London Underground failed to provide proper training to a woman driver member who developed work-related injuries as a result.

Unfortunately this member can no longer work as a train driver but, without her union, she could not have got the justice she fully deserved.

Being in RMT can give workers the confidence to take on the bosses collectively and achieve gains that could not have been won alone.

This is why more than 100 Wightlink seafarer members have won an improved offer after bosses imposed earlier rosters without agreement with the workforce.

Engineering grades at Network Rail have also put the company on notice that unless long-standing issues surrounding harmonisation are dealt with a strike ballot will be initiated.

Recent strike action by signallers in defence of Promotion, Transfer Redundancy and Resettlement agreements, which the company had previously refused to honour, has brought results and further talks.

But before coming back to the negotiating table the company put ill-trained managers into signal boxes in an effort to break strike action.

Instead of indulging in dangerous practices Network Rail should have been settling a dispute it started.

Unfortunately putting safety before profit is an all-too-common occurrence as our safety reps meeting in Doncaster last month made clear.

Delegates agreed that privatisation and the sub-contracting culture that comes with it was a prime threat to workers' safety and conditions.

Just look at the mess caused by PPP and the privatisation of Tube maintenance. The collapse of Metronet has left the tax payer with a bill of around £2 billion.

RMT has warned MPs that taxpayers could face a similar bill if the remaining PPP company, Tubelines, were to go out of business.

However, the government has refused to investigate the matter.

This is despite the fact that a criminal investigation is under way over the use of unqualified contractors by the company, threatening our members' safety and that of the travelling public.

This year's budget was a lost opportunity to close a tax loophole that has allowed the six biggest private train operators and the three rolling-stock companies to rake in £1.3 billion in unpaid tax.

This is money should be funding railway engineering, but it is being used instead for financial engineering, turning hidden subsidies into pure profits for shareholders.

We need to face the fact that private-sector involvement in transport is about maximising profit, and stands in the way of delivering the transport network that our economy and environment desperately needs.

This was recognised recently by the New Zealand government, which is currently trying to buy back the country's privatised rail and ferry businesses.

Prime minister Michael Cullen has said that New Zealand's railways were never going to make money.

"We either end up subsidising the private sector or we end up subsidising ourselves," he said.

That has a familiar ring about it, doesn't it?

It is disappointing that most Labour and Lib Dem MPs have broken their election promise and refused to back a call for a referendum on the renamed EU constitution.

TUC Congress overwhelmingly called for a referendum on the so-called Lisbon Treaty, which would hand huge powers to unaccountable EU institutions such as the European Court of Justice.

This court has already ruled in two cases against the right of trade unions to take legitimate strike action.

In a taste of things to come, British Airways has also threatened its pilots with the same EU laws if they take lawful strike action.

If the ratification process for the constitution is rejected in the House of Lords and it returns to the House of Commons, perhaps more MPs will do the right thing and give voters their chance to have a say.

Bob Crow

SIGNALLING SUCCESS AT DOVER

A number of Network Rail signalling reps have just completed a five-day education course at the union's newly refurbished office in Dover.

Local activists have been working hard to promote the facilities available to members in the area, including education courses.

The office has established itself as a venue for trade union education and providing a venue for meetings and courses for other unions and trade councils.

Incoming regional council education officer Mike Sargeant worked closely with the elected Network Rail Zonal rep for the area Phil Boorman, a signalman from Ashford, to get courses up and running.

"Working with Bill Dickson, another experienced signalling rep, Phil visited every box in Kent recruiting and persuading potential reps," Mike said.

It was decided to run a two-day grievance and discipline course first, which proved very successful.

Phil approached Network Rail with a view to running a five-day block release to get all new reps trained up in one go rather than one day at a time for ten weeks and the company agreed.

EC member for the region Paul Burton visited the class during the week.

"It was the first time we had run a block course in Dover for members who are all from the same grade and company and we are looking forward to carry out the same exercise wherever possible," said Mike. ■



Course: L-R Frank Crompton (TUC), Malcolm Dunning (Dover Shipping), Ron Cox (Hastings Rep), Mark Anderson (Thanet Rep), Bruce Morrison (High Speed Rail Link Rep), Derek Potter (Ashford IECC Rep), Kevin Lawrence (TDAC Rep), Paul Burton, Phil Boorman (Kent Area Rep) John Dadds (Mobile Operations Manager Rep) not pictured also attended the course.

NETWORK RAIL OPERATIONAL STAFF REJECT PAY OFFER

Network Rail has been told by the union to improve its two-year pay and conditions offer to 7,000 signalling and other key operational staff or face ballots for industrial action by the two biggest rail unions.

In co-ordinated referendums, members of RMT and TSSA in operational, customer services and project and engineering-support grades voted heavily to reject an offer, of 4.8 per cent this year and RPI plus 0.5 per cent next year.

Unions had signalled that the offer for year one would be acceptable, but that the second-year element would not protect members against the rising cost of living, with key costs, including fuel bills and pension contributions, rising far faster than the official inflation rate.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that RMT members had voted by a margin of two to one to decisively to reject an

inadequate offer that would leave them less well off.

"Their verdict is quite clear and we have told Network Rail that unless there is an acceptable offer on the table within seven days we will put in place arrangements for a ballot for strike action," he said.

TSSA assistant general secretary Manuel Cortes said that TSSA members were now ready to vote on industrial action unless Network Rail came back to the table with a "sensible offer".

The company's current two-year offer is of an increase of 4.8 per cent from January 2008 and Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 0.5 per cent from January 2009.

It has also tabled a 6.7 per cent increase in London & South East allowances from April 2009, although with nothing offered in 2008, and an increase in the travel subsidy to 50 per cent in April 2008 and 60 per cent in April 2009. ■

IMPROVED OFFER AT WIGHTLINK

Wightlink ferry company has improved an offer to the union on the eve of 24-hour strike action by more than 100 seafarers in a long-running dispute over the imposition of earlier rosters.

Strike action planned for March 20 was suspended to allow members to be consulted on the offer.

RMT seafarers on the company's Portsmouth-Fishbourne route have been refusing to sign on for work before 05:30 since February 18, delaying early sailings on the route.

Members also voted by more than two to

one for strike action after attempts to negotiate with the company foundered.

In addition to a payment of £75 for operating the earlier sailings this year only, the company has also agreed to schedule sailings for future years that do not require a start time before 05:30, and to involve RMT reps in drawing up schedules.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow congratulated Wightlink members for their steadfast determination.

"Clearly the threat of strike action has focused the minds of the management and led to a more sensible offer," he said. ■

MPS WARNED TUBE LINES COULD GO WAY OF METRONET

RMT warns MPs that PPP consortium Tube Lines could collapse in the same way Metronet did, leaving the taxpayer with another huge bill

The union briefed MPs earlier in advance of the special parliamentary debate on the future of the London Underground PPP earlier this month following the collapse of Metronet which left the taxpayer with a bill of at least £1.7billion.

The debate had been called in response to the Transport Select Committee's highly critical report of the PPP. The report was critical of the fact that, under PPP, the government guaranteed the money Metronet had borrowed from the banks which have simply asked for their money back.

In a briefing circulated to MPs, RMT warned that taxpayers also remain exposed

to an unacceptable level of financial risk and could face another ten-figure bill if the remaining PPP company, Tubelines, were to go out of business.

The union welcomed the motion tabled by John McDonnell MP to coincide with the debate which argued that "to safeguard the future interest of the taxpayer the government must take steps to bring the Tubelines contract under the control of London Underground".

The call by the union's parliamentary group chair was picked up by colleagues in the debate. RMT parliamentary group member David Taylor MP asked the transport minister

Ruth Kelly whether "there is a serious risk that, at some time in the short to medium term, Tubelines will go the same way as Metronet?"

"Does she agree that the way of avoiding the catastrophic costs and impact on the public is to take Tube Lines back in-house as soon as possible so that its shareholders cannot meander quietly into the darkness of a tunnel to pocket their profits while we taxpayers have to underwrite their incompetence and veracity?"

RMT group member Kelvin Hopkins MP agreed, arguing that "when it comes to vital national institutions such as our railway system and the transport system for our capital, risk is never transferred and it is always ultimately with the government".

Harry Cohen MP quoted RMT concerns about future delays to upgrades as a result of the Metronet collapse.

"When the difficult and expensive work comes up in later years of the 30-year contract, Tube Lines will walk away.

"This division between the maintenance and infrastructure,

and the operation of the London Underground did not make any sense at the time and certainly makes no sense now. We cannot give any more blank cheques to private consortiums," he said.

In response, the government claimed that the collapse of Metronet was due to a corporate failure of Metronet rather than the fault of the PPP.

Ruth Kelly also rejected a call from the Transport Select Committee for an investigation into the Metronet affair.

However, a major criminal investigation is under way amid evidence that a Metronet manager awarded vital Tube refurbishment contracts to a company with whom he had close business links.

Huge contracts for complex, safety-critical electrical, fire alarm and refurbishment work at Oxford Circus were handed to Lanes Group Plc, whose main expertise is unblocking drains.

Graham Stringer MP also said the relationship between Metronet and its subsidiary Trans4m, which was paid by Metronet to carry out station renovations and was owned by Metronet shareholders, "looks like real corruption". ■



SIGNALLERS MAKE PROGRESS IN NETWORK RAIL DISPUTE

New ballots to be called unless 'clear undertaking' given in Great Northern area

Ballots for more than 900 signallers and supervisors in the Great Northern and North Eastern areas have been called off by RMT following progress in the individual cases at the centre of the disputes.

More than 50 signallers in the Lincoln area have already taken two days of strike action after Network Rail told a local operations manager with 33 years' signalling experience that the Transfer Redundancy and Resettlement (PTR&R) agreement did not apply to him when his post was made redundant.

In York, a local signalling operations manager has now been transferred according to the long-standing PTR&R agreement, which the company had previously refused to honour.

In the Lincoln area new discussions are being held with the company over the breach of the long-standing agreement.

RMT has also written to Network Rail's Great Northern area to seek a clear undertaking that the company would not remove any person from a signalbox, crossing box or electronic control centre without agreement.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow warned that unless Network Rail made this clear undertaking workplace ballots would be called at King's Cross, Doncaster and other locations in the Great Northern area.

He said that the PTR&R agreement was a cornerstone of members' conditions, and the union would do what was necessary to

defend it.

Network Rail came under fire during the Lincoln area signallers' strike following an apparently serious blunder by a Network Rail manager who worked a signal box which could have had catastrophic consequences.

RMT has asked the Railways Inspectorate to investigate an incident at West Holmes box following the error that could have sent a passenger train on the Newark-Lincoln line through an engineering site at up to 70mph.

A document seen by the union indicates that the time an engineering 'blockage' was supposedly given up on February 24 was entered on a safety-critical authorisation form the night before - more than eleven hours before the time indicated on the form.

If the mistake had not been spotted by the experienced signaller who re-opened the box the following morning, and had the engineering work overrun, the line could have been re-opened to traffic with potentially fatal consequences.

"Rather than throwing hastily trained managers into signal boxes Network Rail should be putting their efforts into settling a dispute that is entirely of the company's own making," Bob Crow said. ■



STRIKE: Bob Crow joins striking signallers at Lincoln

UK COASTGUARD STAFF STAGE FIRST EVER STRIKE ACTION

UK coastguards took strike action for the first time in their history on March 6.

The 24-hour strike involved up to 700 workers who are members of the Public and Commercial Services union.

Workers at 19 search and rescue co-ordination centres are in dispute with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency over pay.

The stoppage affected emergency calls and operations, but response teams were still sent out to emergency situations during the action.

The PCS said that coastguards receive "poverty pay" and have called for a wage increase of £3,000 on top of their current base line of £14,000 a year.

PCS pay co-ordinator Geoff Lewtas said: "It is a scandal, quite frankly, that an organisation that's got such great importance as the fourth emergency service, is running its operation with its permanent staff paid on shoestring wages.

"It's because they are on poverty pay in many cases and because their pay isn't on a

level with workers in similar situations providing emergency services, such as the police, ambulance and fire," he said.

MCA management has acknowledged that the coastguards are underpaid and said it was not able to increase pay as it was bound by government rules on public sector pay. ■

OILC MEMBERS VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY TO JOIN RMT

OILC and RMT are to become a single organisation after the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee's members voted overwhelmingly to become the offshore section of RMT from May 1 2008.

In a postal ballot, OILC members voted by 807 to 207 in favour of the transfer of engagements to RMT, which had been recommended by the organisation's annual conference in Aberdeen last October.

The move had already been endorsed by an RMT special general meeting, held in Doncaster last March.

"This is an historic day for trade unionism in the offshore sector," said OILC general secretary Jake Molloy, who will become lead officer for the new RMT offshore section.

"Joining forces with a union built on grass-roots involvement and which fights for workers' rights can do nothing but good in a sector that is notoriously difficult to organise.

"Together we will have the resources and the experience to organise for better safety and to win better pay and conditions and job security for offshore workers," Jake said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that move made sound industrial sense for two unions organising in the same sector and with the same outlook to join forces.

"Bringing our two unions together will give us more industrial clout and can only benefit members of both.

"'Unity is strength' is not just a slogan, it is the single phrase that sums up why we are trade unionists, and today trade

unionism in the offshore sector has taken a huge stride forwards," Bob Crow said.

OILC organises offshore engineering, drilling, construction and support workers, and was set up following the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster, which claimed 167 lives.

RMT already organises divers and catering workers in the offshore industry and recently won its more than 900 North Sea divers and support staff a 45 per cent pay rise after a ten-day, all-out strike.

Norwegian energy union Industri Energi secretary Leif Sande congratulated both unions on the merger.

"I am sure that this merger presents a very significant opportunity to organise effectively across the Norwegian and UK sectors," he said. ■



UNION WINS INJUNCTION AGAINST INFLAMMATORY WEB MATERIAL

Offensive and inflammatory material aimed at RMT general secretary Bob Crow has been removed from a website after a county court granted an injunction against the website operator.

The court has extended the temporary injunction it granted in December against a man named as Vincent Flood, as a result of which material has been removed from the internet.

The court ordered the defendant to pay the costs incurred by Bob Crow.

As well as ordering the removal of the

offending material, the injunction restrains the defendant from conduct which amounts to harassment by any further publication of the material, or from passing the material on to third parties.

RMT president John Leach said that material on the website was particularly nasty and could only be read as incitement to violence.

"When a website carries material that makes reference to taking people out and houses catching fire and allows postings that encourage that, we have gone way

beyond the realms of reasonable debate.

"Bob has already been on the receiving end of an attack with an iron bar at his own home during his election campaign, and in 2003 his daughter was left terrified after a late-night attack on the east London flat his daughter now occupies.

"Bob is not the sort to be intimidated, but publication of material like this is beyond the pale, and today we are sending out the message that we will not hesitate to take action against anyone who crosses that line," John Leach said.

RMT TELLS MPS RAIL STRATEGY FAILS INDUSTRY

The government's 30-year rail strategy fails to tackle the structural problems and long-term waste and inefficiency created by privatisation, the leader of Britain's biggest rail union Bob Crow told MPs recently.

Giving evidence to the Transport Select Committee, Bob pointed out that the government had ignored the committee's 2004 recommendation to create a new public-sector railway agency "given all the powers required to manage the entire rail system".

Renewing the union's call for the railways to be brought back into public ownership, he said that passengers and rail workers were being made to pay the price of privatisation.

"The government's £1 billion cut in funding over the next five years will see

passengers paying through the nose with increased fares, while train operators continue to make massive profits.

"Ever-higher rail fares and the refusal to develop high-speed rail north of the capital will not help the fight against climate change.

"Government plans to introduce 1,300 carriages and new high-speed trains should be a golden opportunity to protect what is left of British train manufacturing, and those trains should be built in Britain.

"There is no still industry-wide forum to address issues such as skills, training and staff assaults, or to discuss the report of the Railway Pensions Commission, and Network Rail's unilateral decision to launch an inferior pension scheme is an attempt to sabotage those discussions," Bob said.

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE OF THE SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK

**Saturday April 12
11.00am until 3.00pm
Union Offices, Albion
Street, Trongate, Glasgow.**

Speakers include, Phil McGarry RMT Scottish Regional Organiser, Sam McCartney Unison Convenor, Dave Chapple CWU branch secretary and co chair National Shop Stewards Network, Pauline Bradley Unison shop steward.

The purpose of this conference is to bring union activists together from across unions, workplaces and regions of Scotland to pool experiences, learn from each others struggles and build the strength of workers resisting attacks by employers.

All RMT representatives, lay officials and members welcome to attend this important conference. There is a delegate fee of £ 5.00 per delegate.





ACTION ON SEAFARERS' RIGHTS



Together with my colleagues in the RMT parliamentary group, I've been lobbying Ministers to take action on seafarer's employment rights and low pay.

During my seagoing days there was no National Minimum Wage and in those days many ship owners ruthlessly exploited British and non-domiciled seafarers. It's a scandal that all these years later, with Labour's minimum wage in place that non-doms are still being paid a pittance – even when they sail on UK ships in UK waters. That's why one of our key campaigns has been fighting for seafarers of all nationalities to receive the National Minimum Wage in these circumstances.

Eight years ago the Low Pay Commission recommended that action be taken to secure greater protection for non-domicile seafarers and in 2003 we thought we had made a breakthrough when the then shipping Minister said in a parliamentary debate that once seafarers are within UK waters, they would be covered by the national minimum wage.

The UK has jurisdiction over UK territorial waters which extend for twelve miles but civil servants have interpreted the Minister's statement to mean that non domicile seafarer's entitlement to the minimum wages only applies on UK registered ships when they are in port or in internal UK waters, as opposed to UK territorial waters.

Bizarrely, this interpretation means that places like the sea between Scotland and the Hebrides, the Firth of Forth, the Wash the Thames Estuary and the Solent are all excluded from protection while waters between Scotland and the Shetlands, between the mainland and the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man are not!

This extremely narrow interpretation of the legislation has led to the continued super exploitation of non-domicile seafarers on UK ships and in UK waters. We have had countless meetings with Ministers to address this issue but despite an admission that this lack of protection is immoral no progress has been made.

Well now there is a golden opportunity to right this wrong. The Employment Bill, currently before Parliament, deals with the application and enforcement of the

minimum wage. In consultation with the union, the Parliamentary group has drafted amendments to the Employment Bill which would have the effect of ensuring the minimum wage applied in UK territorial waters and to UK registered ships.

As RMT News goes to press, my Labour colleagues Baroness Turner and Lord Rosser have tabled these amendments to the Employment Bill in the House of Lords. When the Bill reaches the House of Commons we will be pursuing similar amendments to put pressure on the Government to take action.

I have also tabled Early Day Motion 1006 which highlights the fact that the lack of protection for seafarers "has contributed to poverty wages and widespread exploitation of non-domiciled seafarers on UK ships and in UK territorial waters".

As the Employment Bill progresses through Parliament we will, as always, be faced with predictable scaremongering from the shipping bosses that legislation to protect seafarers will threaten the future of the industry.

Aside from the fact that big business always seem to oppose any legislation that threatens their profits, the ship owners have provided absolutely no evidence to justify their position.

Indeed, as my motion in Parliament also makes clear – other legislation, such as the Corporate Manslaughter Act, applies to all ships in UK territorial waters and UK-flagged ships around the world.

There is absolutely no reason why the government cannot act now to end the type of exploitation that see ferries operating in British waters paying foreign seafarers as little as £1.50 an hour.

As well as being fundamentally wrong, it allows shipowners to undermine the employment prospects of British seafarers. Working with the union, members of the RMT parliamentary group are determined to right this wrong.

Gwyn Prosser,
MP for Dover and Deal

TUBE SAFETY TALKS BREAK DOWN AFTER LUL RENEGES ON AGENCY-STAFF PLEDGE

Talks between London Underground and the Tube's two biggest unions over safety and staffing issues broke down when the company said it intended to continue using agency and security staff and 'mobile station supervisors', despite promises otherwise.

Negotiators representing more than 7,500 TSSA and RMT station staff and drivers were astonished to hear that LUL intended to renege on its pledge to ensure that all station staff are directly employed and fully trained to LUL safety standards.

The unions are in dispute with LUL over a range of issues, including ticket-office closures, lone working and de-staffing, which add up to an attack on safety standards and the casualisation of safety critical work.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said after finally getting

LUL to discuss these matters the company went back on its promise to stop using agency and security staff on stations.

"When LUL took guards away they said there was no need to worry because there would be enough station staff to keep things safe, but the concept of mobile station supervisors drives a coach and horses through the safety regime and the rule book, and passengers should be worried.

"What happens when there's a fire, someone under a train or any one of dozens of possible emergencies and the person in charge is at the wrong station or even stuck between stations?" Bob said.

TSSA senior regional organiser John Page also said experienced station supervisors are a cornerstone of Tube safety.

"Their key role is to oversee safe operation and cope with



emergencies, and if you expect any individual to supervise several stations at once that becomes impossible.

"This dispute boils down to LUL wanting to put casual staff on stations in place of properly trained Tube staff," John said ■

Companywatch

GO-AHEAD PROFIT IS TRANSPORT'S LOSS

The £58 million half-year profits posted by the Go-Ahead group recently should be mourned as another huge loss to the transport industry.

A 23 per cent increase in the group's rail operating profits underlines that the rail franchising system diverts cash out of the industry while passengers suffer overcrowding and year-on-year inflation-busting fares increases.

The group's £31.4 million rail profit includes £300,000 squeezed out of the new London Midland franchise in

just six weeks.

This highlights that fact that rail franchising is only a success for the shareholders who are draining enormous sums of fare-payers' and taxpayers' money out of the industry.

For the passengers who suffer more and more overcrowding and inflation-busting fares hikes, and for staff who have to face the daily consequences, it is a disaster.

RMT members at Wilts and Dorset bus company who have

had to strike against excessive driving time will no doubt take note that Go-Ahead's bus operations have a healthy profit margin of more than 12 per cent.

"When the time comes to submit pay claims at the various Go-Ahead subsidiaries our members will bear in mind that shareholders have been handed an interim dividend of nearly 11 per cent," Bob Crow said.

Despite these huge profits, Go Ahead is considering pulling out of the Birmingham

bus market after writing off the entire value of its Go West Midlands bus operation.

In its interim results statement, Go Ahead said the West Midlands business was loss making and wrote down its value by £8.2 million, despite having paid just £4.5 million for the operations in 2005 and 2006.

Chief executive Keith Ludeman said that the write down was "a reflection of my style and also that of my new finance director". The 'style' is clearly profit, profit and profit.

RMT WINS INJURY APPEAL

RMT welcomes Court of Appeal ruling on Tube driver's wrist injury

A Court of Appeal ruling that London Underground failed to provide proper training to a driver who developed tenosynovitis in her right wrist has been welcomed by the union.

RMT and its lawyers, Thompsons, who acted for Latona Allison, say that the decision sent out the important message that it is the duty of employers to carry out risk assessments and take appropriate action, and not to wait until a health and safety concern is brought to their attention.

Ms Allison said that she was not given adequate training in the use of the safety brake, known as the Dead Man's Handle, when a new design was introduced. She can no longer work as a train driver as a result of her condition.

APPEAL

Her original claim for compensation was rejected by the County Court, but the Court

of Appeal has now ordered that LUL pays damages.

Three judges agreed that the training provided had been inadequate "in the light of what the employer ought to have known about the risks arising from the activities of the business".

They agreed that it was not enough to provide the training after the risks were known.

The court said that Judges have been giving insufficient attention to risk assessments in the years since the duty was introduced.

"Risk assessments are meant to be an exercise by which the employer examines and evaluates all the risks entailed in his operations and takes steps to remove or minimise those risks," the judgement said.

They also agreed that there should be a "blueprint for action".

Henrietta Phillips, Ms Allison's solicitor at Thompsons, said that risk assessments were intended to be a pro-active duty

on employers when the requirement to carry them out became law in 1992.

"Yet increasingly Judges, when asked to decide if an employer has been in breach of that duty, drift back to the common law where a risk had to be brought to an employers' attention before an assessment

is carried out," she said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the decision was very good news, for all workers.

"It makes it quite clear that employers have the duty to assess risk and take the necessary steps to protect employees' health and safety," he said. ■

LEGAL STATS

SUMMARY OF FATAL AND NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS AND ASSAULTS TO MEMBERS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1 TO DECEMBER 31 2007

	Fatal Accidents	Non-Fatal Accidents	Assaults
Rail Operating Grades	0	47	3
Rail Engineering Grades	0	16	0
Workshops	0	1	0
Road Transport	0	1	0
Buses	0	5	0
L.U.L. and Metros	0	16	2
Shipping	0	7	0
RMT Head Office staff	0	1	0

CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES AT COMMON LAW FOR THE PERIOD 1st OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 31 2007

Number of claims settled 108 [72]

Total amount recovered £270,357.75 [573,518.30] [including CICA Claims]

Note: These figures do not include cases dealt with by Pattinson & Brewer. The figures in brackets are those for the previous quarter.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE GRANTED IN RESPECT OF CHARGES BROUGHT BY THE POLICE FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1 TO DECEMBER 31 2007

Road Traffic Act	7	[7]
Other police charges	3	[4]



ECROS TAKE ACTION OVER SAFETY

Electrical Control Room Operators (ERCOs) at York launch five days of strike action over Easter against job cuts and safety fears

Safety critical operators in Network Rail's electrical control room at York began strike action for five days from March 19 over "unacceptable" plan to cut the number of operators from 18 to 12.

RMT had told the company that pushing through drastic staff cuts in the face of serious unresolved health and safety issues and refusing to honour existing agreements on dealing with displaced staff are unacceptable.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the unanimous vote by the highly skilled staff should have told Network Rail everything they need to know about their proposals.

"We have already told the company that pushing through these drastic cuts when there are serious unresolved safety issues is unacceptable.

"We are talking about the safe handling of a 25,000-volt power supply here, and we told Network Rail we were not prepared to allow safety to be compromised for the

convenience of the company's balance sheet," he said.

RMT requests that the proposals be put on hold pending proper discussions have fallen on deaf ears and Network Rail has refused to apply the agreed procedure for dealing with displaced staff.

SAFETY AT RISK

Serious concerns about the safety aspects of the introduction of the CROMOS 2000 SCADA systems into electrical control rooms have been raised by RMT with Network Rail's director of safety and compliance, Julian Lindfield.

A major complaint is that proposals have not been properly discussed with the skilled ECROs who will have to operate the new generation of CROMOS supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems, despite promises of adequate consultation.

RMT had asked for an urgent response to concerns that the system is being used as a Trojan

horse for further staff cuts when the complexity of the system in fact generates more work.

One of the biggest worries is that plans already started for re-equipping Romford ECR envisage doing away with the existing 'mimic' live system-overview board which the operators believe is essential for its safe operation.

Romford is also to have a newly-developed Network Management System (NMS) and ECROs will be expected to run it at full speed on day one – underlining concerns at the lack of valid risk and workload assessments.

All the evidence suggests that a powerful new management system will increase rather than decrease workload.

Coupled with the attempt being made to reduce the number of ECROs at York, the fear is that the cost-saving potential of the new systems is being exaggerated and placed ahead of safety. ■

WHAT ARE ERCOS?

Responsible for ensuring a seamless 25,000-volt power supply for the network, electrical control rooms have a critical safety role to play.

When part of British Rail, the ECRs were part of a single, coherent structure everyone could understand, with clear lines of reporting and demarcation.

Privatisation and the fragmentation that came with it changed that, and, despite their safety critical importance, the ECRs have become something of a Cinderella.

Among the operators there is a growing unrest across the country, coupled with a worrying sense that they are increasingly managed by managers 'passing through', with little understanding of what they do, and as a result frequently making unreasonable demands of an increasingly stretched workforce.



NETWORK RAIL HARMONISATION PROPOSALS REJECTED

Delegates at the union's special engineering grades conference in Doncaster delivered a unanimous rejection of Network Rail's harmonisation proposals for infrastructure and maintenance staff.

The conference issued a statement saying the "proposals are driven by business needs and a desire for profit, ahead of the safety and well-being and cost to our members".

Over 150 delegates agreed to a deadline of one week before the Annual Engineering Grades Conference on April 24 in order for management to make substantial improvements to their proposals or a ballot of all Network Rail maintenance members should take place for industrial action.

Speaker after speaker expressed anger at management's intransigent attitude over the two years that the negotiations have taken place since Network Rail took the maintenance contracts in-house.

Senior Assistant General Secretary Mick Cash, referring to the joint working party which was established to look into harmonisation, said that management should "either listen to us or we go down another road".

Mick told delegates that negotiators had constantly put union policy to management, but "the problem is that the other side is not listening".

General Secretary Bob Crow said that the union had been

patient with Network Rail management but now "we need to give them a deadline".

The union cannot allow management to drive a wedge between one group of workers on one set of terms and conditions and another group of workers on another, Bob said.

CAMPAIGNING

Urging delegates to organise special meetings at branch and LDC level to inform and engage members and non-members with the union's campaign on harmonisation. Ultimately, Bob said, if members reject the proposals in a referendum, then the only way forward is for strike action.

"You can drive a coach and horses through the proposals," Bob said.

Kenny Ray, Andover branch, said that members "have a battle on our hands and that we must be prepared to take these people on".

Steve Wallace, Fort William branch, acknowledged the hard job facing the negotiators during the joint working party meetings.

The proposals on the table from management now are worse than the original documents produced last year, Steve said.

Steve urged for more participation for Area Council Representatives into the negotiating process and for a more even spread over the different grade groups.

Paul Simpson Derby branch

Statement adopted by Special Engineering Grades Conference in 2006 as starting point for harmonisation discussions.

- Working week
 - o 35 hour week without loss of pay
 - o Move towards a 34 hour week and where possible a maximum 4 day rostered week over a 13 week cycle
- Annual Leave
 - o 28 days on entry plus Bank Holidays
 - o 30 days after 10 years service plus Bank Holidays
 - o No compulsory working on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day
 - o Agreed enhancements for all the above working

ADD ONS

- o Additional days for First Aiders (as per Jarvis agreement)
- o Additional day(s) for moving house

APPLICATION OF ANNUAL LEAVE

- o Apply Jarvis Procedure plus annual premium to be paid to all staff
- Sick Pay
 - o Proceed with AMEY & BRIS Agreements i.e 39 weeks full pay
- London allowance
 - o Proceed with Network Rail Signallers Agreement
- Pay
 - o One Grading system
 - o One set of Job Descriptions
 - o Highest possible basic rates with allowances but recognising allowances can be reduced to increase the basic pay

said that, in the two years since the previous Special Conference, harmonisation has been replaced with a restructuring exercise.

Gordon Martin, Wishaw and Motherwell branch said that timescales must now be given to management or strike action should be taken.

Bob Crow said that, with no change in attitude from management in the very near future, then the only way to defend members' jobs was to take strike action. He said that there were big stakes to play for and should mean that the members "don't go back until we win".

He said that the four things the union needed to do now is to reject the proposals, engage

the members, ballot for action and then to strike.

Mark Farrington, Liverpool No5 branch said he agreed with the general secretary but asked where the RMT's demands were in this process.

Bob answered that the union's demands were clear at the outset of the harmonisation process and can be easily found on the RMT web site.

Alex Hogg, Edinburgh and Portobello branch said that there needed to be a debate on the stand taken by the union's negotiators during the JWP and on a strategy to be taken now.

Kenny Ray said that it was time to "put on a united front and the endgame will be in sight". ■



DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS

Over 100 delegates to the union's health and safety conference in Doncaster deal with accidents, incident investigation and the role of safety reps

Conference webcasts

A video archive of the conference can be viewed online by visiting www.rmt.org.uk/webcasts. Enter your RMT membership number (user name) and your surname in capital letters (password) to log on.

Leading rail and maritime accident investigators urged greater co-operation and contact with RMT reps, at the union's sixth annual health and safety conference in Doncaster last month.

Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) chief inspector Carolyn Griffiths explained that the body, although funded by the Department of Transport, acts entirely independently in its work.

She urged RMT health and safety reps to always contact the RAIB whenever an accident – whether minor or serious – occurred in their area.

"If you feel you've got something that's material to our investigation we would welcome that contact," Ms Griffiths told delegates.

"And that's what you're there for, in part, to help us and we're here to help you. We're both after the same thing – to make the railways a safer place."

The RAIB has compiled over 76 reports, its largest being into last year's fatal rail crash at Grayrigg, and made 400 recommendations since its foundation in 2005.

"It's not always been an easy ride. Sometimes we've had some very robust discussions.

But industry has taken on the vast majority of our recommendations," said Ms Griffiths.

She stressed that although funded by the DoT, her organisation remains fully independent and it is a criminal offence for anyone to obstruct its investigations.

"I've not felt anyone fingering my collar and thus far I've had all the funds I need," she said.

MARITIME

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) deputy chief inspector Steve Clinch warned that seafarers are far more likely to die in the workplace or suffer injury than those in other industries.

While there has been a decrease in the number of injured crewmen in recent years thanks to increased regulation, around three-quarters of those hurt are likely to be employed in the kind of jobs typical of RMT members at sea, he said.

Captain Clinch explained that many accidents are due to the fact that crews are "dead on their feet" from working excessive hours.

"Many of the ships around our coastline are working punishing routines.



CRASH: Grayrigg derailment March 2007



WRECK: RMS Mulheim shipwrecked in Cornwall between Land's End and Sennen in March 2003.

"They're in port every day, there's real pressure to load and discharge and there are two officers on board and a very small number of ratings and they are absolutely dead on their feet.

"Shipping is the only industry that mandates a 96-hour working week, which is in theory do-able, provided nothing goes wrong – which is rarely the case," he warned.

He looked at the similarities between MAIB and RAIB and included a session on the four key questions in an investigation:

What happened?

How did it happen?

Why did it happen?

What can be done to ensure that it doesn't happen again?

He also concentrated on the relationship between health and safety reps and shipboard safety officers.

Roger Bibbings from ROSPA focused on the human cost of accidents and how Safety Reps can assist in the investigation process.

Chris Humphries of solicitors Powell Spencer and Partners gave a detailed talk on the interview process of witnesses involved in the Grayrigg Inquiry

and some of the difficulties with some of the agencies involved.

RMT President John Leach stressed that there has never been a greater need to be vigilant about members' health and safety.

He said that the conference is similar to the AGM in that it represents all grades and embraces every member regardless of colour, sexuality or gender.

He commended each safety rep for being in the frontline.

COMMON PROBLEMS

AGS Mick Cash called on members to feed in their ideas for future conferences, the location, themes and ideas for speakers. He said that whatever the sector be it shipping, rail or road, certain key issues had arisen by the speakers including fatigue, staffing levels and costs.

He also had some harsh words for the Office of Rail Regulation, on the day it had imposed a £14 million fine on Network Rail for the Christmas delays yet he said the same organisation was cutting Network Rail's budget by 30 per cent over five years.

A full report of conference will shortly be circulated to all delegates and branches. ■

Safety before profit

RMT general Secretary Bob Crow informed delegates that it was the 20th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster which killed 170 oil platform workers and was one of the worst workplace disasters in British industry.

Many of the survivors had developed a range of illnesses stemming from the disaster yet the oil industry that makes billions of pounds profit every second could not provide a safe workplace.

He also remembered four RMT members killed at Tebay which showed how important this year's conference theme of accident investigation was. Since Tebay, the union had been working hard on the issue of secondary protection.

While RMT fights for members' conditions, pay, hours and pensions this all becomes irrelevant if you don't return home at the end of the day.

He said that too often profit comes before safety regardless of the industry. "Workplace violence is on the increase and today there are no-go areas in some cities and towns that present real problems and genuine dangers to our members," he said.

Bob reminded delegates that he was visited the site of the Grayrigg derailment shortly after the accident. He deplored the treatment of members by the police and the witch-hunt that ensued.

"Our members were subjected to four different bodies' investigations on up to eight separate occasions," he said.

Bob explained why he believed that privatisation could be held responsible for the crash.

"It was privatisation that had resulted in the

fragmentation of companies and subsequent multiple contracting, proper records have not been kept of competencies nor of infrastructure inspections and maintenance," he said.

He said that when everything runs smoothly, Network Rail directors were happy to accept 'large-trousered' pay outs.

"However, when accidents like Grayrigg occur it's our members in the dock but it's the likes of Coucher who should be held accountable," he said.

Bob said that the Corporate Manslaughter Bill didn't go far enough to prosecute individuals responsible for neglecting the safety of workers.

"The fact that drug dealers can have their possessions and cash taken off of them yet managers can and do kill workers seemingly without reproach or being held accountable is nothing short of hypocrisy," he said.

Bob also said that when the OILC join RMT on May 1 of this year, the union will be representing off-shore members in diving, catering, supply vessels, construction and drilling as well as workers in the wind and wave power industries.

"This is to ensure that those workers are safe at work and can return to their loved ones at the end of their shift," he said.

Bob thanked delegates for being health and safety reps and the invaluable work they did to improve working conditions.

He stressed that well-organised work places not only have better pay and conditions but they are safer and he implored the members present to sign up any non-members at their workplaces.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Janine Booth looks at the history of International Women's Day celebrated each year on March 8

International Women's Day is celebrated across the globe to draw attention to women's continued second-class citizenship and the need for equality.

However, it is also celebrated by the very same governments and corporations that contribute to women's unequal rights.

So March 8 should be a day of protest each year rather than complacency.

By the beginning of the last century, the relatively-young capitalist system had thrown millions of women in industrially-developing countries into factories, domestic service and other work.

Many occupations were gender segregated, and "women's work" was often in the most appalling sweatshops, with low pay, terrible safety standards, and long hours.

But at least workers were together, rather than isolated in the home, so they were able to

fight back. Women workers organised industrial disputes to win better conditions.

Although women had become part of public life as workers, they were still excluded from public life as citizens – they did not have the vote.

Women's suffrage movements grew across Britain, Europe, America and elsewhere.

It was from this storm of protest and action that International Women's Day was born.

UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations designated 1975 'International Women's Year', then in 1977, passed Resolution 32/142 inviting each country to proclaim, in accordance with its historical and national traditions and customs, any day of the year as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

It has steered IWD away from its radical past, co-opting it into the political mainstream.

Even corporations – such as Deloitte, HSBC and Aviva – now sponsor International Women's Day, although I have found no evidence that they do so by increasing the wages of their lowest-paid women workers! They prefer celebrations such as the "leadership development sessions, career workshops and corporate citizenship events" organised by consultancy and outsourcing company Accenture. There is now a vast array of non-political events, respectable public presentations, celebrations of high-flying women, and events promoting women's health, leisure and achievement.

In some countries, Women's Day is similar to Mothers' Day. Although these may have given International Women's Day a profile, and some may be quite worthwhile and enjoyable, they have taken focus away from working-class women's grievances. Many IWD events are now a world away from the

FREEDOM: Thousands of women and members of social organisations take part in a march to mark International Women's Day in Mexico City last year, the banner says 'freedom'.



protests that began the Day, and which are still needed today.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Millions of women still work in sweatshops and other jobs with low pay and poor conditions – as well as unpaid in the home. The majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor are women; three-quarters of the world's 960 million illiterates are women. On average, women workers are paid between 30 and 40 per cent less than men.

The rise of religious fundamentalism has seen women lose freedoms and rights around the world and there is not a country in the world where women have full equality with men.

Since socialist women founded International Women's Day, it has been adopted by non-socialist feminists, governments and organisations which have little to do with women's rights. It is now more likely to be marked by an aromatherapy open day than by a march for women's rights. We should return to the original purpose of the Day: to mobilise support for working-class women's demands, and to celebrate the contribution that women make to the struggle for human liberation.

The 2005 TUC passed a resolution calling for IWD to be designated a public holiday in the United Kingdom.

In 2006, RMT successfully proposed to TUC Women's Conference that we wanted not just a holiday but a demonstration for women's rights every year on or around 8th March. The first of these was held last year, in the form of a rally at TUC Women's Conference in Scarborough. In future years, we hope to see thousands march through a major city demanding equality on March 8 each year. ■

TIME LINE

1907

On March 8, women demonstrated in New York, demanding votes for women and an end to child labour and sweatshops. It was the 50th anniversary of a major protest by women working in clothing and textiles, also in New York City.

The 1857 garment workers were protesting against poor working conditions and low wages. Police attacked and dispersed the women, but could not kill their spirit and their first trade union was set up in the same month two years later.

1908

A year later, 15,000 women marched through New York demanding shorter hours, better pay, union rights and the vote. Most were garment workers, sick of the described as "the vilest and foulest industrial sores of New York". The employers made the women pay for their needles, thread and even chairs!

1909

Women shirtwaist makers staged a 13-week strike in 1909, known as the 'Rising of the 20,000'. Their fight won better conditions, and gave confidence to American workers for several generations to come. As strike leader Clara Lemlich said: "They used to say you couldn't even organise women. They wouldn't come to union meetings. They were 'temporary workers'. Well, we showed them!"

The Socialist Party of America declared February 28 1909 the first National Woman's Day (NWD), and socialist women held marches and meetings across the country to demand political rights for working women.

1910

Clara Zetkin proposed to the International Congress of Socialist Women that "women the world over set aside a particular day each year to remember women and their struggles". Over 100 women from 17 countries unanimously agreed, deciding that on this day, socialists in all countries should hold big events, involving men and women in demanding improvements for working women.

1911

International Women's Day (IWD) was held on March 19, with more than one million women and men attending IWD rallies worldwide, demanding women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination.

Russian revolutionary and feminist, Alexandra Kollontai was in Germany at the time and helped to organise the day and wrote that it "exceeded all expectations".

The Triangle Fire

Less than a week after that first International Women's Day, over 140 workers died in the Triangle Fire in New York. Mostly young immigrant women, they burned to death when the factory where they worked caught fire. They died because working conditions were terrible and safety measures lacking and subsequent IWDs

demanding workers' legal rights and improved safety standards to avert further disasters like this one.

Early IWDs

Organised by socialists, International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8 from 1913 to 1915 with women's parades and demonstrations in many European cities.

Alexandra Kollontai explained why the early International Women's Days focused on winning the vote for women:

"in the last years before the war the rise in prices forced even the most peaceful housewife to take an interest in questions of politics and to protest loudly against the bourgeoisie's economy of plunder".

1913-1914

As war loomed, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February 1913. Women across Europe held peace rallies on March 8 1913 and again in 1914.

1917

On the last Sunday of February (23rd), Russian women began a strike for "bread and peace", until four days later the Tsar was forced to abdicate. The provisional Government granted votes to women. February 23 on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia is March 8 on the Gregorian calendar used elsewhere.

1918

In the West, International Women's Day continued during the 1910s and 1920s, but then died away, only reviving with the new wave of feminism in the 1960s.

1928

The first Australian IWD rally took place in the Sydney Domain on March 25, 1928. It was organised by the Militant Women's Movement and called for equal pay for equal work; an 8-hour day for shop girls; no piece work; the basic wage for the unemployed; and annual holidays on full pay.

1960

On the 50th anniversary of International Women's Day, and 729 delegates from 73 countries met in a conference in Copenhagen. It agreed a declaration of support for the political, economic and social rights of women.

1971

As feminism grew in the early 1970s, IWD saw a demonstration of 5,000 women in London demanding childcare, equal opportunities and easier access to safe abortion.

1982

Women in Iran discarded their veils on IWD, protesting against the rise of clerical rule after the overthrow of the Shah.

ORGANISE FOR EQUALITY

Justice for cleaners, organisation and effective action on the issues that affect women workers were the key themes at RMT's biggest-ever women's conference held over International Women's Day weekend in Swansea

Conference webcasts

A video archive of the conference can be viewed online by visiting www.rmt.org.uk/webcasts. Enter your RMT membership number (user name) and your surname in capital letters (password) to log on.



Cleaners battling for a living wage in one of the world's wealthiest cities were the cornerstone of a record-breaking RMT women's conference that homed in on practical steps to tackle the issues that affect women at work.

"We need a living wage, but we also need holidays, pensions, sick pay, free travel and dignity at work," said Elizabeth Morgan, Finsbury Park.

RMT's campaign among thousands of Tube and rail cleaners had already brought successes, but there were other battles to be won, against the scandal of third-party sackings, to ensure that cleaners knew their employment rights, and for education and training of reps, Elizabeth said.

Mercy Chukwu, Finsbury Park, said that before they had joined RMT London Underground cleaners had been humiliated.

"We are still fighting for a living wage and for cleaning to be brought back in-house, but thank God for RMT," she said, paying tribute to the "wonderful" branch that had done so much to help organise cleaners to fight for what was due to them.

General secretary Bob Crow said that the union was committed to equality for all grades from cleaners to drivers as well as equality for women.

"It is encouraging that this conference is growing as a larger participation of women in the union is vital," he said.

ANTI-SOCIAL SHIFTS

Anti-social shifts and short notice duty changes are the bane of many transport workers' lives, delegates agreed.

Reserve, cover or pool workers suffered particularly by being messed about by management, making life especially difficult for workers with caring responsibilities, most of them women.

The union should campaign for caring responsibilities to be taken into account and for no late-notice duty changes without agreement.

This was an important issue for people with childcare responsibilities, said Becky Crocker, Camden No 3, and it was important to stand by members who were disciplined over short-notice shift changes.

"Today's favour is tomorrow's duty," noted Mandy Evans, of host branch Swansea no 1. "Most of us now work for private companies, and we mean nothing to them but profit."

PREGNANT WOMEN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Failure of employers to carry out adequate workplace risk assessments on women with pregnancy related issues was condemned by the conference.

The union should defend vigorously women disciplined unfairly because



employers had failed to take pregnancy issues into account – and employers needed to be reminded of their duties, delegates agreed.

A recent case had shown Linda Martin, Piccadilly & District West, that women's issues were not covered as a matter of course – and had convinced her of the need for an RMT women's conference.

"Managers need to be educated, but we also need a cross-over between industrial and health and safety issues as reps," she said.

It was important to tackle the lack of light-duty facilities in some grades – and to end the situation in which some women were told 'go on the barrier or go sick', said Janet Cassidy, North Clyde.

Employers should be held to their legal duty to provide suitable rest facilities for pregnant women and nursing mothers – 15 years after they were supposed to have been brought in by law – delegates agreed.

Conference called on the RMT executive to take up the issue with employers, establish what facilities do exist and to make the issue a negotiating priority.

"We need to start changing things, show that we are not the ones who should be ashamed, and that we shouldn't have to go to a toilet to express or feed," said Maureen Mulligan Reading.

"Bosses seem to think there are three sexes, male, female and pregnant, with males first, females a long way second and pregnant women a very poor third, said Carol Foster, TfL No 1.

First Great Western had no facilities at all, noted Tamra Giddins, Bristol Rail, who pointed out that women who were stressed by the lack of facilities and the possibility of offending people with what is natural would find it difficult to express milk.

DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS

Delegates endorsed a call to oppose any restriction on access to abortion.

"I remember the terrible time when abortion was illegal, and we will have to fight like fury to ensure that those hard won rights are not taken away from us," said Carol Foster, TfL No 1.

"There is a tendency in our movement just to affiliate to the abortion rights

campaign, but we actively to campaign as a union to defend abortion rights," said Becky Crocker, Camden No 3.

CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Welcoming delegates to Swansea, Labour Welsh Assembly Member Val Lloyd condemned the gender pay gap of £250,000 over a working life, and spoke of the importance of promoting women's representation at all levels.

Stressing the importance of winning better childcare, the former nurse recalled that the hospital creche had opened at 09:00, two hours after the day shift started, forcing her into night-work to share responsibilities.

Sian James, Swansea's first ever woman MP, outlined her skirmishes with the First Great Western franchise.

She described how, even after being forced to implement £29 million in improvements, that proposed changes would be "robbing Peter to pay Paul", with rolling stock shuffled around.

Sian described how curtailing the 15:15 from Paddington to Swansea at Cardiff meant that passengers from an inter-city train now had to decant onto an overcrowded two-carriage commuter service.

"I will keep on about the 15:15 from Paddington to Swansea, because we need that service, and if we allow them to erode the timetable they will keep on doing it," she said.

Katrine Williams, chair of the Public Commercial and Services Union, PCS in Wales, also brought a message of solidarity from public servants – 60 per cent of them women – fighting against massive cuts in jobs and pay cuts across the civil service.

"We are the people expected deliver the services, we need a living wage, and we need to be able to deliver the services the public need," said Katrine

Motions on anti-social shifts and short-notice duty changes and on rest facilities for nursing mothers would be submitted to the union's annual general meeting, delegates agreed.

Delegates discuss the effects of privatisation on women in RMT News next month ■

FREE ONSANLOO

Trade unionists in over 40 countries held protests to demand the release of imprisoned Iranian trade unionist Mansour Osnaloo.

RMT activists joined protesters outside the Iranian Embassy in London on March 6 and handed out leaflets at rail stations demanding his release.

Protests were held worldwide in support of Mansour Osnaloo, the elected leader of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, a trade union founded three years ago.

Even though the organisation is legal it has been violently attacked by Iranian security forces.

As a result of his work Osnaloo has been beaten, arrested and had his tongue sliced as a warning against speaking out.

He is now being held in Evin Prison in Tehran, where he is in danger of losing his sight in one eye due to a previous beating.

As part of a world-wide action day for Osnaloo, organised by the International Transport Workers' Federation, commuters were leafleted at major railways stations in

London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Bristol, Liverpool and Leeds.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow, who joined activists at Kings Cross, said: "across the world trade unionists are demanding the release of our brother Mansour Osnaloo,

whose only crime is to fight for better pay for busworkers".

He said that whether in Britain or Iran, trade union rights were human rights, and appealed for members to sign the petition to the Iranian authorities on the Labourstart

website.

More information about Mansour Osnaloo can be found at the ITF website at www.freeosnaloo.org, and a petition for his release can be found at www.labourstart.org/iran



FREE ONSANLOO: Tom Cashman of UNITE, Andy Bain, TSSA President, Bob Crow RMT General Secretary

HOPE NOT HATE: STOP TH

Following the success of last year's anti-racism bus journey from London to Glasgow – spreading the message of Hope not Hate – Searchlight and the Daily Mirror is repeating the campaign for 2008.

This time there will be a launch on Friday April 18 in Liverpool, the '08 Capital of Culture, with the bus travelling to London before council elections on May 1. The bus will be stopping in Wigan and Salford, Leeds, Stoke-on-Trent, Rotherham, Manchester, Barking and several

London venues.

The double decker will carry the same message – that modern Britain is a place of tolerance and diversity, and somewhere people of all different races and religions live and work together peacefully.

Each day will see one or two key events – from Colliery Brass Bands to Welsh Male Voice Choirs to Steel Bands and Gospel Choirs, from mosques to cathedrals, in communities from mill-towns to inner cities.

This year's campaign will receive

huge coverage in the Daily Mirror which will give progress reports every day of where the bus is and what it's been up to.

RMT members are encouraged to get involved and full details of the bus tour and other anti-BNP activities in your area visit www.hopenothate.org

Members in London can volunteer for U-Day on April 29 when the campaign will be targeting Tube stations. Contact James Croy at head office for more details 020 7529 8822 or j.croy@rmt.org.uk



Front line reps



I was speaking to an experienced RMT branch secretary recently that I have worked with for many years about my role as president. During our discussion asked me a very good question: "do you still represent members at local level meetings with management?"

The simple answer is no, these issues are dealt with by frontline union reps at the workplace up and down the country every day.

But, after my three years term of office as your president, I will be returning to these duties at the workplace, in my case on London Underground.

Frontline union reps are often the only contact that members have with the union and they represent the backbone of the organisation.

An effective rep is also very often the only thing stopping a worker losing his or her job. This is a big responsibility for lay reps and their experience is invaluable if members are to receive effective representation at the workplace.

Whatever role these reps play, the union owes every single one of them a huge debt of gratitude as they form a fundamental part of the service that a trade union can provide.

The vast majority of reps carry out this important work in their spare time as they very often only get a limited amount of time off for trade union duties and sometimes none at all.

Reps can also feel isolated as the transport industry often involves shift work or, if you're a seafarer or oil worker, spending time offshore.

Even with modern communications to assist

us, it can still be a daunting prospect to represent someone who faces complicated problems and issues at work. Taking on the boss in the workplace is not easy and requires courage, knowledge and even humour.

All reps start lacking experience as I remember when I became one nearly 20 years ago. But there is a steep learning curve and I learnt a lot from older hands on the job.

The union at a national level recognises this vital service and seeks to ensure that reps get the training necessary to do what can be a very difficult job.

This training is carried out at the union's new education centre in Doncaster. Regional councils also take the education of reps seriously as the sterling work in this area at the new Dover office shows.

The crucial work of reps, day-in and day-out, is appreciated not only by me but all the officers and executive committee members of the union and we know that without these activists the union could not operate.

Finally, the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee's more than 2,000 members have voted to become the offshore section of RMT from May 1 2008.

Both OILC and RMT believe in strong, democratic trade unionism at the workplace that rejects phoney 'partnership' with employers. The number one priority for our growing union should be defending the interests of the members and improving their pay and conditions at work through collective action and security.

John Leach



IE BNP



EWS-GETTING OUR RIGHTS BACK

RMT has been holding meetings with German and French unions to win back recognition rights for the union which were effectively removed at the English, Welsh and Scottish (EWS) rail freight company in 2005.

Following the signing of a single-union deal with another union, EWS has refused to recognise the union and its local reps, forcing RMT to send full-time officials to negotiate on behalf of members.

However, EWS has now been bought out by German rail operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) with a very different industrial relations culture.

RMT's sister union in Germany, Transnet, recently organised a meeting in Berlin through DB's European works council with the company attended by all UK trade unions with members employed by EWS, including ASLEF and UNITE.

Deutsche Bahn executive board member with responsibility for freight Norbert Bensele said it was important that UK unions spoke with one voice on issues of principle such as the company's attempt to exclude RMT from collective bargaining arrangements.

EWS managing director Keith Heller, who was also present at the meeting, said: "we are keen to get RMT re-recognised. We will set up a meeting to get this sorted out".

The issue of RMT recognition is currently being dealt with under the auspices of the TUC and TUC deputy general secretary Francis O'Grady has been informed of these developments.

European trade unionists unite to demand negotiation rights are restored at EWS for RMT following its take over by German rail operator Deutsche Bahn



Since the meeting RMT has nominated EWS Company Council rep Paul Walker to be the UK representative on the works council.

A specialist RMT recruitment pack and membership application form for rail freight sector is currently being produced by the union.

RMT is also holding a one-day seminar on organising in the rail freight sector with reps from RMT, the French CGT union and Transnet in London on April 18 to improve contacts between the three unions.

French rail union CGT general secretary Didier LaReste also facilitated a similar meeting with RMT and Transnet to discuss the development of EWS International and its French operating arm Euro Cargo Rail, which is becoming an important actor in the continental rail sector.

SOCIAL DUMPING?

Euro Cargo Rail currently operates depots across France and has a number of engines, including fifteen Class 66 freight locomotives, which are currently certified for operations across Europe with certification pending in the Czech Republic and Italy. Until recently they were driven by drivers from EWS(I) UK depots.

In December, following the European Commission's approval of its acquisition by DB, EWS(I) bought Grangemouth freight terminal the second largest in Scotland after Mossend, which EWS already owns.

EWS is planning to install a network of intermodal services to Europe from Scotland, through its subsidiary Euro Cargo Rail.

Euro Cargo Rail expanded its activity in January 2008, to Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Switzerland from Scotland, the Midlands and north-west England.

It plans to run services from Daventry to Brussels three times a week, six services per week will link Manchester to Duisburg and five services per week from Manchester to Milan.

This is consistent with EWS(I) plans to develop its services in the UK and Europe, through its subsidiary Euro Cargo Rail.

EWS is hoping to double the volume of rail freight using the Channel Tunnel to over 2 million tonnes per year by the end of 2008.

CGT reports many problems with ECR and a recent strike forced the company to cough up unpaid wages.

There is no formal recognition status for CGT in terms of Euro Cargo Rail's French activities, which is raising the serious threat of social dumping arising from EU rail freight 'liberalisation' diktats.

In particular CGT reported a number of environmental spills caused by Euro Cargo Rail's practice of stabling locomotives at rail sidings without fuelling points and transporting diesel to site by lorry to refuel locos at remote locations.

It also expressed concerns over standards of train maintenance, which is often carried out by mobile maintenance crews rather than at properly classified train maintenance locations.

CGT's main concerns arise from UK-based EWS(I) train drivers operating on the French rail network outside of French or ETF collective agreements.

Firstly, the multi-functional nature of EWS(I) train drivers' responsibilities arising from restructuring of their conditions poses a significant threat to jobs in the French rail freight sector, particularly at border crossings from France where there are significant numbers of jobs associated with shunting, marshalling, loading and engineering activities.

Secondly, the working practices of UK-based EWS(I) train drivers in France appears to be a breach of the existing agreement on working conditions of mobile workers engaged in interoperable cross-border services in the railway sector concluded by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Community of European Railways (CER).

It is alleged that UK-based EWS(I) train drivers may be working for several days consecutively away from home in order to carry out work for Euro Cargo Rail in France which represents a breach of the CER-ETF Agreement and even EU directives.

ACTION

Both CGT and Transnet support the creation of a network to coordinate trade union strategies for EWS(I)/Euro Cargo Rail.

Both unions have agreed to sign a letter detailing EWS(I) breaches of collective bargaining arrangements and in

support RMT's demand for reinstatement of full recognition rights.

RMT will also forward any details to CGT of any evidence of breaches of the CER-ETF mobile workers agreement regarding rest periods away from home with UK-based EWS(I) drivers cross-border working in France.

The biggest concern is that such practices can be employed anywhere, including the UK, and spark a race to the bottom in terms of wages and conditions. ■

CONFERENCE FOR EUROPEAN RAIL TRADE UNIONISTS

Campaigning against EU rail privatisation

10:00 – 17:00, Tuesday June 17 2008,

**ITF Headquarters,
49 – 60 Borough Road,
London, SE1 1DR**

The privatisation of Britain's railways has resulted in attacks on jobs, working conditions, pensions and safety and has also resulted in a less efficient more expensive railway.

However, this model of privatisation, enshrined in various EU directives and EU rail packages, is being rolled out across the European Union.

RMT is inviting all European railway trade unionists to participate in a one-day conference to discuss these issues including:

1. Origins of EU rail 'liberalisation' and privatisation: including the origins of EU directives and the various rail packages being implemented to various degrees by national states.
2. Impact on rail workers and society: dealing with fragmentation, anti-trade union activity, de-recognition, sub-contracting and attacks on working conditions and safety.
3. Strategies for reversing 'liberalisation' and privatisation: how can European rail unions work together to campaign against privatisation and build alliances with other progressive forces?

If you wish your branch to be represented return forms sent to branches to head office by Wednesday April 30 2008. Attendance at the conference can be taken from Branch Management funds. Places are limited and allocation will be on a first come first serve basis.

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



CAMPAIGNING AGAINST EU RAIL 'LIBERALISATION'

RMT member Roselyne Fong addressed an international protest in the French town of Calais on the ITF Rail Action day against EU diktats enforcing the privatisation of rail networks

“Colleagues, we are here today to protest against the European Union’s drive to take us back to the age of the rail privateers.

Last October the European Parliament voted for the EU’s so-called ‘third rail package’ to open international rail passenger traffic to ‘market competition’ by 2010.

Predictably, the EU portrayed this major step towards a fully privatised passenger rail market as a ‘victory for consumers’, claiming new rights for passenger compensation.

However, reality reveals that compensation is only if train operators are responsible for delays, not if they are caused by engineering work, or bad weather.

EU Directive 91/440/EEC creates a “vertical split” between train operations and rail infrastructure, so that severe disruption caused by storms, would not leave rail companies facing compensation claims.

Train companies that operate over international routes from 2010 will also be able to practice ‘cabotage’ – meaning to stop and take on passengers in countries they cross.

This latest ‘third rail package’ marks the next major step in EU rail privatisation since rail freight was liberalised by the ‘second rail package’ in 2003, when trans-Europe networks were opened to competition, followed by international freight and domestic networks from



March 31, 2006.

A similar staged ‘liberalisation’ process is now being applied to passenger rail regardless of the consequences for socially necessary regional and local train services. The European Commission will now report on the next stage of ‘liberalising’ domestic rail services by 31 December 2012.

This hugely complicated process, proposed by German MEP Jarzembowski, amounts to little more than the enforced mass privatisation of the entire rail sector across Europe, promoted by corporate lobbyists.

French MEP Francis Wurtz quite rightly told the European Parliament that such a path was “dangerous for public employment and service and a path subjected to an obsession with competition and the market”.

The third rail package is a dramatic escalation of the drive

to transform rail services from a social railway towards a rail business with an investment bias towards freight and business travel and away from regional and urban rail services.

The latest moves directly benefit Europe’s largest rail interests and the development of private rail monopolies.

The effect of EU rail privatisation will increase downward pressure on jobs and wages in the rail sector and inevitably undermine occupational and environmental safety standards. European rail unions needs to develop strategies to defeat the social dumping which will undoubtedly follow.

RMT is organising an international conference of railway trade unions in London to discuss these issues on June 17. We hope to see you all there.” ■

A VETERAN OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION



RMT News speaks to Cuban revolutionary Orlando Borrego during the first day of an RMT-sponsored UK speaking tour

One of Che Guevara's closest comrades Orlando Borrego has already spoken at an RMT reception and at a press conference and is enjoying some down time before opening rally at the Venezuelan Embassy later that evening.

Borrego's visit has turned out to be timely for a foreign audience. He left Cuba the day that Fidel Castro announced that he was standing down as

president. Cuba is in the news and people want to hear what Borrego has to say.

And there are few better qualified than Borrego, whose life has been entwined with the Cuban revolution.

He was Che Guevara's former deputy at the Cuban Ministry for Industries (1959-64) and the former Sugar Minister (1964-68). Today Borrego is an advisor to the Cuban Transport Ministry

and to the Venezuelan National Assembly.

Other speakers that have joined Borrego from Cuba for the speaker tour are Jesus Garcia, a philosopher, elected local government representative and author of several books on socialism and democracy and Yoselin Rufin, a leader of Cuba's Federation of University Students.



REVOLUTION: Students hold Cuban flags and a picture of revolutionary leader Ernesto 'Che' Guevara during the May Day parade in Havana 2007



REVOLUTIONARY: Cuba's Economic Minister Ernesto Che Guevara with Orlando holds a press conference at his hotel in Punta del Este, Uruguay, August 1961

A CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY

At the earlier reception Borrego told the assembled trade unionists and other friends of Cuba that while most people view Cuba in terms of its relationship to the United States in fact the Cuban people themselves "have our eyes and ears open to Europe".

He explained that many of Latin America's great revolutionaries such as Jose Marti and Simon Bolivar spent time in Europe before returning to take part in revolutionary activity back home.

As a close comrade of Che, Borrego has been keen to keep his legacy alive. Che is a much romanticised and iconic figure and a lot has been written about him, including by Borrego himself. However, of all these biographies Borrego quips "they range from awful, to very bad, to bad, to ok".

Borrego says that the problem with most of what has been written about Che is that they only cover one or other aspect of the man's life. He says that there is preparation underway in Cuba for a more all encompassing biography that will do justice to Che and put his life in perspective.

Che was killed in 1967 in Bolivia attempting to use the guerrilla tactics that he had developed and used successfully in Cuba. Borrego says that he wanted to join him but Che believed that mission was too risky so didn't let him join them. Borrego's role was to stay and work with the government.

It is of course Che the guerrilla fighter –

replete with beret – that comes to mind when people think of the man. But Borrego is keen to point out that Che developed ideas on how to manage and develop a socialist economy.

Borrego has always been keen to develop these ideas and gained a PHD in economics so that he could equip himself with the intellectual tools for the job. This gave him the necessary grounding to produce the book *Che: The Path of Fire*, about Che's work as a member of the Cuban government and his ideas about developing a socialist economy.

THE FUTURE FOR CUBA

At the press conference assembled journalists were keen to know what is going to happen now Castro has stood down. At the time we didn't yet know who would be elected to the presidency although it was correctly widely predicted it would be Raul Castro.

Borrego gave an interesting insight into Raul Castro, saying that he was a socialist before Fidel was and the areas of government that he has run have always been well managed, and hence successful.

If the journalists were going to find some knocking copy, they were going to have to look elsewhere.

RMT News was able to ask him about the area that he currently advised the Cuban government on, and about which nobody has asked him all day: transport.

"Our transport system collapsed when the

Soviet Union fell because most of our equipment was imported from the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia," Borrego says.

He explains that it was a big blow because the Cuban government was embarking on a program to expand the width of the railway tracks at the time and the plan was scuppered.

It wasn't only train travel that suffered either.

"Bus travel totally collapsed. In Havana we went from 32,000 journeys a day to 4,000. Freight imports were also greatly reduced," he says.

"But recent years have seen us recover very strongly. We have good quality buses from China. We have made a major investment in improving the railway tracks and our friendly relationship with Venezuela has helped finance this," explains Borrego.

He talks about how the workforce had to be committed to the work to make the necessary advances. "The trade unions are working with us to improve the standard of living in the transport sector for workers as well," he says.

The subject of unions brings Borrego to make his final point.

"We have had good relations with unions in many countries over a long time. "International solidarity with RMT means a lot to us," he says with a smile. ■

50 YEARS OF CUBAN SOCIALISM

Bob Crow explains why the union supports the work of Cuba Solidarity Campaign

The reason Cuba deserves our support is simple. Since 1962 the United States has attempted to strangle the country's economy and force the Caribbean island to follow US style policies in the region.

Cubans face the longest and most brutal trade blockade experienced in modern times, a blockade which restricts access to everything from medical drugs through to foodstuffs, building materials - and even

equipment to up-date the country's railway system.

I am proud to support Cuba and promote the Cuba Solidarity Campaign's (CSC) fight to end the barbaric trade embargo.

What Cuba has achieved for its people is incredible, and is testament to what can be achieved when people work together, especially when viewed in the light of continued US aggression.

For 16 consecutive years the

United Nations has condemned the US blockade as illegal and has called on US authorities to scrap the legislation. Last year 184 countries - including the UK - voted to end the blockade, whereas only four - the US, Israel, Marshall Islands and Palau - supported the draconian measures.

According to George Bush and his predecessors in the White House, the Cuban people deserve this unique and devastating punishment for daring to oppose US policy.

Cuba is squarely against the extreme brand of free market capitalism being vigorously championed by the US across the globe. Cuba's "crime" is to offer a viable alternative to privatisation and rule by big business.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The facts speak for themselves. Cuba has free public health care and education, life expectancy is 77 years, its literacy rate is the highest in Latin America, it has the continent's highest proportion of academics per head of population.

Its infant mortality rates are better than those in a great many cities in the developed world - including Washington.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign was formed to offer support and help raise awareness about the Caribbean country. This became vital after Cuba's economy came under increasing pressure following the collapse of the Soviet Union and its former trading partners in Eastern Europe.

The US blockade had made it virtually impossible for Cuba to trade with other countries, and the US chose to tighten the economic screws on Cuba in order to make life as difficult as possible for ordinary Cubans in

an effort to force the people to revolt against their own government.

But in an affront to the US, Cubans chose to endure years of hardship rather than succumb to such bullying from their powerful neighbour.

CSC campaigns against the US trade embargo, raises awareness about Cuba's many achievements, organises tours to the country and hosts speaking tours by Cuban guests. Hundreds of RMT members have traveled to the island to see Cuba for themselves.

RMT was one of the first union's to affiliate to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and now is one of 24 British trade unions supporting their work.

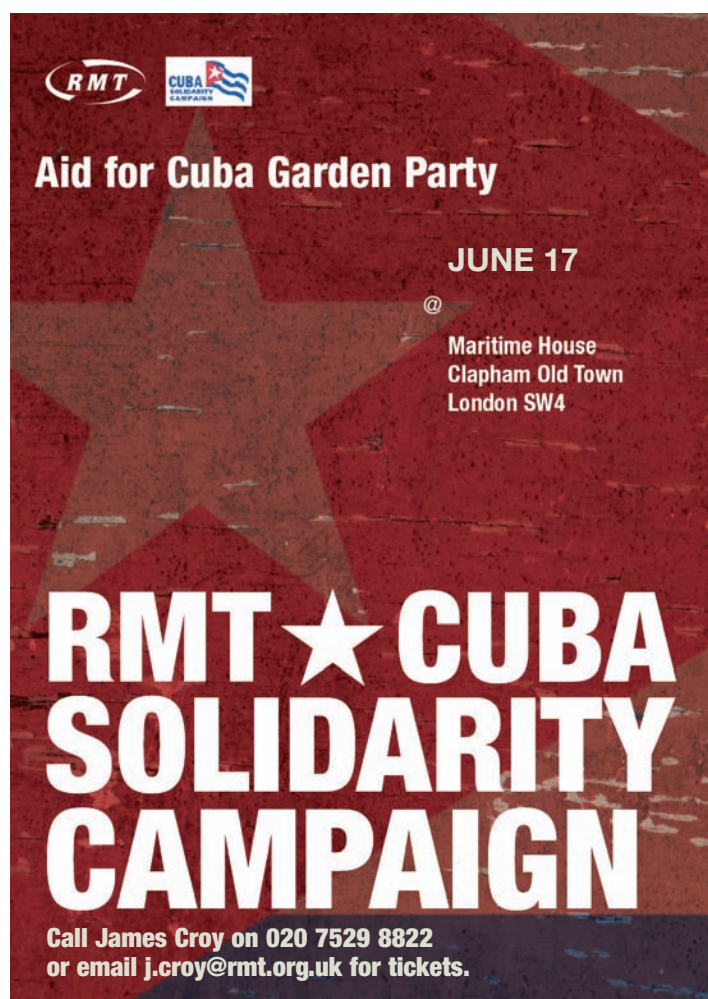
I urge members to join CSC and for those RMT branches and regions that are not yet affiliated to the campaign to join as soon as possible, especially because next year is the Cuban Revolution's 50th anniversary.

The extremely popular RMT/Cuba Solidarity Garden Party hosted at Maritime House is now in its sixth year and is a testament to this cooperation. So hope to see you there.

The best way to support the Cuban people is to join together in the Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

Membership costs £15 and trade union branches and regions can affiliate for £30. For more information call CSC on: 020 7263 6452 or visit www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

"I urge members to join the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and for those RMT branches and regions that are not yet affiliated to join as soon as possible, especially because next year is the Cuban Revolution's 50th anniversary." ■



Aid for Cuba Garden Party

JUNE 17

@
Maritime House
Clapham Old Town
London SW4

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LETTERS

Successful claim

Dear editor,

This is to notify you of my successful claim
that I made against London Eastern Railways
following an accident on September 1 2004.

The accident occurred at Ilford Station ticket
office when I sat on a broken chair resulting in
my falling backwards and injuring my back.

On October 30 2007 I received £9,500 in
settlement of my claim, for this I am most
grateful for all the work that Thompsons
Solicitors carried out on my behalf. I would like
to add that I feel that my success is due to

Andrew Hutson who took my case over on
August 21 2007.

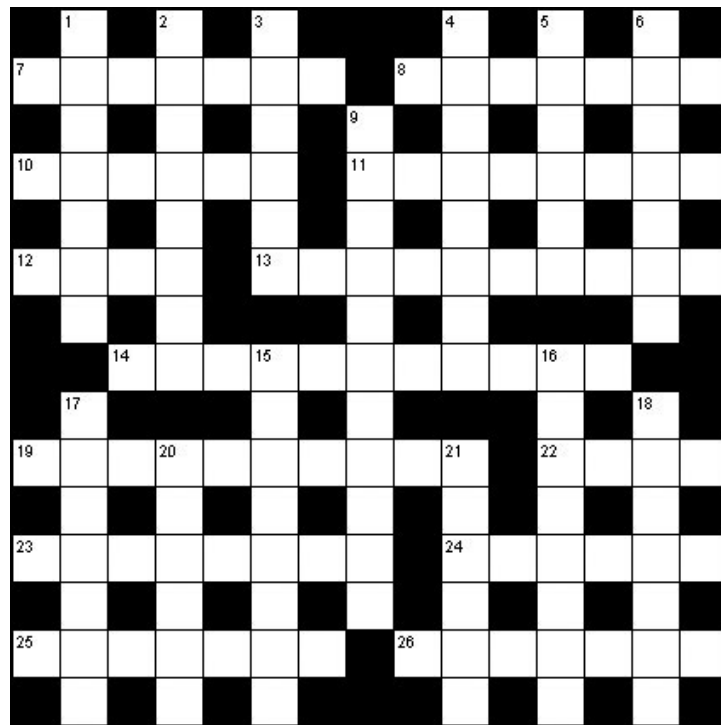
My thanks must also go to my branch secretary
Derek Marr and John McEvoy for all of their
support. I would like members to know about
my claim as I feel this would encourage other
members to come forward and not accept the
conditions that they have to work in.

Good luck and good health to all my brothers
and sisters in RMT.

Kind regards, Jane Nublely

**£25 PRIZE
CROSSWORD**

No. 43. Set by Elk

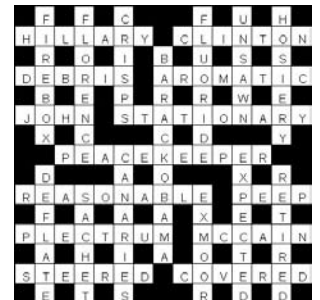


ACROSS

- 7, 12 Campaign against far right by 9 (4,3,4)
8 Lidded, hatted or insured! (7)
10 Head could be 8 by one of these! (6)
11 Physical effort (8)
12 See 7 (4)
13 Kept at it (10)
14 One philosophically opposed to dogma,
especially in religion (4-7)
19 Potentially dangerous way of doing nothing
outdoors?! (10)
22 Devon resort, could make you fall over! (4)
23 Come towards (8)
24 Clue such as this (6)
25 Replay; repeat sporting meeting (2-5)
26 Chooses (7)

DOWN

- 1 Contains horse's meal (7)
2 Antlered creature - called caribou in north
America (8)
3 Loser of shaggy ovine ruminants! (2-4)
4 Predicted (8)
5 The other end is Carlisle (6)
6 Taken away (7)
9 Anti-fascist campaigners keep their beam
trained on the far right (11)
15 Door; gate; hypnotise (8)
16 Got aboard (8)
17 Joked (7)
18 One-roomed dwellings (7)
20 Chap behind the counter (6)
21 RMT unites all these in one common aim (6)

Last month's
solution...

The winner of prize
crossword no. 41 is
G R Spinks from Ipswich.

Send entries to Prize Crossword,
RMT, Unity House, 41 Chalton
Street, London NW1 1JD by
April 1 with your name and
address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

SAVE FOR CHRISTMAS THE EASY AND SAFE WAY WITH THE RMT CREDIT UNION

Saving for Christmas can be a real headache. Take some of the stress away by saving over the course of the year with the RMT Christmas Club. We'll add a little extra to your savings and pay out the money ready for your Christmas shopping spree. This account is designed for people who want a secure savings account that helps them to save for their Christmas spending.

It's based on the traditional Christmas Club principle of saving a fixed amount each month that is not accessible until the payout date. Many people like the discipline of a regular savings programme where they are not able to access the cash!

Even a small amount saved each month soon adds up. Saving is made easy by Direct Debit either monthly or 4-weekly to suit your pay cycle.

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be 14th November each year. We will add a bonus dividend at the maturity date and pay the money direct to your bank account. There are no vouchers or hampers or anything of that kind – you decide how you want to spend

your money.

The bonus will be added to your savings if you complete all of your regular payments. This year the bonus will be 2%, although we hope to improve this in subsequent years as the Christmas Club grows.

As all of your Christmas Club money will be paid out each year it will be kept separately from your regular credit union savings and cannot be used against credit union loans.

We also intend to launch a summer savings club account on the same basis and principle with a payout date of mid-June, so that you can have ready access to summer holiday spending money. Watch out for details in later in the year.

If you want to open a Christmas Club account and are already a credit union member simply complete the form below. If you are not already a credit union member you will have to complete the form below and the credit union membership application opposite. Completed forms should be returned to our freepost address.

TERMS & CONDITIONS – IMPORTANT INFORMATION - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

- You need to be an RMT Credit Union member to open an RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You have to save at least £5 per month into a regular RMT CU account in addition to your RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You pay a monthly or 4-weekly Direct Debit consisting of your nominated Christmas Club payment (min. £10) plus at least £5 per month to your main RMT CU account. Christmas Club payments will run from November to October each year.
- Christmas Club accounts have to be opened by the end of April. Late applications commence the following November.
- As an RMT CU member you build up regular savings with a yearly dividend (3.75% in 2007) and you can apply for low interest rate loans.
- Your Christmas Club money is separate from your regular savings account. That means you will have a guaranteed sum available for Christmas maturing every 14th November, plus a savings account growing with time.
- The Christmas Club secures your money so it's there for the Christmas period. This means that your money is locked-in and you can make no withdrawals until 14th November when all of your money, plus dividend will be paid out.
- If you make all of your payments we will add a dividend bonus of 2% p.a. as accrued through the year
- All of your money will be paid to your bank account on the first working day after 14th November.
- If you cancel your payments the 2% dividend is not applied and you cannot withdraw your money until after 14th November. If you think you will need access to your money before 14th November, this account is not suitable for you.
- The Christmas Club will continue year-on-year, so payments after 14th November start the next year's account. Of course if you wish to cancel your payments you are free to do so at any time.

Cut here

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB APPLICATION									
RMT Credit Union Account Number (if known)									
Surname					Address				
Forename(s)									
Home phone									
Mobile									
email					Postcode				
Date of birth					NI Numb				
Employer					RMT Branch				

Do you save monthly on 28 th ?		Or 4 - weekly (Fri)?		You can save by calendar month or 4 - weekly	
How much do you save in your RMT Credit Union Account?				£	min. £5 per month
How much do you wish to save in your Christmas Club Account?				£	min £10 per month in £5 multiples
The total each period for both accounts on my Direct Debit is				£	the total month/4 -weekly
This is the total amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th or 4-weekly					

Remember that if you have a loan with us your regular Direct Debit will also include that repayment

DECLARATION

I understand the Terms & Conditions of the RMT Christmas Club Account and that membership of the RMT Credit Union is a condition of holding an RMT Christmas Club Account. I understand that my monthly savings into the RMT Christmas Club cannot be withdrawn until the maturity date which is on or after 14th November each year.

Your Signature		Date			/		/				
----------------	--	------	--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

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 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

4 **Mr** ☐ **Mrs** ☐ **Ms** ☐ **Miss** ☐

5 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐ RMT Family Member ☐

6 **How much do you wish to save £** This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th ☐ or 4 weekly (Fri) ☐

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

We are checking new member identification electronically. To do this, we now carry out searches with credit reference agencies who supply us with relevant detail including information from the Electoral Register. The searches will not be used by other lenders to assess your ability to obtain credit.

If we cannot verify your identity and address by this method, we will ask you to provide paper documentation instead. Full details of these can be supplied to you by calling 020 7529 8835.



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

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Originator's Identification Number

9	7	4	2	8	1
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Reference Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



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or call the helpline on freephone

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline
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into 170 languages)*

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

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk

Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516
Seven days a week

