

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

RALLYING FOR RAIL



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yes to democracy

In the
Euro elections on

JUNE 4

Defend public services • Yes to workers' rights • No to the BNP

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

END PRIVATISATION - VOTE No2EU



The European Commission has just approved the use of £5.2 billion of taxpayers' money to pay off Eurostar's debt prior to privatisation.

The British end of Eurostar is run by the government-owned holding company London and Continental Railways which built the high-speed link between London and the Channel tunnel.

Now it will be subject to EU directive 91/440 and sold off with some of Britain's most valuable development land.

This is a repeat of the madness of rail privatisation in 1996 and the Tube infrastructure sell-off under the PPP.

These disastrous EU-led privatisations have fragmented our railways and allowed any profit to be trousered by shareholders or handed out in management bonuses rather than ploughed back into the industry.

The EU-led enforced break up of ferry services such as Caledonian MacBrayne in Scotland has also been a hugely expensive waste of time which does not deliver a better service.

We have seen the same results with the privatisation of the bus industry as workers face constant attacks on their wages and conditions.

The union is presently fighting to defend attacks on the pensions of bus workers at Wilts and Dorset and others.

The disaster of privatisation can be seen on the East Coast Line where National Express is looking to bail out of their current contract for the rail franchise in favour of a fixed-fee management deal.

The franchise was awarded to National Express just over two years ago with the company promising to pay nearly £2 billion

in premiums back to the government over eight years.

But a promise from a privateer is made to be broken and National Express is reportedly trying to use the excuse of the recession to get out of its franchise obligations.

Apparently, they have agreed an outline deal with the government which would give them the copper-bottomed financial guarantee of a fixed-fee management arrangement.

If reports of the collapse of the East Coast franchise are true, it gives the government a great opportunity to renationalise the service.

Rather than plugging in the life support machine for National Express, ministers should be seizing the chance to return this big section of the rail network to full public ownership and control.

For too long well-heeled politicians have shrugged their shoulders and claimed these issues have nothing to do with them.

Although politicians in Westminster have found time to milk the expenses system and enrich themselves. The notorious EU gravy train is even worse as there is no public scrutiny whatsoever and expenses are handed out in secret.

This has led to widespread apathy and contempt for establishment politicians and even the rise of the far right. That is why I urge you to vote No2EU: Yes to Democracy in the Euro elections on June 4 so that we can let them know at the ballot box what we think of their privatisation plans.

Watch out for our party political broadcasts on May 29 at 10.30pm

Best Wishes

Bob Crow

When you have finished with this magazine give it to a workmate who is not in your union. Even better, ask them to join RMT by filling in the application form opposite

MAKE A DIFFERENCE VOTE No2EU-YES

Bob Crow explains why you should vote No2EU: Yes to Democracy in the euro elections on June 4

Since No2EU-Yes to Democracy was launched the European Commission has given the green light to privatise Eurostar and the European parliament has backed the 'liberalisation' of healthcare across the EU.

These two events alone reveal the EU's drive to force discredited free market dogma

into our public services.

The European parliament rubberstamped the Health Services Directive after the Party of European Socialists abstained, paving the way for private companies to take over health services.

This directive represents the biggest threat to our National

Health Service since it was set up in 1948 by a Labour government.

Labour MP Gisela Stuart has warned: "I bet you my wages that in 10-15 years, if this Directive goes through, we cannot have a generally tax-funded NHS system".

And Gisela knows what she

is talking about as she helped draw up the original EU Constitution as a member of the hand-picked convention.

She described the renaming of the Constitution as the Lisbon Treaty and the pretence that it was a different document as a "deeply dishonest process".

Unfortunately, dishonesty has become a common word to use when it comes to describing politicians these days. Sleaze, corruption and lying seem to have become the national sport among our politicians.

No2EU is standing as a protest against these practices which are so widespread within the EU that it even has a name, the gravy train.

The huge allowances handed to MEPs, which are not open to public scrutiny, makes them over a million pounds every five years.

That is a scandal, particularly when you discover the European Parliament doesn't even make laws. That privilege belongs to the European Commission which is unelected and stays the same after these elections.

Therefore No2EU is calling on everyone who supports democracy and public services to turn out and vote on June 4 for our candidates which are standing in every region of Britain.

We are standing on a clear platform of defending of public services and workers' rights and against the Lisbon Treaty and the EU gravy train. ■



NORTH WEST: No2EU campaigners in the North West region out on the streets of Preston



WEST MIDLANDS: No2EU candidates march in defence of manufacturing in Birmingham

NCE ON JUNE 4 TO DEMOCRACY

YOUR CANDIDATES - All acting in a personal capacity

London – Eight candidates

Bob Crow – RMT general secretary
John Hendy QC – Leading human rights lawyer
Professor Mary Davis – Leading labour historian
Kevin Nolan – Visteon convener, Enfield site
Syed Islam – Social worker and Bangladeshi community activist
Onay Kasab – Greenwich UNISON branch secretary
John Rowe – Former Labour councillor and supporter of Peter Shore MP
Nick Wrack – socialist barrister

West Midlands – Six candidates

David John Nellist – Socialist Party Councillor and Coventry MP from 1983 to 1992
Dyal Singh Bagri – President, Indian Workers Association
Malcolm Gribbin – Retired teacher, school governor
Jo Stevenson – YCL general secretary
Peter McLaren – Alliance for Green Socialism
Andy Chaffer – Anti-fascist and gay rights campaigner

East Midlands – Five candidates

John McEwan – Lindsey Oil Refinery worker
Avtar Sadiq – Unity for Peace and Socialism party
Jean Thorpe – UNISON NEC member
Shangara Singh Gahonia – Unity for Peace and Socialism party
Laurence Platt – UNITE branch secretary

Wales – Four candidates

Rob Griffiths – Communist Party of Britain general secretary
Rob Williams – Unite convener of the Linemar plant in Swansea
Laura Picard – UNISON Wales staff member
Trevor Jones – Deeside trades council secretary

North West – Eight candidates

Roger Bannister – Unison NEC member
Les Skarrot – FBU executive committee
Craig Johnston – RMT executive
Alec MacFadden – President of Merseyside trades council
Steve Radford – Liberal Party councillor
Lynn Worthington – Community and healthcare campaigner
John Metcalfe – Former deputy Labour leader of Carlisle council
Harry Smith – One of the 47 surcharged Liverpool Labour councillors

Scotland – Six candidates

John Foster – Scottish Campaign Against Euro Federalism secretary
Tommy Sheridan – Solidarity Co-Convenor
Leah Ganley – Student at Dundee University
Stuart Hyslop – Retired seafarer RMT
Ajit Singh Uppal – Indian Workers Association
Tom Morrison – Secretary Clydebank TUC

Yorkshire & Humberside – Six candidates

Keith Gibson – Lindsey oil refinery worker
Celia Foote – Alliance for Green Socialism
Councillor Jackie Grunsell – Save Huddersfield NHS councillor
Peter March – RMT regional secretary
Mike Davies – Alliance for Green Socialism secretary
Juliet Marie Boddington – Alliance for Green Socialism activist

South East – Ten candidates

Professor Dave Hill – Former East Sussex Labour Group leader
Garry Hassell – RMT executive committee
Kevin Hayes – Ford worker
Owen Morris – Construction worker and supporter of Lindsey and Olympic site protests
Gawain Little – Teacher and CND National Council member
Robert Wilkinson – NUT Wokingham and District Secretary
Jacqui Berry – Medway trades council president
Nick Wright – Graphic designer and teacher
Nick Chaffey – Youth worker
Sarah Wrack – Student Sussex University

Eastern – Seven candidates

Brian Denny – Journalist and democracy campaigner
Frank Jepson – Visteon factory convener, Basildon
Steve Glennon – shop steward at GSK in Ware, Hertfordshire
Phil Katz – Author and designer
Eleanor Donne – UNISON steward, local government worker
Pete Relf – Environmental campaigner
Ron Rodwell – Former CWU activist RMT staff rep

North East – Three candidates

Martin Levy – Newcastle trades council president
Hannah Walter – UNISON shop steward
Peter Pinkney – RMT activist

South West – Six candidates

Alex Gordon – RMT executive committee
Roger Davey – Health worker
Rachel Lynch – NUT activist
Nick Quirk – RMT executive committee
John Chambers – Retired T&G union official
Paul Dyer – Barnstaple trades council secretary



EUROSTAR CLEANERS VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY FOR ACTION OVER 'BIG BROTHER' STAFF FINGERPRINTING

RMT members working for Carlisle Cleaning Services at St Pancras International on Eurostar have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action short of a strike following the installation of fingerprinting machines to replace clocking on/clocking off machines.

The cleaners voted by 30 to 1 in favour. From May 12 they are

boycotting the use of the finger printing machines until further notice.

"This vote shows just how angry the Eurostar cleaners are at the outrageous introduction of staff finger printing and their treatment by the Carlisle Group as little more than common criminals," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. ■

RMT SEEKS RECOGNITION AT HANTS AND DORSET TRIM

RMT is seeking recognition for its members at bus bodyshop, paint sprayers and upholstery fitters Hants and Dorset Trim, which is part of the Go Ahead Group. The company services Go South Coast buses including Blue Star, Wilts & Dorset Bus Company, Southern Vectis and Damory Coaches.

With 20 members of staff at the bodyshop in RMT the union sought voluntary recognition on

the basis that half the staff were in the union. This was turned down by the company on the basis that staff at the paintshop on separate premises should be taken into account as well.

RMT is organising a meeting of all the workforce, including non-members to seek recognition of the union and get a petition signed. It will also be pursuing recognition with the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC). ■

RMT REP VICTIMISED

RMT is demanding that London Underground cease victimising Waterloo staff rep Elaine Holness.

LUL has stood Elaine down from duties pending an investigation that she 'racially harassed' a manager. It is the union's belief that it is in fact Elaine that is being harassed, because she criticised a manager when she gave evidence at an employment tribunal in support of sacked RMT member Mo Makhboul.

Prior to the latest action against Elaine she has also faced a series of other arbitrary acts against her. These include docking her pay for attending a doctor's appointment and preventing her attending a TUC conference.

RMT believe that Elaine is being targeted to prevent her appearing as a witness for another sacked RMT member –



Gyles Henry – and also because they want to remove a highly effective union rep from the workplace.

Outside of the workplace Elaine has received awards for her charity work and is a well known local community activist with a track record of opposing racism. That is why the false accusations of racism are particularly disgusting.

RMT London regional organiser Steve Hedley has written to LUL complaining that the allegations: "are of a malicious and vexatious nature." ■

VICTORIA LINE STRIKE SOLID

No trains ran during a 24 hour strike on the Victoria Line on April 21-22. The strike was 'rock solid' after management refused last minute talks to resolve the dispute over passenger door safety and the bullying and victimisation of RMT members.

The dispute hinges on the failure of management to install correct door side enabling equipment on the Victoria Line which is operational on all other lines on the Underground. This is a fail-safe mechanism which prevents the wrong side doors being opened when a train is on the platform.

RMT safety reps have a dossier of 18 incidents over the past four years when the wrong side doors have been opened on the Victoria Line, posing a serious safety risk to the public.

The dispute is also over an associated issue of the sacking of a train driver Carl Campbell and the victimization of RMT activist Glenroy Watson.

"The safety implications of not installing the correct door side enabling equipment for the travelling public on the Victoria Line are blindingly obvious. If the doors open incorrectly, and you or your kids are jammed into the carriage, the potential for a tragedy is clear and that's why every other line on the Underground has brought in this fail safe mechanism", RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"There is something rotten about a management culture which ignores crucial safety issues but wastes time and effort victimising staff. The RMT are determined to put a stop to it," Bob Crow said. ■



RMT general secretary Bob Crow joins the Victoria Line strikers

RMT MEMBERS RALLY TO DEMAND A PEOPLE'S RAILWAY

Hundreds of banner-waving Union RMT members converged on Parliament on May 5 to demand a publicly owned 'People's Railway' instead of cuts in jobs and services.

With Klaxon horns blaring, the activists staged a noisy demonstration before going in to lobby MPs. They carried placards declaring: 'Rail Jobs are Green Jobs', 'Save Rail Services', 'Rail Cuts Cost Lives' and for a 'People's Railway.'

As the lobbyists prepared to buttonhole MPs, RMT general secretary Bob Crow spelt out a clear message for the government and the private rail companies. "Our members are not cannon fodder who can be hired and fired at will while the bankers and the City spivs are being bailed out to the tune of billions," he said.

RMT parliamentary group convener Labour MP John McDonnell welcomed the lobbyists to Westminster. Mr

McDonnell condemned the "lunacy" of the government stepping in with yet more public money to bail out failed PFI schemes.

And he urged lobbyists to present his fellow MPs and government ministers with a "rational" alternative to the failed system of railway privatisation. He demanded that the railways must be taken back into a new form of accountable common ownership, managed by the state alongside representatives of the workers and the passengers.

Left Labour MP Kelvin Hopkins argued that a new start with investment in a publicly owned railway would help to dig Britain out of the "awful recession" arising from the "love affair" with global free-market capitalism.

Numerous other MPs supported the demands of the rally including RMT parliamentary group members

Alan Simpson, David Drew and Jim Dobbin.

Stephen Joseph, director of green transport group Campaign for Better Transport, spoke at the rally in support of the campaign to save green rail jobs. The campaign has also been lobbying the government to reinstate the deferred renewals. Coincidentally Stephen met rail minister Lord Adonis the same day.

RMT members presented MPs with a well-produced document containing a blueprint for a wholly integrated, publicly owned and accountable people's railway. It complained that the government was subsidising the rail privateers to the tune of £6 billion a year.

The document called for an urgent programme of investment in the railways, which would provide a much-needed "green stimulus" to the economy in the midst of the current crisis. It also demanded

a freeze in shareholder dividends, with all profits instead being invested to protect services and jobs.

MPs were also urged to sign an early day motion calling for an end to the cuts and for a People's Railway.

As RMT News went to press Rail Minister Andrew Adonis called a meeting of Labour MPs to discuss the concerns raised by RMT members. The campaign continues. If you could not make the lobby then maybe you could make an appointment to see your MP in his or her constituency. ■

BOB CROW TELLS GEOFF HOON STOP JOB CUTS

In the week before the lobby RMT General Secretary Bob Crow met Secretary of State for Transport, Geoff Hoon, to demand a moratorium on job cuts on the railways. The government was told that in the last few months almost 4000 job losses have been announced on the railways and London Underground despite the rail companies receiving big government subsidies and continuing to make huge profits.

Bob warned the cuts mean safety is also under threat. Network Rail is cutting back on the frequency of track inspections and has postponed a third of its planned track renewals. Geoff Hoon was told that conditions are being created for a serious derailment.



RMT CALLS FOR RENATIONALISATION OF EAST COAST LINE

RMT called on the government to take urgent action to renationalise the East-Coast Line. This followed reports this month suggesting that the franchise holder, National Express, is looking to bail out of their current contract in favour of a fixed-fee management deal.

The franchise was awarded to National Express just over two years ago with the company promising to pay nearly £2 billion in premiums back to the government over eight years.

National Express are now claiming that the recession has hit their profits.

They are reported to have agreed an outline deal with the government which would get them out of their franchise obligations and give them the copper-bottomed financial guarantee of a fixed-fee management arrangement.

The East-Coast Line, which links London with Edinburgh via York and Leeds, carries 17 million passengers a year and employs 3,100 staff.

RMT general secretary, Bob Crow, said that if reports of the collapse of the East-Coast franchise are true, it gives the government a golden opportunity to

renationalise the service.

“Rather than plugging in the life support machine for National Express, ministers should be seizing the chance to return this big section of the rail network to full public ownership and control. RMT has no time for private companies who promised the earth when they took on these franchises and who are now going cap in hand to the government, pleading poverty. They saw the railways as a fast route to an easy profit at the taxpayers’ expense and now is the time to get shot of them,” Bob Crow said. ■

BOB CROW ADDRESSES CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AS PART OF No2EU CAMPAIGN

The convenor of the *No2EU – Yes to Democracy* European election platform, RMT general secretary Bob Crow, joined with a thousand construction workers on the gates of the Olympic site in Stratford earlier this month in a mass protest over attacks on pay and working conditions.

The protest on May 6 was called by rank and file construction workers in opposition to a ‘race to the bottom’ on pay and conditions and the exploitation of overseas workers to drive down wages. It was joined by workers from all

over the country including a contingent from the protests at the Lyndsey oil refinery.

Addressing the mass picket Bob Crow said that anger should be directed at managers who exploit migrant workers to undercut union agreements.

“These people are not the problem – the bosses who want construction workers to compete in a race to the bottom and force their pay and

conditions down are the problem,” he said.

The construction workers later held a rally outside of Parliament which was also addressed by Bob Crow.

Leaders of the Olympics protest, along with convenors from the Visteon dispute and Lyndsey oil refinery, are standing as *No2EU–Yes to Democracy* candidates on June 4. ■



FIGHT FOR JOBS AND

Supervisory
grades conference
urges resistance to
attacks on jobs
and ticket offices



OPPOSE THE FAT CATS

Rail jobs are under massive attack by the fat-cats, and the only possible response is to organise, delegates at RMT's supervisory grades delegates resolved at their spring conference on the Isle of Wight

A fraction of the money used to bail out banks could have brought Britain's railways back into public ownership, noted conference president Peter March, Hull Rail.

Yet rail jobs were under attack as train operators sought to maximise profits, and now more than ever it was important to belong to a strong trade union, said Peter.

Employers across the industry were attempting to undermine jobs, pay and conditions, but the union's executive was united in its determination to resist, said executive rep Garry Hassell.

The attacks on jobs were not about good housekeeping as train operators claimed, but about maintaining profits at workers' expense, and using the recession to impose casualisation, assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said.

Job cuts already announced were in the thousands, said Pat, "but I am proud to be part of a union that is leading the fightback on the fundamental right to work."

That fightback needed to be co-ordinated, both industrially and politically, and it needed "all shoulders to the wheel", said Pat.

Delegates welcomed campaigns that RMT had already run against ticket-office cuts on several train-operating companies, but urged a co-ordinated industry-wide campaign, drawing in passengers, local authorities and other unions, and with a national ballot if necessary.

Operators deliberately cut shifts and created difficulty for

passengers to buy tickets at stations, and then cynically moved to close them on the grounds that they were not selling enough, said Richard Constable, Deptford.

"This is a national problem and it needs a national campaign," he said.

Passengers were being conned into paying over the odds for tickets at machines, said Jim Levy, Watford.

"The value of real rail staff to passengers cannot be measured on a balance sheet," said Jim. "Passengers send in comments praising the help they've had from ticket-office and station staff, and they're the very ones under attack."

PROTECT PENSIONS

Conference also called for redoubled efforts to defend the Railways Pension Scheme and ensure that all its sections were open to all employees from day one of employment and benefits maintained.

"Our pension scheme is not a 'gold plated' privilege, whatever the right-wing press says, it is a hard-fought-for right and we do not need to justify maintaining it," said Chris Smart, Manchester South.

The union should do all in its power to resist attempts to replace the RPS with defined-benefits schemes, said Chris.

It wasn't that long ago that employers enjoyed lengthy contributions holidays, yet the same bosses were now were saying it was unsustainable, said Mike Sargent, Cinq Ports.

"The deficits are a drop in the ocean compared with the money being thrown at banks – this is just another way of attacking working people," said Mike.

The new defined-benefit CARE pension scheme imposed by Network Rail was intended to undermine the existing RPS and

should be closed, delegates urged.

HONOUR PTR&R

Network Rail must be held to its obligations under the Promotion, Transfer, Redundancy and Resettlement agreement under the threat of a ballot for action, conference agreed.

There were already too many examples of members being dealt with outside the PTR&R agreement, with the company

using its 'People Process' instead, noted Billy Laing, Central and North Mersey.

Delegates unanimously condemned London Midland's refusal to release delegates to attend conferences.

Jim Levy, Watford, said that the company, which has been stung by a campaign of solid strike action in a protracted dispute over Sunday working, had resorted to attacking reps carrying out their legitimate duties. ■

AT A GLANCE

The union should take the necessary steps to secure 'safeguarded' travel facilities for all, delegates agreed, urging that the demand should be a central part of future pay claims.

Network Rail's bonus scheme was condemned for offering obscene sums to the bosses but crumbs to the people who do the work.

Conference called on the RMT executive to seek an end to 'role clarity' personal salary rates at Network Rail

Delegates also expressed disgust at NR's failure to pay the 2009 award to members in Bands 5 to 8 grades until more than seven weeks after others received it, and asked the executive to seek an urgent explanation from the company.

Delegates condemned "unrelenting attacks" on RMT rep Chris Smart by Network Rail, including denying him a pay rise for his union activities, and called on the union to do all it could to defend him

RMT members should be advised not to take part in 'employee engagement surveys', which are merely a device designed to undermine collective bargaining agreements and channels for consultation.

Delegates called on the union to do all it can to stop the misuse of CCTV footage to provide evidence in disciplinary cases against staff.

Notes of discussions with employers should be provided by negotiators within 24 hours of meetings taking place, conference agreed.

The Supervisory Grades' conference advisory committee should be advised not to consider inviting employer representatives to address it, delegates agreed.

ENGINEERS SAY NO TO CUTBACKS

Report from engineering grades conference

This year's engineering grades conference was dominated by the central theme of cutbacks and the impact that the drive to slash costs is having on jobs, pay, working conditions and safety.

In his opening introduction to conference, RMT general secretary Bob Crow spoke about the union's campaign over job loss plans across the industry from a finance obsessed management looking to protect their profits at the expense of our members' livelihoods.

Bob piled in on the issue of Home Start – one of the latest management wheezes which would break up workplace identity and collectivism and replace it with little more than travelling salesmen, based in their own front rooms and at the beck and call of management.

The general secretary also spoke of the threat of the notorious "zero hour contracts", the ultimate assault on working conditions that leave workers waiting at the end of a telephone to find out if they have a days work or not: the modern incarnation of the casual dock shifts dramatised in the movie *On The Waterfront*.

A composite motion attacking the way that the harmonisation negotiations have been used as a battering ram in a "race to the bottom" on jobs, pay and working conditions, and setting out a strategy for an industrial and political campaign of resistance, was carried unanimously.

Motions on the misuse of Project Rose as a mechanism for cuts in safety and staffing, and on re-affirming the call for a

public enquiry into the deaths of four RMT members in the Tebay runaway train tragedy, were also endorsed by the conference.

At the close of the conference, President Greg Hewitt said that there had been a systematic attack on pay and a driving down of conditions of employment over the last three to four years from Network Rail. Now under the guise of harmonisation and the current economic downturn, Network Rail are twisting the knife into the loyal employees who have sustained the infrastructure for so many years.

"Reports from all over the UK come to the annual grades conferences showing clearly that our workforce is being depleted, areas extended and maintenance cut back on. Our fear is that it

may take another Clapham, Greyrigg or Tebay incident to awaken the public's perception of just what is going on in this industry," Greg said.

"We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the intransigence of Network Rail who's only goal is to have a totally compliant workforce at its beck n call. We salute our members working for the private contractors who have sent out a clear signal that they will not sit back and take the attack on jobs and conditions.

"We have learnt through years of experience that you gain nothing without struggle. We did not win all of our current conditions and pay levels by sitting back, we have fought hard and long and we will not give up our rights easily I can promise you that," Greg added. ■



OBITUARY

SIMON DAVIS SHIPPING REP DIES IN DIVING ACCIDENT

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Simon Davis, board rep on the *Pride of Bilbao*, writes Steve Todd, RMT national secretary.

Simon Davis was bosun on the *Pride of Bilbao*, he died on April 14, 2009 in a diving accident at the age of 45.

He was an able seaman (SGIA) who served on various vessels at sea. Since 1991 he had worked on P&O Ferries: the *Pride of Cherbourg*; *Pride of Winchester*; *European Trader*; *European Clearway* and *Pride of Portsmouth* before transferring to the *Pride of Bilbao*.

Simon provided the highest level of representation for RMT members in sometimes controversial and often difficult circumstances, defending their jobs and conditions with a passion. He represented the members of his branch at the

BGM. He was an asset to the union's network of representatives and will not only be missed by his family and shipboard mates but also by the union at large. Below, his colleagues pay tribute to him.

THE CREW OF THE PRIDE OF BILBAO

With regret Simon Davis passed away so unexpectedly.

He always made time to listen to our problems and dilemmas, and offer advice and guidance along the way.

He was an excellent union representative, often taking up large chunks of his personal life to try and benefit others.

His character and outlook on



life will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

It is a sad loss of a friend, colleague and all who met him.

CAPTAIN PHILIP HILL

I had hunted Simon from the *French Fleet* a number of years ago. I needed somebody with a strong character, that was also firm but fair with the crew. Having worked with Simon on the *French Fleet* I knew Simon fitted the bill and he was the man I wanted. He became an important and essential asset to this vessel.

Simon never let me down; if at times we disagreed he would explain his reasons in a clear and concise way. At no time did I ever hear Simon raise his voice. As a union representative he always looked after the interest of the crew but also understood that the company had a commercial side that had to be supported.

Simon will be sadly missed by all those who came into contact with him.

S.D.GROSS, CHIEF OFFICER

I first met Simon on the *Pride of Bilbao* when he was promoted from the *French Fleet*. Simon

was a well respected Bosun by both the officers and crew. His seamanship, leadership and calmness under pressure stood him out from the crowd. As an active union member he put himself out, representing his people and attending Port & Company meetings. He was articulate and intelligent which made him the perfect representative, while wanting the best for his crew he also understood the employers' position: he was also a very fair person. I can remember one particular conversation where he was suggesting that higher paid ratings took a lower pay rise in order to increase the basic pay of lower paid crew who were probably not even union members. The impact to the employer was minimal, I have no idea if anything came of it, sadly not I think, never the less an admirable suggestion and typical of his 'fair treatment' attitude. Simon was a character who was well liked and respected; he will be missed by all aboard the *Pride of Bilbao*.

Thanks to Darren Procter for collating the material from the workers on the *Pride of Bilbao*

NO TO JUG

FREIGHT ON RAIL SAYS LOBBY YOUR MEP BEFORE JUNE 4

Philippa Edmunds from Freight on Rail gives 10 reasons why you should help ensure that the European Commission rejects plans to impose heavier lorries on our roads.

The European Commission is currently evaluating longer, heavier lorries (LHV's), which would be fifty per cent longer and a third heavier than existing HGV's (25 metres long and 60 tonnes in weight). The European elections on June 4 provide a good opportunity to ask your local MEP candidates what their position is on allowing LHV's on our roads.

Freight on Rail believes that these massive lorries would have terrible economic, environmental and safety implications and have no place on UK roads for a number of key reasons:

1 Previous increases in lorry dimensions have resulted in more lorries driving around less full, causing more road congestion and more pollution, which is the reverse of what was claimed would happen. The proponents of LHVs are using the same flawed arguments again.

2 LHVs would destroy the majority of rail freight which has a much better environmental and safety record than road and force trainloads of freight back onto our congested roads. LHVs would undermine container and bulk rail freight; Freightliner found that up to 66% of container traffic could be forced back onto the roads. Detailed examination of rail's bulk freight flows by EWS in May 2007 found that up to 40% of aggregates currently carried by rail could switch to road and almost 20% of metals traffic.

3 LHVs have dangers of their own due to their size and lack of manoeuvrability, DfT research showed that because of their size and weight, when HGVs are involved in accidents the level of injury tends to be higher. On motorways, HGVs are over three times as likely as cars to be involved in fatalities from road accidents per billion kms travelled.

Source: DfT Transport Statistics Traffic Speeds Figure 3.5C for 2007 issued July 2008

4 Road haulage industry has a poor record in complying with existing road regulations. Over 82% of HGVs exceeded their speed limit of 50 mph on dual carriageways and almost three-quarters exceeded the 40 mph limit on single carriageway non-built up roads in 2007.

VOSA spot checks in October 2008 found that half of UK registered HGVs stopped were breaking the law. International Freighting Weekly 21st October 2008.

5 Longer heavier lorries will have minimal impact on road congestion whereas an average freight train which is designed for heavy and bulky cargoes, can remove 50 HGVs from our roads. Source Network Rail 2008.



GERNAUTS

6 Trying to restrict LHV's to dual-carriageways and motorways simply will not work.

The promoters are claiming that these vehicles will be restricted to motorways, dual carriageways and major roads, but there is no mechanism available to keep them to this and the type of road has not been fully clarified. The reality is that these vehicles will need local access to distribution hubs which would not be on motorways/dual carriageways, but on roads which are totally unsuitable for vehicles of this scale.

7 HGVs are up to 160,000 times more damaging to road surfaces than the average car; some of the heaviest road repair costs are therefore almost exclusively attributable to the heaviest vehicles.

8 The claimed environmental benefits of LHV's rely on very high levels of load

utilisation – in excess of that routinely achieved within the haulage sector. Therefore at lower levels of utilisation the environmental performance of LHV's would be worse. German trials showed that utilisation of above 77% for LHV's was needed for fuel costs to breakeven. In 2006 in the UK HGVs over 33 tonnes were only 73% full.

Source Umwelt Bundes Amt August 07 and UK CSRG 2006

9 Lower road haulage costs will increase lorry miles with LHV's becoming travelling warehouses. LHV's would mean more lorry-miles, not fewer, because demand will be stimulated as LHV's could reduce road haulage costs by up to 20% according to the freight industry. Distribution centres are likely to be rationalised, saving on real estate costs, with lorry tonne kilometres increasing in line with current trends.

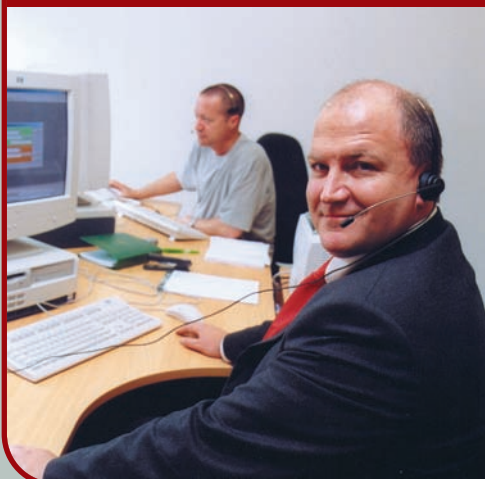
10 As it is, road freight only pays between one to two thirds of the costs it imposes on society in terms of road accidents, pollution, damage to infrastructure and loss of productivity.

Freight on Rail welcomed the government's decision in June 2008 to reject trials of 60-tonne 25.5 metre lorries on UK roads. However, if the European Parliament allows longer heavier lorries to travel across member states, it will mean in the medium term that LHV's would come to the UK because of pressure from the road haulage industry.

Tell your local MEP candidates that the UK does not want juggernauts imposed by the European Commission. ■

For more information on the campaign against LHV's and lists of candidates for the European Elections go to the Freight on Rail website [www:freightonrail.org.uk](http://www.freightonrail.org.uk); or ring Philippa Edmunds on 020 8241992 or email philippa@freightonrail.org.uk

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INSURERS' THIRD PARTY CAPTURE TRICK

Doug Christie of Thompsons Solicitors warns that employers and insurers are increasingly trying to settle accident claims directly with injured workers.



When RMT member David Coles met with Network Rail management to discuss his progress and return to work options after a horrific accident at work in which he lost a leg, he already had the union's lawyers Thompsons acting for him in his compensation claim.

It was something of a surprise therefore when he was asked during the meeting if he needed legal representation. He was recommended a law firm who act for Network Rail. David considers Network Rail to be liable for the accident in which he was hit by a train while working beside the track. He explained that he already had a solicitor.

No more was said about this recommendation. But these

direct approaches by employers and insurance companies to injured people are happening increasingly.

It is a practice called 'third-party capture', where an employer or insurance company either tries to settle a personal injury claim direct with an injured person without them getting independent legal advice or advises the injured person to use one of their 'recommended' solicitors.

Third party capture is common in road traffic accident claims. Motor insurance companies rarely waste time in contacting victims with offers of swift compensation if the injured person agrees to deal with them direct, cutting out the 'hassle' of lawyers.

It is also common for road accident victims to be contacted by solicitors on the motor insurance company approved panel. An elderly couple who had already instructed Thompsons to act for them in their injury claim were put directly through to a law firm during a routine call to their insurer. They didn't want or need another lawyer and told the insurance company so. But over the following weeks they were called and written to by at least two other law firms who had been passed details of the accident by the insurer.

It was harassment and Thompsons has given the details to the Financial Services Authority in an effort to get such practices stopped.

That the practice is creeping into work-related, often serious injury accident claims such as David Coles is alarming. A member of the Bakers' Union received a letter from his employer's insurer offering "to provide assistance to you concerning the accident". The letter went on "we would like to deal with you directly to resolve your claim for personal injury and any other associated losses you have sustained as a result of this matter".

This, in spite of the insurer being well aware that the claimant was a trade union member and so would be able to get free and independent legal advice and representation through the union.

And Fire Brigade Union members who were involved in a fatal fire incident were approached by their employers with a view to arranging representation for them at the inquest. This was in spite of the fact that the employers were defending their position at the inquest and they subsequently settled a personal injury claim against them by the family of the deceased.

Insurance offers to settle direct without lawyers will almost always result in a low offer of compensation. Clearly insurers have a duty to their shareholders to maximise profit, and therefore minimise payouts.

In addition, an insurer cannot accurately guess at the value of the claim (even if it was their intention to try, which is unlikely) without knowing all the facts about the seriousness of the injury, the long term prognosis and issues such as how much pay and benefits the injured person has lost as a result.

It is necessary to obtain expert medical reports and to calculate losses before the correct level of damages can be known.

One insurer offered an injured woman £4,000 to settle without lawyers. She sought independent legal advice and medical evidence revealed that she needed a significant operation as a result of her injury. Her claim settled for £35,000.

Injured people have a right to independent legal advice and insurance companies have a duty to inform them of this. Offers to settle without taking legal advice should be firmly rejected.

Insurance company or employer recommended solicitors may claim to be independent but they work for the insurers and employers and in many cases the claims are brought against those same insurers and employers. Accident victims are under no obligation to use them, whatever the insurer or solicitor may imply, and members are strongly advised not to.

If somebody mugged you in the street, you wouldn't go to a solicitor appointed by the mugger. In the same way, when you're injured it makes no sense to instruct a lawyer nominated by the company or other person who injured you.

RMT members and their families can get expert, independent and free legal advice and representation through the union's legal service. Union solicitors have no relationship with the insurance company and will seek the maximum amount of compensation possible, with absolutely no deductions. It pays to take advice. ■



TUBE AND TfL WORKERS TO RE-BALLOT

RMT is re-balloting nearly 10,000 members across London Underground (LUL) and Transport for London (TfL) for strike action in separate disputes centred on jobs, pay, breaches of disciplinary and attendance agreements. Up to 3000 jobs are under threat across the Tube and TfL.

The re-run of the strike ballots follows a provocative legal challenge by LUL to ballots last month, which nonetheless showed a rock-solid five-to-one majority in favour of action.

RMT is re-balloting all members at LUL, including former Metronet staff, as well as staff at TfL. Balloting begins on May 14 and closes on May 28.

On London Underground, bosses are threatening to tear up an agreement aimed at safeguarding jobs, and have refused to rule out compulsory redundancies. TfL is also threatening compulsory redundancies as part of a £2.4 billion cuts package.

LUL has also refused to budge from an unacceptable five-year pay offer that gives no real-terms increase for four years, and which could even see pay cut, and there have been so many complaints of breaches of

disciplinary and attendance procedures they appear co-ordinated. TfL has so far failed to table any pay offer at all.

LUL management have been breaching the agreed disciplinary and attendance procedures and have encouraged aggressive and punitive behaviour by local managers.

"Our members are furious that a democratic vote for action just a month ago was sabotaged by a shameful legal challenge aimed at undermining the internal democracy of our trade union. Tube bosses have wasted time and money on lawyers when they knew very well that RMT would never tolerate this attack on our members and our organisation. The re-ballot will give our members a chance to express the depth of their anger," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Despite the managements diversionary tactics it remains the case that after months of stonewalling LUL has tabled what is at best a five-year pay freeze which it knows full well is totally unacceptable to RMT and its members. LUL managers appear to have been given the nod to unleash a fresh round of

bullying.

"LUL's own 'Valuing Time' study acknowledges that our members' productivity is at an all-time high, with passenger numbers up to record-breaking levels of four million a day.

"We said from the start that our members, whether in LUL or TfL, would not be made to pay for the failure and greed of bankers and privateers, and that

any attempt to impose compulsory redundancies would be met with a ballot for industrial action. We've balloted once and now we'll ballot again and if LUL and TfL want to avoid confrontation they should withdraw the threat to jobs, take the pay issue seriously and start treating staff with the respect that they deserve," Bob Crow said. ■

RMT CALLS FOR YES VOTE OVER PENSIONS ON GO AHEAD BUSES

RMT members on Wilts & Dorset, Southern Vectis and Blue Star are being balloted for strike action this month over new pension scheme arrangements. All three companies which employ the workers are part of the massively profitable Go-Ahead Group, which has unilaterally closed the company's final-salary pension schemes to future new recruits.

For those left in the schemes it is a move that makes it both likely that contributions will have to rise and that the schemes will not be viable in the long term.

For those denied entry to the schemes it holds out the prospect of a worse standard of living in retirement, because the 'money-purchase' schemes offered in their place give nowhere near the same benefits – but it is cheaper for the company.

Management say they can

no longer afford the fund, but their contributions towards benefits are only 6.5 per cent – not that high for a good-quality final-salary scheme – while members' contributions are bigger.

In the year up to June 2008, Go Ahead Group made a pre-tax profit of £117 million and paid out £48 million in dividends to its shareholders, and in April this year the group announced that bus revenues were up once again as passenger numbers rose by nearly four per cent.

The company are keen to close the scheme because with its inferior replacement its total contributions will plummet to just 4.25 per cent.

As RMT News went to press the union was serving the company with a notice of a ballot and was urging members to return a yes vote for strike action. ■

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THE ECONOMIC CRISIS RMT MEMBERS UNDER ATTACK

Readers of this column will know that I have repeatedly returned to the fact that since the unfolding of the recent economic problems RMT members have been in the front line. They face attack after attack on their pay and conditions, staffing levels and safety. On top of this is the appalling impact of compulsory redundancies.

This month is no different. One of the latest attacks we are dealing with is the systematic attack on the pensions of RMT bus workers employed in the companies owned by the Go Ahead group.

With this in mind – and because I like to get out and meet our members – on May 10 I attended the Poole and District bus branch meeting. This was a well attended meeting with important issues on the agenda. Roster problems were discussed and voted on. The regional organiser Peter Gale was able to give a comprehensive report on the current pay negotiations, as well as the current situation on pensions. Basically – using the excuse of cost – the management want to stop the final salary scheme for new members. Now our bus driver members in this company, some of whom have spent their whole working lives in the industry, see their pensions under threat.

This is totally unacceptable and will be resisted, using all means at our disposal.

Political support has been sought from our group of MPs. The legality of managements' actions will be questioned, and we will ballot for strike action, if that's what it takes.

At the branch, I made the point, as I had at other conferences and meetings I've attended, that if you put up a map of the UK, and put a pin where every cut or attack was taking place. Then the whole map would be covered.

Network Rail Renewals, Network Rail pay and Harmonisation, LUL /TFL, East Midlands Trains and South West Trains are just some that spring to mind. In fact, with the train operating companies the whole franchising scheme is on the edge of collapse.

Why on earth doesn't the government use this chance to renationalise the whole lot? The truth is that they don't do it because they don't want to! We have had meetings with the government, where the case has been put to take back the industry that should never have been flogged off anyway. And all we got was a shrug of the shoulder and nothing afterwards.

Well it's not on. We also have met the most senior management in Network Rail and I stated, on the record, that our union felt that the reduction of renewals by 28% could be unsafe!

On that basis I would urge every single rep of our union to argue the case against any cut, any reduction in the name of economic efficiency. If you hear anything to do with cuts or so called efficiencies that are dodgy or worrying, then contact your full time RMT officials.

While all this is going on the union continues at all levels to fight for our members interests. To all of the representatives I salute your efforts, as I have said before; your hard work is the backbone of RMT.

Our members on London Midland are at the forefront as I write this column. They have taken 8 days of strike action, and plan to escalate more in defending their right to refuse to work Sunday shifts, as long as they give enough notice. This is a point of principal for them. They have turned down financial offers and are holding firm. I know that when I say that we salute your determination to stick by your rights and hard won conditions, then I am speaking on behalf of the whole union.

So as I said at the start, the union carries on in spite of the economic problems. We have no other option! We organise, we educate and we fight for our union and its members. And the union is never more needed by its members than at a time of economic crisis.

John Leach

RMT MEMBERS SEEK CHARITY SPONSORSHIP

LU Employees Bike It from Land's End to John O'Groats

Six RMT LU workers will be under pressure as they bicycle ride 1,000 miles from Land's End to John O Groats in 14 days to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

The Training Wheels team of six consists of Mark Collier, Colin Norwood, Glenn Harvey, Warren Evans, Tristan Pitt, Kenny Blackmore, and Lee Radley. They set off on their adventure on May 8 from Penzance.

For further information and to make donations go to: www.justgiving.com/trainingwheels

LGBT WALK FOR LIFE

RMT member Joanne Parry will be taking part in the Walk for Life 2009 along with other

Transport for London LGBT Staff Network Group Members and staff. She will be walking 10km around London on June 7 as part of the NAT (National AIDS Trust) team. Funds raised will be split between the National AIDS Trust and Crusaids. NAT is the UK's leading charity dedicated to transforming society's response to HIV.

For further information and to make donations go to www.walkforlife.co.uk/public_individual_sponsorship.php?ID=834

RMT SISTERS WALK FOR BREAST CANCER CHARITY

There is still time to donate in support of the three RMT staff members from Unity House who

will be doing the Edinburgh Moon Walk 2009 (see last month's RMT News). Nicky Hoarau, Vicky Bryce and Yvonne Sawford aim to walk 26.2 miles overnight on

Saturday June 20 in aid of the Breast Cancer charity Walk the Walk. ■

For further information and to make donations go to www.justgiving.com/rmt-sisters



Training Wheels Team prepare to ride the length of Britain

RMT CAMPAIGNS ON SEAFARERS' EARNINGS REDUCTIONS

RMT is determined to end the situation where some seafarers could be disqualified from Seafarers' Earnings Reductions (SED) as a result of recent changes to the law.

The Inland Revenue has accepted – after advice from RMT – that construction, construction support, well service and dive support vessels will not automatically be disqualified from SED.

Also, the union, together with Nautilus UK and the Chamber of Shipping, have made representations to the Inland Revenue on a number of other issues in order to try and reduce the negative impact on RMT members. As a result it has been conceded that vessels that might previously be treated as offshore are in fact multi-purpose vessels which can be used for navigation. Also accepted is the fact that other vessels may have been constructed with a particular purpose in mind but

subsequently be changed for different users.

RMT has also persuaded the Inland Revenue that claims for SED should not be ruled out on the basis that a vessel remains stationary for more than three days. The Revenue has amended their original proposals so that the period for which the vessel cannot be stationed for SED eligibility is more than five days, although the union argued for longer.

Nautilus UK has announced that they intend to challenge the way the rules are to be enforced, in light of recent changes restricting eligibility for seafarers. RMT are also considering the possibility of a legal challenge.

The union has also asked that an updating of the existing regulations should take place so that seafarers' entitlement is protected and not vulnerable to further challenges from Inland Revenue officials. ■

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

RMT Union Learning Reps from around the country once again put on some excellent events during Adult Learners' Week between May 9–15.

The Week is the largest festival of learning in the UK. Held every year it is coordinated by NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) and involves thousands of individuals and hundreds of communities and workplaces.

Many reps have been successful in being awarded funding for their activities, with the support of their branches and RMT Learning Development Workers.

Members have had the opportunity to try out new things, and find out what learning opportunities there are for them. Some ULRs used the week as a chance to launch book swaps in their workplaces. A full report will appear in the June edition of RMT News. ■

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RMT POLITICAL SCHOOL

STUDENTS HAIL EVENT A BIG SUCCESS



This article was written following feedback from students at the school. Thanks to Trevor Howard for drafting and pulling it together.

This year's recent Political School at the RMT National Education Centre in Doncaster was represented by a wide spectrum of grades from rail, road transport, shipping, docks and buses from all over the UK.

The purpose of the week-long school was to raise awareness of the tools available for political campaigning and lobbying at all levels.

James Croy, the RMT political officer, gave an overview of the course and an insight into the process of using politicians to further RMT's aims.

A lecture from Professor Roger Seifert of Warwick University took up the best part of the first day. His presentation on industrial relations and Marxist philosophy set the week off in style and everyone had an input into the debate.

Alex Gordon of the RMT Council of Executives spoke about the history of RMT and the wider trade union movement.

Derek Kotz gave an insight into how to handle the media.

Kelvin Hopkins MP, who is

also a member of the RMT Parliamentary Group, spoke and answered questions via video link from London.

Other guest speakers included trade unionist Tom Feilings from Justice for Colombia, who painted a gloomy image of the life expectancy of a union rep in Colombia. Also, an official from CWU made us aware of the fight against privatisation of Royal Mail.

An important afternoon session was led by Paul Meszaros from anti-fascist group Hope not Hate. He spoke about the threat of the British National Party and other fascist organisations and how to campaign against them.

The highlight of the week was the trip to Parliament and a chance to question some of the RMT Political Group including John McDonnell MP. We also had the opportunity to see how Parliament works to support RMT campaigns and see other MPs including Norman Tebbit and the branch chairman of Leeds Goods & Cartage debating with Dennis Skinner.

In the evening we had the

chance to relax at dinner with some of the MPs who are members of the RMT Parliamentary Group. However it was back to business the next day when we discussed what we had got out of the week. Most of us were then able to join a RMT demonstration outside Network Rail Head Office called to protest at Job cuts.

The whole of the class thought that it would be very useful to have a follow-up weekend in about a year's time to discuss how the school has helped any of us to further our political causes. We all agree that this political school should

remain as a permanent fixture to the RMT educational curriculum.

The RMT School is open to all RMT members and one of the students from the school, Pauline Harris, has specifically asked that we inform *RMT News* readers that she would urge any women members interested in politics to attend the school.

Members wishing to apply to be on the school in future should contact their branch secretary. For more information email Political Officer James Croy, j.croy@rmt.org.uk or call 020 7387 4771. ■

STUDENTS ON THE RMT POLITICAL SCHOOL

Ken Rollings (Heathrow Express)
Pauline Harris, (Plymouth 5)
Mohamed Aslam, (Exeter 2)
Anthony Winckless (Deptford)
Denis Connor (Glasgow 5)
Trevor Howard (Leeds Goods and Cartage)
Owen Herbert (Swansea 1)
Bryan Henderson (Dover Shipping)
Karl Norendal (Carlisle City)
James Bannister (Penzance 1)
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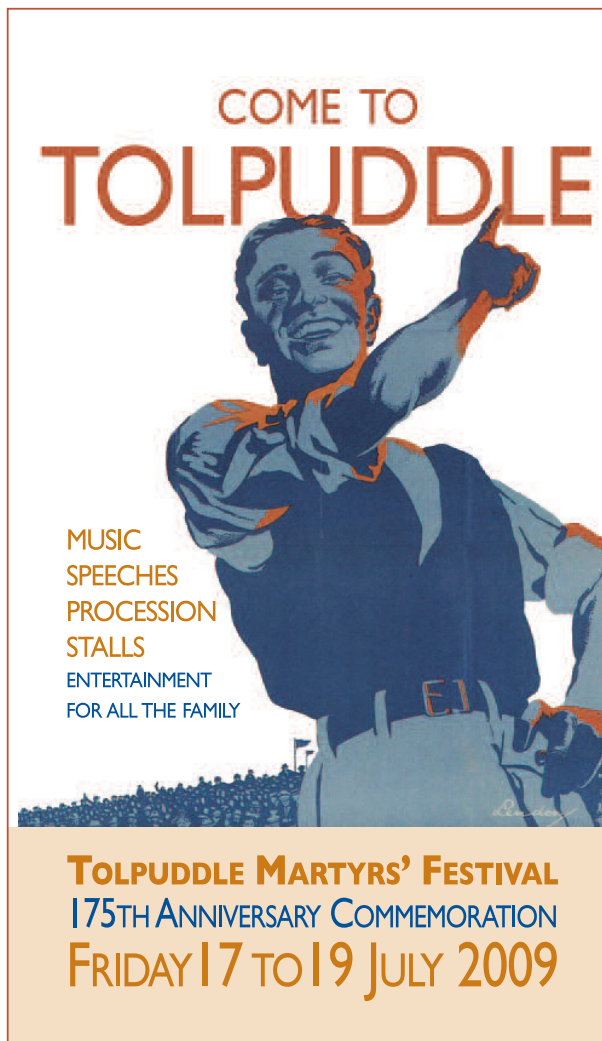
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RMT LEARNING BURSARY

Giving practical support for learners

The RMT Learning Bursary was set up just under a year ago in response to the fact that the cost of courses can be a major barrier to learning. Since its foundation the bursary has made a huge difference to the members who have received it. Applications have come from all sorts of members wanting to learn a variety of subjects from beginner's level all the way up to university level.

One of the key aims of the bursary is to help people to improve their English and maths. This is because without these subjects it can be difficult to take up other forms of learning. Although English and maths courses up to level 2 are free the bursary can help with

some of the associated costs if needed.

For some though, the next step of a GCSE is where help is needed – Bill Martin, branch secretary and conductor on SouthEastern Railways, said: "After taking numeracy and literacy courses up to level 2, which are free, I wanted to get myself a proper GCSE – however, GCSE's aren't cheap and I'm so glad I was able to get some help from the RMT Learning Bursary". Bill has since passed his English GCSE, grade A, no less, and is now looking for a GCSE maths course.

Due to government cutbacks in funding, ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages)

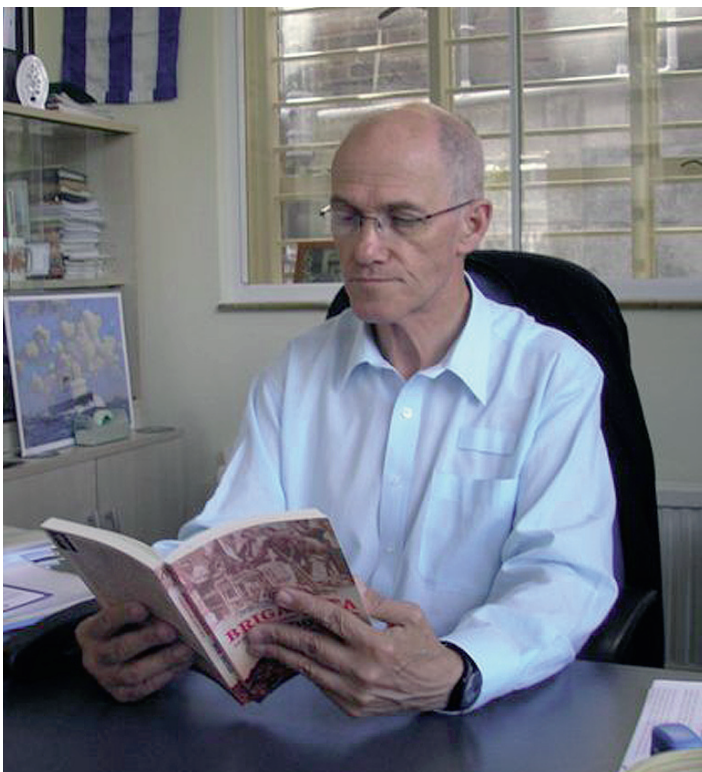
can now be quite expensive. Having English as your second language can make it difficult for you to get on at work and make friends. Improving listening, speaking and reading skills in English can make all the difference. Sebastian Sciog, a bus driver for Stagecoach, said: "My ULR, Gary Lord, has been a great help and I feel so much more confident now that my English is improving".

A number of members are now undertaking Open University courses thanks to the RMT Learning Bursary. The subjects being studied vary from psychology to mathematics, and

from business studies to law. Other applications include those for languages: Spanish is popular and one person is taking British Sign Language.

If you would like to learn something, but the cost is putting you off, talk to your local Union Learning Rep (ULR). Your local ULR can help you find the help you need for the right course and get any discounts due. They can also help you put in an application to the bursary fund.

For more information call Andrew Brattle, RMT Learning Administrator, 020 7529 8820. ■



Bill Martin, RMT Learning bursary recipient

QHOTELS
AA Hotel Group of the Year 2008 - 2009



ENJOY A LUXURY BREAK IN THE COTSWOLDS

The stunning Cheltenham Chase Hotel, ideally situated between Regency Cheltenham and Gloucester, provides the perfect location for exploring the Cotswolds and now you can save 25% on an indulgent break there with our special offer.

You and a partner will pay just £40.00* per person per night for a contemporary double room, full English breakfast and a complimentary three-course dinner on the first evening, plus use of the hotel's state-of-the-art leisure and spa facilities, with a 10% discount for pre-booked spa treatments.

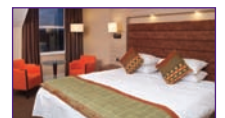
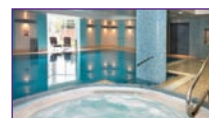
The 4-star Cheltenham Chase Hotel, part of the prestigious QHotels collection, awarded AA Hotel Group of the Year 2008-2009, is set in 15 acres of beautiful landscaped gardens against the backdrop of the rolling Cotswolds hills, yet within easy reach of the M5.

Guests enjoy complimentary use of some of the finest health and leisure facilities in the area, including a 13-metre pool, beauty treatment and rest and relaxation areas, sauna, steam room, solarium, techno gymnasium and dance/aerobics studio.

You can look forward to dining in Hardy's Restaurant, where fine cuisine, complemented by an extensive wine list, is served in an idyllic light and contemporary setting – perfect for an intimate dinner with a loved one or a get-together with friends.

For more details or to book, call 0845-074-0050, quoting RMT News. For further details about the Cheltenham Chase Hotel and the remaining properties in the QHotels collection visit: www.QHotels.co.uk

*Offer (based on two adults sharing a twin/double room for a minimum two-night stay) valid until 6th September 2009, and subject to the availability of allocated rooms. A single supplement of £25.00 per room per night applies.



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BIG IN JAPAN SHARP

50 YEAR BADGE AWARDED



Willie Welsh, (left) Glasgow No5, receiving his 50-year badge at the recent station staff grades conference held in the city. He was presented with the award by Ian Macintyre, Regional Organiser for Scotland and Northern Ireland. During his five decades of activism in the union Willie has held numerous posts including president of the Scottish regional council and has attended many grades

conferences and annual general meetings.

He became active soon after starting work as an engine cleaner in 1958. Since Willie's retirement in 2001 he has remained involved in the union, recruiting new members to RMT among other branch duties.

"I have met great colleagues during this time and have enjoyed their company on many, many occasions. I wish to thank every one of them," he said. ■

MAY DAY CREDIT UNION PRIZE DRAW

The RMT Credit Union May Day 2009 prize draw took place at Unity House on May 1. It was the first draw to be televised and broadcast on RMTV.

Doug Christie from trade union solicitors Thompsons was on hand to oversee that the draw was carried out fairly.

RESULTS WERE:

First draw winner for £1000.00 – **Samantha Hulass**, London and Orient

Second draw winner for £250.00 – **Laurence Cotton**, London Retired members

Third Draw winner for £250.00 – **Simon Maguire**, Glasgow Shipping

Fourth Draw winner for £250.00 – **Melvyn Taylor**, Doncaster

Fifth draw winner for £250.00 – **Ann-Marie Roche**, Worcester 1

LETTERS...

THANKS FOR SAVING MY JOB

I am a conductor at Barnham Depot in West Sussex.

In January I was dismissed from Southern against which I immediately appealed. There followed a robust campaign by my union reps, namely Chris Rodway, Adrian Walsh and Malcolm Chisolm from his hospital bed.

In February I was reinstated and I have received a letter of apology from the company, my record has been wiped clean and lost earnings promised to be refunded.

The stress which such a situation can impose on oneself and one's family is quite severe.

All in all an excellent result for which I would like to thank all involved including colleagues for their support during this difficult time.

Mike Thomas

Conductor, Barnham Depot

PURLEY TRAIN CRASH DRIVER PASSES AWAY

I was very saddened to hear of the death of fellow colleague and railwayman Bob Morgan, the driver involved in the Train Crash at Purley in November 1989. Mr Morgan was jailed in September 1990 for 18 months, 12 of which were a suspended sentence, but the term was later cut to four months on appeal. In 2007, at the Court of Appeal he had his convictions quashed on the basis they were unsafe in the light of fresh evidence relating to the signal at the centre of the tragedy.

I am simply appalled at the sort of legal system we have where a railwayman at work is charged after an accident, when there is no evidence that the cause was intentional. Those involved in the legal system that perpetrated this injustice should not only hang their heads in shame but should be called to public accountability.

Any railwayman now going about his or her lawful business is today the target for probing police enquiries, in the event an incident occurs and anyone is injured or worse. I contrast this with the response one gets from the police these days to the general misconduct upon the railway, and worse, that is perpetrated against railway staff every day.

Many years ago there was a protocol, whether official or unofficial that a railwayman on duty would never be charged for any error arising from carrying out his duties, as long as there was no deliberate intent to injure or worse.

The railway police are no longer our friends and need to be viewed with great suspicion if you are involved in an incident into which they commence enquiries. I counsel everyone to ensure that they join the appropriate trade union, and to never ever speak with the police after an incident unless accompanied by a legal representative. This does not suggest guilt but is merely to ensure that you have the full protection of a legal adviser.

Any statements made or signed whilst still affected by an event cannot be altered later, and will be used to add weight to any potential legal proceedings. What "justice" there is may no longer stand proud.

R Veitch

Train Guard, NXEC

PEOPLE'S PUBS - Words by Mike Pentelow, Picture by Peter Arkell

JAMES WATT

80-92 CATHCART ROAD
(OPPOSITE WATT PLACE),
GREENOCK, SCOTLAND

As the inventor who greatly improved the efficiency of steam engines James Watt (1736-1819) is currently portrayed on a Royal Mail stamp as "a pioneer of the industrial revolution."

But at the time, as a young working class man, he was unable to afford to patent his ground breaking method. On leaving school he made workshop models for his father,

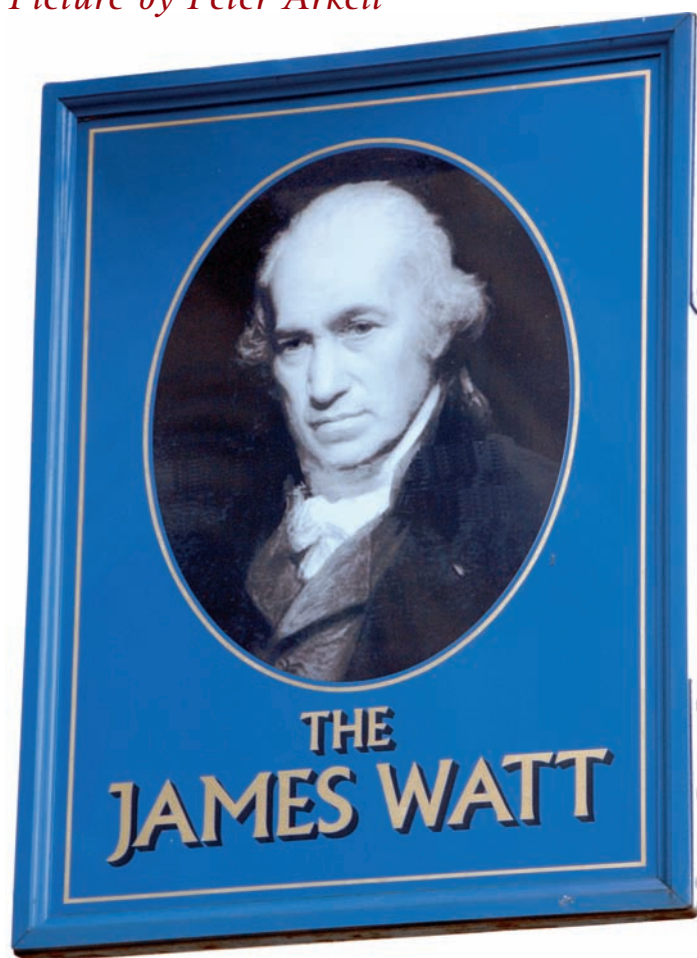
who was a shipwright, carpenter and joiner. This skill served James well later, when testing his own theories about steam power on models he had made himself.

First, however, he decided to earn a living out of making mathematical instruments.

When he went to Glasgow to learn this skill he was prevented from opening his own workshop to the public because he had not



James Watt statue outside his birthplace in William Street



served a proper apprenticeship. He was, though, allowed to make instruments for the local university. And it was the university which set in train his great contribution to the railways.

In 1763 the university asked him to improve the poor performance of one of its steam engines. After experiments with a tea kettle, discovering the latent heat of steam, he came up with the idea of separate condensers (one hot and one cold).

This proved a huge leap forward but he was unable to afford to patent it for another six years. In the meantime, while developing it in Birmingham, one of his workmen stole his plans and patented them before him.

Watt put this setback behind him and in 1782 patented a new system which prevented steam escaping and being wasted, enabling it to drive pistons more effectively.

The following year he discovered the chemical

composition of water (until then it had been considered one of the elements) which was another great leap forward. He submitted his paper on this to the Royal Society in November 1783 but it was not publicly read to its members until April 1784. This was three months after the paper with the same findings by Henry Cavendish was publicly read. It is debatable which of the two first came up with the discovery.

Watt's other inventions included a method of curing patients through inhaling gases, and machines for copying letters and reproducing sculptures.

He never forgot his working class roots in Greenock and provided the town with an improved harbour, a new waterworks, and its first library. There is a statue of him outside his birthplace at the bottom of William Street - about two minutes' walk from this Wetherspoon's pub.

While studying in Paris in 1789 his son, also named James, took part in the French Revolution. ■



PRESTON BRANCH BADGES

Two new badges are available from Preston branch and are sold on behalf of the union's Orphan Fund at £5 each plus £1 p&p.

Please indicate which badge(s) you want and make cheques payable to RMT Preston No 1 Branch and send to T.A. Jordan, 3 Edward Street, Morecambe, Lancs, LA4 4BL.

Alternatively, funds can be sent via PayPal to preston1@rmt.org.uk (please add £0.50 if using this method).

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

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Annual European and Worldwide Multi-trip Travel Insurance

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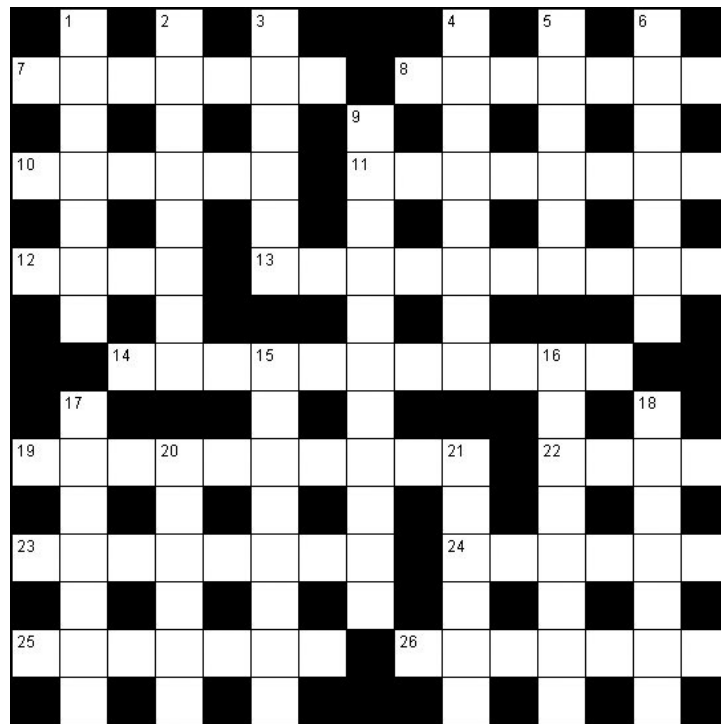
Competitive rates available for winter sports, single trips and long stay holidays.

Maximum 31 days any one trip, acceptance subject to underwritten criteria.

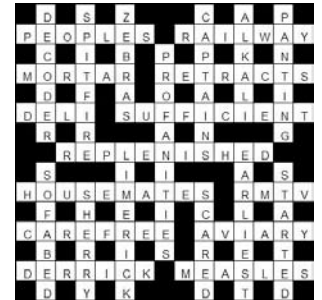
Provided by A IS Insurance Services, Authorised and regulated by The Financial Services Authority No. 307746

RMT £25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 54. Set by Elk



Last month's solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 53 is Simon Day, Glasgow.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by June 5 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

CLASSIFIED ADS

INDIAN WELLS KISSIMMEE VILLAS

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

ACROSS

- 7 Cupboard full of politicians? (7)
- 8 Laid a bet (7)
- 10 Invisible workplace killer, pressure (6)
- 11 Uneatable (8)
- 12 Festive occasion common in mining communities (4)
- 13 Igniting again, especially old flame (10)
- 14 (Scene of) havoc and destruction (11)
- 19 Attacking with artillery (10)
- 22 Public houses, with accommodation (4)
- 23 Hollow-horned, hoofed ruminant, related to goat (8)
- 24,25 Company reluctant to concede voluntary Sunday working (6,7)
- 26 Given freely, for benefit of others (7)

DOWN

- 1 Supposedly green alien (7)
- 2 Free (8)
- 3 Delete or prevent publication, or one who does so (6)
- 4 Grape variety (8)
- 5 Antenna (6)
- 6 Turn down; decay (7)
- 9 They are not to be crossed! (6,5)
- 15 Off the ground (8)
- 16 Eastern (8)
- 17 Local authority; deliberative body (7)
- 18 Ball game played on table (7)
- 20 Insect; small German car (6)
- 21 Horse's fastest pace (6)

RMT Credit Union

Our Own Savings and Loans Co-operative

PARADISE IS A BIT CLOSER WITH THE RMT CREDIT UNION IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER TO JOIN

OUR OWN SAVINGS AND LOANS CO-OPERATIVE

Our RMT Credit Union exists to provide help and support to all our members for their savings and credit needs, not to make a profit.

By saving together, and lending to each other, we take the profit motive out of savings and loans. All the surpluses created by the Credit Union are recycled as benefits to members through cheap loans, and the ability to pay dividends on savings.

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

Loan term (months) 12.68% APR (1.056% per month)

Amount	12	24	36	48	60
500	44.58	23.70	16.77	13.33	11.29
1000	89.17	47.39	33.54	26.67	22.59
1500	133.75	71.09	50.31	40.00	33.88
2000	178.33	94.78	67.08	53.34	45.18
3000	267.50	142.18	100.62	80.01	67.77
4000	356.67	189.57	134.16	106.68	90.36
5000	445.84	236.96	167.70	133.34	112.95
7500	668.75	355.44	251.55	200.02	169.42

CHEAP LOANS

Decisions on interest rates are made by our members. This year our AGM decided to offer very cheap loans to members. This means we can now offer loans at 12.68 per cent APR, equivalent to 1.056 per cent per month on the declining balance. See our great rates below.

IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER TO JOIN

All RMT members and their families and retired RMT members can join our Credit Union. You simply complete the form opposite. Under government legislation we have to check your identity and address but we can now do this electronically so you do not have to send any documents with your application.

MONTHLY OR FOUR-WEEKLY PAYMENTS

You can now also make your payments on a calendar monthly basis (28th of each month) or on a four-weekly basis which ties in with the pay cycles of many transport workers. The choice is yours so just indicate on the form. We take regular payments by Direct Debit although one-off additional payments can be made by cheque or cash. Members must make savings payments of at least £5 per month/four-weekly.

If you wish to join complete the application and return it to the RMT Credit Union at Unity House:

RMT Credit Union, Unity House, FREEPOST NW3706, London NW1 3YD

For assistance: Tel: 020 7529 8835

Authorised and Regulated By The Financial Services Authority FRN: 228612





RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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

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 ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

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.

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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





no²eu
yes to democracy

www.no2eu.com

on June 4