

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

TIME TO TAKE THEM ALL BACK

RMT calls for rail franchise rethink

national *express*

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FIGHT HEATHROW
MINICAB PLANS
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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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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

TAKE BACK THE FRANCHISES



As we go to press RMT members at National Express East Anglia are due to take strike action in a dispute over pay, conditions and other issues.

After voting by nine to one in favour of strike action, RMT members have shown that they are not prepared to be the victims of the National Express franchise chaos.

Despite the announcement that the company's failed East Coast Main Line franchise is to be renationalised, the company is still trying to milk the East Anglia franchises and make their staff pay for a crisis.

Under cross-default rules the government should strip the company of all its franchises, East Anglia and C2C.

This company has broken its contract and has no right to keep squeezing money out of the public purse. Transport workers face warnings about the dire consequences of breaking their contracts so why shouldn't those who lecture them get the same treatment?

RMT and our parliamentary group will be stepping up the pressure for the franchises to be nationalised on a permanent basis, not as a short term measure.

National Express, along with the rest of the rail privateers, should be kicked off the tracks for good so we can get back to being a public service, not cash cows for big money.

RMT Network Rail maintenance members have also voted by over 95 per cent to reject harmonisation proposals.

The process is brought to a halt but staff will retain their current terms and conditions.

There is no doubt that the harmonisation process has been hijacked by managers who saw harmonisation as an opportunity to attack pay and conditions as part of their £3 billion cuts plans.

Overwhelming support for action

short of a strike by members at Arriva Cross Country has also given the union a solid mandate to take the dispute forward.

The union has had over 75 ballots this year alone and RMT will not shy away from holding more as employers use the economic crisis to impose pay freezes.

You will also see that the union has been successfully fighting in the shipping sector to prevent 'social dumping', where employers try to bring in exploited labour from Eastern Europe to replace UK ratings on lower pay.

This struggle against European Union rules that encourages such practices is one of the reasons why this union took part in the No2EU: Yes to Democracy electoral coalition in the euro elections. I am pleased to say that after a good debate at our annual general meeting the decision to stand candidates was wholeheartedly endorsed by delegates.

AGM also agreed to mount a campaign to boycott Israeli goods in an effort to help end the devastating occupation of Palestine, a position already adopted by the Scottish and Irish TUC.

Transport workers are facing huge pressures in this difficult economic climate and the task ahead in defence of workers will not be easy. But the executive committee and officers of this union are united in their determination to carry out that task, day-in and day-out. The union's internet TV station RMTv can be found on www.rmt.org.uk and it now has weekly updates on all major disputes. So get on-line and keep up-to-date about how your union is defending your interests.

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

RMT BLACK CAB DRIVERS FIGHT HEATHROW MINICAB PLANS

Black cab driver members are fighting plans by British Airports Authority which would open the door to direct booking of minicabs at Heathrow in a move that has been described as “disastrous” for the licensed taxi trade.

BAA is looking at trialing a deal with Addison Lee and One Transport at terminals 3 and 5 this year which would allow them to operate from reserved bays and from a central booking booth in the car park in direct challenge to the traditional black cab rank.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow addressed black cab drivers at the Heathrow protest.

He told drivers that the plan to deregulate the traditional taxi rank system at Heathrow was a “kick in the teeth” for those thousands of men and women who have spent years doing the knowledge and who now find that they are being squeezed out by the minicabs.

“If this system, which makes a mockery of the pre-booked status of minicabs, is introduced at Heathrow there is little doubt that it will be rolled out at other airports and possibly rail terminals and the consequences would be disastrous for the licensed cab trade.

“RMT will give full backing to black cab drivers fighting

these plans and our fast-growing taxi branch will play a leading role in co-ordinating action.

“Cabbies have proved in recent months that they are prepared to take militant action to defend their trade and their livelihoods,” he told the crowd to applause.

Cabbie members picketed the headquarters of Radio Taxi Group for setting up shop in direct competition with black cabs.

RMT taxi driver John Paul-Pace said that drivers were angry and were voting with their feet and joining RMT at an unprecedented rate.

“These companies will march into City airport, Canary Wharf and then the train stations.

“They will offer train operating companies money unless they are stopped otherwise the people of London will see black cabs disappear,” he said.

Hundreds of cabs also blockaded central London in February in protest at moves to allow minicabs to operate from a rank in Leicester Square.

*Members can view a film of the dispute on RMTV or searching ‘RMT taxi drivers’ on YouTube or at

<http://www.tinyurl.com/rmt-taxis>



RMT MEMBERS VOTE FOUR TO ONE FOR ACTION AT ARRIVA CROSS COUNTRY



RMT members working for Arriva Cross Country have voted overwhelmingly by four to one on a 55 per cent turnout to take action in a dispute over a breakdown in industrial relations around pay and a series of issues relating to working conditions.

The ballot, for action short of a strike, has given the union a solid mandate to take the dispute forward.

Arriva Cross Country runs rail services over a wide geographical area stretching across England and into Wales and Scotland.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that members had voted by a massive margin for

action, reflecting just how angry they are at the company's divisive approach to both pay and a range of issues relating to working conditions.

"It's that approach which has led to this breakdown in industrial relations.

"RMT company representatives will now discuss the strategy for taking this dispute forward.

"RMT remains available for talks and we would encourage Arriva Cross Country to take the opportunity to sit down and work out an agreement on pay and service conditions which gives all staff a fair deal," he said. ■

STRIKE DATES AT NATIONAL EXPRESS EAST ANGLIA

RMT members working on National Express East Anglia have voted by a massive nine to one majority in favour of strike action in a dispute over pay, conditions and reorganisation.

RMT will be taking strike action on the following dates in conjunction with ASLEF members:

**Thursday July 30
to Friday July 31**

**Thursday August 6
to Friday August 7**

**Thursday August 13
to Friday August 14**

**Thursday August 20
to Friday August 21**

National Express has made nearly half a billion pounds in profits from their rail operations over the past ten years while sucking in £2.5 billion in subsidies over the same period.

RMT have also issued a call to the government to take urgent and decisive action over National Express which, after defaulting on its East Coast Main line franchise, is fighting to hold onto the East Anglia and

c2c franchises, contrary to the cross-default rules.

The company is also sending signals that they may even fight to retain the East Coast Main line despite the announcement by Lord Adonis that it is to be renationalised.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that there was no doubt that the failure to make any kind of meaningful pay offer to staff on East Anglia was all about trying to milk the franchises and make their staff pay for a crisis which was cooked up in the boardroom by senior managers who have now jumped ship.

"RMT members have shown in this ballot that they are not prepared to be the victims of the National Express franchise chaos and that they are determined to fight for a decent pay rise and for decent working conditions.

"This company has made half a billion in profits out of our members over the past decade, it's a scandal that they are offering their staff peanuts in return," he said. ■

See page 8/9



WORKING AND SWINE FLU

RMT calls on employers to take measures to protect staff during the swine flu pandemic

As RMT News goes to press, the outbreak of a new strain of H1N1 influenza, commonly called swine flu, has intensified raising fears of a major global pandemic.

This outbreak will have a major effect in the workplace and large numbers of people are likely to be absent at any one time. It is also important to ensure that those workers who are ill as a result of infection stay at home and do not go into work.

The union's executive committee has discussed the

possible impact on RMT members and an Early Day Motion is being prepared by the union's parliamentary group.

The EDM will draw attention to the particular difficulties faced by public transport members and shippers demanding that employers suspend punitive attendance at work policies that could make the spread of flu pandemic worse.

The union is also insisting on the rights of the union to be fully involved in compiling government guidelines to

employers on dealing with the situation.

RMT has written to all employers to ensure that they have a policy agreed with the union for dealing with the pandemic or a general policy covering major health incidents with full involvement and agreement in line with TUC guidance for unions (June 2009).

The union believes that where employers have "sickness absence" monitoring, or irregular attendance, or Managing for Attendance policies in place that these policies are suspended in light of the current serious situation.

Employers should agree, in line with HSE and Government advice, to "advise staff to stay at home if they are sick with flu like symptoms and send home any employees who are

displaying flu like signs or symptoms".

Where appropriate, it is also important that staff are given the opportunity and resources to work from home.

Risk assessments need to be carried out with full trade union involvement where staff are likely to be exposed in their work to members of the public, what measures can be taken to minimise contact, duration and frequency.

Employers should notify all staff of any arrangements made to prepare for an outbreak of pandemic flu, including what role they expect individual staff to take.

** The TUC guidelines and Department of Health advice is available via the RMT website under health and safety. ■*

JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline

(Now with two operators and the facilities to translate into 170 languages)

Open six days a week - Mon to Fri - 8am until 6pm, Sat - 9.30am to 4pm

e-mail: info@rmt.org.uk
Legal helpline: 0800 587 7516 - Seven days a week

TUBE WORKERS PROTEST AT CITY HALL OVER BROKEN PROMISES TO CLEANERS

RMT tube workers took a protest to Mayor Boris Johnson over his broken promises on the London Living Wage for some tube cleaners and over the docking of pay for staff that could not get into work on the snow day in February.

Boris Johnson had given a pledge that all staff working on GLA and TFL contracts will receive the London Living Wage which was recently upgraded to £7.60 an hour.

However, staff working for ISS on Tube Lines are only getting £6.12 an hour as well as working in appalling conditions.

RMT has pointed out that Mayor Johnson himself is paid £78 an hour and that his Chief Executive has had an 11 per cent increase taking him to £205,000 a year.

Cleaners are expected to clean up syringes and other waste left behind by drug users, deal with the aftermath of suicides and run the constant risk of exposure to diseases carried by rats.

They work in filthy conditions down the tube tunnels. But despite that, they typically have no access to hot and cold running water to wash themselves and share primitive, cramped and mixed changing rooms.

Back in February, Johnson also said that he had "no intention of penalising anyone who failed to get to work because of the ...exceptional weather". Local managers have since reneged on that promise and staff



have had their pay docked or been forced to take annual leave.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said it was a scandal that some of our tube cleaners, who clean up infected syringes, the body parts from suicides and run the constant risk of exposure to infection, are paid just over six pounds an hour – nearly £1.50 an hour less than the London Living Wage.

"London Underground is conniving in this exploitation.

"They have washed their hands of the cleaners appalling levels of pay and the failure to supply safe and appropriate working conditions, by saying it's a matter for the private contractors.

"That's a disgraceful way to treat key underground staff and the Mayor should intervene to stop it now.

"Boris Johnson should keep his promises on the London Living Wage and snow day pay," Bob said. ■

Companywatch

STAGECOACH HANDS OUT DIVIDENDS WHILE 1,000 FACE THE SACK

The latest financial results of bus and rail company Stagecoach reveal that shareholders dividends are rocketing to nearly £13 million while up to a thousand jobs on their South West Trains and East Midlands Trains franchises face the axe.

The Stagecoach figures show that overall operating profits rose by 11 per cent to £227 million Interim dividends for shareholders have gone up from £9.5 million last year to £12.9 million this year with final

dividends going up from £28.9 million to £30 million.

Stagecoach tycoon Brian Souter has announced that he will be giving away his £1.6 million bonus to charity but, with his sister Ann Gloag, enjoys a combined fortune of £700 million to see him through the recession.

Yet, Stagecoach, with the connivance of the government, is jacking up their dividend payouts while up to a thousand of their rail staff are being threatened with being thrown

on the scrapheap.

Jobs are being axed, ticket office opening hours are being cut and all in the name of generating the maximum profit and dividends for the company's shareholders.

SWT has already been ripping seats and toilets out to squeeze more long-suffering passengers on, and those lucky enough to get a seat are likely to be jammed five abreast in suburban trains unsuitable for longer journeys.

At the same time, passengers

have suffered inflation-busting fare increases every year and SWT wants to remove the guard's responsibility for opening doors to pave the way for removing more staff.

As a result of the latest shareholder bonanza, RMT has repeated its call for a moratorium on dividend payments across the transport sector while the threat of redundancy hangs over the heads of thousands of hardworking staff. ■

BRING FAILED RAIL FRANCHISES BACK IN-HOUSE

RMT steps up pressure on government after National Express defaults on East Coast Main Line franchise but makes half a billion in profits

RMT has called on the government to remove National Express from their other rail franchises East Anglia and C2C after defaulting on East Coast Main Line.

The union welcomed the announcement by transport secretary Lord Adonis that he would be taking the failed National Express franchise back into public ownership, probably at the end of the year.

But junior transport minister Chris Mole later confused matters by claiming that it was “theoretically” possible the company could keep the London to Edinburgh service. National Express has also indicated that it will fight to retain the rights to run the service. The Group has also thrown down a gauntlet to the government over National Express East Anglia and c2c which they should be stripped of under the “cross-default” clause.

The Group claims that because it ran the East Coast franchise through a paper company NXEC Trains it is entitled to keep its other more profitable franchises.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that National Express had taken the whole country for a ride.

New RMT research has shown that the company has made nearly half a billion pounds in profits from their rail operations

in the past 10 years while sucking in nearly £2.5 billion in public subsidy over the same period.

“Now National Express are leaving a potential rail funding gap of £1 billion behind after their chaotic performance on the East Coast Mainline and once again it’s the travelling public and rail workers who are left to pick up the pieces,” he said.

Bob said that the union was stepping up the pressure for the company to be dumped as a matter of urgency and for their franchises to be nationalised on a permanent basis, not as a short term, crisis measure.

“National Express, along with the rest of the rail privateers, should be kicked off the tracks for good,” he said.

RMT Parliamentary Group Convenor John McDonnell MP backed the call and said that the public control of the East Coast franchise should be a stepping stone to full and permanent public ownership.

BOWKER DEBUNKS

The trigger of the takeover announcement of the East Coast franchise was the resignation of the chief executive of transport group National Express Richard Bowker.

He is now taking up a new role as head of Union Railway in the oil-rich United Arab

Emirates dictatorship.

Bowker, formerly head of the now-disbanded Strategic Rail Authority, was the architect of the complex frail franchising scheme which led to GNER defaulting on its £1.3 billion bid to run the East Coast line.

As National Express head, Bowker then put in a suicidal £1.4 billion bid to run the line until 2015 after losing the Group’s Midland Mainline and Central Trains franchises.

The bid was based on a 10 per cent increase in passenger growth which was wildly inaccurate and made worse by

the biggest capitalist crisis for a generation.

RMT ACTION

On the day of the announcement, RMT General Secretary Bob Crow personally told Secretary of State for Transport Paul Adonis that keeping the service in the public sector would be massively popular,

The union has submitted three detailed briefs to MPs in support of the campaign for public ownership.

RMT parliamentary group MPs have intervened in a

NATIONAL EXPRESS UK RAIL OPERATING PROFITS (SOURCE NATIONAL EXPRESS ANNUAL REPORTS)

Year	Operating Profit
1999	£28 million
2000	£34.1 million
2001	£40.6 million
2002	£33.9 million
2003	£33.2 million
2004	£61.3 million
2005	£64.2 million
2006	£49.1 million
2007	£63.3 million
2008	£81.3 million
Total	£491 million

PROFIT: Despite withdrawing from the East Coast mainline, National Express continues to profit from government support on its two remaining franchises, National Express East Anglia and C2C.

Parliamentary column

MPS BACK PUBLIC OWNERSHIP



number of parliamentary debates (see right) and a delegation from the RMT Parliamentary Group will shortly be meeting the Secretary of State for Transport.

The union is in discussion with a contact group of Labour MPs and other unions to build broad support for public ownership.

The RMT group will also holding a special seminar on the future of rail franchising in the Autumn, watch this space. ■



RESIGNED: Richard Bowker, the chief executive of transport group National Express, whose resignation sparked government moves to renationalise the East Coast Main Line. Bowker invented the dysfunctional rail franchise system when he was at the Strategic Rail Authority where he maintained a self-styled FIFO management line – Fall In Or F**k Off. This is similar to the approach of the unelected government of the United Arab Emirates, where he has debunked to run their railways, so he should feel at home.

Since the government's announcement that National Express would lose its East Coast franchise a growing number of Labour MPs have used parliamentary debates, motions and questions to call for the line to be kept in public ownership and for the company to be stripped of its other franchises.

In response to the ministerial statement Chair of the Transport Select Committee Louis Ellman said: "Can we have a public sector operator to act as a comparator with the private sector franchise operators?"

While Edinburgh North and Leith MP Mark Lazarowicz argued: "the decision to re-let the franchise will inevitably lead to a lot of uncertainty for the passengers and staff of National Express.

"Would it not be much better if we decided either to keep the franchise in public ownership or to have it operated by a not-for-profit mutual, so that the customers' interest came first, not the interest of shareholders?," he asked.

Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn agreed, saying, the whole episode proves "that only the public sector can be relied on to maintain and run the railway system".

"Can he therefore give us the good news that the line will not be handed back to the private sector but will remain a publicly owned, publicly run and publicly accountable railway, so that we will not have such debacles in future?," he asked.

Blaydon MP David Anderson praised the workforce.

"The only people to come out of this with any real respect are the staff, who have tried to hold the service together.

"Will he ensure that when he talks to people, he asks the staff and their unions what they want to see? They will

say that they want public railways in this country, and they will be right," he said.

In a subsequent special parliamentary debate York MP Hugh Bayley said: "This is the second time within three years that the franchise has gone belly up.

"It is not a quirk or a technical problem; I believe that it is a signal that the franchising model is not robust enough and not fit for purpose for a railway of such great strategic and economic importance," he said.

John Grogan the MP for Selby agreed.

"I would be absolutely confident, as a Labour MP in Yorkshire, that that would be a popular policy.

"We could go into the election saying that we would keep the line in public sector hands, and presumably the Conservatives would oppose that," he said.

RMT Parliamentary Group convenor John McDonnell MP said: "National Express has taken the Government for a ride.

"It has made £500 million profit out of a public subsidy of £2.5 billion. It has increased the fares this year as follows: regulated at 6 per cent. and unregulated at 7.4 per cent. On the east coast and the East Anglia lines, it has laid off 750 workers. Cannot we get the message that we are being ripped off?," he asked.

Labour Transport Select Committee members Graham Stringer and Angela Smith have tabled a parliamentary motion supporting public ownership while Labour MP for Morley and Rothwell Colin Challen said: "If it can be shown that public ownership, of one form or another could offer better value for money for passengers and taxpayers then there is no reason why this option need be excluded".



GET YOUR STORY COVERED

National secretary Steve Todd calls on shipping members to contribute to RMT News

The union met some criticism recently in relation to the amount of cover shippers get in the RMT news.

Sometimes criticism is not a bad thing, especially when it is constructive and I am mindful of the concerns raised by our members. I can assure you that we will make every effort to have issues and subject matters in the RMT news.

I am sure there are other grades who also wish they had more coverage in the magazine and what frustrates me most of all is the fact that some of us make comparisons with the Nautilus publication – in particular the job advertisements.

I would respectfully remind members that the Nautilus publication is covering one grade of worker, namely “the officer”.

Our publication covers not one industry but several, for example there are numerous grades in the rail industry and I am sure they would all like their issues covered.

As regards job adverts, the “bosses” do not want to pay RMT for advertising, as you know, many of them do not want to employ us at all. We do try and encourage them to advertise (those that employ ratings) and we have not charged where we have had limited success.

I would like to take this opportunity also to remind members that anytime you want issues covered in the magazine you can send them in and we will make every effort to cover them.

Branches also have the opportunity to publish their own newsletter covering local issues and we can assist with that if required.

Whatever happens, every effort will be maintained to keep your issues highlighted.

SHIPPING NEWS...

NEW RATINGS FOR DOVER

Recently Dover has seen the arrival of a new fast craft, reportedly the largest of its kind in passenger service.

The new vessel named ‘Norman Sword’ operated by LD Lines is sailing between Dover and Boulogne. It is managed by Clyde Marine who also manage another vessel called ‘Norman Spirit’ sailing between Portsmouth and Dieppe/Cherbourg.

Both vessels are UK-flagged and have a significant number of RMT ratings onboard. Numerous discussions between LD Lines, Clyde Marine and RMT resulted in agreement that the Norman Sword will be fully staffed by UK ratings and the Norman Spirit will have an additional four UK AB’s.

All vessels will also be covered by an RMT agreement and the Norman Sword agreement has concluded. There is still some work to be done finalising the Norman Spirit agreement in regard to the UK rates of pay being applied to non-domiciled seafarers.

STOPPING SOCIAL DUMPING AT NORTHLINK, ABERDEEN

Northlink has announced plans to replace one of its ships – the ‘Hascossay’ – with a replacement vessel on a Time Charter basis, which means the ship comes with the Polish crew which only received the UK minimum wage.

This caused RMT grave

concern in relation to the practice of social dumping as the agreement for Polish crews is by far inferior to the conditions enjoyed by UK Ratings on the Hascossay.

National secretary Steve Todd, Regional Organiser Ian MacIntyre and Executive Committee member Andy Gordon for the region met with the CEO of Northlink along with other Caledonian MacBrayne managers and told them in no uncertain terms that such practices totally undermine the terms and conditions of RMT members employed by Northlink.

The union has been assured that there are no job losses as a result of the replacement vessel and following further discussion it is agreed that the terms and conditions of the crew on the replacement vessel are the same as those enjoyed by members on Northlink.

European rules on ‘free movement’ encourages the potential for this kind of social dumping and the union cannot under EU law demand that the present crew of the ‘Saga Moon’ is replaced by RMT seafarers.

However, the union has insured no loss of members’ jobs, no social dumping by paying less than other shippers and no undermining of the Northlink agreement.

RMT SAFEGUARDS UK JOBS AT JAMES FISHERS

RMT has won a new jobs and training agreement with James

Fishers at Barrow after the company threatened to seek to employ ratings from overseas under the guise of the Race Relations Act and EU legislation.

The company proposed that they may recruit more widely for seafarers to work on PNTL vessels.

However National secretary Steve Todd, regional organiser John Tilley and members of the reps committee met with senior management and the owners/operators INS to discuss the matter.

RMT rejected the Race Relations Act argument as totally false and merely an attempt by the employer to engage in the social dumping of crews.

Following the meeting an apology was issued for any “disquiet/anxiety that the original statement/letter had caused” and joint statement was issued confirming “it was not the policy of INS or JFSS to replace British seafarers with non-UK nationals and the focus for advertising these positions will remain in the UK”.

The apology and the statement is welcomed by the union as are the pending recruitment plans and the Trainee Ratings positions.

It was further agreed that we will look jointly at ways in which future business decisions, policy and procedures affecting the operation of vessels safety and any impact on employment could be more effectively shared before any implementation.

END POVERTY PAY ON SHIPS OF SHAME

RMT Presses for changes to Single Equality Bill to end ships paying seafarers as little as £1.50 an hour

The union's group of MPs has brought to Parliament's attention the scandal of seafarers working in UK waters still being paid substantially less than the national minimum wage.

The exploitation is perfectly legal under a loophole in the Race Relations Act which allows non-UK seafarers to be paid lower rates. An anomaly in the National Minimum Wage legislation also excludes non-UK seafarers.

The group met with the new Shipping Minister, Paul Clark, for an update on these loopholes and the need to close them.

National Secretary Steve Todd and the MPs told Paul Clark that the delay in bringing forward changes to the discrimination against legislation, as originally promised, was unacceptable.

"I have now met my fourth Minister with responsibility for Shipping since I took office six years ago and we have voiced our complete dissatisfaction at the lack of progress on a number of issues, most importantly in tackling exploitation of seafarers on ships in UK territorial waters, and at the lack of training and recruitment of UK ratings," Steve said.

The Minister was advised that in the absence of an early commitment from the Minister the MPs would be tabling amendments on both the Race Relations Act and the National Minimum Wage.

The union has taken legal advice and found that we are in a position to amend the Equality Bill, both in respect of National Minimum Wage enforcement and the exemption from the Race Relations Act.

The Department for Transport has now been considering what measures they might take on the enforcement of the National Minimum Wage for over a year but no action has been

forthcoming.

The Department for Transport are also promising changes to the seafarers exemption from the 1976 Race Relations Act in the next few months. However, the Equality Bill was published several months ago, and this Bill is the vehicle by which the DfT is to take action on the Race Relations Act, therefore the lack of any proposals on seafarers discrimination is, after all this time, unacceptable.

The DfT promised reform in 2005, and a consultation setting out proposals to end discrimination against other EU nationals ended in 2007.

RMT will be supporting amendments on both these issues and will campaign alongside MP for action. The six MPs sponsoring the campaign at this stage are Gwyn Prosser, John McDonnell, Geraldine Smith, Albert Owen, Katy Clark, Andrew Dismore.

RMT WELCOMES OFFSHORE SAFETY REVIEW

RMT has welcomed a new safety inspection report into offshore installations but emphasised that it is only a 'snap shot' of the industry and a lot more needed to be done.

RMT will continue to contribute through the various workgroups to bring about real improvements in health and safety performance.

RMT offshore regional organiser Jake Molloy said that the HSE report states it is: "essential that fluctuating economic environments should not slow progress on management approaches to achieve and sustain

improvements".

"It is difficult to see how these improvements can be sustained in cases such as BP announcing significant cuts to workers terms and conditions coupled with proposed changes to maintenance strategies.

"Shell announcing around a 20 per cent cut to engineering and maintenance support staff onshore; and many more companies shelving all planned engineering projects while cutting staffing levels and staff packages," Jake said.

Jake said that there was a significant change in the language of Oil & Gas UK and

their wholly owned safety team Step Change, where the 'target date' had been dropped from their mission statement.

Until only recently Step Change/OGUK had the 'goal' of making the UK sector - "the safest place to work in the worldwide oil and gas industry by 2010".

"The target date of 2010 has gone, which must be seen as an acknowledgement by the industry that they have some considerable way to go."

"We feel the most important area to bring about the desired improvements lies in greater workforce involvement", Jake

said.

The report revealed that only around 15 per cent of the 3,600 plus workers interviewed as part of the workforce survey had any input to their respective 'Safety Case'.

"The Safety Case is supposed to be a 'living document' from which the management of health and safety on an offshore installation is controlled. On the basis of these two points alone it can readily be seen there is a significant job of work to be done if we are to 'continuously monitor safety systems'," he said.



TAKING ACTION: TfL staff have taken strike action in defence of jobs and working conditions in recent years

RMT CALLS FOR TRANSPORT FOR LONDON CASH INVESTIGATION

Union calls for investigation into use of consultants at Transport for London while thousands face job cuts

RMT has called for a full National Audit Office investigation into the use of management consultants by Transport for London after new figures showed that over £15 million has been spent in one section alone in the past two years.

The union also referred the matter to the Transport Committee of the GLA and submitted Freedom of Information requests demanding details of the consultancy spend in another nine sections of TfL operations.

The bulk of the cash has been spent on a consultancy

contract with Deloitte, whose partners charge TfL an incredible £2,761 a day on the congestion charging and traffic enforcement section alone.

Transport for London is currently looking at a multi-billion pound cuts programme and thousands of jobs are known to be at risk across TfL and the Tube.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that while TfL staff face the prospect of being thrown on the dole in a jobs massacre, the sky's the limit for the management consultants who appear to be able to charge what they like when they like

with no serious accountability to Londoners.

"Some of these management consultants earn in a week what some TfL staff would struggle to earn in a year, yet we get lectures from the same managers who are signing off these grotesque fees about how RMT members should take a hit on pay and job security to help them balance the books.

"We are going to fight for a forensic examination of the use of management consultants at TfL.

"We want to know just who is signing off these millions of pounds of taxpayers' money and why they are doing it while thousands of TfL staff face the threat of the sack," he said.

PAY HYPOCRISY

RMT also accused senior Tube bosses of "rank hypocrisy" on pay as figures from Transport For London's annual report

showed that 123 managers are now earning more than £100,000 a year.

The same managers have been leading the assault on RMT members who have voted to strike a multi-year pay deal which would almost certainly amount to a pay cut well into the next decade and over plans to impose compulsory redundancies.

The pay figures show that five TfL/LUL chiefs earn more than a quarter of a million pounds a year plus bonuses. Fifteen TfL bosses, including the director of marketing, earn more than the Prime Minister.

These figures have only heightened the anger amongst RMT members who have voted overwhelmingly to strike over attempts to impose pay cuts and compulsory redundancies and over the bullying and harassment of staff. ■

MIND THE FUNDING GAP

RMT warns that the estimated £6 billion funding gap for transport in London stems from the privatisation of Tube infrastructure which should be reversed once and for all

RMT has warned that services in London are facing a £6 billion funding gap which threatens to wreck modernisation schedules and plans for the 2012 Olympics while leaving thousands of jobs under threat.

A new London Assembly report points to a £1.7 billion transport income gap as a result of the recession which it predicts will open up between now and 2018.

This latest funding bombshell comes on top of TfL's existing £2.5 billion savings programme and a £2 billion finance row between TfL and the Tube Lines consortium. With the costs to the taxpayer from the failure of the Metronet privatisation thrown in, the total cash gap racks up to over £6 billion.

METRONET CUTS

The cuts being proposed to save money on former Metronet lines includes a new £60 million cut in maintenance.

The latest package of cuts will slash £26.1 million from track and signals, £18.9 million from fleet and trains and £18.5 million from stations on the former Metronet lines.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that tube bosses had claimed during the recent strike that they could slash budgets and axe jobs without hitting services.

"But these are real cuts that will hit track, signals, trains and stations maintenance as well as putting yet more tube staff jobs on the line.

"The consequences of these kinds of cuts on the Tube could be potentially disastrous.

"These cuts are just the start and if we don't stand up and fight together there will be much more to come as the scale of the funding gap from the collapse of Metronet blows a massive hole in budgets across the tube network," he said.

OLYMPIC THREAT

In the run up to the Olympics, the funding crisis puts the entire future of services across the capital on the line.

RMT has repeatedly warned that the threat to jobs is part of a wider package of savage cuts to the transport budget in London which can all be traced back to the failure of privatisation.

As a result the modernisation of the Tube is under serious threat and the ability to deliver in time for 2012 is left in serious doubt.

Bob Crow said that the solution was simple, reverse the privatisation experiment.

"Bring Tube Lines back under public control and draw a line under the privatisation disaster and then demand government investment to protect London's transport services. "If the government can find billions to bail out the banks then they can find the cash needed for world-class transport services. The alternative is real cuts in jobs and services and transport chaos," he said.

TUBE LINES FUNDING ROW

The latest example of why privatisation does not work is the funding row that has broken out between Tube Lines and TfL which could put essential works and thousands of jobs at risk in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

Tube Lines, which holds the contract for the repairs and refurbishment of the Piccadilly, Northern and Jubilee Lines, has attempted to hack £2 billion from its estimated costs of £7.2 billion on the work programme for the next seven and half years with a significant scaling back of the scope of the planned works.

TfL has estimated that the full scope of the essential upgrading and modernisation programme could be delivered for £4.1 billion and the government arbiter concluded it should cost no more than between £5.1 billion and £5.5 billion - leaving a £2 billion black hole on the Tube Lines budget.

Bob Crow said that it was clear that there was a £2 billion stand off between Tube Lines and TfL on the works programme on the Piccadilly, Northern and Jubilee Lines with tube users and tube workers caught in the middle.

"This row all stems from the botched PPP privatisation of the Tube and it is not out of the question that we could see another failure similar to Metronet or National Express on the East Coast with Londoners left to pick up the pieces.

"Meanwhile, jobs and essential works on these lines are left at risk in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

"Our advice to Boris Johnson and TfL is to seize this opportunity to get rid of Tube Lines, take these works back into direct public control and work out a funding programme which protects jobs and the upgrade programme in the run up to 2012 and beyond," he said.



Train Crew Charter Launched

Traincrew and Shunting grades meeting in Hull launch charter

RMT general secretary Bob Crow launched the union's Train Crew Charter describing it as a document that came about from a whole range of meetings and is ultimately written for train crew by train crew.

"What it boils down to is a steadying up of what has taken place since privatisation.

"Why is it that we had 26 TOC's at the start of privatisation down to 21, 18, 17 and beyond that?

"People are still working alongside each other with different rates of pay, different rostering parameters, different travel passes and different pension schemes.

"It's a whole maze out there of people doing the same job and at the end of the day all those train operating companies are running contracts for the government.

"The government own all the contracts out there and there is no reason why, when they put these contracts out, that they can't put down clear markers that if you win a contract you

will be expected to do: A for the workers; B for the workers and C, D, E, F, and G.

"Of course they are only worried about P-R, O, F, I, T, and S - profits," Bob said.

DEFENDING THE ROLE OF THE GUARD

Attempts to undermine the role of guards by inadequately "training" managers and other staff for the role received the scorn of delegates.

Steve O'Connor, Bletchley and Northampton, spoke in support of a motion opposing the use of managers carrying out guards' duties.

The resolution decried the fact that not only have some managers and other staff been supposedly trained to carry out guards' duties but also noted that a number of these people are members of other trades unions. In disputes they are used to work the trains.

It also argued that this was a deliberate attempt to undermine the democratic right of RMT to take action in the case of a

legitimate dispute.

"They are deskilling our grade, they are undermining us at every opportunity and it's not managers working trains anymore, it's any Tom, Dick and Harry they can find from the booking office, from the station grades, retail staff, anyone from all over the place," Steve said.

GUARDS ON HITACHI TRAINS

Tom Strong, East Midlands Central called for the union to be involved in the configuration and running of the new Hitachi high speed trains that are due to be introduced into service in 2012, with emphasis on maintaining and increasing the role and responsibility of the guard.

Talking about the general downplaying of the role of guards, Tom said: "make no bones about it, it will filter down to every other company.

"They will deskill our role as a guard as far as they possibly can until they can take somebody in off the dole, give them two days training and send them out on a train.

"We are not just fighting for what we want we are fighting for what the public want. Instead of making this an internal fight, let's take this to the wider public".

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Tony Gulley, Bristol Rail called for the union to campaign to change health and safety law that allows train and freight operating companies to mitigate

their duty of care to traincrew members who are injured due to "the motion of the train".

He said that members had the right to be protected in their workplace.

"TOCs and FOCs must take responsibility for staff, whatever their workplace. "They ask staff to work there therefore they must compensate and support staff when they are injured in their place of work, when carrying out their duties," Tony said, winning unanimous support from the conference.

PEOPLE'S CHARTER

Assistant General Secretary Pat Sikorski promoted the People's Charter and told conference that rail is the most green form of transport there is.

"If you look at the charter you can see what's laid out as a programme for the improvement of public services.

"Energy, transport, water, telecommunications, keeping the post office in public ownership and an end to corporate profiteering in health and education, social and other public services.

"We must stop the EU privatisation directives which are at the heart of the privatisation of every single one of those services. Read the rest of it, what could any socialist or trade unionist disagree with?" Pat said.

Next year's conference will be held from April 1-3 at the Royal Station Hotel in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.



SOLIDARITY WITH LINDSEY OIL REFINERY WORKERS

Conference heard Keith Gibson from the Lindsey Oil Refinery joint strike committee describe the background to the national dispute which led to a stunning victory for the workforce.

"This dispute was not about racism it was about defending pay, working conditions and a national agreement for the engineering and construction industry.

"Companies were bringing Polish, Italian, Spanish and Portugese workers on less money to break the agreement," he said.

He said that shop stewards had demanded that these workers should be on agreed pay rates and local unemployed should be hired.

"They responded that they were not going to abide by the agreement or employ local labour," he said.

Within hours a call for unofficial action led to a thousand workers on the picket line and thousands of others walked out across the country.

"Within days the BNP turned up and the lads on the picket lines told them in no uncertain terms that they were not welcome.

"They were told they have nothing to do with the struggles of working people," said Keith who as the lead candidate for No2EU:Yes to Democracy in the euro elections.

He said that the background of the dispute was the banking crisis where there are billions of pounds being poured away to bail out a banking system in crisis.

"We can also see that there are going to be three million working class people unemployed by the end of the

year.

"Workers are looking at those particular issues and how the bosses react in terms of crisis.

"The chief executive of Network Rail Ian Croucher is defending his salary of £539,000 and that's boosted up to £1.24 million pounds.

"Compare this to workers in all the industries that are facing attacks on pay and conditions," Keith said.

He said that the anti-trade union laws were still restricting the right of union to defend their members.

"We are in an historic period and we have got to rebuild our trade unions.

"The bosses want to make workers pay and we need to defend the right to work and a decent standard of living," he said to a standing ovation. ■

SOLIDARITY: Lindsey oil refinery worker Keith Gibson addresses Olympic site workers picket in East London demanding 'Fair Employment Rights for All' with Bob Crow



KEY BIDDER PULLS OUT OF TYNE AND WEAR METRO SALE

RMT reveals that £1 million of tax payers' money has been wasted in tender process

One of the four approved bidders for the privatisation of Tyne and Wear Metro – MTR Rail from Hong Kong – has pulled out of the process leaving just the in-house operation and two private companies still in the frame.

RMT has also calculated that around £1 million of tax payers' money has been spent on an in-house tender for a privatisation that the overwhelming majority of people are opposed to, money that could have been invested in improvements to Tyne and Wear Metro.

Newcastle MP Jim Cousins tabled a motion in the House of Commons saying that the tendering process can play no useful purpose.

"The best interests of passengers will be served by the Metro remaining as a unified railway in the public sector, where every penny of funds invested is spent on improving passenger services," the EDM said.

RMT, working with MP's and

the high profile campaign to Keep Metro Public, has warned that privatisation would mean job cuts and the milking of the contract by a private company to pump up returns for their shareholders. The contract is due to be awarded in November.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the withdrawal of MTR Rail shows just how shaky this whole privatisation plan really was.

"It's pressure from the campaign which has sent out a signal to the private sector that Tyne and Wear Metro is not going to be sold off for a fast buck and that they will have a fight on their hands every step of the way.

"The Nexus passenger transport executive and the government should pull this privatisation plan before more money is wasted and before irreparable damage is done to Britain's most successful railway in the name of greed and profit," he said. ■



METRO CAMPAIGNERS LOBBY RAIL BUSINESS AWARDS

LOBBY: Campaigners to keep Tyne and Wear Metro, Britain's best-performing railway, in the public sector, lobbied the HSBC rail business awards in London recently.

The Metro was nominated for three awards – yet the Tyne and Wear passenger transport executive, Nexus, lined up three private-sector bidders to compete for the right to exploit its operations and some infrastructure.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that Tyne and Wear Metro remained a first-class public service, owned and operated by the public sector for the benefit of the public, and that is how it should stay.

"Nexus should be really proud that Britain's last wholly public-sector railway remains the country's best performing one," he said. RMT regional organiser Stan Herschel said that Nexus and the government was playing Russian roulette with the future of the Metro.

"Metro has proved time and again that it is run properly and efficiently in the public sector, and it beggars belief that anyone could even think of putting its operations into private hands," Stan said.



AGM 2009

Isle of Man



AGM 2009

UNION VOWS TO FIGHT CUTS

AGM unanimously approved a national campaign to resist plans for even more ticket office cuts and closures, and pledged to fightback against what Assistant General Secretary Pat Sikorski described as a “wave of redundancies”.

“Southwest Trains have forced 670 workers out, NorthEast have made 300 redundancies, Transport for London want 3,000 - and it may be as much as 5,000, and East Midland have sacked 200,” he detailed.

“The bosses are coming at us, but there’s no way that the RMT can do nothing about this,” Pat declared.

Alex Holden, Manchester

Victoria pointed out that less able passengers were being excluded from the railways because stations are being left without staff, “becoming intimidating no-go zones, dirty and dark with smashed lights and broken windows.”

Janet Cassidy, North Clyde emphasised that “it is imperative for women travelling alone that stations are staffed”.

Glen Burrows, Bristol Rail added that “the problems are mounting because the bosses want to get rid of us.”

“Queue busting for them means putting in a ticket machine rather than taking on extra staff,” he said.

Mike Sargent, Cinque Ports

pointed out that “every job and every grade are under attack from companies that want to protect shareholders’ dividends at the expense of our jobs”.

Janine Booth, Stratford insisted that the cuts can be defeated.

“When our bosses wanted to close 40 ticket offices and sack

270 workers, we leafleted the public, made stopping the cuts one of our demands in a strike ballot, and made it an issue in the London elections,” she explained.

“We won 100 per cent - with no job and not a single working hour lost,” she added.

THE ‘SOCIALIST REPUBLIC’ OF THE ISLE OF MAN

Delegates were welcomed to the Isle of Man by RMT Douglas Shipping branch secretary Alan Charmer, who pointed out that most of the island’s transport remained nationalised.

“All the rail and trams, buses, port and airport are publicly owned and publicly funded,” he explained.

“In fact, we are probably the country that is the closest to a socialist system in the whole of Europe,” he added.

The Isle of Man has all the trappings of independence - it has its own flag, parliament, banknotes, stamps and legal system, and even a £6.00 an hour minimum wage - higher than the UK - but the island is not quite a separate country.

Isle of Man Trade and Industry Minister David Cretney, who also welcomed delegates to the Royal Hall in the capital, Douglas, explained that the UK still

has responsibility for defence and foreign affairs, a detail which makes the island a crown dependency.

Mr Cretney, one of just two Manx Labour Party members of the island’s parliament, the House of Keys, also emphasised that, although the Isle of Man’s government is dominated by independent politicians, it still strongly backs workers’ rights.

“The Isle of Man supports the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention which ensures fair treatment of shipping crews, regardless of nationality, domicile or the registration of their ship,” he stressed.

General Secretary Bob Crow responded to the official welcome, commenting that he “appreciated a Labour minister coming to talk to RMT, as those on the mainland don’t seem to want to”.



Glen Burrows



Bob Law

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**DEFENDING PENSIONS**

Conference agreed to support the immediate restoration of the link between the state pension and earnings, with compulsory contributions from employers, employees and government to a second state pension.

Delegates called for the cost of higher pensions to be met by tax on excess company profits and condemned the pension holidays taken by employers as contrary to the interests of employees and the future viability of the fund.

Conference also opposed EU policies demanding the raising of the state pension retirement age, a cut the value of pensions and the 'liberalisation' of the pension fund market.

An unprecedented motion from the RMT young members' conference in defence of occupational pensions was also carried.

Gwyn Williams, Holyhead Shipping said that young workers under 18 years of age were angry that they were being denied the right to join occupational schemes.

"Contributing to an occupational pension as soon as they start work can make a significant difference to pensions," he said.

Bob Crow stressed that "workers' industrial strength is the key to improving wages, which will then have a knock-on effect, forcing rises in pensions and the minimum wage for the good of all society".

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Speakers from several countries, including Australia, Palestine, Japan, Israel and the United States addressed AGM

**AUSTRALIA'S FIGHTING MESSAGE**

Maritime Union of Australia general secretary Paddy Crumlin said it was a great honour to address RMT delegates.

He said that the world was on a precipice as a result of a global economic crisis not created by workers but by bosses and elites that do not seem to share decent human values of co-operation, peace and fairness.

"We have seen the largest loss of money in history yet it is the 95 per cent of humanity, working men and women, that have paid for it not the elites that caused it.

"This is not like any other economic depression, there is plenty of wealth just a complete lack of distribution and regulation.

"This was helped along by all shades of government not just neo-conservative ones but so-called social democratic ones as well," he said.

He said that transport workers had contributed to the profits created by the boom in freight movements from developing markets and through urban transport modes but had lost out.

"The extraordinary explosion of wealth for the few also led to the greatest attack on workers' rights that we have ever seen.

"This New World Order has

always sought to take away our power because the opposition only sits with the trade union movement.

"No-one is going to save us, except us," he said.

US SOLIDARITY

US Teamsters rep Dan Kane brought greetings from his union's President, James Hoffa, and praised RMT for being a "pioneering, militant union that makes headlines around the world".

Dan recounted how US workers had been faced with a "viciously anti-union government for the last eight years, but now with President Obama, we have an opportunity to make a difference."

"The current economic crisis means that we are in the battle of our lives, but we have the confidence to fight," he insisted.

"And Teamsters, like RMT, already use the strike weapon more than any other union because we know that when we stand up for workers' rights, our struggles, like yours, have an effect all across the world," he said

JAPANESE FIGHTBACK

Japanese Railworkers Union (JRU) President Masaharu Takei addressed delegates, agreeing that RMT had become renowned worldwide for fighting back

against privatisation.

Mr Takei emphasised that bosses' attacks on collective bargaining and the right to strike that RMT members were resisting in Britain echoed the experiences of rail workers in Japan.

"Such rights are indivisible for all workers," he stressed.

Mr Takei explained that in Japan, "many workers have been sacked - like so many spare parts - as employers ignore workers' rights to increase profits for capitalists," and he revealed that the state had resorted to imprisoning union activists.

"Seven railworkers were imprisoned for 344 days, and security police have raided union offices in attempts to crush us, but we are determined to continue because workers everywhere are facing the same problems," he declared.

General Secretary Bob Crow said that the JRU was an example to the labour movement and its history of resistance.

"The attacks that railworkers in Japan have experienced - not just threats of sequestration from the state, but also because other unions collaborated with the state to try to undermine the JRU - reminds us of the challenges we face in Britain," he said.

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Alex Holden



Chris Fuller

SAFETY FIRST

Delegates held important debates on runaways, injuries on moving trains and the use of managers doing member's jobs.

Gregg Hewitt, Brighton and Hove related how five years after the Tebay disaster, when four RMT members were killed by a "calculated act of greed by a private contractor cutting safety to make a profit, the potential is still there for more deaths".

Greg outlined the contractor disconnected the brakes on two trailers because the hydraulic brakes were not working.

"Rather than spend money fixing it he inserted ball bearings in the pipes so it looked like the brakes were working.

"And the operator simply put wood in front of the trailers and with all that weight, including 16 tonnes of steel the wood broke and we had a runaway and our members had no chance," he said.

Michelle Rogers, Manchester South said that there had been a minimum of 16 more runaways that had been reported in the last five years.

"The time has come to say to Network Rail that enough is enough and demand protection

for our members and say we are not interested in your profits," she said.

Delegates agreed that the union should demand secondary protection for track workers against this kind of tragic event.

Senior Assistant General Secretary Mick Cash pledged that the union would step up its attempts to force Network Rail to "meet their responsibilities and put the money in to prevent such a disaster ever happening again".

Alex Holden highlighted how TOCs were training managers to do RMT members' jobs "so as to make our industrial action less effective when we take it".

"This needs to be opposed by all means necessary," Alex insisted, and was joined by Steve Skelly, Bridgend emphasised how "poorly trained managers brought in from other companies to scab" would pose huge threats to the safety of workers and the public.

Pat Sikorski confirmed that many disputes "were already kicking off over this issue".

He insisted that "reps must be firm in resisting this, and if it is not possible to get agreements stopping management chipping away at our members' jobs, then we must defend them industrially."

no²eu

yes to democracy

DELEGATES BACK NO2EU: YES TO DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

Conference overwhelmingly backed the union's decision to take part in the No2EU: Yes to Democracy electoral coalition and agreed to continue campaigning against the Lisbon Treaty.

No2EU stood in the euro elections on a platform of opposition to the neo-liberal treaty, the rise of the far right and for workers' rights and public services.

"All the main parties support privatisation, all of them support EU directives attacking public services and they all support the anti-trade union rulings coming from the European Court of Justice.

"As a result they have created a Frankenstein called the British National Party," Bob Crow told delegates.

"No2EU offered voters an opportunity to protest against the EU's privatisation agenda and the threat to workers' rights from the EU," he said.

He said that in the face of a concerted media boycott, No2EU still won 153,236 votes nationally representing over one per cent of the total vote.

Peter March, Hull Rail said that he was proud to stand as a No2EU candidate which led to his expulsion from the "new" Labour Party.

"My expulsion didn't bother me as I didn't join new Labour I joined the Labour Party.

"While it is disappointing that the BNP won two seats, they won on less votes than they got five years ago as many people just didn't turn out to vote," he said.

Bob Law, Jubilee thanked the union for launching such an pro-working class coalition.

"This is the first time that a

trade union has stood against a Labour Party that we helped to create but turned its back on the working class years ago.

"If I and others didn't vote I would, in effect, be voting BNP and I'm proud my union gave me something to vote for," he said.

Mike Sargent, Cinque Ports said that events dictated that the No2EU platform had to be put together very quickly in time for the elections.

"I have been active in Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution which set up this platform and this union has been at the forefront of fighting directives like 91/440 that privatised our railways," he said.

Brian Munro, Bakerloo said there was a lack of consultation on standing in the election.

"The consultation process was flawed, however, working people do need political representation," he said.

Bob Crow said that time was short because the Lindsey oil refinery dispute lit the flame of protest against social dumping and No2EU had been unanimously endorsed by the executive.

Delegates agreed that the campaign must continue to alert working people to the threat posed by anti-democratic EU institutions, directives and treaties.

A recorded vote was taken and 63 delegates backed the campaign, three abstained with none against.

A full list of the 66 candidates including trade unionists, community, political and anti-racist campaigners is available on the campaign website www.no2eu.com

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OFFSHORE OIL WORKERS ATTEND FIRST RMT AGM

RMT offshore delegate Neil Rothnie pointed out that he was “unique” because he had also been a member of the RMT’s predecessor unions.

“I was a shunter in the NUR, and I was an NUS member while on the ships out of Aberdeen, and now I’m in the RMT as an oil rig worker,” he recounted.

Successfully urging delegates to back a campaign against “sweetheart” union deals in the offshore industry, Neil explained that “there are 20,000 workers who are denied representation because the employers have so-

called agreements – no strike deals – with unions that have hardly any members,” he said.

General Secretary Bob Crow welcomed offshore workers to AGM, and went on to strongly criticise single union sweetheart deals as “disgraceful class collaboration”.

“A piece of paper signed by a Human Resources officer and a union official will not get workers anything – only strong union organisation will,” he stressed.

Delegates pledged to support in the campaign to organise as many offshore workers as possible, despite the difficulties posed by other unions supposedly ‘negotiating’ terms

and conditions through the sweetheart deals.

“The only route to union recognition for us, once such a deal has been signed with another union, is industrial action,” explained Bob.

“But we will draw up a strategy to organise workers on the oil and gas rigs in the North Sea and the Irish Sea, on supply vessels, and amongst catering and construction workers,” he pledged.

BOYCOTT ISRAEL

AGM delegates had a thorough and detailed discussion before agreeing on a card vote to mount a campaign to boycott Israeli goods in an effort to help

end the occupation of Palestine.

Gregg Hewitt, added that the “Israeli government is an apartheid government that commits war crimes and defies international law. We can’t sit on the sidelines and must use everything within our power to help the Palestinians,” he insisted.

Opposing the motion, Darryl Emberson, Poole insisted that a boycott would “jeopardise workers in Israel,” while Janine Booth argued that it would help Israeli workers “side with their government”.

But Glenroy Watson, Finsbury Park countered that Israeli workers had already elected the far right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, “so it is necessary to up the ante”.

“Israel doesn’t want peaceful cooperation with Palestinians – it is killing them as we talk. We need to send a clear message that the Israeli occupation is unacceptable,” he stressed.

Bob praised delegates for the quality of the debate, and went on to argue that a boycott was “similar to when RMT members go on strike – our industrial action might hurt other workers trying to get to work, but what we are actually doing is applying economic sanctions against the bosses.

“And this is exactly what we should do because it is effective,” he said.

Bob pointed out that “there is no military option to end the occupation, there is no legal option, and Israel ignores political pressure, so all that’s left is economic action, and we need to do our part”.



Vaughan Thomas



AGM 2009

SEND IN THE NEWS

Delegates called for more support for local branches, more involvement of retired members, and a greater effort to encourage members to participate in reporting on what's happening in their workplace.

Mike Sargent, said that if members wanted to read about their dispute or their workplace in RMT News or on the union's website, then "write about it and send it in".

Bob Crow pointed out that the union was now communicating with members using the latest technology – SMS Texts, internet video, and would even look at using Twitter to keep members informed, but that RMT News "was still one of the most effective weapons we have in the workplace, so use it," he urged.

A PRIVATE TRANSPORT MONOPOLY IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

John McDonnell MP was given a warm reception as he gave his Parliamentary report to delegates.

Speaking just the day after Transport Minister Lord Adonis announced the effective renationalisation of the East Coast mainline, John declared that the government was now "in a panic" over the failure of Labour's privatisation plans.

John revealed that he had consistently warned Lord Adonis that National Express's franchise was in danger of collapsing, but that the government had ignored the "blindingly obvious and is now panicking".

"National Express made fools of the government.

"Its executives set up separate companies to milk the profits of privatisation, but now that it has failed, the public is left with the losses," he said.

John demanded that ministers, instead of taking over franchises until another privateer can be found to bail out a failed line, instead keep a rail line publicly owned so that it can be used to "demonstrate how it can be run more efficiently - without threats to cuts jobs and services."



Dennis James



Young Members

"But the government continues to enthuse about the 'contribution' that private business makes, even while employers throw union members to the wolves," he said.

"What we need is a rail service managed by, and accountable to, those who work

in the industry," John insisted.

As First Group – which runs a large number of bus and rail franchises – was attempting to takeover National Express, which also holds several bus and rail franchises across the UK, John warned that a private



AGM 2009

sector bus and rail monopoly must be prevented.

"We will be asking questions of Ministers to ensure that the interests of the travelling public are at the centre of all considerations."

"Railworkers, busworkers and passengers alike are sick and tired of this constant speculation about the future of key franchises like the East Coast.

"These on-going rumours, fuelled by vultures like First Group, are designed to detabilise services and just show us yet again what a disaster the privatisation and fragmentation of our railways and buses has been.

"The National Express meltdown on the East Coast, and the picking over of the bones by First Group, presents a massive challenge to the Government and the Office of Fair Trading who must not be allowed to sit back while this

kind of aggressive takeover is fought out on the tracks and on the streets," he said.

END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Speaking on a successful RMT women's committee motion to step up the campaign for the dignity and human rights of victims of trafficking, Linda Wiles, Transport for London emphasised that "all humans have the right to decide their own destiny".

She was joined by Bob Crow in denouncing the practice as "the worst form of exploitation".

"Sometimes we can spend too long talking about overalls, boots and how much extra we get for working on Sundays, but we need to understand that issues like this are also workers' problems and this can be stopped," he insisted.

Glenroy Watson, insisted that the union should not shy away from taking a strong position on the issue.

"This requires a political



Sean Hoyle

solution," he stressed.

"Essentially, the government is living off immoral earnings because it is failing to stop this immoral trade in people who are trafficked and their labour exploited.

"The campaign should not just be about stopping trafficking, but about improving conditions for all workers so that the demand is undermined," he added.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

Brian Munro, moved a motion to press the government for a greater commitment to family friendly working, pointing out that bosses "continually refuse to concede flexible working to single parents".

Glen Burrows said that "devious managers try to use the issue to divide workers," while Tracey Darker, Bassetlaw insisted that "children are our future – that's why we need to push this in the workplace".

A webcast of this conference is available to view on-line at www.rmt.org.uk/members



AGM 2009



Conference welcomed the TUC rule change of 2008 that permits Trade Councils to send motions and delegates to congress and called on the TUC youth conference to enjoy the same status.

Currently, only statements are agreed and then ratified by the TUC general council.

"If the TUC wishes to encourage youth participation it must give youth a voice," said youth delegate Gwyn Williams.

Conference agreed to send, as one of its motions to the TUC Congress, a call to allow the TUC youth council to send motions directly to Congress that can be fully debated.

RMT YOUNG MEMBERS' COURSE

The annual young members' course returned this year with a flourish. Sixteen branches sent delegates to the largest-ever event which is held alongside the AGM. Nearly all grades were represented, from shipping workers to bus drivers, road freight to railways.

The aim of the course is to educate some of the 11,000 under-30s in RMT in how the union works, how it is structured and how members can affect the way policy is made.

Both the president and general secretary were keen to point out how young members are the future of the union and by holding the course alongside the AGM the young members were able to engage directly with the union at its highest level.

They were able to watch the policy-making process as the AGM delegates from across the country debated resolutions from Palestine to pay conditions, setting RMT's agenda for the year ahead.

The young members were then encouraged to write resolutions of their own on matters which affected them with a view to them perhaps becoming policy in the next year. The members then looked at ways to increase active

young member participation and to get more young workers to join the union.

MOJO

Young members were also proud to host a breakout session during a lunchtime featuring the Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO).

The organisation aims to support people who have faced miscarriages of justice, from wrongful imprisonment to wrongful dismissal in the workplace.

MOJO are presently raising funds for a trauma centre for people severely affected by a miscarriage of justice, whatever that may be. Invited to speak at the event were Gerry Conlon and Paddy Hill, who both spent 15 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted of IRA pub bombings in Guildford and Birmingham in the 1970s. The powerful session highlighted the importance of giving support to RMT members who are wrongfully dismissed from work

and need support from both the union and organisations like MOJO.

By the end of the course young members took several ideas away with them and forged many friendships. Adrian Rowe, Chair of the National Young Members Advisory Committee, attended the course and said that it was great to see so many positive faces attending the AGM course.

"The delegates on the young members' course were enthusiastic and professional and it made me proud to be part of this group," he said.

Many of the delegates are already looking forward to the Young Members' conference next February. The weekend event in Liverpool is open to any member under 30 years of age. People who are interested in attending, or who wish to be more active in the union should attend branch, speak to their branch secretary or email Adrian at

rmtyoungcomrade@googlemail.com



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STOP SOCIAL DUMPING IN THE ROAD FREIGHT INDUSTRY

RMT road freight conference calls for campaign against social dumping

RMT's road freight conference meeting in Weston-Super-Mare called for a campaign to oppose European Union rules that allow low paid foreign lorry drivers to engage in up to six load journeys while on the country.

Andrew Hill, Leeds and Cartage said that employers should not employ foreign drivers that "do not pay road tax in this country, use cheaper diesel from abroad and often drive unsafe vehicles".

"This is not a level playing field and it is costing the jobs of our members," he said.

Jim Rafferty, Exeter Rail said that conference was not against foreign workers working in Britain but demanded a level playing field.

"In Spain the government does not allow foreign drivers to take goods across the border," he said.

Bill Drackley, Birmingham Engineering said that the police

were not stopping lorries with foreign number plates because it was "too much hassell to deal with them".

"The chief constable of Kent has said that he was not prepared to stop speeding foreign lorries due to the lack of interpreters and the need to impound vehicles.

"A family was killed recently on the M6 in an accident with a foreign lorry and many of these vehicles are unsafe," he said.

Peter Daniels, Leeds Goods and Cartage, agreed and said that police had told him that pulling up foreign lorries was "more trouble then its worth".

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that EU rules, creating the conditions for a "race to the bottom" in terms of wages and conditions, were being exploited by transnational companies in the pursuit of profit.

He said that the problem was

not foreign workers but the legal framework imposed by the EU allowing the complete free movement of goods, services, capital and labour regardless of the consequences.

"On top of this the European Court of Justice has ruled that industrial action which contravenes these rules is effectively illegal, preventing trade unions acting in defence of their members," he said.

He said that was why RMT was supporting the No2EU: Yes to Democracy electoral coalition at the euro elections, in protest at EU rules designed to protect big business and undermine real trade union rights.

"These ECJ rulings are bringing back Victorian ideas that trade unions in dispute with the employer was acting 'acting in restraint of trade' and therefore illegal," he said.

Pat suggested that the road freight advisory committee meet with the union's executive committee to discuss how to take the campaign forward.

"We need a national industry-wide agreement and we need to campaign for it," he said.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

Conference unanimously agreed that the union negotiate with Lynx/UPS for all handling grade staff to be issued with uniforms and personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the Health and Safety Executive.

Trevor Hiscox, Swansea said that at one depot he visited only one member of staff was wearing a hi-fi vest and adequate boots.

"When I asked why this was the case I was told the staff don't last long enough.

"Even aside from the very important safety aspect it would be a good advert for the company if staff had proper uniforms and equipment," he said.

Peter Daniels said that supplying PPE was a legal requirement and that the company was effectively breaking the law.

"The company just shouldn't be allowed to get away with it, end of story," he said.

Andrew Hill, Leeds Goods and Cartage said that one excuse he had been given for staff not wearing boots was that 'the parcels are not heavy



enough to cause a problem.

"This of course ignores the fact that pallet loads are being shipped around all the time," he said.

Trade union facility time
Delegates called on the union to negotiate facilities for trade union reps working in all companies covered by the grades conference.

Peter Daniels said that it was a general and ongoing problem which needed to be dealt with.

"Any rep that has decent facilities like an office, a phone, a cabinet etc should hold on to them as they are very difficult to win back," he said.

PAID BREAKS

Conference called on the union to enter into negotiations with Freightliner in order for drivers to be paid for meal breaks.

Mark Williams, Leeds Goods and Cartage said that heavy goods vehicle drivers were the only Freightliner employees that did not receive paid meal breaks and can only take a break from driving during tipping and loading periods.

"Drivers should be entitled to breaks like everyone else," he said.

Jim Rafferty, Exeter Rail said that these vehicles were worth over £100,000 each and drivers were the custodians of them even during loading and tipping.

"You are still expected to protect them while not driving, how can that be a break?," he asked.

Bill Drackley said that drivers were moving goods around sometimes worth millions of pounds yet were not paid for meal breaks.

"While not driving you are still responsible for that vehicle and the goods inside yet you are not being paid," he said.

Conference also called for a scale of increasing holiday entitlement to reflect length of service.

"Such increases in holiday entitlement would be beneficial to the employer as well as staff and encourage staff to remain at the company" he said. ■

ADDRESSING THE PARLIAMENT OF THE UNION



My duties as national president include addressing the union's annual general meeting each year and it was an honour to do so for the third time as your president and as the fourth in the chair.

Experience has taught me a lot of things since I was a first-time delegate in 1995 in Swansea as part of the delegation from London Transport.

And I remember the advice and encouragement I was given from other delegates and officials.

AGM is essentially about making the union work. This conference is the RMT's 'supreme government' where the delegates give orders to the leadership for the next twelve months.

It is a pleasure to report that, for the first time ever, our union had more female delegates per head than we have in the union as well as over 20 members attending AGM on the young members' course.

The current economic and political crisis clearly dominated the AGM. Industrially, we have had over 50 ballots so far this year and taken strike action where appropriate against job losses, casualisation and attacks on our members' health and safety.

This is because every employer seems to be using this economic crisis as an opportunity to attack not only terms and conditions but very important issues to do with staffing levels, lone working and safe systems of work.

We also need to work with other unions where we can, including supporting the

magnificent action that has taken place across Britain over the Lindsey oil refinery dispute. We need to also state that those elements around those disputes who seek to exploit the crisis and promote the anti-working class message of the BNP which have no place in our movement.

As a result our union has been behind a number of political projects in the last twelve months. We took part in the Hope Not Hate campaign to combat the BNP and we were an integral part of the No2EU: Yes to Democracy electoral initiative to give workers something decent to vote for.

There is also the People's Charter outlining basic political demands designed to give people a different vision of the future. We also need to salute the work of John McDonnell MP and the Parliamentary Group for the work they do dealing with practical politics on a day-to-day basis. I salute them for what they do. It is clear from all this work that action is required as well as words because without action words are meaningless.

We have learnt these lessons throughout our history and one of the key lessons has been that organisation is the key to what we do as a union. We can be positive about what we are doing organisationally because the proof is that we are growing.

My core message is that despite the relentless attacks on the union we will prevail, using our democracy, solidarity and fighting principals. RMT stays on course.

John Leach

TAKING PRIDE

Russell Wolfe reports on the union's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) conference this year

The 2009 RMT annual lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) conference held in Cardiff in May was far better attended than last year but still needs support.

A social event held on the eve of conference, and hosted by the Golden Cross pub, proved a great ice-breaker, enabling delegates old and new to become better acquainted.

Conference opened with an introduction and welcome from RMT relief regional organiser Peter Skelly who stressed that the union did not tolerate any form of discrimination due to sex, race or sexual orientation.

RMT council of executives Oliver New voiced concerns over

the approaching European elections, warning that people's reluctance to vote may allow the British National Party "in through the back door".

In the event these fears were to be realised with the BNP winning two seats in the European parliament following the June 4 poll.

As a reminder of the implications BNP leader Nick Griffin has written of gay people: "No wonder ordinary people find these creatures flaunting their perversions so repulsive...they must be humanely pushed back into the closet".

Steve Skelly, Wales & South West regional council secretary,

led a discussion on the benefits of joining the RMT credit union.

Guest speaker Derek Lennard, representing the International Day Against Homophobia held annually on May 17, explained that as recently as 1990 homosexuality was classed as a mental illness by the World Health Organisation. IDAHO campaigns against the criminality of homosexuality worldwide.

A representative from RMT lawyers Thompsons Solicitors distributed pamphlets on employee rights and the kind of support available.

Conference was also supported by Greg Harrison, Cardiff Rail; Dave Hobbs,

Newport and Steve Richards, Newport so a big thank you to all speakers and supporters.

RMT's LGBT committee meets three times a year and still requires considerably greater support. Several RMT regions have very little or no representation at all.

These vacancies need to be filled so that views and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members from across the country and all areas of the transport industry are heard.

Next year's conference will be held in Belfast with a provisional date of May 7, 2010. Further information from Pat Wilkinson at RMT head office ■

PRIDE: RMT members attend this year's Gay Pride march in London in July



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RMT WINS COMPENSATION CLAIMS FOR MEMBERS

The union takes up members' cases free of charge and, unlike commercial "no win/no fee" solicitors, takes no commission on successful claims. RMT News highlights some recent successful claims for our members.

TRAIN COMPANY FORCED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAULTY EQUIPMENT

RMT member and a keen horse rider who damaged her knee as she worked in an express train buffet car has been awarded more than £5,000 in compensation.

RMT member Olwen Hernanz-Lloyd was awarded the compensation by Newcastle County Court after a faulty drawer in the buffet car of the Great North Eastern Railways' (GNER) Newcastle to London train flew open and struck her

knee.

The court found that the catch on the drawer was broken and train operator GNER had failed to mend it.

The accident happened as Olwen was pouring coffee for a customer and the train ran over the points, making the carriage jolt.

Despite the pain in her knee, Olwen continued her work that day as a customer services representative which included working in the train's restaurant.

RMT lawyers Thompsons

Solicitors pursued the claim for compensation.

The case went to trial where GNER claimed that the drawer had been inspected and wasn't broken. It was later found that the drawer had not been inspected and the judge said that the drawer flew open due to a defect in the catch.

Olwen received £5,124 in compensation and £18,000 costs were awarded.

She said that she was pleased the court has found in her favour.

"I felt strongly about fighting my case because GNER were blaming me for the accident and I now feel vindicated.

"The compensation will help to pay towards the upkeep of my horses which has been much harder for me to cope with since the accident," she said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a matter of principle that the union fought the case on behalf of Mrs Hernanz-Lloyd.

"GNER failed to accept it was responsible for this accident and blamed Mrs Hernanz-Lloyd for its mistakes.

"This case shows how union legal services can fight for and win justice on behalf of our members," he said.

Tony Scott from Thompsons solicitors said they knew she

had a strong case from the beginning and the court agreed with us.

"We hope this compensation will help Mrs Hernanz-Lloyd cope with the difficulties she now faces as a result of her injury," he said.

WELDER FORCED TO RETIRE EARLY

A welder who was forced to retire after he injured his back at work has received more than £7,000 in compensation.

Kevin Hartley, 63, from Sheffield needed surgery after the accident at Network Rail Infrastructure in Sheffield where he worked as track welder for the firm for over thirty years.

On the day of the accident he was lifting a heavy piece of equipment when he fell causing a slipped disc in his back and damage to his sciatic nerve.

He was off work for several months but after returning to light duties his condition became so bad he found it difficult to walk and he took early retirement.

RMT lawyers Thompsons Solicitors pursued the claim for compensation, which was settled out of court.

Kevin said the damages will contribute to the cost of the private operation he needed on his back.

He added: "I worked in that job for over thirty years but I will never be able to return to it. On some days I find just sitting still difficult so I can't even do a desk job.

"This compensation comes as a great relief as it will pay for the private healthcare I received on my back.

"There was a long waiting list on the NHS and because I was in so much pain I decided it would be quicker to go private," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that many members work in environments where moving heavy objects is a regular activity.

"Employers should be aware of the risks involved and should take appropriate action to avoid injuries," he said.

Tristram Sterry from Thompsons Solicitors added that the employer failed to comply with manual handling regulations or conduct an adequate risk assessment on the task Mr Hartley was carrying out.

"As a result our client has been forced to retire early and

will suffer from a debilitating back injury the rest of his life," he said.

ON-TRACK MACHINE OPERATOR COMPENSATED FOR BRICK ATTACK

An on-track machine operator has received more than £4,000 in compensation.

Thomas Keogh was travelling on a track machine when a youth threw a brick through the windscreen of the machine. The brick hit Thomas, causing him to sustain a fracture of the left clavicle.

Following an application to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority Thomas was awarded £4,087.50.

TRACKMAN BRINGS SUCCESSFUL CLAIM

A trackman has received over £4,000 after being injured in the course of his work.

Vincent Jones was carrying out his duties as a trackman with Network Rail, walking in the cess on the down mainline, when suddenly his foot went into a hole in the ballast

causing him a strain injury to his left leg.

Following correspondence and detailed negotiations with Network Rail representatives a settlement was negotiated for £4,250.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR COMPENSATED FOR WHIPLASH INJURY

A train conductor received over £1,000 in compensation for a whiplash injury.

David Brett was working on the 21.57 Paddock Wood to Gillingham service when the driver of the train hit a crane/cherry picker which was overhanging the track on the M20 motorway bridge.

David was in the rear cab of the train and was thrown forward as a result of the impact, suffering a whiplash injury to the neck and shoulder.

The company's insurers refused to negotiate a settlement and it was necessary to commence court proceedings. As a result satisfactory settlement terms were agreed and David was awarded £1,350.

MAINTENANCE WORKER COMPENSATED FOR BALLAST FALL

A maintenance worker has received over £17,000 after injuring his leg.

After preparing a Metronet train at Ealing Common depot David Morgan went to leave the cab through the driver's door. There is no platform on the west end side of the train, so he had to step down from the cab onto the ballast next to the line.

The ballast was not firm under foot so as he stepped onto it he stumbled and heard a crack in his left knee followed by a very sharp pain. On putting his left leg onto the ballast he realised that he could not put any weight on it and started to lose his balance. As he attempted to regain his balance he fell over a large lump of concrete that was sitting on the ballast.

The main injury suffered by David is believed to be a tear to his medial collateral ligament.

Following negotiation's with Metronet's representatives a settlement was negotiated for £17,500. ■



AGREEMENT REACHED FOR MORE IT TRAINING AT LONDON MIDLAND



Following the successful computer course for rail workers, further agreement has been reached between RMT and London Midland to offer more ITQ training courses.

ITQ is the National Vocational Qualification for IT Users which demonstrates staff competence in the use of IT in the workplace.

ITQ courses are designed to provide an up to date IT user qualification for a workforce, tailored to the needs of the particular business and staff. The courses provide analysis of workforce skills such as making the best use of technology in business systems and in communication with colleagues and customers. It recognises that all organisations need IT skills but that these will vary in level

and type depending on individual business needs and the use made of technology in the organisation.

At an award ceremony in Milton Keynes, certificates were awarded to those who had gained the Level 2 ITQ qualification. The computer course was set up by London Midland Union Learning Reps, including the RMT Lead Union Learning Rep, Karen Lloyd. The pilot course was delivered in Watford by City and Islington College.

The next ITQ course will be delivered in Milton Keynes in September, and 16 employees, including drivers, train crew, and station grades will attend. The course will be delivered by Milton Keynes College via workshop sessions. Learners will



complete part of the course in their own time but will be eligible to claim 16 hours of this time back if they successfully complete the course.

The photographs show some of the successful learners at the

Award Ceremony with their tutor Tamer Paksoy from City and Islington College. Karen Lloyd, RMT Lead ULR, is pictured receiving her award from Neil Langford, Retail Manager at London Midland. ■

RMT MARKS 50 YEARS OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

RMT members were joined by Che Guevara's daughter, Tony Benn and a host of musicians including the band behind the Soprano's theme song "Woke Up This Morning", the Alabama Three, and other special guests for the seventh annual RMT Cuba Garden Party.

Aleida Guevara also addressed the union's executive committee before the festivities and discussed the advances made by Cuba despite the cruel and vindictive economic blockade being carried out by the United States.

Aleida is the eldest daughter of four children born to revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. She is a medical doctor based at the William Soler Children's Hospital in Havana and has also worked as

a physician in Angola, Ecuador and Nicaragua. She is interviewed about the philosophy behind universal health care in Michael Moore's film Sicko.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union was delighted to be hosting the event to mark 50 years of the Cuban Revolution.

"The resilience and determination of the Cuban people to defend their revolution in the teeth of US hostility for fifty years is a lesson to us all," he said.

Tony Benn said that a loud and clear message needed to go from London to Havana that the "Cuban people are not standing alone and that our solidarity is stronger today than it's ever been".



EXECUTIVE: Aleida Guevara with Bob Crow and president John Leach in the boardroom with the executive committee.



SUPPORT: Jon McDonnell MP (far right) joined in the celebrations with Tony Benn and Jeff Sheares of Thompsons solicitors

A TURBULENT LIFE

Autobiography of leading trade unionist and class fighter Jock Nicolson launched in London and Glasgow

Jock Nicolson's autobiography, *A Turbulent Life*, was launched recently at events in Glasgow and London.

Jock was a lifelong trade unionist and communist who, among other things, served two terms on the NUR national executive during the 1970s. He died in August 2007.

Jock's story gives a tremendous insight into the life of the labour movement when it was at its strongest. It is more than a story of political struggle, it is also a personal account of how a working-class boy from Hamilton in Lanarkshire, who left school with no qualifications, came to find himself at Downing Street facing the Wilson government.

The book describes how in 1974, in the face of a national rail strike, the government asked to see the NUR executive to try and avert it.

However, Jock was having a break, staying in a caravan in the countryside with his wife Bridget at the time.

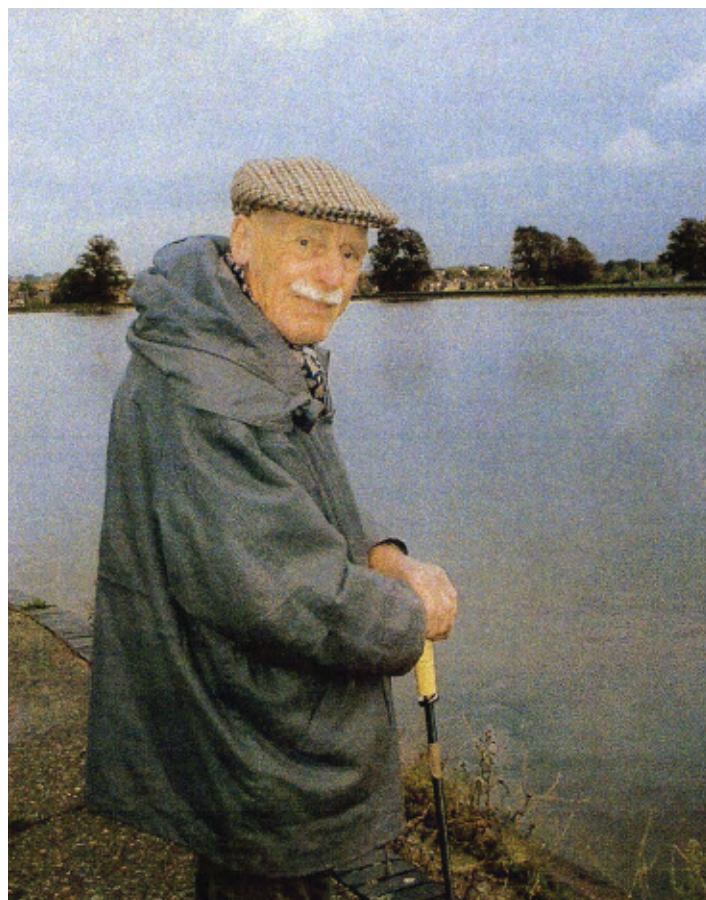
He recalled that the old lady that owned the site came to him in the morning and said: "Mr Nicolson, the Prime Minister wants to see you urgently".

Jock says that at the meeting Denis Healey did all the talking and that Jimmy Booth, on behalf of the NUR executive, replied by giving him a "roasting" about the increase in prices.

"I can still see Healey throwing himself back in his chair with eyes staring and lips downturned. Jimmy had worked in the rail workshop in Glasgow and the rivet gun had made him deaf.... We got an extra two per cent added to the pay offer and the strike was called off," Jock wrote.

FIGHTING FASCISM

Jock was part of a generation that saw the rise of fascism and its defeat. In the wake of the Second World War the labour movement was behind sweeping changes that saw among other things the creation of the



National Health Service.

Internationally, as more and more countries declared themselves socialist, it seemed that history was on their side. The book is very honest and therefore tells how the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc hit Jock particularly hard.

While it has become fashionable to dismiss the sort of political views that Jock had, *A Turbulent Life* shows just how much Jock, and his comrades really were in the vanguard of political life in Britain.

Standing in St Pancras as a Communist candidate in 1959 – at the time of the so called "Notting Hill Race Riots" – Jock's election address declared: "The colour bar and racist propaganda should become legal offences."

Jock may not have won the election but the 1965 Race Relations Act came into being as a direct result of campaigns by

people like Jock and his comrades.

A Turbulent Life is a story of fighting fascism, cold war, rent strikes and union militancy, it is also a very human account of one man's involvement in a movement that fights for a better world.

Bob Crow said that Jock had a heart of a lion.

"He wanted unity and wanted to build unity and strength and he was ahead of his time.

"For example, he argued for equal pay for women when people in this union were against it and Jock will be remembered as being on the side of working people," he said.

Jock's daughter, Jose, added: "Jock felt that what he had written was important and he found out just before he died that he was going to get it published". ■

A Turbulent Life, Jock Nicolson, with a foreword by Bob Crow, Praxis Press, £8.99 and can be obtained from Unity Books, 72 Waterloo St, Glasgow

Plaque unveiling for Cyril Wilkes
on Wednesday August 26 @ Brighton railway club, Belmont, 7 Dials 16:00 hours.

Cyril Wilkes passed away , January 5 2009 aged 77

Previous Branch Secretary of Streatham Branch
N.U.R
Sectional Council member
British Railways Guard
Active member of Brighton and Hove widows and orphan's fund.
Lifelong trade unionist and Socialist

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MARCH & DISTRICT BRANCH

IS PROUD TO NOMINATE

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR LONDON &
ANGLIA REGIONAL ORGANISER

BE SMART - VOTE FOR SMART

PETERBOROUGH BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

FOR THE POSITION OF REGIONAL
ORGANISER – LONDON & ANGLIA

*THIS MOST ABLE CANDIDATE IS
DEDICATED TO RMT MEMBERS
AND CALLS ON MEMBERS TO
VOTE FOR STEVE*

LONDON & ANGLIA REGIONAL
ORGANISER

EAST LONDON RAIL BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

DERRICK MARR

*AND URGES SUPPORT FOR THIS
SKILLED, EXPERIENCED AND
FEISTY NEGOTIATOR*

IPSWICH BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON AND ANGLIA

**LONDON & ANGLIA TRANSPORT
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

FOR

REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON & ANGLIA

*SUPPORT THIS EXPERIENCED,
OUTSTANDING AND MOST ABLE
CANDIDATE. 100% DEDICATION
FOR THE MEMBERSHIP*

**EUROPEAN PASSENGER
SERVICES BRANCH**

NOMINATES

DERRICK MARR

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
LONDON & ANGLIA

*AND WE SEEK SUPPORT FOR THIS
ENERGETIC AND TALENTED
CANDIDATE*

LONDON & ANGLIA
REGIONAL ORGANISER

**BLETCHLEY & NORTHAMPTON
BRANCH**

HAS NOMINATED

DERRICK MARR

*AND URGES SUPPORT FOR THIS
HARD WORKING, HONEST AND
DEDICATED CANDIDATE*

COLCHESTER BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON & ANGLIA

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON & ANGLIA

*AND CALLS ON MEMBERS TO
SUPPORT THIS OUTSTANDING AND
MOST ABLE CANDIDATE*

LONDON & ANGLIA
REGIONAL ORGANISER

SOUTH EAST ESSEX BRANCH

NOMINATES

DERRICK MARR

*AND CALLS ON MEMBERS TO
VOTE FOR THIS EXPERIENCED &
DEDICATED ACTIVIST*

LONDON & ANGLIA
REGIONAL ORGANISER

WILLESDEN RAIL BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

DERRICK MARR

AND URGES SUPPORT FOR THIS
WORTHY CANDIDATE

WOLVERTON BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON & ANGLIA

GREAT NORTHERN ENGINEERING
BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
LONDON & ANGLIA REGIONAL
ORGANISER

*AND CALLS ON MEMBERS TO
SUPPORT THIS OUTSTANDING,
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE*

LONDON & ANGLIA
REGIONAL ORGANISER

**WALTHAM CROSS & DISTRICT
BRANCH**

HAS NOMINATED

DERRICK MARR

*AND URGES MEMBERS TO VOTE
FOR THIS REGION'S LEAD
RECRUITER*

WIGAN BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

*AND ASK OTHER BRANCHES FOR
SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS FOR
THIS ABLE CANDIDATE.*

REGIONAL ORGANISER LONDON
AND ANGLIA REGION

KINGS CROSS BRANCH SAYS

BE SMART, VOTE SMART. WE
URGE ALL MEMBERS TO VOTE

STEVE SMART

**LONDON & ORIENT
ENGINEERING BRANCH**

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

IN THE ELECTION FOR
REGIONAL ORGANISER –
LONDON & ANGLIA

*AND CALLS ON ALL MEMBERS TO
SUPPORT THIS OUTSTANDING,
EXPERIENCED AND MOST ABLE
CANDIDATE*

LONDON & ANGLIA
REGIONAL ORGANISER

**HARLESDEN ENGINEERING
BRANCH**

HAS NOMINATED

DERRICK MARR

*AND URGES MEMBERS TO VOTE
FOR THIS EXCELLENT ACTIVIST*

**BRIDGEND, LLANTRISANT AND
DISTRICT BRANCH**

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR THE POSITION OF RMT
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

 **THOMPSONS**
SOLICITORS

 **Drummond Miller**
Solicitors and Estate Agents

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



KINGS CROSS BRANCH

NOMINATE THEIR SECRETARY

RAY KNIGHT

AND SEEK SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS

FOR FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY

WISHAW AND MOTHERWELL BRANCH

NOMINATE

JOHN MCDUGALL

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN
IRELAND

AND URGE MEMBERS AND
BRANCHES TO SUPPORT THIS
ABLE AND EXPERIENCED
CANDIDATE

WATFORD BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
REGION 10

DON'T FORGET TFL MEMBERS

Dear editor

Thank you for your coverage
of last month's London
Underground strike.

However, the reporting
overlooked the simultaneous
48-hour strike by our
members on Transport for
London.

London Underground is a
subsidiary of TfL, but is not
the total of it. On TfL, our
members in departments as
diverse as traffic
enforcement, the museum,
travel information centres
and the call centre took
action to defend jobs and
demand a decent pay rise.

At the time, their employer
had not even bothered to
table a pay offer, despite it
being overdue since 1 April!

Members took action despite
RMT being a minority
union, and despite other
unions' inaction and
collaboration with
management. They deserve
to be recognised, not
ignored.

Janine Booth

Secretary, RMT London
Transport Regional Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY BRANCH

NOMINATES

GREG HEWITT

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

AND IS SEEKING SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FROM BRANCHES
FOR THIS ABLE CANDIDATE

GLASGOW 5 BRANCH

NOMINATES

ANDY GORDON

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN
IRELAND

AND URGE MEMBERS TO USE
THEIR VOTE IN OF SUPPORT THIS
CANDIDATE

BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH IS PROUD TO NOMINATE

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT

AND INVITES OTHER BRANCHES TO
GIVE SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS
TO THIS EXPERIENCED AND
TRUSTED CANDIDATE

EXCLUSIVE OFFER for RMT members

Annual Travel Insurance

Prices from £29.75*

Please call **0844 482 0689**

Quoting RMT

U.K Call centre.

Provided by AIS Direct. AIS Direct are a trading style of Rock Insurance Services Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). FSA number 300317.

* Terms and Conditions apply. Prices based on individual European Annual Economy for ages up to 54 years and cover is correct as 01/06/2009

DONCASTER BRANCH

NOMINATES

DAVE COLLINSON

FOR THE POSITION OF REGIONAL
ORGANISER FOR YORKSHIRE &
LINCOLNSHIRE

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FROM
MEMBERS AND BRANCHES FOR
THIS VERY ABLE CANDIDATE

BASSETLAW BRANCH

NOMINATES

DAVE GOTT

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
ELECTION, YORKSHIRE &
LINCOLNSHIRE

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
ABLE CANDIDATE

CLASSIFIED ADS

INDIAN WELLS KISSIMMEE VILLAS

10% discount on rates for RMT
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screen porch and overlooking a
lake. Will sleep 8 and cot facilities
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www.indianwellskissimmeevillas.co.uk

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RETIRING TO GOZO

Dear Editor,

Pensions are a subject that is very close to my
heart and the importance of a good standard of
living in retirement for our members and
protection of income. But what does it all mean
in reality what can you do with your money?

Well, I went to Gozo in Malta to find out.

Ex-long serving branch secretary and RMT
activist Graham Geliher and his wife Kate,
decided that living abroad was their best option.
Graham came to live in Gozo a year ago and I
asked him if life in the sun all its cracked up to
be?

"The short answer is a very big yes it is. But
does take a bit of getting used to and after a
year we are settled in nicely now.

"We decided to sell up in UK and come and live
out here there are so many properties out here
its far better to rent and keep the money from
your assets in the UK in the bank.

"The choice of property to rent is fantastic we
have moved once since we got here an the best
thing is get a short term rent for a few months
then get a property on a long lease. "The rental

system out here is designed to protect the tenant,
once you agree a deal your rent can be protected
for up to ten years with no rental increases in
that time," he said.

Graham has a lovely brand new house with three
bathrooms and bedrooms and a massive
underground garage for only 350 Euros a month,
and there are no rates or council tax in Gozo.

"We have a very relaxed lifestyle here run a
small car and don't have any real worries ,you
need to know the ropes and take your time
making a deal ,but if you use your head its
fine."

"The biggest question people ask me is well its
all ok but what happens if you get sick? "Well
it's not a problem Kate has been hospital twice
once in the middle of the night with a serious
asthma attack. The standard of care was
excellent seen by the specialist at 4am and it's
free and everyone speaks good English its not a
problem," he said.

It may not be everyone's cup of tea but for
Graham and Kate, from the toil of life in
Mansfield, It's another world.

Yours Dave Gott

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 date you next get paid weekly ☐ if 4 weekly (Fri) ☐ date here.....

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 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

9 7 4 2 8 1

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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





MINI CRUISE TO AMSTERDAM

2 nights

Amsterdam may be small in size, but this enhances the charm of this delightful city. It also means you can experience much of the city on our 2-night mini cruise break.

Sailing every day from Newcastle to IJmuiden (a short coach journey from Amsterdam), you will depart at 5.00pm and enjoy the overnight cruise experience, including the selection of quality restaurants, bars and live entertainment. You will arrive into port at 9.30am next morning, where a coach will be waiting to take you into Amsterdam for the best part of the day exploring this lovely city.

What's included:

- 2 nights on board ship in a 2-berth inside en suite cabin
- Live entertainment on board
- Approx 5 hours in Amsterdam
- Coach transfers to/from Amsterdam (approx 40 minutes) and free optional sightseeing tour

Daily departures from Newcastle
Book by 30th September 2009.



BRUGES CHRISTMAS MARKET, BELGIUM

4 nights

This Belgian city has a unique beauty and medieval appeal. Walk along the charming cobbled streets and old canals, enjoy Christmas markets or a horse drawn carriage ride and immerse yourself in the city's atmospheric magic.

Bruges is known as the chocolate city; the aroma of chocolate will waft through the streets as confectioners get to work.

What's included:

- 2 nights on board ship in a 2-berth inside en suite cabin
- Coach transfers to/from Bruges (approx 3½ hours)
- 2 nights bed and breakfast at the 3-star Novotel Brugge Centrum
- Walking tour plus a visit to a chocolate shop with demonstration

Departures from Newcastle: 29th November, 6th & 14th December 2009
Book by 30th September 2009.



RIBE BYFERIE SELF DRIVE, DENMARK

4 nights

Staying in idyllic surroundings, this self-drive break is an ideal relaxing getaway for both couples and families. The holiday village Ribe Byferie, a 'town within the town', is based on the medieval Ribe town centre and combines old-world quality with modern design.

Your self catering apartment is a great base from which to enjoy the holiday centre's facilities, as well as explore the nearby area. Relax in the sauna and whirlpools or enjoy a massage. Then stroll into medieval Ribe to explore its many museums, shops and places of interest.

What's included:

- 2 nights on board ship in a 4-berth inside en suite cabin
- Carriage of a standard car
- 2 nights in a self catering apartment

Departures from Harwich: Every 3 or 4 days a week
Book by 30th September 2009.

