

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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FIGHTING FOR JOBS AT VESTAS



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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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2 Your Employment.

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

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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

FIGHTING FOR MEMBERS



RMT has been dispute after dispute on the railways, the Tube, the buses, in shipping and off-shore over attacks on pay, jobs and working conditions.

There is no doubt at all that employers have sought to use the capitalist downturn as an excuse for driving down pay and conditions under the threat of the sack if you don't bend the knee.

Yet RMT has refused to accept such bullying and as a consequence we have chalked up some major victories.

On London Underground and TfL we took 48-hour strike action in the teeth of a vicious media assaults on the union. Our members shrugged off the abuse and intimidation and the result is that 1000 jobs under threat have been saved.

Our members at train companies have secured some of the biggest pay awards during this recession because they have seen the profits they make for these outfits and have been determined to fight for their share.

Offshore oil workers have fought off cuts, bus drivers have been fighting back up and down the country and track workers have campaigned over cuts with a force that has pushed Network Rail onto the defensive.

Rail privateer London Midland has seen the error of its ways by re-instating enhanced Sunday payments for conductor members but RMT is balloting other grades to get the same benefits.

Our shipping members in Ireland are also involved in the campaign to win another rejection the Lisbon Treaty October 2, along with trade unionists from a number of other unions.

The Lisbon Treaty, a rehash of the discredited EU constitution, enshrines right-wing Thatcherite economic policies and hands huge new powers to big business to use as a stick against organised labour throughout the EU.

Let's hope Irish voters resist the bullying and intimidation and reject this privateers' charter once and for all.

A real alternative to undemocratic EU

rules obsessed with privatisation is The People's Charter. This charter sets out a different path which would guarantee decent public services, decent housing and jobs and justice for all. This is the agenda that voters would vote for, given the chance.

The struggle to defend jobs at the Vestas wind turbine plant on the Isle of Wight is a real example of this alternative vision. As an offshore energy union, RMT is at the forefront of this fight.

While the government makes great claims about developing 'green' industries we see the only manufacturer of wind turbines being shut down on the whim of big business.

RMT made it clear that the government that it should nationalise the factory in order to develop home-grown green energy technology.

If you can nationalise the mountains of debts that the greedy bankers have run up, you can nationalise viable concerns like Vestas and defend the manufacturing base of this country.

That is also why RMT continues to fight against the privatisation of Tyne and Weir Metro and for the whole of the rail system to be brought back under public ownership.

The fiasco of National Express on the East Coast Main Line, collapsing in disarray in a repeat of the GNER debacle on the same tracks just three years ago, has exposed the nonsense of the franchise system.

With the collapse of National Express on ECML they could start the process with that company's three franchises and it wouldn't cost them a penny. I would have thought that in the current political climate Labour needs all the simple and popular policies that it can lay its hands on.

Best Wishes

Bob Crow

ARRIVA CROSS COUNTRY MEMBERS WIN PAY BATTLE

Members win improved pay offer following threat of month-long campaign short of strike action

RMT members at Arriva Cross Country have won their dispute of pay and other issues relating to work conditions after a long campaign of action short of strike action.

Following a breakdown in industrial relations at the company members working at the company voted by four-to-one for a month of industrial action, including an overtime ban, no rest-day working and a ban on non-rostered Sunday working.

The action had an immediate affect on the franchise, hitting services in and out of Stansted and causing major disruption

across the Midlands and into Wales.

The level of disruption revealed the extent to which the franchise relied on overtime working and the goodwill of hardworking staff.

The planned month-long action was called off after the company agreed to further talks resulting in an improved two-year deal on pay and conditions.

The package, backdated to April 1 2009, sees an increase on basic pay rates of 2.25 per cent or £500, whichever is the greater. Then another increase on basic pay of 3.5 per cent or RPI plus 0.75 per cent or £750,

again whichever is the greater amount from again on April 1 2010.

Members accepted the improved offer in a referendum.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the victory highlighted the determination of members at the company to secure a fair deal for hardworking staff.

"It was clear from the affects of this campaign that the franchise relies heavily on the goodwill of the staff which keeps the company running.

"It is just a pity that we had to go through this dispute to get the deal our members deserve," he said.

LONDON MIDLAND REINSTATES SUNDAY PAYMENTS FOR CONDUCTORS

Rail privateer London Midland attacked its own staff earlier this month when it suspended train services and claimed that staff had "failed to volunteer" for Sunday working after receiving a 50 per cent cut in pay.

However the company reinstated the payments to conductors to maintain services.

RMT will be balloting other grades for strike action to ensure parity for Sunday payments is maintained.

RMT has already suspended two days of industrial action by conductors earlier this year after stopping the company from introducing compulsory Sunday working.

The company also used anti-union laws to prevent industrial action by station, clerical, retail, booking office and supervisory staff after they voted to strike over Sunday working payments.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow dismissed the company's latest attack on its own staff to point out that it was London Midland's decision to shut their entire service down.

"The firm has just cut the payment for Sunday working from double time to normal time, so it is not surprising that the first day this is to happen, they couldn't get the staff," he said.

He also pointed out that asking for volunteers to work on Sundays had always suited management, who can cut services to save money as they see fit.

Northampton Labour MP Sally Keeble also ignored the workers' right to fight for extra pay for working unsocial hours and demanded that bosses "forcibly" roster Sunday shifts into staff working hours.

"Instead of using anti-union laws, intimidating staff and cutting pay the company should get round the table in order to avoid these kinds of situations," Bob Crow said.



SOLIDARITY WINS AT NATIONAL EXPRESS EAST ANGLIA

RMT wins improved pay and conditions for members working across the franchise after three 48-hour strikes

RMT suspended industrial action on National Express East Anglia half way through a third 48-hour strike last month after the company agreed a much-improved pay offer.

The revised pay deal has shifted the company from 0.5 per cent with strings to 3.5 per cent with no strings over two years with the potential for a further 0.5 per cent on top taking the increase to four per cent.

The deal, overwhelmingly accepted by members in a referendum, saw NXEA also agree to pay staff for the last day of strike action.

After two rock-solid 48 hour strikes, National Express East Anglia must have recognised just how angry staff are at the company's failure to make any significant moves on pay and conditions.

With TSSA joining strike action in the last 48-hour strike the company was looking at a total lockdown of services right across the franchise after NXEA managed to alienate their entire workforce.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that nobody should be in any doubt that the improved offer had been won due to the commitment and determination of RMT members on National Express East Anglia to secure a fair deal.

"It's their sacrifice over the past three weeks that has forced the company's hand and they can be proud of what they have achieved.

"It's just unfortunate for both staff and the travelling public that it's taken strike action to push the negotiations forward," Bob said.

Rail workers and passengers alike were made aware by the union that National Express had made nearly half a billion in profits out of their rail operations in the past ten years and have soaked up £2.5 billion in public subsidies over the same period.

"It's no wonder our members are refusing to take a hit on pay and conditions when they see those numbers up in lights and we have fought to get that important message across to the public and have received many messages of support.

"The company thought they could jack up fares and jack down wages and conditions without anyone batting an eyelid.

"RMT members have shown again that working people do not have to be the victims of an economic crisis created by the politicians and bankers and that

if we stand strong and united we can win," Bob said.

National Express has defaulted on its East Coast Main Line franchise and it remains unclear if it will lose its East Anglia and c2c franchises as it should do under 'cross-fault' franchise rules.



Solidarity from Scotland: Richie Veitch and Nigel Ross from Edinburgh No.1 and Portobello district branch went down to support brothers and sisters on the picket line at Norwich station during strike action at National Express East Anglia. The two reps said that it was a good day out and it showed how strong the solidarity is amongst RMT members.

Branch secretary Andy King said that it was excellent to see National Express staff from Scotland coming down to support.

"It just goes to show that we all want the same thing, one employer and one railway," he said.



EUROSTAR CLEANING STAFF VOTE 100% TO TAKE STRIKE ACTION

RMT members working for the Carlisle Group cleaning company on their Eurostar contract have unanimously voted for strike action over a series of key issues including pay, bullying and working conditions.

The ballot was triggered after the company tried to impose a pay freeze for 2009 and dishonestly tried to push back the pay settlement nine months taking it into 2010.

The already understaffed company is also trying to offload 14 cleaners through compulsory redundancies. The company was accused of bullying and pressurising staff members into using an "Orwellian" finger-printing system despite RMT members voting against the proposals.

The victimisation of RMT representative Mohammed Yellow who was suspended for ten weeks on charges that RMT believe to be false is also just one of the cases in a catalogue of incidents of bullying and harassment of staff.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the unanimous call for strike action by those balloted reflected the depth of anger felt by members.

"Staff working for Carlisle Group, who clean the modern and high tech Eurostar Trains, have been subjected to some of the most draconian working conditions in the transport industry and RMT has decided that enough is enough.

"We will be calling for public support and particularly from the Eurostar passengers who benefit from the hard work of the cleaning crew," Bob said.

As RMT News went to press the union put on strike dates and hoped that the company will get round table with the union to resolve these issues.

RMT TO FIGHT NETWORK RAIL PLAN TO AXE OVER 2,500 MAINTENANCE JOBS

RMT has vowed to resist plans by Network Rail to cull up to 2,500 jobs in a bid to cut costs across the UK over the next 18 months.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the "stupid" cuts amounted to cutting five per cent of the workforce, a move that would increase the risk of a major accident.

"This is a recipe for disaster and risks taking us back to the dark old days of Railtrack and the cuts which led to the crashes at Potter's Bar, Hatfield and Paddington.

"The company wants to change the way our members work, but we're not prepared to see their safety compromised," he said.

The proposed job cuts were announced came a day after Network Rail unveiled a £34 billion plan for a high speed rail link between London and Scotland.

Bob Crow accused NR of using those plans as a 'smokescreen' to hide the impact of the job losses.

The Office of Rail Regulation has demanded that the government-backed track maintenance company make savings of 21 per cent, or £4billion, over the next five years.

A spokesman for NR also claimed that the cuts were required as "we have a clear commitment to the British people to reduce the costs of running the railway".

The proposals would affect about 13,000 maintenance frontline staff up to and including section managers. S&T Tech support are included, but Telecoms, OCR group and Property Works are not.

The matter is being discussed by the union's General Grades Committee and meetings have been set up with RMT Area Council Representatives.

A formal national consultation process is planned to commence at the end of the month and area consultations will begin in November.



SAFETY FIRST: RMT members protest outside Network Rail headquarters against dangerous budget and job cuts



TAXIS POUNCE ON TIGER, TIGER

London taxi drivers descended on the "Tiger, Tiger" club in the Haymarket to reclaim the rank outside the famous night spot.

RMT activists had tried to negotiate with the relevant Authorities responsible for enforcing this stretch of roadway so that taxi drivers can rank up for fares without harassment from Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs).

After no action was taken

taxi drivers decided to take some direct action and converged on the venue to take control of the rank at 2am.

This prompted the arrival of Club Manager Gavin Hughes who welcomed having licensed black cabs outside and saw it as a positive benefit for the venue.

Within a very short space of time every one of the 30 or so taxis had picked up a

legitimate fare and were replaced by more cabs.

One taxi driver member said that due to the traffic congestion at Piccadilly Circus there was a queue of fares and no taxis which led to the return of the touting PHVs.

"When questioned as to whether they had pre-booked jobs, most took flight when a camera was produced taking their photo.

"If one man with a camera

can keep the rank clear, why can't Westminster's Director of Transport Martin Low's army of enforcement officers do it," he said.

One taxi driver later reported that he had picked up a fare to Putney from the club and when asked how much it would cost he said around £25.

"When I asked how much they were quoted by PHVs they said between £35 and £45," he said.

FIRST GROUP BUS AND RAIL REPS MEET

RMT officers and reps working for members at First Group bus and rail companies met in Unity House recently (right).

The meeting followed concerns raised at the bus workers grade conference that the First UK Bus Board had imposed a pay freeze for operating companies with pay talks due this year.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that First was imposing pay freezes, job cuts and other cost-cutting measures across the board.

"RMT is working for a national pay claim," he said.

Bus members at First Somerset and Avon are currently being balloted for strike action against the pay freeze.



ACTION AGAINST PRIVATE BUS MONOPOLIES

Office of Fair Trading launch investigation against 'informal cartels' of private bus companies

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has called for a full inquiry into the operations of local bus services outside of London and has referred the matter to the Competition Commission.

The OFT has already held an initial inquiry which uncovered evidence suggesting that there is little or no competition on local bus services outside of London and a quarter of public tenders for these routes received only one bid.

The fact that a quarter of public tenders receive only one bid, indicate a potential carve up of the sector by monopoly operators namely; First-Group, Arriva, Stagecoach and Go-Ahead, who between them dominate two thirds of the market outside London. One third of local routes has one monopoly operator.

Despite claims by these monopoly companies that privatisation and fragmentation of the bus services is better for the public due to lower fares through competition, the OFT report revealed that this is not the case.

Operators are keen to maintain their dominance of a route and bus companies have breached competition law as a result. This creates a situation where the public have no choice but to use service at whatever fares the company charge. The report found that fares are nine per cent higher on routes where a monopoly is in place.

Since privatisation, bus operators like those named above have been unwilling to provide socially necessary routes

without subsidy support from local authorities.

As a result these bus monopolies are subsidised to the tune of £1.2 billion by the tax payer in order to keep services available to those who live in more remote areas. Essentially, profitable routes have been given away and those routes which do not put money in the coffers of the monopolies are still paid for by the taxpayer.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Since the privatisation of the industry by the Tory government in 1986, RMT has consistently campaigned for the return of bus services to public ownership.

Various studies conducted by the union have highlighted the fact that privatisation has caused greater social exclusion, through increasing costs above inflation which disproportionately affects those without cars, lower wages and worse terms and conditions for workers in the industry.

This coupled with lack of investment in the industry through the draining of its profits into the pockets of shareholders, and a lack of integration with other forms of transport has had disastrous consequences.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow noted that "privateers routinely use their monopoly position effectively to blackmail local authorities into parting with more public money under the perpetual threat of the axe falling on more routes".

"The only supposed virtue of



privatisation is competition and where there is no competition, as in this case, the question must be asked as to why basic transport services are not publicly owned, democratically accountable, and run in the interests of the public.

"Expecting good faith from these companies is the equivalent of expecting a jackal to refuse red meat. Their behaviour is predatory, and cannot be properly regulated," Bob said.

The Office of Fair Trading has also had "many complaints alleging predatory behaviour of incumbent firms designed to eliminate competition from new entrants".

For instance, transport magazine Transit recently reported a meeting between the chief executive of publically owned Lothian Buses, Neil Renilson, and the Scottish Parliament local government and transport committee.

When asked why Lothian Buses would not expand out of Edinburgh into West Lothian, Renilson replied: "I know if I run buses from Edinburgh to Livingston or Broxburn, First will regard that as an attack and will then run buses in the city against mine."

"The reality is I will not snap at [First's] heels in case I get stood on". The committee convenor then observed that "that does not sound like competition; it sounds like an informal cartel".

LOCAL TRANSPORT ACT

RMT last year welcomed the passing of the Local Transport Act, which gives local authorities powers to regulate some local bus services, as a small step in the right direction.

An RMT-inspired amendment to the Act ensured full pension protection for bus workers transferred between employers in the deregulated bus market, as well as the right for unions to be consulted if a local authority wishes to introduce franchised bus services.

However, RMT still maintains that the system of competition, even with greater regulation, cannot work.

Once one company has competed "successfully" against others, the likelihood of a monopoly developing is very high. Tougher competition regulations cannot solve the problem, as monopolisation often arises from competition.

The union argues that the only solution for having a value for money, accountable service where staff are treated with dignity and respect is an immediate return to public ownership.

"If the private sector is to be allowed to continue operating buses at all, it must be under rigid regulation, but ultimately the only way to ensure that buses play their proper role in an integrated transport network is to bring the industry back into public ownership," Bob Crow said.

NEW NOTTS AND DERBYSHIRE BUS BRANCH LAUNCHED

RMT general secretary Bob Crow attended the official opening of the new Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire bus branch recently.

The new branch, which has over 200 members, was set up after a long battle for union recognition with the help of branch chair Stanley Waplington and branch secretary Joe Galea.

Joe joined the union in May 2007 while working for Dunne line coaches, which has since been taken over by Veolia Transport UK.

"I decided to join because we seemed to have no rights at all at work.

"At the time there were a couple of other drivers who were union members but we had no organisation," he said.

Things came to a head in February last year when Joe was disciplined for a trivial matter and went into the hearing with no representation and no real idea of his rights.

"I received a final written warning for this offence and when I came out I decided that I would be the last driver to be treated like that," he said.

Joe got in touch with long-standing RMT activist Graham



Geliher who was East Midlands Bus branch secretary at the time and launched a recruitment drive.

"With his help and the invaluable help of Gerry Hitchen and the recruitment team I started to encourage workers to join RMT," said Joe.

Before long they had signed enough members to approach the company with a petition for trade union recognition.

Originally the company refused to recognise RMT because they already had recognition agreements with another union.

"We insisted on the freedom to choose which union we wished to join because we were a separate bargaining unit from their other depots," he said.

After a long struggle and a few delaying tactics from management, Veolia finally relented and RMT won recognition earlier this year at the Nottingham, Heanor, Anston and Tuxford depots.

Previously members had been organised within the East Midlands Bus branch but it was decided for logistical reasons to form the new branch, which today also includes members

from K&H Doyle's Coaches of Alfreton.

"I would like to thank all the people involved in our fight for recognition including Graham, Gerry, Alan Heath, Ken Usher and especially Peter Trend who was our lead organiser and the members for joining the union and placing their trust in us to fight for their rights at work," said Joe.

Branch meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 1930hrs at The Beacon Public House, Aspley lane, Nottingham

CALLING ALL ROAD TRANSPORT AND BUS BRANCHES

Join the ITF International Road Transport action week next month

RMT intends to play a full and active role in the International Road Transport Action Week on October 7 to 13 and urges road transport and bus members and branches to get involved.

The theme of the action week, organised by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) will be the necessity of shorter working hours in a safety critical industry.

RMT is drafting its submission to the

Department of Transport's consultation on Domestic Drivers Hours Rules.

The rules are largely unchanged for 50 years, cover issues including maximum driving time, breaks, rest time, daily and weekly rest, record keeping and enforcement. Vans not exceeding 3.5tonnes and buses/coaches operating on regular routes up to 50km come under the scope of the rules.

The week of action will culminate in a

demonstration and leaflet outside the Department for Transport in London on October 12 2009 and the union's submission to the consultation will be hand-delivered. Regional Councils are also encouraged to organise events locally. Please advise Alastair Gittins in the RMT National Policy Department if you wish to hold a leafleting session/demonstration in your area and materials can be provided: a.gittins@rmt.org.uk or 020 7529 8281.

RMT FORCES PROCEEDINGS AGAINST RACE RELATIONS ACT OPT-OUT

The Department for Transport has revealed that the European Commission has begun infraction proceedings against the UK arising from the discriminatory provisions allowed against EU nationals under the 1976 Race Relations Act.

This follows an RMT complaint to the European Commission that the 1976 UK Race Relations Act was in breach of the EU free movement of workers provisions for allowing discrimination against other EU nationals.

In response, the European Commission took its first steps towards infraction proceedings in March 2009.

The government has received notice that the issue was not going to go away following the tabling of amendments outlawing discrimination under the 1976 Race Relations Act by the RMT parliamentary group.

The amendments tabled by

Gwyn Prosser MP seek to enforce the national minimum wage for foreign nationals seafarers working on ships trading between UK Ports and in the UK offshore sector.

The DfT has said that it did not wish to make any changes to seafarer coverage of the national minimum wage until after the Race Relations Act has been dealt with. The union will shortly be writing to all MPs seeking support for the amendments.

RMT parliamentary group member have also tabled an Early Day Motion 1780 (see below) calling for reform of the Race Relations Act which already has 56 signatures from MPs with many more to follow once Parliament returns.

The formal regulations brought forward by the DfT setting out reform of the 1976 Race Relations Act will now be issued shortly after Parliament resumes later this year. They

will be taken forward as part of the Equality Bill which is due to become law early in 2010.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that at long last reform of this legislation was in sight.

“We should not underestimate the fact that it is the RMT campaign and our willingness to pursue this at every available opportunity has brought this about,” he said.

EARLY DAY MOTION

EDM 1780

PAY PRACTICES IN THE UK MARITIME SECTOR

Gwyn Prosser

That this House is appalled that in the 21st century ships, including ferry services, which regularly trade on fixed routes between UK ports and between the UK and Europe, are allowed to pay poverty wages substantially below the minimum wage to non-UK seafarers including rates as little as £1.50 per hour; is dismayed that this super-exploitation is legal as a result of a loophole in the Race Relations Act which allows non-UK seafarers to be paid rates below agreed UK levels and also due to the exemption of seafarers from the national minimum wage; urges the Government to bring forward amendments to the Equality Bill to outlaw this discrimination and to reform the Race Relations Act as it applies to seafarers; and calls on the Government to bring forward immediately legislation to ensure that non-UK seafarers are protected by the provisions of the national minimum wage.



RMT OPENS DESK AT ABERDEEN AIRPORT FOR OFFSHORE WORKERS

RMT has opened a help desk providing information and support directly to offshore energy workers at Aberdeen airport after many companies unveiled 'cost cutting' measures, ranging from project delays or cancellations, restructuring and cuts to maintenance budgets, jobs, pay, leave and other terms and conditions of employment.

The geographical and logistical problems associated with the offshore industry make it extremely difficult to visit workers at their place of employment.

So the union operated an information and support desk for two weeks last month in the main terminal building at Aberdeen airport, which has the biggest movement of offshore workers in the UK.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that both OILC and RMT had a long tradition of providing quality services to workers.

"As a combined organisation we are upping our game in an effort to assist workers through these difficult times.

"We are taking our support and organisational services directly to the workers, to the nearest and most accessible point of contact to their place of work," he said.

It will be the first in a series of exercises aimed at providing services directly to offshore workers.

Following Aberdeen, the aim is to take the support desk to Humberside, then on to Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Blackpool over the course of the next few months.

RMT regional organiser Jake



OFFSHORE: RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy and Bob Crow at Aberdeen airport

Molloy said that the union was being inundated with concerns about wage cuts and redundancies, which could impact on health and safety performance.

"While we'll be using this exercise to provide information and support to workers, we will also be taking time to gather information about the effects of the cost cutting," he said.

NEW PROJECT INVESTIGATES HEALTHCARE NEEDS OF SEAFARERS

The Seamen's Hospital Society has commissioned new research to investigate the level and nature of need for health care among working age seafarers based in the UK and related healthcare provision.

The Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), a research organisation well known for investigating all aspects of workers health, is carrying out the research will be completed early next year.

The new research has been launched following a report by the Maritime Charities Funding Group which looked into all aspects of support for seafarers including health, housing and

poverty.

One of the key health findings concerned the importance of timely access to medical diagnosis and treatment for seafarers of working age.

Some 17 per cent of merchant seafarers and 23 per cent of fishermen surveyed reported concerns about accessing healthcare, whilst 32 per cent and 47 per cent needed medical care and 23 per cent and 29 per cent had needed rehabilitation to return to work at sea.

As a result of its findings the report specifically recommended that further work be undertaken into

access to healthcare.

YOUR VIEW

As part of the new study, the IOM is seeking out seafarers' views on their health needs and access to healthcare.

Anyone who would like to participate can do so by filling out a short questionnaire which can be found at www.iom-world.org/research/seafarershealth.php.

The questionnaire will also be distributed directly to maritime RMT members who have access to e-mail and additional copies will be available on request. It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and two

completed questionnaires will be drawn at random to receive a gift.

The more people who take part in the study, the more reliable the results will be. Results from the study will be completely anonymous and no individual will be identified at any stage.

Seamen's Hospital Society general secretary Peter Coulson said that he hoped the research would provide valuable information to guide policy and practice and would be particularly pleased to have the participation of as many seafarers as possible in contributing their experiences and views to the findings.

FIGHTING FOR RESPECT AT TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

RMT News talks to members of the Transport for London (TfL) branch about the problems of organising a diverse workforce into the union

Transport for London branch chair Paul Rutland said that people working at TfL join RMT because it's a fighting union.

"They join because they want to be in it," he says.

The success of RMT recruitment among TfL workers is down to the hard work of the branch activists who are dispersed across numerous workplaces and TfL subsidiaries.

There can be no doubt that they are organising on difficult terrain. A non-exhaustive list of where branch members come from includes: London Transport

Museum, Lost Property, Human Resources, Revenue Protection, Traffic Enforcement, Public Carriage Office, Oyster Card, Facilities and Health and Safety.

TfL was created in 2000 as the integrated body responsible for the capital's transport system, ostensibly implementing the transport strategy for which the Mayor of London has responsibility.

There are four RMT reps within TfL, although the company refuses to officially recognise them all.

With no centralised

workplace and, as a result, nowhere to pin up notices of branch meetings, organising is done by email and text messages. Even that has been made difficult by management, who have barred the use of the TfL email system for RMT purposes. Reps have also reported being bullied.

The diverse nature of TfL jobs and their workplaces may be a real challenge to organising and recruiting but that makes for a high calibre of recruit.

"People who join tend to be as strong, fighting people. Membership hasn't been handed to them on a plate, they have had to seek us out, or we have had to seek them out," says Lindsey Rutland, the branch's vice secretary.

In June TfL members came out on strike alongside LUL members in a dispute over rates

of pay, conditions of service and redundancies. With regard to redundancies, TfL wouldn't reveal which jobs are to be cut as part of £2.4 billion worth of cuts.

To make matters worse, it appeared that they hadn't even factored in the loss of revenue due to income dropping or the lost funds from the ending of the western congestion charge zone.

Carol Foster, the branch's women's officer, says that "everybody thought that we would be moderate and therefore they were really shocked when we came out on strike.

"We may do different jobs from operative staff, but the issues and the type of management we face are just the same and it doesn't matter what type of work you do, all we want is respect," she said. ■

RESPECT: Paul Rutland and Lindsey Rutland on the picket line in June.





RMT WINS JOB SECURITY FOR TUBE WORKERS

RMT forces London Underground to stick to agreed policies on redundancies, protecting a thousand jobs

As a result of strike action by Tube workers and Transport for London members, London Underground has agreed to RMT demands that there will be no compulsory redundancies.

A thousand jobs had faced the axe but now management has agreed to abide by 'Annex H' – the key security of employment clause – and that this will apply to all LUL operational staff.

The dispute, which was at the heart of the successful 48 hour tube strike earlier this year, had led to long hours of direct negotiations and through ACAS.

A thousand of the LUL members that were transferred to the failed private Metronet consortium were at risk of losing their jobs, leading to the two days strike action.

As a result of the industrial action and the talks that followed the union has safeguarded these members' jobs and forced management to abide by negotiated agreements and provide alternative jobs for all displaced staff.

Unfortunately a last-minute deal to prevent the 48-hour tube strike had been

scuppered by the office of London mayor Boris Johnson.

RMT negotiators had spent all day and early evening at ACAS on the eve of strike action putting together a deal which could have settled the dispute.

However London Underground saw fit to bring in lawyers at the last minute who pulled the rug from under a workable agreement. The strike goes ahead as the union knew that it will receive solid support from RMT members across the tube network.

Bob Crow RMT general secretary said that the action had shown what can be done by workers showing solidarity with their colleagues.

"Tube members must be congratulated on the stand they took in these difficult times with a credit crunch and rising unemployment causing job losses and attacks on working peoples' terms and conditions.

"The stand you have taken has proved that by sticking together and supporting each other and the union we can protect jobs and conditions," Bob said.

RMT London regional organiser Steve

Hedley agreed that it was the best deal on offer under the circumstances but RMT had not been able to secure the jobs of members of other unions.

"If only other unions had stood with us we could have secured an even bigger victory," he said.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF WHAT RMT ACHIEVED

- Rebuffed the proposed five-year pay deal in favour of a two-year deal. On TFL where RMT is a minority union there is still a four-year pay deal on the table.
- Achieved an increase in pay from one per cent to 1.5 per cent in the first year of pay deal.
- Secured jobs or job offers for all RMT members facing compulsory redundancy.
- Secured improvements to the attendance procedures including the definitions of a 26 weeks maximum warning in future will mean exactly that and there are other concessions that the joint working party will report on fully.
- More talks on pay and talks on a job offer for anyone who is redeployed for reasons of ill health are to take place. ■

RAILWAYS FOR ALL

Olly New reports on a recent international conference in Germany against the EU-driven privatisation of Europe's railways

RMT sent a delegation to a conference in the German towns of Dusseldorf and Cologne earlier this year entitled "Next Stop: A Peoples' Railway".

The conference was organised by a broad alliance from across Europe of trade unionists, political parties and social movements known as 'Bahn fur Alle' (Railways for All) that successfully campaigned to stop privatisation of Deutsche Bahn (German railways) last year.

However Deutsche Bahn is still under orders to act like a private company. It has taken over UK rail freight company EWS and has savagely cuts jobs and services while aiming to dominate European railways.

European rail privatisation would make a bad situation worse in Britain, with the continual undermining of working conditions and agreements. Under EU directives and various rail packages, freight companies are allowed to bid for track use and long

distance 'elite' use of the network would undermine local services.

The German privatisation was stopped by a combination of the credit crunch and German anti-privatisation campaigners. Bahn fur Alle ran an excellent campaign with imaginative protests, academics speaking out, a film, flashmobs and mass media coverage. The campaign clearly highlighted the disastrous example of British Rail privatisation and activists are keen to get ideas from RMT.

The biggest German union, IG Metall opposes privatisation, but unfortunately the biggest rail union, Transnet, prefers to go along with their bosses' plans of private German railways dominating Europe.

Rail privatisation is unpopular with most ordinary people, but the German government is committed to it. Sound familiar? The social democratic SPD party majority is also against privatisation, but the party leadership supports it.

The conference against rail privatisation and for sustainable transport took place in Cologne, and was preceded by a public meeting in the nearby city of Dusseldorf.

RMT was represented by Alex Gordon, Garry Hassell and Olly New from the Executive, Chris Reilly from Reading branch, Tony Jakeman and Mike Bennett both from Bristol Rail branch. The public meeting in Dusseldorf was held in the impressive state parliament buildings. Alex Gordon gave an excellent speech on the British experience of privatisation at both events.

Delegates included members of the German Green party who take part in coalitions in several regional governments. As a result some Greens at the conference were surprisingly not opposed to privatisation. They

want excellent public transport systems that do not damage the environment but fail to understand the devastating effects of privatisation.

Even some trade unionists need to wake up to the fact that privatisation leads to understaffing, underinvestment in unattractive parts of the railways, undermining of safety and the whole ethos of a public railway service.

The ongoing process of privatisation, splitting the infrastructure from operating and many other measures as outlined in EU directives, are fundamentally undermining the foundations of public railways.

Even in Germany, with its high quality rail system, transport investment is biased to cars and airlines. In the last 30 years motorway mileage has tripled and lanes have been added, while rail tracks have declined by 12 per cent. Roads and airways are publicly subsidised by hundreds of millions of dollars, while railways are facing privatisation. CO2 emissions are enormously up as a result.



PROTEST: RMT members at the demonstration against EU rail directives

The Cologne conference unanimously adopted a "European Declaration Against Rail Privatisation and for Sustainable Transport", which is available on the RMT website.

The declaration states that the current global economic crisis underlined the need to expand public transport for economic and social development, to create jobs and to reduce carbon dioxide emissions for a sustainable environmental future.

The Declaration is to be sent to European MEPs (except far right parties) and all European trade unions asking them for support.

A lot of useful material was written for the conference and has now been published called 'Reverse European Transport Policy Now' and sent to branches.

Another conference is planned for next year, if possible in Lille, France on June 11/12 2010. Watch this space! ■

COLOGNE DECLARATION

European Declaration Against Rail Privatisation and for Sustainable Transport

We call for an economic stimulus plan based on:

- Sustainable economic development of rail infrastructure as public transport networks that link regional, national and international passenger rail traffic, increase the public funding to assist rebuilding public transport infrastructure
- Increase public transport in cities and an expansion of bicycle traffic capacity, to facilitate reduced car use
- Development and finance local passenger rail transport, develop freight and diversification of rail freight operations
- Convert rail to renewable energy sources
- We believe rail privatisation and the fragmentation of national railways leads to:
- Attacks on railway safety, pay, conditions, pensions, trade union organisation and collective bargaining
- A railway run solely in the interests of big business
- A more expensive and less efficient railway where profit comes before the needs of the community

We call for:

- The maintenance of integrated and publicly-owned railway infrastructure and operational undertakings
- The expansion of local passenger transport services controlled by democratically elected bodies
- The rejection of European Union efforts to call into question regional cooperation as one of the central financing instruments
- Clear and binding rights for public transport users

We condemn:

- EU directives and the various EU railway packages which privatise Europe's railways and the so-called liberalisation process promotes less democratic accountability and the growth of private rail monopolies.
- Those governments, EU Institutions, the World Bank and other financial institutions which are increasingly making privatisation, liberalisation and fragmentation of the railways a condition of funding.

We agree to ally our local and national struggles in a European Coalition Against Rail Privatisation and for Sustainable Transport bringing together organisations of rail workers and rail users together with citizens to secure a future for the following generations

'REVERSE EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY NOW!' 'EUROPAISCHE VERKEHRSWENDE JETZT!'

Alex Gordon reviews a book of contributions to the European conference on the future of railways

Many of the contributions to the groundbreaking conference in Germany against European Union plans to privatise our railways have been collected together and published in this joint German-English special publication.

The pamphlet opens with a no-holds barred introduction from RMT general secretary Bob Crow entitled: "This EU 'liberalisation' model has proved disastrous in the UK".

This in-depth and exciting pamphlet includes contributions from Carl Wassmuth of 'Bahn für Alle' on whether the German parliament will make the same mistake again as it did in 2008 when it voted in favour of rail privatisation. Johannes Hauber, trade union Chair of the Bombardier Transportation Works Council in Mannheim, Germany discusses on jobs and

climate change in the rail sector.

The publication includes detailed proposals from Dr Winfried Wolf entitled "Peoples' Railway – NOW!" calling for publicly owned railways to make a real difference to prevent climate change and create good quality, green jobs in the booming rail sector. Dr Wolf, a former socialist MP in the German parliament, demonstrates convincingly with the aid of statistics that current EU policies are wedded to promoting the private car and airlines at the expense of railways – in contrast to EU rhetoric about promoting 'modal shift' from road to rail.

He shows that the only industrial sector where carbon emissions rose across the EU for the period 1990–2005 was transport (responsible for more than 25 per cent of all CO₂

emissions in the EU-27), 84 per cent of which was caused by road and air transport.

To reverse European transport policy, Dr Wolf argues that it will take a new railway investment programme in the order of €500 billion between 2010–2025 and a political earthquake. It's good to know that other people are coming to the same conclusions as RMT members. This publication makes an interesting and informative read. Order it now from Unity House, free to RMT members. ■



SOUTHERN VECTIS BUS WORKERS STRIKE OVER PAY FREEZE



Isle of Wight bus drivers launch first of three days of planned strike action

Southern Vectis bus drivers on the Isle of Wight took solid strike action this month in response to the refusal of the company management to budge on its zero per cent pay "offer".

The company, part of the giant Go-Ahead group, has failed to make any pay offer to their drivers this year forcing staff to take action.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow congratulated members for refusing to be beaten down and for taking solid action in their campaign for a fair deal on pay.

"The company is making big profits but is using fear over job losses and the recession to try and smuggle in a pay freeze and RMT members have shown that they will not be bullied in that way," he said.

RMT News spoke some of the workers on the picket line who braved company intimidation to make their stand.

Standing on the picket line at Ryde bus station, Newport Isle of Wight No 2 branch secretary, Keith Murphy, said that members were out on a number of picket lines because they had not had a despite many meetings hoping to resolve it.

The public response has been supportive as passers by took leaflets handed out by the strikers explaining that Southern Vectis had made over £2 million in profit in the first quarter of the year and was passing on the profits to shareholders instead of staff. The company's response when staff voted for strike action was to immediately

suspend the company's sick pay scheme and to tell strikers that their holiday pay will be reduced. They also told the local media that the union was asking for a 15 per cent pay rise when in fact negotiations had never got far enough to mention a figure. Regional organiser Pete Gale said that he was really impressed by the turnout and support for the strike, in spite of management using intimidatory tactics.

"They have spoken to every individual asking if they are prepared to cross a picket line.

"Most disgraceful of all, company officials have been speaking to people who have less than a year's service and told them that they won't have a job if they go on strike. "Even

today we have had managers taking photographs of individuals on the picket line," he said.

In an attempt to break the strike, the company operated a skeletal bus service on the day, shipping in managers and others from the mainland at huge cost and putting them up in hotels.

The company also reduced fares for the day and told the drivers that it shipped in to take fares but not issue tickets. At bus stations' buses were mounting curbs as the drivers – many of whom had not driven a bus in many years – tried to negotiate the unfamiliar terrain.

As RMT News went to press two more strike days were planned on September 11 and 12. ■

FIGHTING FOR GREEN JOBS AT VESTAS

Geoff Martin reports on the struggle to keep the turbine factory on the Isle of Wight owned by Vestas open

In July a group of workers at Vestas Wind Turbines in Newport on the Isle of Wight took the courageous decision to move into the factory buildings and begin an occupation against the closure of their workplace.

As a result they were catapulted into the national news headlines and which would see their campaign against job closures move from a local to a global fight back.

Vestas had begun moves to close their manufacturing capacity back in April, some of the workforce had contacted RMT over the summer and the union had begun recruiting into its offshore energy section.

Vestas workers marched with RMT contingent at Tolpuddle the weekend before the occupation kicked off.

As the occupation began on the evening of the July 20, RMT moved additional resources and a permanent presence outside the factory gates and, working with climate campaigners, families, friends and other trade unionists, began to build the support and publicity networks that would sustain the workers on the inside.

By the end of the week, the Vestas occupation was front page news. RMT general secretary Bob Crow addressed a mass rally and the fight was on to stop Vestas and their private security guards from starving the workers into submission.

Climate Change secretary Ed Miliband was dragged into the row as the hypocrisy of the government's public position on green jobs and renewable energy, while England's only

wind turbine factory is set up for closure, was laid bare.

A first attempt by the company to take re-possession of the factory failed in the County Court due to some sterling work by the RMT's legal team.

The following week the company were successful and the final group of workers left the building in some style, and on their own terms, 19 days after the occupation began.

In the meantime, a group of supporters flying RMT flags had taken over the roof of the nearby Cowes Vestas property where they stuck it out in appalling conditions right through Cowes week, only agreeing to come down on August 14.

Behind the scenes RMT mobilised 16 union leaders to publicly back the campaign as well as securing backing from the TUC for the fight for the 625 green jobs that faced the axe.

A meeting with government minister Joan Ruddock revealed that Vestas had turned down every approach from the government, including the offer of a cash buy out and reinvestment, which could have saved the factory.

The company's argument that there is no demand for turbines in the UK was exposed as nonsense by their own trade association who confirmed that 2700 turbines will be needed by 2012 and Government figures putting the figure at 10,000 by 2020.

It also emerged that the company had pulled a similar stunt in Kintyre in Scotland

earlier this year where a Scottish Parliament intervention saved a threatened Vestas factory with the creation of dozens of new jobs.

Despite the end of the occupation, the fight for Vestas and the future of wind turbine manufacture in the UK goes on.

RMT continues to fight for these members and their industry and will take their case to the TUC congress and into every other available forum.

This has been one hell of a campaign so far and has nailed the lie that workers, and predominantly young workers, are not prepared to join trade unions and are not prepared to fight. This battle goes on. ■



RMT ACTIVITY IN SUPPORT OF VESTAS WORKERS:

Worked with branches on the Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth and with the local labour movement and galvanised wider solidarity and support from the trade union and green movement nationally and internationally. The TUC also responded positively in support of the campaign.

Obtained an injunction to delay moves by the company to evict our members who were occupying the factory

Ensured members occupying the factory received adequate food, water and supplies, including lobbying the government and successfully servicing legal papers on the police to ensure that the security blockade was lifted to allow the provision of food and water

Provided support for all members during the statutory redundancy consultation

The union is affiliated to the campaign against climate change and supported a number of initiatives including demonstrations outside the Department for Climate Change

Members of the RMT Parliamentary Group supported the campaign and John McDonnell tabled Early Day Motion 1925

The union lobbied government officials, wrote to and met Secretary of State for Climate Change Ed Miliband MP and the Minister of State for Climate Change Joan Ruddock MP, making the case for keeping the factory open.

During the occupation the union issued numerous press releases and received excellent and widespread media coverage which significantly raised the profile of the campaign.

RMT continues to support members through circulating a hardship fund appeal established by RMT Newport Isle of Wight 2 branch and our sacked members have been invited to address numerous solidarity meetings.

SAYING NO TO THE LISBON TREATY **AGAIN**

Campaign launched in Dublin for a No vote in the second Irish treaty referendum due on October 2

Against the backdrop of the worse economic crisis in Ireland for a generation and a long-running dock strike in Dublin, Vote No to Lisbon campaigners warned that the Lisbon Treaty would only make things worse.

A launch statement said that the Lisbon Treaty – the same in substance as the previous EU Constitution – would do nothing to help Ireland out of the current economic crisis.

“Instead it would take us in the direction of more privatisation, more right-wing economic policy, more militarisation, less neutrality and less democratic control,” it said.

UNITE Irish regional secretary Jimmy Kelly warned that should the renamed EU Constitution come into force, workers would rely on the EU’s European Court of Justice (ECJ) in any dispute between them and their government.

“This EU court has already made it clear in a number of cases that the fundamental rights it recognises are not absolute but could be varied or restricted in the interests of ‘common organisation of the market’ or to advance ‘objectives of general interest pursued by the Community’,” he warned.

EU rules on ‘free movement’ of capital, goods, services and labour has already led to widespread social dumping in Ireland where exploited foreign labour is being used as a battering ram to drive down wages and increase profits.

Tens of thousands marched in Dublin a few years ago after Irish seafarers were sacked by Irish Ferries and replaced with sweated east European labour, a union-busting policy which is actively encouraged by EU internal market rules and ECJ rulings.

Today Dublin dock workers at Marine Terminals Ltd are entering their 7th week on strike after a ruthless management forced redundancies, imposed “take it or leave it” contracts, slashed pay and worsening conditions.

The company, 49 per cent owned by Deutsche Bank, is refusing to engage with the Irish State industrial relation bodies and has brought in scabs from the UK.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was ironic that, after hundreds of years of Irish labour being exploited in Britain, exploited British workers were being used to break a dock strike in Dublin.

“It’s no good blaming those workers, it is the employers and European Union rules that has created this mess and the Lisbon Treaty will make it even worse.

“This Treaty is a privateer’s charter that removes power from elected governments and hands it to unaccountable EU institutions like the European Court of Justice.

“This EU court has already made a number of draconian anti-trade union rulings which give big business huge new powers over organised labour.

“This has directly led to disputes like the Lindsey oil refinery strike, Irish Ferries and the current Dublin dock strike and it is time to say No once more,” he said to applause.

Frank Keoghan of the People’s Movement has also made clear in a recent pamphlet that the ECJ Ruffert judgment opens the door to the introduction of the ‘country of origin’ principle.

“This means that contractors from other member states could exercise their freedom to provide services at the same rates and conditions of employment as apply in their country of origin, seriously undermining the wages and conditions of Irish workers,” he said.

Socialist Party MEP Joe Higgins warned that the Lisbon Treaty enshrined the running of essential public services, including health and education, for profit.

“If it is passed, the EU Commission would

uphold the right of big business to profit from public services, over and above the rights of workers to take action to defend these services.

“It could intervene to prevent even a mildly progressive government from investing to improve public services as this in their view ‘distorts the market’.

“This is a profoundly undemocratic document, which seeks to impose right-wing economic policies at a time when the neo-liberal policies of privatisation that has directly led to a catastrophic collapse in the living standards,” he said.

He also warned that EU commissioners, going back to Jacques Delors, had expressed their frustration at the EU’s lack of military capacity.

“Lisbon will represent another staging post towards Delors’ dream of a fighting force to, in his words, ‘fight the resource wars of the 21st century’,” he said.

Sinn Féin vice president Mary Lou McDonald said that the Irish government was urging a Yes vote by claiming that so-called ‘guarantees’ gained at a recent EU summit would change how the treaty would affect Ireland.

“These are cynical and empty political promises that do not alter the treaty in any way and the so-called ‘guarantees’ on workers rights simply do not address the issues concerned.

“The government could have argued for a social protocol in the treaty which trade unions have been calling for across Europe.

“Instead with have these meaningless ‘guarantees’ that are essentially designed to deflect from the fact that the electorate are being asked to vote again on the same discredited treaty,” she said. ■

On the web...

www.people.ie

www.no2eu.com



WARRINGTON BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN MACDONALD

RELIEF ORGANISER NORTH

THREE BRIDGES BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

SUPPORT THIS ABLE AND
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

WIGAN BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

AND ASK OTHER BRANCHES FOR
SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS 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

WARRINGTON BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT

THREE BRIDGES BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN WHITEHEAD

FOR RMT RELIEF
ORGANISER(SOUTH)

SUPPORT THIS ABLE AND
EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

**BRIDGEND, LLANTRISANT AND
DISTRICT BRANCH**

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR THE POSITION OF RMT
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE

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

CARLISLE CITY BRANCH

SUPPORTS

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

DEDICATED TO MEMBERS-
COMMITTED TO ALL GRADES

TEESIDE BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR PRESIDENT

THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE
JOB

KINGS CROSS BRANCH

NOMINATE THEIR SECRETARY

RAY KNIGHT

FOR PRESIDENT

AND SEEK SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS

FOR FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY

WATFORD BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE SMART

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
REGION 10

CARLISLE CITY BRANCH

NOMINATES

**ANDY-WARNOCK-
SMITH
&
JOHN TILLEY**

TO THE POSITIONS OF NORTH
WEST REGIONAL ORGANISER

VOTE FOR BOTH CANDIDATES

SOUTH DEVON BUS BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR PRESIDENT

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY
BRANCH**

NOMINATES

GREG HEWITT

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

AND IS SEEKING SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FROM BRANCHES
FOR THIS ABLE 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

CARLISLE CITY BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN MACDONALD

FOR RELIEF ORGANISER NORTH
A CANDIDATE WITH A PROVEN
RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE
MEMBERS

WATERLOO BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN WHITEHEAD

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER
SOUTH AND WOULD URGE OTHER
RMT BRANCHES TO CONSIDER
MAKING SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS

**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

BASSETLAW BRANCH

NOMINATES

DAVE GOTT

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
ELECTION, YORKSHIRE &
LINCOLNSHIRE

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
ABLE CANDIDATE

BACKING THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

People's Charter Campaigns Co-Director John Mulrenan outlines why RMT members should sign up

Since its spring launch the People's Charter for Change has given people the chance to reconnect with politics by offering realistic and attractive alternatives to those being peddled by the mainstream parties. The Charter's principles are firmly geared towards the needs of ordinary people, not those of big business and the wealthy.

The party political and media debate is relentlessly focused upon which public services should be cut, how much wages should be restrained and how public sector pensions can be cut back.

The Charter sets out to undermine that consensus, and to offer people an alternative, positive vision.

Countless billions of our money has been used to bail out the banks and other failed financial institutions, and to maintain bankers' obscene bonuses. Ever more public money is channelled to multinationals, many of which pay little or no tax, through failed privatisation and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) schemes that now require public subsidies. Although we effectively own a large section of the banking industry we have no control over investment strategy, bankers' bonuses or mortgages. Hundreds of thousands face unemployment, and ever-increasing numbers are threatened with eviction from their homes.

The Charter demands public

control of the banks, along with energy, water and transport, ensuring that there is investment in these services instead of money being creamed off to corporate shareholders.

It also calls for a fairer tax system, with the wealthy and big business paying their way, investment not cuts in public services, the creation of millions of new homes, and sustainable jobs with decent wages.

The Charter is currently supported by 18 trade unions, and also has the support of 33 MPs through a motion sponsored by John McDonnell MP.

RMT, one of the of the founding organisations, has submitted a motion to September's Trades Union

Congress seeking unequivocal TUC backing for the Charter.

Charter meetings have taken place, and are taking place up, and down the country, and the first national Charter event will take place this autumn in London.

The event at the Camden Centre on November 21 is open to all Charter supporters. Trades unionists and community activists are particularly welcome. We aim to sign up a million people in the run-up to next year's General Election. You can help by signing up to the Charter at www.thepeoplescharter.com, getting your friends, family and colleagues to do the same, and by attending the Charter event. ■

The People's Charter

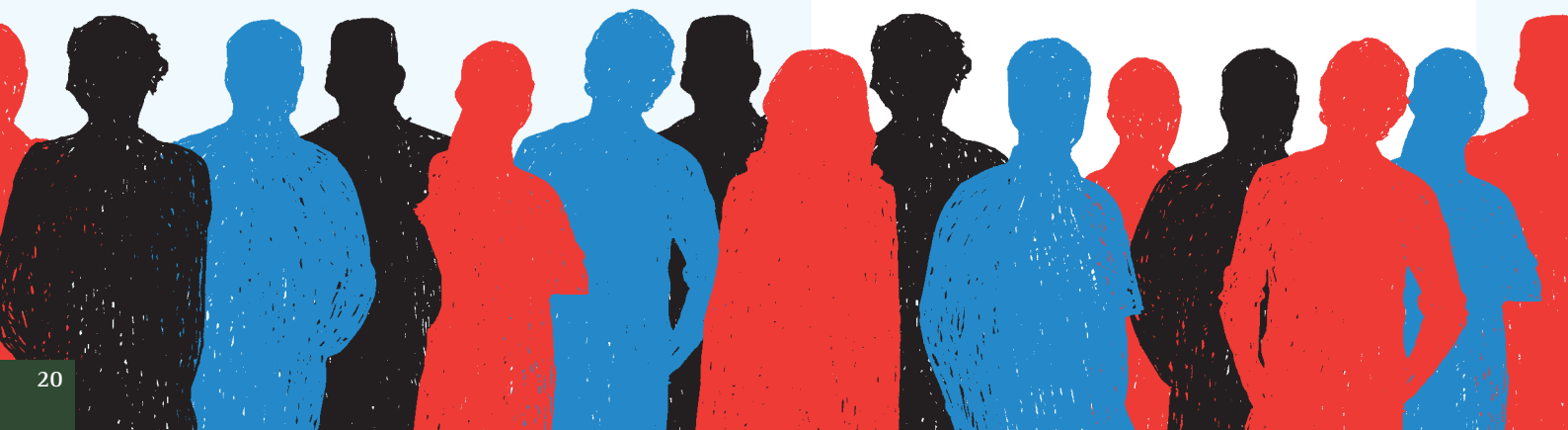
National Conference

Camden Centre

Bidborough street WC1H 9JE
(five-minutes walk from Euston or Kings Cross)

Saturday 21st November
10am–3pm

info@thepeoplescharter.com
www.thepeoplescharter.com



THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

**WE NEED CHANGE.
WE NEED HOPE.
WE NEED A FAIR
BRITAIN.**

A fair economy for a fairer Britain

Progressive taxes without loopholes or tax havens. We must own and control the main banks. Guarantee all pensions, mortgages and savings. Tie pensions and benefits to wages. Give Pensioners free transport and heating. Increase the minimum wage.

MORE AND BETTER JOBS.

Protect existing jobs. Make a massive investment in new jobs, particularly in green technology for our children's sake.

DECENT HOMES FOR ALL

Create 3 million new publicly owned homes. Stop the reposessions. Control rents.

SAVE AND IMPROVE OUR SERVICES

Energy, Telecommunications, Water and Transport to be owned by all of us; keep the post in public ownership. Remove profit making from the NHS and education. Support our public service staff.

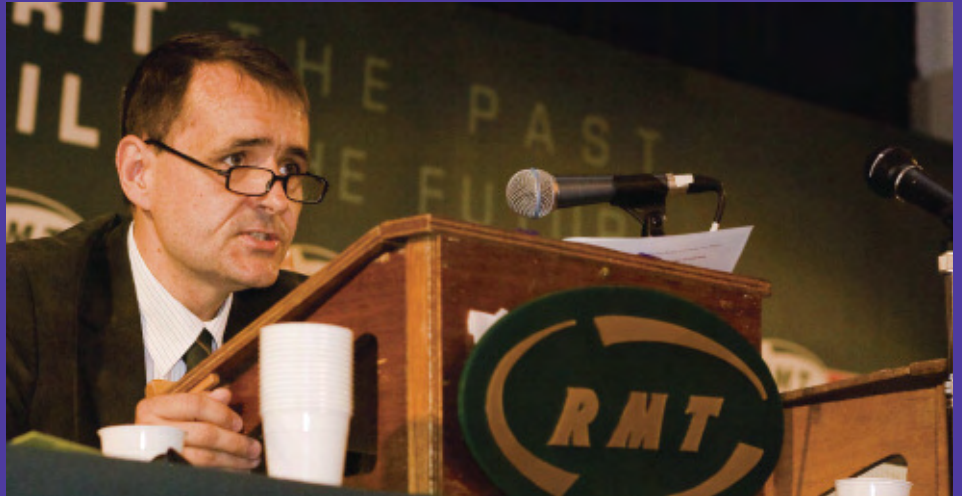
FOR FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

Equality for all. Together against all racism and discrimination. Equal pay for women. End child poverty. Give young people a future. Free child and youth facilities, education and training for all. Repeal the anti-union laws to fight poverty and inequality.

A BETTER FUTURE STARTS NOW

No more blood and money for war. Bring the troops home. No more £billions for nuclear weapons. We want massive investment for a greener, safer world. Get rid of the debt economy in Britain and cancel the debts of the poor of the planet. ■

JOINING THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING



No-one should underestimate the desperate need to prevent global warming and the fight for a more environmentally and responsible approach to the future of our planet.

This need is a fundamental part of this union's political and industrial work, whether it is campaigning to move freight around on rail or encouraging people to get out of their cars and use public transport.

RMT has consistently argued for the needs of people and safety over profit and cutbacks and that means opposing the environmental vandalism of capitalist greed.

That is why hundreds of RMT members lobbied parliament earlier this year to demand a 'people's railway' and carried placards insisting 'rail jobs are green jobs'.

The union presented MPs with a well-researched document containing a blueprint for an integrated, publicly-owned railway which could be run without the need to subsidise rail privateers to the tune of £6 billion a year.

But RMT not only campaigns for a green railway, the union also supports green energy and that includes green offshore energy. That is why RMT had no hesitation to support the protests by 600 workers at the wind turbine plant at Vestas on the Isle of Wight after it was threatened with closure.

RMT organises in the offshore energy

sector where it has many members working on wind turbines and in the oil industry. Therefore it was only natural that Vestas workers turned to RMT for help and the union backed their struggle to the hilt.

The union is still fighting for those who were sacked, to the eternal shame of the management, for trying to save the plant from closure.

Two of those sacked members, the general secretary and myself met the minister responsible, Joan Ruddock MP. Despite a lot of apologies, the government said that it couldn't take over the company and management actions were nothing to do with them.

So banks get unimaginable amounts of public money, something like £1.3 trillion, and wind turbine workers and their industries get exactly nothing. That is a disgrace.

If, as they say, the Vestas management declined to co-operate then the factory should have been nationalised. If it is good enough to bail-out and national banks, then why not productive factories which actually makes things for export?

The fight to protect the environment and save and create green jobs must continue. That is why RMT places the issues of environmentalism at the heart of our activity alongside the fight for justice for our members and their families and for workers' rights.

John Leach

TOLPUDDLE 175 YEARS ON

This year's Tolpuddle Festival marked the 175th anniversary of the events back in 1834 when six farm labourers from the Dorset village were arrested for taking an "illegal oath" and forming a trade union.

It also marked 175 years since 100,000 people marched from Copenhagen Fields in North London to parliament in protest at the transportation of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs.

The festival was another stunning success culminating in the Sunday march through the village at which the RMT contingent and the RMT brass band made their presence felt in fine style.

The RMT presence at Tolpuddle, Durham, Burston and other trade union events continues to go from strength to strength with more members getting involved every year under the slogan: "The Past We Inherit – The Future We Build."



LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

RMT learning rep John Dougherty embarks on a university course of his own

As an RMT lead Union Learning Representative (ULR) for the past three years, John Dougherty has been at the forefront of pushing the union learning agenda forward at Merseyrail.

John sits on the Learning Steering Group and encourages others to attend courses and develop their knowledge and skills. But now John has embarked on his own learning experience by enrolling on a new university course for trade union activists.

The Certificate of Professional Development in union learning studies is a two year course delivered in London by The Working Lives Research Institute (London Metropolitan University).

The CPD course was developed following research done by the Working Lives Research Institute (WRLI) evaluating the impact of union learning on the trade union movement. The course will enable John to build up 60 credits which can lead to access on to a degree-level course.

RMT bursary

John won funding for the course from the RMT bursary scheme. The RMT fund was set up to encourage RMT members to develop their skills and knowledge and make sure that course costs don't act as a barrier to personal development.*

"I am really enjoying the course and it has given me the opportunity to work and share best practice with other union activists from a variety of different trade unions.

"It has raised my awareness about how the learning agenda can have a positive influence on other areas of trade unionism such as organising and bargaining," he said.

EDUCATING AND ORGANISING

The CPD course is aimed at all union activists including ULRs. The Institute developed this course due to the huge growth in trade union involvement in learning and the rise of the learning rep.

Designed in consultation with trade unions, the four course modules focus on union learning as part of the struggle for worker's education and the history of trade union education, globalisation, change at work and the role of union learning, how and why workers learn and upon how ULRs fits into union strategies and organisation at the workplace.**

The ULRs on the course each wrote a case study about their own experience in their workplaces and the course tutors were so impressed with the content that this material will now be published.

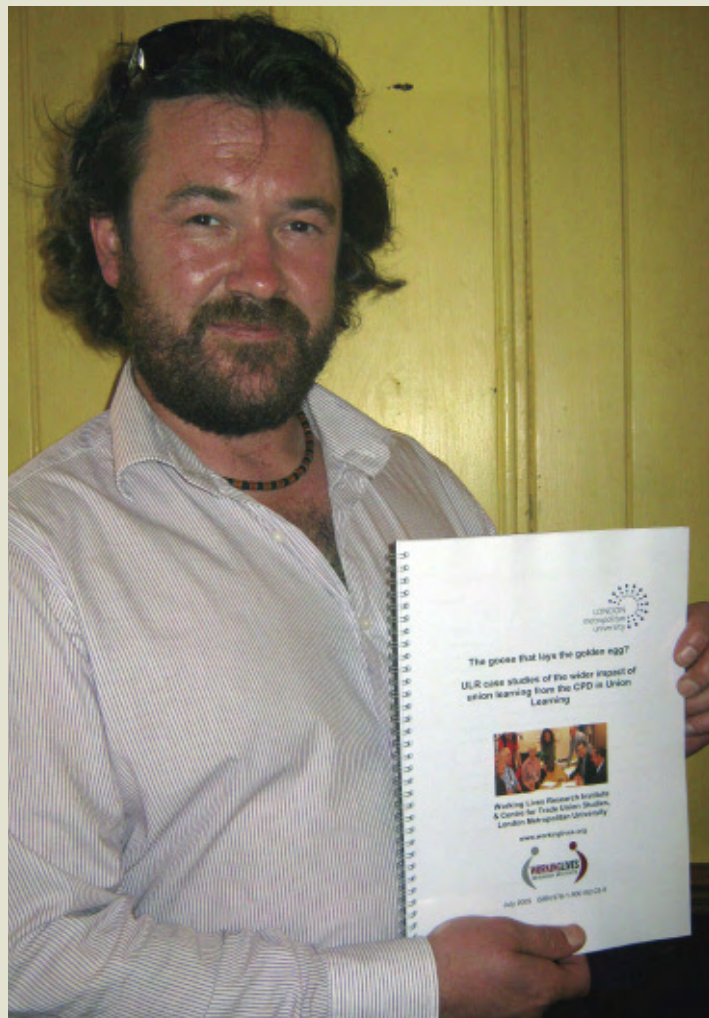
This will be the first collection of case studies published by ULRs and focusing on the experience of linking the educational and organising agendas. John said that the course had enabled him to take his own personal development to the next level.

"I have improved my academic research skills and gained more confidence when producing objective writing such as the case study," he said.

Since starting as a guard with Merseyrail in September 2000, John was recruited on to the educational development programme to provide information and advice to schoolchildren about anti-social behaviour and their responsibilities as passengers on the Merseyrail network.

The Company Council rep then alerted John to a vacancy for a ULR.

"I'd always had a belief in



the benefits of education but I didn't know too much about the ULR role at the time," John said.

This inspired him to start a new learning journey as an adult. Just like many working adults, John left school with no formal qualifications.

After attending the trade union education courses for his new ULR role he took the opportunity to gain other qualifications in literacy, numeracy and IT.

John is now keen to promote the benefits of the union learning agenda to other reps.

"The Union Learning Rep role has changed my perceptions of trade unionism and provided me with a far broader understanding of labour history

and the objectives of the organised labour movement," he said.

John is keen to encourage other union reps and activists to attend similar educational programmes.

"By using education as a tool for personal development we empower ourselves as trade unionists, giving members more focused and pro-active representation," he said. ■

* For more information about the RMT Bursary Scheme contact the RMT Learning team on 0207 529 8820 or e-mail a.brattle@rmt.org.uk

** More information at www.workinglives.org

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LEGAL RIGHTS FOR NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

RMT produces a reps' guide for parents from pregnancy to flexible working

RMT has produced a new guide for representatives on legal rights for new and expectant mothers.

The guide is intended to provide information on essential legal rights relating to pregnancy, maternity and new mothers and indeed fathers.

Included are issues relating to health and safety and the importance of risk assessments; maternity leave and pay; and, the problems confronting those who wish to work flexibly on their return to work.

For those who encounter problems on flexible working requests, a model grievance letter is included as one of the appendices.

The booklet has been designed to provide reps with quick and understandable access

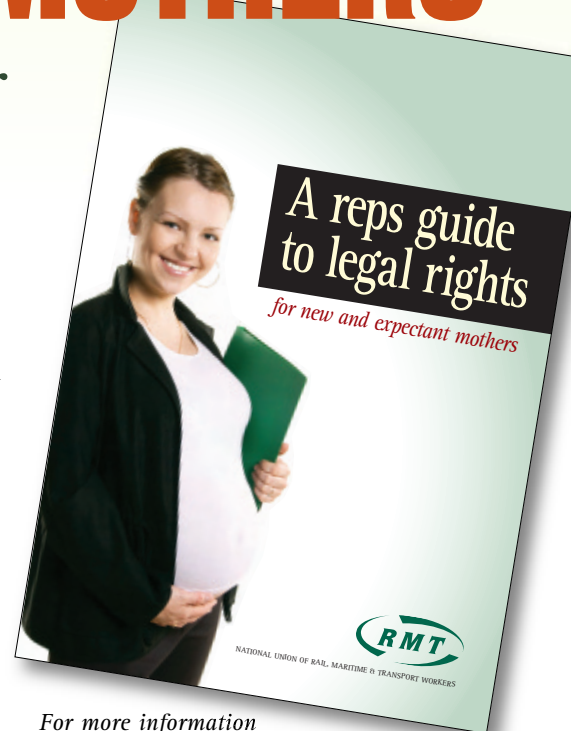
to this complicated area of legal rights.

The guide also advises if a legal remedy is available when rights have been infringed and what the time limits are in relation to employment tribunal proceedings.

Reps need to be mindful that the booklet sets out statutory minimum rights so it is always worth checking what a company's policies are.

It may be the case that they are more generous than the statutory minimums outlined in this guide. For example, maternity pay may be higher.

A copy of this booklet is available from Unity House and is being sent to all first and second stage reps and will appear on the RMT website shortly. ■



For more information contact pat Wilkinson at Unity House or E-mail: p.wilkinson@rmt.org.uk

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NOMINATE

STAN HERSHELL

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER
NORTH

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NOMINATE

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TEESIDE BRANCH NOMINATE MICKY THOMPSON FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	MANCHESTER VICTORIA BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR PRESIDENT 2010-2012 <i>AND URGES ALL MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THIS EXCELLENT CANDIDATE</i>	WATERLOO BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT <i>AND ASK OTHER BRANCHES TO MAKE SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS</i>	LEEDS AND CARTAGE BRANCH NOMINATES DAVE COLLINSON FOR POSITION OF REGIONAL ORGANISER FOR YORKS AND LINCS
TEESIDE BRANCH NOMINATE JOHN MACDONALD FOR RELIEF REGION ORGANISER	LU ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES GREG HEWITT FOR PRESIDENT	DERBY AND RAIL ENGINEERING NOMINATES KEN USHER FOR MIDLANDS REGIONAL ORGANISER <i>RE-ELECT THIS SKILLED AND DEDICATED CANDIDATE</i>	EIRE SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATES PETER PINKNEY FOR PRESIDENT
EDINBURGH NO1 BRANCH SUPPORTS MICHAEL HOGG <i>A WORTHY CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF REGIONAL ORGANISER SCOTLAND</i>	LU ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES BRIAN WHITEHEAD FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER (SOUTH)	DERBY AND RAIL ENGINEERING NOMINATES PETER PINKNEY FOR RMT PRESIDENT	EIRE SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATES ANDY WARNOCK-SMITH <i>AND</i> JOHN TILLEY REGIONAL ORGANISERS FOR REGIONS 2,3&4
EDINBURGH NO1 BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN MACDONALD FOR THE POSITION OF RELIEF ORGANISER NORTH	ST PANCRAS BRANCH NOMINATES PETER PINKNEY FOR PRESIDENT	RHONDDA BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR RMT PRESIDENT	NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH NOMINATES STAN HERSCHELL FOR NE REGIONAL ORGANISER

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RMT SISTERS DO THE MOONWALK

RMT staff members Nicky Hoarau, Vicky Bryce, Yvonne Sawford from Head Office made their way to Edinburgh this summer to walk 26.2 miles overnight to raise money for the fight against Breast Cancer.

Nicky and Yvonne completed the

walk in just under seven hours, whilst Vicky was proud to make it to 18.5 miles before hip pain got the better of her.

In total to date the RMT Sisters have raised £3,524.30 for this worthwhile cause and would like to thank all for

their generosity and support.

Donations can still be made via www.justgiving.com/rmtsister alternatively donations can be sent to Head Office, Unity House (cheques payable to 'Walk the Walk Worldwide').



TUBE WORKERS TAKE ON THREE PEAKS

Tube workers Jim McDaid, Garry Houghton, Den Fitzpatrick and Dave Rayfield are taking part in the Three Peaks challenge this month, which involves climbing Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis one after the other to raise money for The Railway Children charity and would really appreciate your support.

RMT News will let you know how they get on. It's easy to donate online with a credit or debit card - just go to our JustGiving page:

www.justgiving.com/thermtrambler
JustGiving sends the donation straight to The Railway Children and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you're a UK taxpayer, so the donation is worth even more.

NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH

NOMINATES

MICKY THOMPSON

FOR EC MEMBER

EAST SUSSEX COASTWAY BRANCH

NOMINATES

GREG HEWITT

FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT
AND IS SEEKING SUPPORTING
NOMINATIONS FROM OTHER
BRANCHES

HUMBER SHIPPING BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR PRESIDENT

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THIS
EXPERIENCED AND TRUSTED
CANDIDATE

NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR PRESIDENT

ABERDEEN SHIPPING BRANCH

NOMINATES

ANDY GORDON

REGIONAL ORGANISER FOR
SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN
IRELAND

HUMBER SHIPPING BRANCH

NOMINATES

DAVE COLLINSON

AND

JOHN MACDONALD

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISERS
NORTH

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN WHITEHEAD

IN THE ELECTION FOR RELIEF
REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

RUGBY N01 BRANCH

SUPPORTS

KEN USHER

FOR THE POSITION OF REGIONAL ORGANISER FOR THE MIDLANDS

FORT WILLIAM BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN MCDUGALL

FOR SCOTTISH REGIONAL ORGANISER AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR

THIS ABLE CANDIDATE

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

PROUD TO NOMINATE

KEN USHER

FOR RE-ELECTION AS MIDLAND'S REGIONAL ORGANISER, RE-ELECT THIS HIGHLY SKILLED, DEDICATED AND EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

CARDIFF RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

OWEN HERBERT

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES, SOUTH WALES AND WEST REGION, AND URGES OTHER REGION 7 BRANCHES SUPPORT THIS CAPABLE AND EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

RUGBY N01 BRANCH

SUPPORTS

STEVE BOND

FOR RE ELECTION OF THE POSITION OF FULL-TIME COORDINATOR WEST COAST SOUTH

CENTRAL AND NORTH MERSEY BRANCH

NOMINATE

JOHN TILLEY & ANDY WARNOCK-SMITH

FOR THE POST OF REGIONAL ORGANISER REGIONS 2 & 3

WE ASK MEMBERS TO RE-ELECT THIS HARD WORKING TEAM

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN MCDONALD

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER NORTH

A WORTHY, RELIABLE AND TRUSTED CANDIDATE DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS

KEITH BRANCH

NOMINATES

JOHN MCDUGALL

FOR SCOTTISH REGIONAL ORGANISER

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

SUPPORTS

GREG HEWITT

FOR PRESIDENT

AND SEEKS FURTHER NOMINATIONS FROM OTHER BRANCHES

REGIONAL ORGANISER SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND

GLASGOW 1&2 BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

JIM GRAY

AND CALLS ON ALL MEMBERS TO USE THEIR VOTE FOR JIM

THE MOST EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

PROUD TO NOMINATE

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT

A WORTHY, RELIABLE AND TRUSTED CANDIDATE DEDICATED TO RMT MEMBERS

MORDEN AND OVAL BRANCH

NOMINATE

PETER PINKNEY

FOR PRESIDENT

THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB

GRANTHAM BRANCH

NOMINATES

GREGG HEWITT

TO BE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

GLASGOW 1&2 BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR POSITION OF RMT NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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

JUBILEE SOUTH & EAST LONDON LINE BRANCH

NOMINATES

PETER PINKNEY

FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

SUPPORT OUR CANDIDATE - THE MEMBERS CHOICE

NORTH CLYDE BRANCH

NOMINATE

JIM GRAY

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

PERTH N01 BRANCH

PROUD TO NOMINATE

JOHN MCDUGALL

FOR THE POSITION OF LEAD ORGANISER SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND ASK ALL MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THIS CAPABLE AND EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE

RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER (NORTH)

GLASGOW 1&2 BRANCH

HAS NOMINATED

JOHN MACDONALD

AND URGES SUPPORT FOR THIS ABLE AND TRUSTED CANDIDATE

CARDIFF RAIL BRANCH

NOMINATES

ALEX GORDON

FOR RMT PRESIDENT

AND ASKS OTHER BRANCHES FOR SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS FOR THIS DEDICATED AND HARD-WORKING CANDIDATE

NORTH CLYDE BRANCH

NOMINATE

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GUILTY AND PROUD OF IT!

Sean Geoghan reviews *Guilty and Proud of It! Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians 1919-1925* by Janine Booth

In charting the heroic struggle of the people in the East London borough of Poplar and their socialist and trade unionist Labour councillors, RMT London Transport Regional Transport Secretary, Janine Booth, has, by all measures, written a very fine book.

In the aftermath of the slaughter on the western front, working people nationwide were struggling to re-build their lives and no longer prepared to put up with terrible housing, hopelessly inadequate welfare provision and poorly paid and unsafe working conditions.

Elected in the same year as the 1919 successful national rail strike, Poplar's councillors set about tackling the appalling social conditions in a borough where twelve districts were officially designated as slums, over 10,000 homes were occupied by two families and infant mortality and unemployment rates standing at 10% and 12% respectively.

Determined to defend local

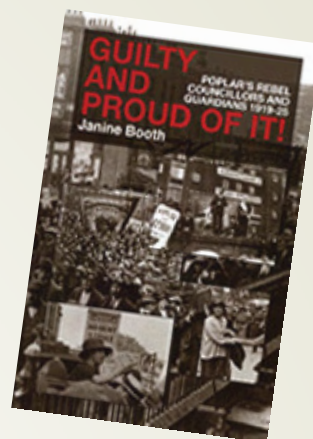
services and the poor relief paid to the unemployed in the borough, the council found itself in breach of the law when it refused to collect rates designed to pay for services in much wealthier areas of London. Their demand was that money raised from rich, Tory areas like Kensington should contribute towards eliminating the grinding poverty present in working class boroughs; Poplar would not collect the cross-London rates until the system was changed, and the rates equalised. By March 1921 Poplar owed £30,000 to the Tory-controlled London County Council, £25,000 to the Metropolitan Police and Metropolitan Water Board £40,000.

By defying the law, Poplar was on a collision course with government. To widespread acclaim expressed at a series of local labour movement conferences and large, enthusiastic public rallies, councillor George Lansbury explained: "All reforms come

from those who are ready to break bad laws". Reforms were soon delivered; Poplar paid a minimum wage of £4 a week to workers in the borough, equal pay was introduced for women lifting their pay by an average of 70 per cent. Furthermore infant mortality rates were reduced, library services improved and a house building programme embarked upon.

The council's principled stand and the huge support it enjoyed amongst working people across London caused consternation in government circles. The response was swift. September 1921 saw thirty councillors sentenced to prison for refusing to collect the rates. Twenty-five male councillors, including NUR members Albert Baker and James Jones, served time in Brixton prison. Joe Banks, previously the Poplar No1 Branch Secretary of the ASRS (a predecessor union of the NUR) and sacked by the railway for taking unauthorised leave to work as a Labour election agent, was also imprisoned. The then NUR Poplar No1 Branch Secretary, Joe Hammond, was also a Poplar councillor but was not sent to prison.

When the five women councillors were taken to



Holloway Prison, 15,000 people marched with them in a massive show of support. Tragically one of the imprisoned women, the inspirational Minnie Lansbury, became ill during her time in Holloway and was to die of pneumonia a matter of months after her release.

Remarkably, over 30 official council meetings took place in Brixton prison with the women prisoners being taken to the meeting from Holloway. When released the councillors were unbowed and went on to secure an important victory with outdoor relief costs being pooled across London to scales agreed by the Minister of Health. Although short of equalisation, this was an important victory. As the book recounts, the Poplar councillors and their supporters changed bad laws by their non-compliance and the unemployed of London benefitted from their courage and determination.

As a union we are rightly proud of the role played by those Poplar councillors, Jones, Baker and Hammond, who were NUR members. It is in their tradition that this is a book should be read not simply as important historical account of selfless struggle but also as a guide and inspiration to struggles today. ■

Guilty and Proud Of It! Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians 1919-1925 By Janine Booth (Merlin Press) costs £12.95 and can be purchased at www.merlinpress.co.uk



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PEOPLE'S PUBS - Words by Mike Pentelow, Pictures by Peter Arkell**JARROW CRUSADERS**
76 WALTER STREET, JARROW

Durham. The unemployed marchers from Jarrow to London in 1936 learned that being so called "moderate" was seen as a sign of weakness by the authorities. The government ignored their plea for action to reduce the 80 per cent unemployment rate in the town following the closure of the shipyards and to reverse its decision to reduce unemployment benefit. When the more militant National Unemployed Workers' Movement marched on London a few days later, however, they drew such huge crowds of supporters that the government was forced to meet them and suspend the dole cuts. Jarrow's Labour MP was Ellen Wilkinson, known as "Red" Ellen on account of the colour of her hair and her politics (she had been a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain from 1920 to 1924). The town council approached her to do something dramatic to persuade the government to reopen the shipyards. She consulted leading communist Wal Hannington, leader of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. He advised her to organise a Jarrow contingent to join a national hunger march of the NUWM taking place in October. The NUWM was considered too militant by the leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC, so this suggestion was rejected by the town council. Instead they organised a separate march of 200 "Crusaders" on the 280 miles to London, and set off a week before the Tyneside and Durham contingent (led by communist councillor Tom Richardson) joined the NUWM march. "Red" Ellen joined the Jarrow Crusaders, but broke off to attend the annual conference of the Labour Party. There she was amazed to find her marchers denounced from the platform. "I

thought that we were guaranteed 100 per cent respectable," she wrote. "With the blessing of bishops, priests and clergy, subscriptions from business men, the paternal interest of the Rotary Club, and the unanimous vote of the town council, could anything have been more constitutional?" Despite this, she added, the Labour Party leadership withdrew support and the TUC circulated trades councils advising them against giving help. "So in places like Chesterfield, where the trades and Labour council obeyed the circular, the Conservative Party weighed in with hot meals and a place to sleep". On reaching London they were allowed to sit in the public gallery at the House of Commons where their petition was handed over on November 4.

But they could not understand it when the matter was not debated.

"The men, who were entertained to tea in the House, were rather disappointed," recalled Ellen.

"They had imagined an imposing ceremony and a long discussion".

The government never showed any inclination to reward the men of Jarrow for their good conduct, as Wal Hannington remarked in his book "Never on Our Knees", so they left unheralded on November 7. The very next day the officially denounced NUWM marchers were greeted by a crowd of 250,000 as they arrived in Hyde Park demanding the withdrawal of dole cuts. Such crowds led the Parliamentary Labour Party to reassess its opposition to the marchers. Its leader Clement Attlee saw no problem in joining Wal Hannington on the platform and attacking means testing of the dole. The national government also did a u-turn. It



had said it would not receive a deputation of the NUWM marchers, but four days after their arrival it was forced to do so, and the Minister of Labour, Ernest Brown, announced a suspension of the dole cuts. The contrasting lack of success of the Jarrow experience was described as "a picture of capitalism at work" by Ellen in her book "The Town that was Murdered".

It was also an indictment of the politics that made the town "a workhouse without walls," she concluded. Jarrow is still proud, nonetheless, of the symbolic gesture made by their Crusaders, who are commemorated by a sculpture in the town, which was unveiled in Morrisons car park in 2001. Musician Alan Price also composed a song about them which includes the lyrics: My name is Geordie McIntyre, and the bairns don't even have a fire, and the wife said Geordie go to London town and if they don't give us half a chance, don't even give us a second glance, then Geordie with my blessings burn them down. ■

Crossword

Due to technical difficulties we have been unable to run our regular prize crossword. We hope to re-instate the crossword in the near future. In the meantime, winner of crossword No54 is David Chapman of Eastbourne.

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- Christmas Club accounts have to be opened by the end of April. Late applications commence the following November.
- As an RMT CU member you build up regular savings with a yearly dividend (3.75% in 2008) and you can apply for low interest rate loans.
- Your Christmas Club money is separate from your regular savings account. That means you will have a guaranteed sum available for Christmas maturing every 14th November, plus a savings account growing with time.
- The Christmas Club secures your money so it's there for the Christmas period. This means that your money is locked-in and you can make no withdrawals until 14th November when all of your money, plus dividend will be paid out.
- If you make all of your payments we will endeavour to add a dividend bonus of 2% p.a. as accrued through the year
- All of your money will be paid to your bank account on the first working day after 14th November.
- If you cancel your payments the 2% dividend is not applied and you cannot withdraw your money until after 14th November. If you think you will need access to your money before 14th November, this account is not suitable for you.
- The Christmas Club will continue year-on-year, so payments after 14th November start the next year's account. Of course if you wish to cancel your payments you are free to do so at any time.

Your savings are fully protected for up to £50,000 by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme

Cut here

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

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

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

DECLARATION

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

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



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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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.

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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

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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

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- 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
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