

RMT *news*

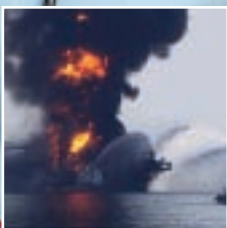
Essential reading for today's transport worker

DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES

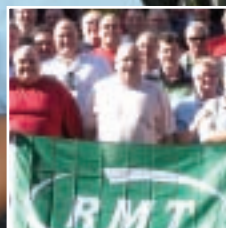
**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE**



**STOP TUBE CUTS
PAGE 6**



**OFFSHORE SAFETY
STANDARDS
PAGE 15**



**CAMPAIGNING FOR
THE BUS INDUSTRY
PAGE 18**



www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**. * Information that must be provided.

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Surname*		Address*	
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Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

2 Your Employment.

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

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To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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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
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

contents

Page 4

RMT BACKS JUSTICE 4 JARVIS WORKERS PROTESTS

Page 5

SOUTHERN SHELVES EXTENSION OF DRIVER-ONLY TRAINS

Page 6

EUROSTAR TRAIN MANAGERS TAKE ACTION OVER LONE WORKING

Page 7

UNION BLASTS ATTACKS ON TUBE JOBS AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Page 8

COMPANYWATCH

Page 9

PARLIAMENTARY COLUMN

Page 10

BRING AGENCY STAFF IN-HOUSE

Page 12

NETWORK RAIL DISPUTE UPDATE

Page 13

CATERING STAFF ORGANISE TO RESIST ATTACKS

Page 14

AGAINST RACISM

Page 15

BP AND SHELL 'NOT MEETING SAFETY STANDARDS ON NORTH SEA OIL RIGS'

Page 16

DEFENDING SUPERVISORY AND CLERICAL JOBS

Page 17

FIGHTING CUTS DEFENDING JOBS

Page 18

CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BUS INDUSTRY

Page 19

CORPORATE TAKEOVERS AND THE BUS INDUSTRY

Page 20

GREEK WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Page 21

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Page 22

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL TRADES COUNCIL

Page 25

LEGAL NEWS

Page 27

BOOK OFFER

Page 28

UNION SECURES RIGHT TO TIME OFF

Page 29

YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

Page 30

TAKING PRIDE

Page 32

PEOPLE'S PUBS

Page 33

CROSSWORD

Page 34

CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

DEFENDING PUBLIC SERVICES



No-one voted for a 'ConDem' government but it has ushered in a new era of public spending cuts and austerity unprecedented since the end of World War Two.

The Tories have always been the party of mass unemployment because that suits their class and keeps workers under the cosh.

Make no mistake, this is fiscal fascism in all its Thatcherite glory being propped up by the Lib Dems, a government with no mandate imposing savage cuts at the behest of big business and the central banks. As a result, the billions the bankers have creamed off in bail outs will be chewed up and spat back in our faces as cuts.

But there will undoubtedly be a fight back when the electorate realizes that they have been misled by the political elite more interested in doing the bidding of corporate institutions like the IMF and the European Union rather than those that elected them.

This anger will mirror the growing resistance in Greece and elsewhere across the struggling eurozone.

One way of stopping any effective resistance is by running to the courts to ban strike action. British Airways workers are the latest to suffer this outrageous attack on trade union democracy after judges cited the recent judgment against RMT workers at Network Rail.

The courts made the same ludicrous claims against their union Unite, namely that it had not informed their members of the result.

Yet it's complete rubbish that RMT didn't convey the result of the strike ballot to our members. The result was texted to members, appeared on the union's website and was plastered all over the TV and the papers - we hardly kept it a secret. We warned after the initial judgment that it bent the anti-trade union laws even further in favour of the employers and so it has proved.

There is no doubt that this new ConDem government want to effectively outlaw strikes in publicly used services before they swing the

axe at our hospitals, schools and fire stations and the courts are the battering ram to make that happen. This is a ripping up of a basic human right and we stand 100 per cent alongside BA cabin crew in their fight to defend jobs and conditions.

At each grades conference I have attended recently, delegates have outlined how the general attack on jobs and pay affect their sector. Whether it is the corporate takeovers currently taking place in the bus industry, social dumping in the shipping sector or the jobs cull of engineering workers being carried out by Network Rail, transport workers are bearing the brunt of capitalism in crisis.

Our members at what was EWS have bitter experience of this aggressive profit-first approach adopted by the likes of Deutsche Bahn, the German state rail operator that has now taken over Arriva and the Tyne and Wear Metro, which was formerly a beacon of public-sector success.

Yet millions of people across Europe believe that transport should be publicly owned and publicly run, not a commodity to be smashed up and exploited by privateers who are ultimately only interested in profit margins.

That is why private rail companies are mugging passengers by rescheduling off-peak trains as peak services in order to dishonestly jack up fares.

It is a scandal that not only are private transport companies allowed to exploit passengers on a daily basis but they also continue to soak up tens of millions in taxpayer subsidies.

Moreover, with the collapse of Tube Lines and the renationalisation of London Underground maintenance, the time has come to roll out that process and kick the rest of the private operators off the transport sector here and across Europe.

Bob Crow

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

RMT BACKS JUSTICE 4 JARVIS WORKERS PROTESTS

RMT backed protests by the Justice 4 Jarvis Workers outside Network Rail offices in London and Leeds city centre recently as the union continues the fight for the jobs of 1,200 workers following the collapse of the company in March.

Jarvis campaigners took the opportunity to make their case

for re-employment and payment of outstanding wages outside the offices of Jarvis administrators Deloitte who are based on Leeds City Square.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a disgrace that a mismanaged company like Jarvis could be allowed to crash and burn with the

employees, essential workers playing a safety-critical role on the rail network, kicked in the teeth and dumped out on the cobbles.

Jarvis workers spokesman Bill Rawcliffe said that Network Rail had sat back and watched while the job cuts scandal unfold.

"We repeat our demand that Network Rail should ensure an orderly transfer of the Jarvis work to companies that are committed to re-engaging the Jarvis workforce on their existing terms and conditions," he said.

RMT assistant general secretary Mick Cash told the noisy protest that the union expected Network Rail to deliver for Jarvis workers not ensure that they are sacked.

TSSA general secretary Gerry Doherty joined the protest and said the work that still needed to be carried out belonged to Jarvis workers, "not jumped up directors hiding in Network Rail head office".



A short film of the Jarvis protest in London can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/user/RMTtelevision

RMT RALLIES TO FIGHT £50 BILLION SPENDING CUTS

On May Day RMT issued a clear warning to politicians regardless of the outcome of the general election that the trade union movement was gearing up for a head-on fight with the political elite over an estimated £50 billion of spending cuts.

RMT, and its brass band, led the May Day march in Belfast and had a major presence on the traditional London march the same day and other events from Scotland down to the south coast.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that in Greece thousands of workers out on the streets protesting over the collapse of their economy and the impact on working men and women who are taking the hit full-on for the failures of the political class, the bankers and the European super state (see page 20).

Bob Crow, who led the EU-critical NO2EU: Yes to Democracy election coalition last year,

warned that the attack on living standards, jobs and public services imposed on the Greek people by the European Central Bank and the IMF could well be mirrored in the UK in the months ahead.

He warned that while the Greek debt was 13.6 per cent to GDP, Britain's was very similar at 12 per cent of GDP.

"While the political class stitch together a government in the corridors and committee rooms of Westminster they need to be well

aware that the trade unions are already preparing resistance to the emergency package of cuts that we know will be coming down the track as soon as a deal is fixed.

"Most people in this country want to know how many hospitals and schools will close, how many jobs will be lost and how much will be slashed from budgets like transport and pensions when the new government grabs the levers of power.

"We have seen the resistance in Greece and we stand shoulder to shoulder with the Greek workers.

"Don't be fooled, the IMF and the European Central Bank will be swift to impose the same kind of austerity measures and public spending cuts on the UK as soon as the ink is dry on the political fix.

"There will be industrial and public resistance on a scale unprecedented since the end of the Second World War," he said.



NO DOO: RMT members on the eve of the general election lobbied Holyrood against the highly-dangerous extension of Driver Only Operation on Scotrail services and for the renationalisation of the railways.



SOUTHERN SHELVES EXTENSION OF DRIVER-ONLY TRAINS

Southern Trains has stepped back from an attempt to undermine rail safety by extending driver-only train operation after Britain's biggest rail union threatened industrial action.

The company slipped a guardless Victoria-Brighton service into its new summer timetable, despite having told RMT that it had no plans to extend driver-only operation.

However, Southern has now confirmed in writing that the service will be run with a guard.

The union, which is running a campaign to defend the safety role of guards on two dozen train operating companies, welcomed the change of heart as a significant victory in its Keep the Guard – Keep the Train Safe campaign.

RMT guards, drivers and sleeper-train managers have been embroiled in a separate protracted dispute in Scotland, where Scotrail, with the support of the SNP government, has been trying to extend driver-only operation to the Airdrie-Bathgate line, in breach of a clear agreement.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said it

was a significant victory in a crucial campaign to defend the safety of our members and the travelling public.

"RMT made it clear to Southern that if it attempted to carry out its plan to extend driver-only operation it would put itself in dispute with RMT.

"Southern's change of heart is welcome news, and will give heart to our members fighting to keep fully safety-trained guards in charge of passenger train," he said.

SCOTRAIL

The SNP government at Holyrood was accused by the Scottish TUC of "union bashing as shocking as the dark days of Thatcher" – on the very day that SNP leader addressed delegates in Dundee.

An emergency motion from RMT congratulated Scotrail staff who have taken six days of strike action in the campaign against the extension of driver-only operation.

The motion condemned the use of public money by the SNP government not only to bankroll losses by Scotrail during a dispute provoked by the company, but also to

finance a strike-breaking army of scabs.

Bob Crow told delegates that it was a scandal that the SNP government had abused public funds to bankroll a dispute aimed at undermining rail safety.

"Our members have made clear where they stand, and that imposition of driver-only operation on the Airdrie-Bathgate line would be the thin end of the wedge that would see safety-trained guards removed wholesale," he said.

RMT has held two lobbies of Holyrood including one on the day Elaine Smith MSP secured a full debate over the Scottish government indemnifying Scotrail for any losses associated with the dispute.

In the debate it was revealed that the Scottish government does not hold records on whether all its services run with the statutory requirement of a second member of staff on board in addition to the driver.

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that it was a shocking admission because a key part of the existing Scotrail franchise agreements that all services must still run with a minimum two staff on board.



EUROSTAR TRAIN MANAGERS TAKE ACTION OVER LONE WORKING

RMT members at Eurostar took industrial action earlier this month over a failure by the company to give assurances that they will not implement a policy of lone working for train managers.

Train managers are refusing to operate any passenger service that was not fully staffed with a complement of two qualified Train Manager grade staff on board before the departure of the service.

Members also refused to collect upgrade revenue from passengers on board the train service for one day.

The dangers of trying to force through lone working on the Eurostar service were reinforced during the massive failures experienced by the company in the run up to Christmas last year where the need to have fully staffed trains in the event of a major incident



became all too evident.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the chaos on Eurostar last December, and the crucial role played by train managers in managing a potentially dangerous situation, should have killed off any plans to try and bulldoze through lone

working.

"However, we have still been unable to secure concrete assurances that the plans will not be implemented and in the interests of the safety and security of both our members and the travelling public on the Eurostar we have had no option

but to take action.

"I have informed Eurostar that we remain available for talks and in the light of the massive mandate for action I hope that the company will see sense and take the necessary steps to resolve this dispute," he said. ■

FERRY WORKERS WARNED ABOUT HEARING RISKS

An RMT member exposed to dangerous levels of noise by his employer Stena Line has been compensated following help from RMT legal team.

Peter Hall from Liverpool has received £4,000 in damages after suffering from occupational deafness while working on the vehicle deck of ferries.

Peter, currently serving as an official of the union, is warning other RMT members who worked in the ferry industry to consider having their hearing tested as he believes many will have been affected by the working conditions.

Peter's hearing became damaged while working for Stena Line in Liverpool for 18 years.

He worked on the car decks loading and unloading lorries which were crossing the Irish Sea.

He was never provided with protection for his ears while working in an enclosed space among engine noise.

He knew he had hearing difficulties for

ten years before he went to the doctor. It wasn't until he became a full time union officer and began to know more about health and safety at work that he began to consider his hearing problems might be related to his job.

He raised the problem with the union and it instructed Thompsons Solicitors to pursue a claim for compensation.

Stena Line admitted liability and Thompsons secured a settlement out of court.

Peter said that he knew he had hearing difficulties for a long time but only did something about it when it got so bad I couldn't ignore it anymore.

"Even when I was diagnosed I put it down to getting older but when I started working for the union and began to learn about health and safety regulations I realised my hearing was never protected while at Stena.

"I reckon that there are many former ferry industry workers who suffer from

hearing loss but have not considered that it may have been caused by their work."

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that hearing loss affected many shipping members working in noisy environments and like Peter they often put it down to getting older.

"As Peter's case shows members who have worked in a noisy environment and who have been diagnosed with hearing problems should get in touch," he said.

Matthew Tollitt from Thompsons Solicitors added that hearing loss was a common problem in heavy industrial work places and typically follows work alongside or with high decibel tools.

"Here the combination of working in an enclosed space and engine noise should have caused the employer's to provide ear protection for Mr Hall, their failure to do so meant they were responsible for his deafness," he said. ■

UNION BLASTS ATTACKS ON TUBE JOBS AND SAFETY STANDARDS

RMT has blasted London Tory Mayor Boris Johnson for throwing up a smokescreen under the guise of a "Transport Strategy", designed to deflect attention away from his multi-billion transport cuts package that threatens thousands of jobs, ticket office closures and the undermining of current safety standards.

In his 'strategy', Johnson has chosen to airbrush out the attack on staffing levels, ticket offices and safety standards that is already being rolled out by his officials.

RMT has pledged to fight the Tube and TfL cuts and warned that the incoming government will seek further cuts in transport budgets as it swings the axe at public expenditure.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that Boris Johnson had made no effort to discuss his "Transport Strategy" with the people who really matter – the thousands of workers out there delivering transport services in London day in and day out.

Cuts are already leaving Tube stations unstaffed on a regular basis creating dangerous travelling conditions and far worse is to come if Johnson bulldozes through his plans to axe a further 800 station posts.

The latest figures obtained by RMT show that from October 2009 through to March 2010 surface level stations on the District,

Central, Metropolitan, Circle and Hammersmith and Northern Lines were left unstaffed for entire shifts on a total of 439 occasions. One station, Mill Hill East, was left unstaffed for 95 entire shifts.

Current cuts plans being implemented by London Underground would see up to 800 ticket office, station and platform staff jobs axed creating a wave of ticket office closures and ushering in a culture of unstaffed tube stations, particularly late at night.

There are already proposals on the table that will force drivers to pull away from stations without working mirrors or cameras and without the assistance of platform staff.

The union has warned that it is only a matter of time before a passenger is dragged under a tube train as a consequence of these reckless cuts.

Bob Crow said that the Tory Mayor, who promised no cuts to station staff and no ticket office closures, was smuggling through reductions in staffing numbers that will have lethal consequences for the travelling public.

"RMT remains committed to fighting the jobs carnage on the tube and we will continue to fight for safe staffing levels on behalf of both our members and the travelling public," he said.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Fill in the RMT postcard available from your branch secretary and return it by FREEPOST – we will pass the cards directly to the Mayor
- Write to London Mayor Boris Johnson directly at mayor@london.gov.uk, or at City Hall, 110 The Queens Walk, London, SE1 2AA asking him to honour his election pledges
- Write to your MP asking him or her to defend Tube safety and oppose job cuts.
- Ask your local councillors to tell the Mayor that these staff cuts are unacceptable.
- Check for campaign updates at www.rmt.org.uk. ■

RMT SEEKS GUARANTEES FOR TUBE LINES WORKERS

Union launchess strike ballot after PPP killed off, but leaving workers with an uncertain future

Transport for London has called time on the public-private partnership and bought Tube contractor Tube Lines out for £310 million, ending the disastrous experiment with the private sector brought in by outgoing prime minister Gordon Brown.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that while the TfL buyout from owners Amey, a unit of Spain's Ferrovial, and

Bechtel was good news it was unclear what the future held for the workforce.

"We want assurances on jobs and conditions and we are balloting members for industrial action," he said. The ballot will close on June 1.

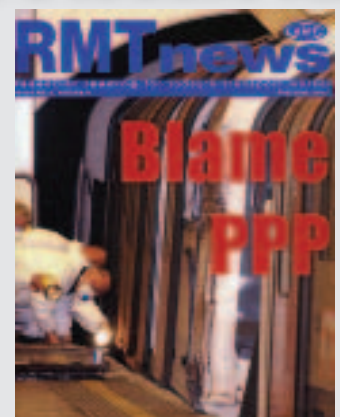
As a result of the deal – which brings London Underground back under state control and ends months of wrangling over upgrade works –

TfL will take control of maintenance on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly Lines from next month.

Metronet was the first private PPP consortium to collapse in 2007, leaving taxpayers with a bill of hundreds of millions of pounds.

Bob Crow said the buyout was a "recognition on a massive scale that transport privatisation does not work" and said RMT would continue to campaign for the renationalisation of Britain's rail network.

The union campaigned hard to stop the madcap £30 billion scheme which handed Tube



engineering work over to privateers on 30-year contracts and became known as a license to print money at the taxpayers expense. ■

Companywatch

FRANCE AND GERMANY SLOG IT OUT

Deutsche Bahn's takeover of Arriva is the latest battle in war between the German state-owned rail operator and its French counterpart SNCF

Deutsche Bahn's buyout of the bus and train operator Arriva will be one of many takeovers as European transport giants consolidate in the face of the European Union's transport privatisation drive, according to DB chief executive Rüdiger Grube.

The German state-owned rail operator has confirmed its cash offer for Arriva, which values the latter's shares at £1.58 billion.

"Liberalisation is starting now and the consolidation process will follow.

"We have the chance to participate in entering this market in Europe - or we can sit back and continue to shrink," Grube said.

DB will also operate regional transport lines in the north of Sweden from August in cooperation with the Swedish public state railway SJ, which will lose its monopoly next year.

DB has slashed its workforce by half since moves to privatise it began in 1994. It is also aggressively raising capital for acquisitions and making full use of the EU's 'liberalisation' of European rail networks enforced through various EU directives and rail packages.

DB already runs Chiltern Railways and the newly privatised Tyne and Wear Metro and has closed freight depots at Trafford Park and Falkland since it acquired UK rail freight firm EWS to become DB Schenker.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the latest takeover was a huge step in the wrong direction for rail workers and passengers.

"This should sound a warning that we are heading towards a dangerous monopoly of rail and bus services across Europe in which profit comes ahead of safety and service.

"Our first concern is to protect the jobs and conditions of our members and we will be seeking urgent meetings with DB and Arriva subsidiaries.

"The accelerating pace of acquisitions across Europe will be bad news all round as DB seeks to squeeze both its passengers and its workforce," he said.

Arriva, the UK's third-largest bus group and operator of the Arriva Trains Wales and Cross Country rail franchises, is alone among the big five UK bus and rail companies to enter Europe's increasingly neo-liberal public transport markets seriously.

It operates in 11 European countries, including Sweden, Denmark, Italy and Portugal and has been successfully winning contracts to run bus and rail services for local authorities including in Germany.

Deutsche Bahn already has a strong foothold in the UK but it has been losing regional passenger business in its domestic market to rival operators that have picked up contracts to run subsidised services.

The latest takeover has effectively ended a bidding war for Arriva between DB and SNCF, France's state train operator. SNCF announced takeover talks with Arriva in January but called them off in March, shortly before DB began talks.

But SNCF could still come in with a counterbid before the court hearing scheduled to approve the transaction, likely to take place in June.

Mr Grube has already said that DB had accepted that it would have to sell Arriva's German rail business to satisfy anti-competition concerns.

The business - which accounted for £330 million of Arriva's £3.27 billion 2009 turnover - is Germany's second-biggest passenger train operator after DB.

"We decided that, from our point of view, this would not be a deal breaker," Mr Grube said.

SNCF is still looking to gain a foothold in the UK market by buying up rail firm GB Railfreight which is being put up for sale by



its parent company, First Group.

A report in The Financial Times suggests that SNCF, Eurotunnel and the UK's second largest rail freight firm, Freightliner, have all emerged as potential buyers.

The FT report said that First Group was considering selling GBRF, which it had taken over as part of its acquisition of GB Railways in 2003, to reduce its debt since it took over Laidlaw International, the US owner of the Greyhound bus brand.

Meanwhile DB Schenker is expanding its rail freight services in Europe by adding scheduled services and new facilities.

Its focal point for shipments between eastern and western Europe is a new hub in Salzburg, Austria, with private sidings providing a rail link. A new terminal in Sofia, Bulgaria, has also begun operations and in Romania, DB Schenker Romtrans has set up a network operating through a central hub in Brasov. ■

MARKING WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY



Retired RMT activist Tom Angus spoke at a Workers Memorial Day event on April 28 in Manchester, the first year that it has been formally recognised by the government.

It was the first time that Tom had attended a WMD event and says it opened his eyes.

"There were many people there who had lost loved ones in accidents at work.

"There were wives holding pictures up of their husbands; parents holding up pictures of their sons and daughters who had been killed in accidents at work.

"I just thought of the families who had lost loved ones at Tebay and other railway tragedies," he said.

Tom had been asked to speak on the terrible events at Tebay in 2004. Tom was among the 13 men that had gone to Tebay to do some maintenance work, and an RRV loaded with 16 tons of rail came into their worksite and killed four men and injured five more.

"Since the accident in 2004 we still have no Secondary Protection and there have been 33 runaway incidents on the railway since then and they could all have been as bad as Tebay.

"As a union, RMT have been fighting for Secondary Protection with Network Rail it's only now in 2010, six years after the accident at Tebay that we are finally getting somewhere.

"The pressure RMT has put on Network Rail for the last six years has been for the families who lost loved ones, but also for the staff working on the track now," he said.

Tom pointed out that health and safety reps have the power, with the help of their union and health and safety procedures to stop unsafe practices and resist the pressures put on workers by the companies to work in an unsafe way.

"Workers Memorial Day is now recognised by the government, yet companies won't let health and safety reps attend the event each year on the 28 April with paid leave.

"We have to ask ourselves is health and safety really at the forefront of the employers' agenda?

See you at the next year's WMD - 28 March 2011," he said. ■

Parliamentary column



AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION

Despite the pious claims to be launching an era of 'new politics', for the titular bauble of Deputy Prime Minister, a few seats in government for his reduced number of MPs, Nick Clegg has obediently served the country up to a coalition of cutters. Already a target of a further £6 billion worth of cuts in public services has been agreed with the Tories and more will inevitably follow as these neo liberals pander to the market's demands to restore the casino economy. In effect the markets and the speculators are now dictating the terms on which our economy is run.

The role of the RMT Parliamentary Group to May 2015 (if the cutters' coalition holds together for five years which is by no means certain) will be crucial in achieving a dialogue between your union and a new government even more hostile to trade unionists than its predecessor. It is critical that RMT has a voice in parliament and we stand ready to perform that vital democratic role.

Whilst the Election saw us lose some key members of the Group, particularly Gwyn Prosser in Dover, David Drew in Stroud and Bob Wareing in Liverpool West Derby, other key members, such as Katy Clark, Jeremy Corbyn, Ian Davidson, Kate Hoey, Kelvin Hopkins and Linda Riordan, were returned. We retain the core of an effective Group of hard working MPs well versed in the relevant industrial issues.

We will also be working with RMT to identify those new MPs who we can work with to increase the group's membership, bolstering what is the first line of defence against the spending cuts and pro-private industrial policies we expect from this genetically modified administration.

So far we do not know which Ministers will get the rail, maritime and other responsibilities within the Department for Transport. But the new Secretary of State, Philip Hammond served notice for trade unionists within hours of being appointed by siding against Unite in their dispute with British Airways. Mr Hammond will be joined by other Tory Ministers Theresa Villiers and Mike Penning, and Norman Baker MP is the Liberal Democrat in the DfT.

Nationally, despite the many and varied abuses of power committed by New Labour, not least the failure to restore trade union rights, what was remarkable in the general election campaign was that when it came down to it, basic class solidarity kicked in and many people did turn out to vote Labour to keep the Tories out. It is noticeable that they voted in significantly larger numbers for known Labour Left candidates because they had no doubt that they were on their side. If the vote for the Labour Left had been replicated across the country there would be a Labour government in power today.

Of course, the Labour Party and the media are fixated on the election of a new party leader. Already some trade union leaderships have yet again hijacked their own unions into supporting the campaigns of particular candidates. All of the candidates named by the media so far are central New Labour figures who actively supported the New Labour policies which have left us with a Tory government. However be warned, just as three years ago it is highly unlikely that the members of the Parliamentary Labour Party will permit a genuine Left candidate onto the ballot paper.

It is crucial that trade unionists and other socialist campaigners increase activity in the civil opposition to the new government's attempts to make us pay for the bankers' excesses. A start was made in the campaign of resistance last weekend when the Labour Representation Committee made the first tentative step in bringing together the coalition of the people necessary to resist the coalition of the cutters. This has given us great heart for the level of public support we can garner in the years ahead.

And in Parliament, the RMT Parliamentary group will remain an effective presence in parliament and stands ready to test the credibility of the 'new politics' Clegg and Cameron are attempting to usher in.

John McDonnell, MP for Hayes and Harlington

BRING AGENCY STAFF IN-HOUSE



The Station and Associated Grades grades conference discussed plans to bring agency workers in house and against the use of CCTV against staff

Delegates to the Station and Associated Grades conference meeting in Weston Super Mare last month backed calls for an end to the practice of companies using agency staff.

Tony Jakeman, Bristol said: "More than any other sector we have suffered by the employment of agency staff, on train cleaning, depot carriage cleaning, station cleaning, gateline staff, carpark staff and security staff.

"With the agency workers regulations coming into force in October 2011, now is the time to say enough is enough and insist all rail employees are directly employed by the appropriate train operating company," Tony added.

Conference also condemned the use of CCTV footage by companies to spy on and discipline staff. A unanimously backed motion damned companies for using CCTV footage for disciplining members for smoking and for allegedly not carrying out commercial duties. The motion also argued that managers trawled CCTV footage looking for any small infringement so they can discipline a member.

Delegates called for companies to offer staff the option of receiving vaccination for hepatitis.

Caroline Parry said that she would like to see all employers in the industry offer staff the option of receiving hepatitis vaccinations.

"The virus can be readily transmitted via bodily fluids, through cuts and skin wounds," Caroline told conference.

"By contact with infected people or dirty needles workers are at risk when picking up litter. Infection can lead to chronic or acute hepatitis, chronic liver damage and cirrhosis of the liver.

Yet, a three course treatment can give immunity for life," she said.

The conference relaunched a new edition of the Station Staff and Associated Grades Charter, with delegates taking copies back to their workplaces to use as a recruitment tool.

Peter March, council of executives, gave a report outlining action on decisions from last year's conference. He also reported on the recent ballot for industrial action that was challenged in the High Court by Network Rail.

Phil Boston, organising unit, gave an account of recent successful recruitment campaigns, telling delegates that "membership is climbing again." He urged the audience to consider organising recruitment campaigns at their workplaces in conjunction with the organising unit. He told delegates that staff working in many station concessions are eligible for RMT membership "At big stations like London Victoria, this means that there are several hundred extra people that could potentially be brought into the union," Phil said.

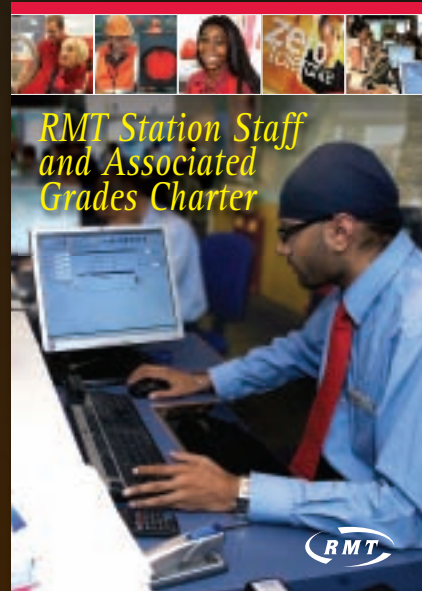
A number of guest speakers addressed the conference. Mike Bell, local prospective parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Democrats, outlined the history of rail locally and his party's policy today.

David Redgewell, from Transport 2000, praised RMT for its work in the bus industry in the south west particularly. He also gave an account of meetings with the political parties in the run up to the general election with regard to their policies on the rail network.

Pat Sikorski, assistant general secretary, issued a call for unity across the union in the face of unprecedented attacks. He pointed out that there was a massive assault on both jobs and the democratic rights of members to defend those jobs.

Pat reminded delegates that last year's conference called for the union to bring together the various disputes that were taking place in which around 5-6,000 jobs were under threat. The union is committed to doing that in spite of the fact that the companies wanted to maintain rates of profit and the dividends that they pay to shareholders, he said.

Pat argued that workers and



RMT launches Station Staff and Associated Grades charter

union members are held back by the complete failure of political representation in this country. This is exemplified by the hoops that have to be jumped through to get a successful ballot for industrial action with no prospect of the anti-union laws being repealed by any future government.

"We must produce a paper trail showing we went to every workplace and established people's job titles. We are asked to produce a perfect list – a near impossible task – to get a successful ballot," Pat said.

"We need to unite and extend our unity as thoroughly as possible through this industrial union. We are taking up the cudgels because that is what we have to do to defend ourselves.

We are still here and still fighting. We have seen massive yes votes on massive turnouts.

That means we are doing something right. We are not going away, it is the management and the franchises that go away.

We are the people that run the railway," Pat added.

The lack of planning for adverse weather by train operating companies was condemned by delegates.

Dennis Connor, Glasgow 5, said that Scotland had been particularly badly affected this past winter. "During the recent bad spell members found it difficult to get to work, and when they did there was little

effective communication and little management," he said.

"An adverse weather payment should be made to our members rather than them be penalised for not making it into work. Some of our members are the lowest paid and cannot afford to be penalised. Unlike some, they do not have the option of working from home," Dennis added.

Jason Humphrey, Jubilee SE London, said that London had also been hit hard by the bad weather. "If they had decent travel plans in the first place we wouldn't be having to discuss this," he said.

Delegates called for the union to campaign for a recognised identification scheme to be introduced to ensure that passengers have a way of knowing that replacement road transport is bona fide.

Caroline Parry said: "We need a policy in place so that passengers know that they can safely get into a taxi and be assured it is an authorised person that is driving.

Vulnerable people may be stranded at an unmanned station, often after dark, due to cancelled or greatly delayed train services.

"Road transport may have been arranged by the train operating company, but with no platform staff there to inform them, they may be uneasy entering a taxi without being sure as to the validity of the driver," Caroline added. ■

NETWORK RAIL DISPUTE UPDATE

Company reveals its latest proposals for discussion with the union following an overwhelming vote for industrial action and the courts banning strike action

RMT has been involved in discussions with Network Rail under the auspices of the conciliation service Acas regarding the dispute with the company over its maintenance reorganisation proposals.

Network Rail has now issued its latest position publicly, which has come a few weeks after management side said that they would “take stock” of RMT representations.

All documentation on the proposals can be viewed on your union’s website at www.rmt.org.uk/networkrail

Their position has certainly been modified through the discussions and as a result of the strong RMT opposition to its original proposals and on the fact that

members voted so overwhelmingly for strike action on the matter.

Presently, the company’s position now is just that - it is not an agreement or any indication that their latest proposals have been accepted by RMT in any way. The union reiterates that no agreement will be reached without further consultation with RMT members affected and their representatives.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow reiterated that the union does not believe that planned job cuts had anything to do with overstaffing, new technology or outdated working practices, but was a dangerous money-saving gamble.

“We already know that inspections and maintenance frequencies are overstretched and that most safety recommendations made after the Grayrigg crash have not been implemented in full or in part.

“NR knows as well as our skilled members that signalling systems need more maintenance, not less, that there is no widespread introduction of new technology, and that the conditions it wants to rip up have been negotiated in recent years,” he said.

He said that NR is under pressure to slash 21 per cent from its budget, wants to axe 1,500 front-line posts, lump maintenance functions onto over-worked signallers, and impose changes that would undermine rail safety and make another disaster inevitable.

“While we are pleased that Network Rail bosses are now prepared to talk, running to the high court to overturn a democratic vote for strike action is no way to settle a bona-fide dispute,” he said. ■

CATERING STAFF ORGANISE TO RESIST ATTACKS

Spirit of resistance shines through as catering grades meet in sunny Bournemouth

Catering workers must stand together and organise as never before to resist attacks on jobs and conditions from train operators and contractors, delegates at the catering grades conference resolved.

Whoever was to win the general election, working people, including transport workers, would have to rebuff attempts to bolster profits at their expense, delegates noted.

Transport catering workers were too often seen as expendable – and the union would have to organise to resist and to harness public opinion to keep services in place, said EC member Owen Herbert, Swansea.

Attacks on catering grades were the height of hypocrisy from company directors on telephone-number salaries.

“We have to stick together and organise, not just within our own TOCs and outlets, but across the industry,” said Owen, pledging to improve communications among catering grades.

Employers were increasingly using anti-union laws to head off strike action, so it was necessary to ensure that we were better prepared and better organised with, membership lists updated, said assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski.

Guards were already in the

thick of dispute at Scotrail, with the prospect of nationwide action, while rail track workers and signallers were in dispute with Network Rail, and the collapse of Jarvis was being used to attack workers’ pay and conditions.

Ultimately the railways would have to be re-integrated and renationalised and run safely for people, not for profit said Pat.

RIGHT TO SAFETY

The collapse of Jarvis was an act of industrial vandalism being used to attack jobs and conditions and the right to organise – and it was totally

bound up with the attack by Network Rail on 1,500 maintenance jobs, said Derek England, Leeds City.

All on-board crew should know that they were entitled to refuse to allow themselves to be put in danger if NR could not guarantee the integrity of the infrastructure.

DEFEND RFA

The possible fragmentation and privatisation of the Royal Fleet Auxillary was condemned by delegates, who noted that catering grades were always among the first to be attacked by privateers.

The union should highlight



the consequences of hiving off the RFA, urged Southampton Shipping branch

"We all know what privatisation is," said Mandy Evans, Swansea. "It's about slicing and dicing, and this is a chance for rail and shipping members to stand shoulder to shoulder."

Putting privateers in charge of the RFA would be "sheer folly" said John Stevenson, Newport – not least because of the safety and security issues involved.

REINSTATE EAST COAST TRAINS

Delegates demanded re-instatement of direct east-coast services to Glasgow, which the company planned to cut from the start of the winter timetable.

The decision would have a potentially devastating effect on the economy of the west of Scotland, particularly hitting elderly and disabled passengers who relied on services, as well as the livelihoods of rail workers and many others.

Delegates also slammed misleading media claims by the government that there would be no reduction in services on the east-coast line via Glasgow.

NO TO ASSAULTS

Delegates expressed concern at the lack of support for Rail Gourmet trolley staff assaulted while wearing the uniform of Southeastern Trains – often on trains without a conductor for

part of the journey.

Conference demanded that they be given the same level of protection as guards.

Catering staff were expected to wear the SET uniform and to work trains without a guard, yet while staff were being assaulted it was they who were being warned to 'stay within the law' or face disciplinary action, said Ron Richardson, Hastings.

It was unacceptable that TOCs were trying to remove guards and trying to use catering staff to take their place, said James Davis.

Removing shops and buffets from trains worsened the situation as staff no longer had a place of refuge, said Derek England.

Use of technology that prevents retail members knowing the amount of money they should pay in was unfair and must stop, delegates agreed.

The practice amounted to entrapment, and new equipment should be endorsed by company councils before being introduced.

"This allows a company to accuse a member of fiddling without giving the worker the chance to refute it," said Cathy Mazur, Euston No 1

- Delegates condemned the use of CCTV equipment by train operators to discipline members.

CCTV should be used to protect health and safety and security, but was being used

systematically as a weapon against staff, with managers trawling footage to find infringements.

The union should pursue all abuse of CCTV by TOCs and infracos, using the union's lawyers, said James Davis, Manchester South.

- Workers unable to get to work due to adverse weather should not face deductions from their pay, delegates agreed.

"When we have the police telling people not to travel unless it's vital, employers should not be allowed to stop our pay – and we don't have the luxury of being able to work from home," said Derek England.

- Conference demanded that TOCs respect equal opportunities policy procedures in the way that secondments are filled.

"Despite the procedures there is obvious cherry-picking, and people become managers overnight without a post being advertised," said Rebecca Hartley, Exeter Rail.

It was not right that someone could be promoted to on-board trainer before finishing their probation and over the heads of long-standing staff, said Diane Holt, Exeter.

- A major push to recruit among Select Service Partners was outlined by Dave

Marshall, Organising Unit – and that meant all members going into SSP outlets to recruit.

The union had an agreement with SSP, but it was important to build on the existing organisation if RMT was to improve the pay and conditions of some of the most vulnerable workers in the industry.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS AND CANDY

Conference president John Kear, Bristol, paid warm tribute to conference Secretary Chris Kefford, who was unable to attend because of ill-health.

Chris, and his partner Candy, the conference welfare secretary, had long been the mainstays of the Catering grades' gathering, but had both had to resign.

Delegates agreed to add a suitable emblem on the conference president's chain to mark the contribution Chris and Candy had made to the conference.

"Chris and Candy have been the key organisers for years, and it is tragic that they have both had to resign, but we all send them our very best wishes," said John.

In written reports, Chris expressed sadness at missing his first conference for two decades, and Candy Kefford reported a welfare fund standing at more than £1,700. ■

AGAINST RACISM

RMT's Black and Ethnic Minority members' conference



This year's Black and Ethnic Minority Members' Conference sent solidarity greetings to the people of Haiti, in the wake of the earthquake that took place in January in which hundreds of thousands died and many more were made homeless.

Glenroy Watson, London Underground Engineering, moving a motion on Haiti, pointed out that the country's problems run much deeper than the recent earthquake.

He explained that the country suffering a long history of interference from imperialist powers.

The unanimously backed motion argued that what the country needed was not the reoccupation of the land by US troops but aid. It also called on the union to support a number of initiatives in support of Haitian independence.

Conference also backed a motion in support of National Anti-Slavery Day.

Frank Murray, London Transport Regional Council, argued that it is not just a question of history but that

"there are examples of people being enslaved today. A lot of money is being made by traffickers who kidnap women and make them work in prostitution. Anything that highlights people being held against their will should be supported.

"I want RMT to support a call for a national anti-slavery day for slavery in the past and present," Frank said.

A number of guest speakers addressed the event. Lorraine Fitzsimons, from Hope not Hate, the anti-fascist campaign group, acknowledged the fact that RMT was quick to take a stand by expelling BNP members from membership.

Lorraine told conference that "the BNP plays on people's fears. They turn everything into a race issue," she said, before calling on delegates to get involved in their local anti-BNP campaigns in the run up to the elections.

RMT president, Alex Gordon told delegates that the union believes that the conference plays an important role in the

union. "RMT was one of the first unions to recognise the principle of self organisation," he said.

Alex also addressed the issue of the general election.

"The problem is that the main parties are too similar. As a result racists and fascists are able to get into office by presenting themselves as different," he said.

Outlining RMT's political strategy for the elections, Alex explained that the union would be prioritising campaigning for the re-election of the members of the RMT Parliamentary Group. He also said that the union would be considering backing other candidates on a case by case basis and that requests from some candidates' supporters had already been made to head office.

Hardiv Sohal, Thompsons Solicitors, outlined some of the key legal issues with regard to race discrimination in the workplace. He explained the difficulties of winning a successful race discrimination case, telling delegates that the vast majority of cases brought

are unsuccessful.

Micky Thompson, Council of Executives, gave a progress report on last year's motions and the union's other work on issues of particular relevance to the conference delegates. He said that the union recognised "the need to increase the RMT delegation size to Black Workers' TUC and other similar conferences."

Frank Murray gave a report from the black and ethnic minority members' advisory committee. He gave an account of several events that had been held over the previous year including a training seminar at Unity House in Black History Month and, in partnership with SERTUC, a public film showing of the history of Ska music at the Bernie Grant Centre in Tottenham.

Looking to the future, Frank said: "We need more resolutions, we need more events.

"We need to get people out there and involved," he said.

Next year's conference will be held in Newcastle upon Tyne.



CATASTROPHE: Deepwater Horizon oil rig sinks ablaze in the Gulf of Mexico

BP AND SHELL 'NOT MEETING SAFETY STANDARDS ON NORTH SEA OIL RIGS'

BP and other oil companies operating in the North Sea have been warned by the Health and Safety Executive that they are failing to operate rigs and other offshore equipment to appropriate standards.

The "improvement notices" from the offshore regulator come as RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy revealed provisional safety statistics for 2009 that showed a deterioration in major injuries and hydrocarbon releases on the previous year.

He said that safety had been compromised after operators and drillers slashed pay, for drill rig workers by up to a fifth last year, in response to oil prices of less than \$40 a barrel last January.

"Drill workers feel they're being sold short.

"They undergo training and do the work, yet the reward they get is a massive pay cut and that is not good for safety culture on rigs," he said, "especially when rig day rates remain at an all time high".

RMT members have reacted angrily to the Offshore Contractors Association about an offer of a 1.8 per cent pay increase this year, Molloy said this disguised cuts in entitlements such as travel expenses and sick pay.

Jake Molloy accepted that standards – at least before last year's cost cuts – had

begun to improve, but took issue with how some of the figures are calculated.

For example, he said the number of man hours lost to accidents is massaged by operators assigning rig workers suffering relatively minor injuries to office work, meaning they are excluded from the Lost Time Injury category.

He also said that recommendations from Cullen following the Piper Alpha disaster – that killed 167 workers – which called on the workforce to be given a much larger role in safety had been ignored.

One 'safety alert' listed on relevant section of the HSE website posted on April 6 also calls on all North Sea operators to check the pipeline emergency shut-down valves (ESDV) that were made mandatory after Lord Cullen's investigation into the Piper Alpha platform fire 22 years ago.

The valves are designed to stop the flow of oil and gas.

The HSE says the alert follows the failure of an emergency shut-down valve and says "other ESDVs have been found to be at risk of failing in this manner".

DEEPWATER HORIZON

Questions have also raised as to why BP had apparently not installed emergency shutdown valves on the blown-out well of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in the

Gulf of Mexico, which has left US southern states facing an environmental and economic catastrophe.

Most of the 126 people on the rig escaped safely after the explosion, but 11 workers are missing after an explosion and fire, presumed dead.

Around 5,000 barrels of oil a day have been pumping unchecked into the sea since the rig exploded.

US lawmakers and regulators in Washington are also asking why the company had not installed a so-called "acoustic switch" on the blowout preventer, which is on the seabed and designed to stop pressure from the oil well damaging the drilling rig and can be activated remotely.

BP have started drilling – or "spudding" – a new relief well half a mile away from the site of the Deepwater Horizon. It will run its new well alongside the Deepwater's excavations, down to 18,000 feet, in the hope that it can intercept the flow of oil and relieve pressure on the damaged wellhead.

But it will take two to three months to get down to the right depth. In that time, half a million barrels of oil could have escaped – 19 million gallons or almost twice the amount that ravaged the coastline of Alaska 21 years ago when the Exxon Valdez ran aground. ■

FIGHTING CUTS DEFENDING JOBS

Engineering grades meeting in Liverpool vows to fight to defend jobs

RMT will fight to defend its members against attacks on jobs and conditions at both “callous” Network Rail and the rail infrastructure contractors, the union’s engineering grades conference pledged.

Delegates, meeting in Liverpool, condemned Network Rail for its plans to axe 1,500 safety-critical track maintenance jobs as part of its “phase 2 b/c” reorganisation plans.

They also censured the company for its deferral of

essential renewals work elsewhere – a practice which led to the collapse of engineering contractor Jarvis in March with the loss of more than 1,200 jobs.

Gordon Martin, Wishaw and Motherwell, told conference that cuts and deferrals were being forced through by Network Rail “on behalf of the British government,” adding: “this is a political and industrial attack on our members.”

RMT faced two choices – it could accept the attacks or “do



everything at our disposal to fight back," he told delegates, with a warning "not to be under any illusions it's going to be easy."

General secretary Bob Crow explained how Network Rail used the anti-trade union laws to scupper a planned strike by RMT signallers with a court injunction on April 1. Following the ruling the union postponed similar action among engineering grades.

"It would have been lovely to take that industrial action in the run-up to the general election. I think we had them. We would have won it – no doubt about that," he said.

"That's why they used the courts – because they didn't want to take us on industrially."

Sacked Jarvis worker Bill Rawcliffe briefed conference on the situation at the former company, laying the blame for its collapse firmly at the door of the "vicious, nasty and thuggish Network Rail".

Bill told delegates: "We're all still a bit shell-shocked and reeling. It's quite clear it's Network Rail driving this and playing fast and loose with people's lives. The government cannot be allowed to simply shrug its shoulders and say they can't do anything about it."

He explained how, like many colleagues, he had worked for British Rail since leaving school. Following privatisation they were transferred to Jarvis under TUPE rules – which protect workers pay and conditions when they are moved to another company.

"Well we're only asking to be TUPE-transferred to whoever they give it to next," he added. Other companies are in the running to take on the Jarvis work amid fears that they will evade their TUPE obligations, employing sacked workers on vastly inferior contracts.

Delegates backed an emergency resolution moved by Dave Parks, Sheffield and District, calling for justice for the Jarvis workers, who had been left "high and dry" by Network Rail.

"The work itself has not

disappeared, it's just our members' jobs that have disappeared," Dave told delegates.

Dai Hobbs, Newport Rail, warned: "If we allow this disgusting situation to carry on then it's going to happen to the rest of us in the renewals companies."

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash, who has led RMT negotiations with Network Rail, told conference: "This is the most difficult, intransigent, callous, insensitive, arrogant management I've ever come across".

Conference agreed that resolutions on Network Rail's phase 2 b/c reorganisation and the collapse of Jarvis would be submitted to the union's annual general meeting, which takes place in Aberdeen in June.

A collection among conference delegates also raised £336 for the Jarvis hardship fund.

Elsewhere on the agenda, delegates backed a motion from Jimmy Brown, Liverpool No5, condemning the practice of cross-boundary working among track workers.

Jimmy said that when members were forced to work outside their normal area it could lead to job losses and the practice was only for the convenience of Network Rail managers.

"If we don't nip this in the bud then you know what's going to come next – multiskilling and all the rest," he warned.

Malcolm Williams, North Wales Coast, said that cross-boundary working was already a reality in his workplace.

"It leaves a hole in our area for other work that needs to be done," he said.

Ken Knight, South Ealing and Slough, warned that track workers going into unfamiliar territory, mainly in the dark, represented a major health and safety risk.

Conference backed a call from Nobby Richardson, Willesden No4, for the union to negotiate with employers of agency staff.

"Too often staff are released with no reference to seniority, suitability or disciplinary matters to the whim of management," he said.

Delegates heard how corrupt managers were taking bribes from some desperate agency workers to ensure they are kept on at the expense of others.

They also backed a call from Alex Hogg, Edinburgh & Portobello, over home visits by managers to employees injured at work, which he condemned as "a form of intimidation."

Alex gave the example of one 61-year-old colleague who had received no less than five home visits from managers within a 24-hour period. Many workers feel obliged to return to work long before they have fully recovered, he said. ■

With the conference taking place in Liverpool on the 21st anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, delegates observed a minute's silence for the 96 Liverpool football fans that died in the tragedy. They collected £333 For the Hillsborough Justice Campaign.

CAUSE OF FREEDOM !

The LONDON CENTRAL DORCHESTER COMMITTEE of the TRADES UNION CONGRESS feel great pleasure in inviting fellow workmen and women and all enemies of oppression to

TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS' FESTIVAL

TO TAKE PLACE IN the village of

TOLPUDDLE, DORSET

BETWEEN

Friday 16th to Sunday 18th July 2010

IN CELEBRATION OF THE REMISSION OF THE SENTENCE OF THE

DORCHESTER LABOURERS

and in commemoration of the moral power displayed by the working classes

A

CONCERT AND BALL

Friday and Saturday evening

The whole arrangements of the FESTIVAL will be under the immediate superintendence of the London/Dorchester Central Committee of the Trades Union Congress, who pledge themselves that nothing shall be wanting on their part to ensure the comfort and convenience of those who may assemble to celebrate; and they feel confident that their exertions will be rewarded. Food will be served hot, of the best description, and may consist of every sort of Roast and Boiled Meats, Fruits, Vegetables, Bread, Porter, Plum Pudding and Tarts.

THE MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY THE COMMITTEE

WILL INCLUDE

Sam King, Eliza Carthy, Billy Bragg, Bad Shepherds, Nazim Miska, Jackie Giles, The Stone, Papad Le Gal, Shant Baby Brothers, Chris Woods and Hugh Lupson, Shank Tark, Gumpin Bone Allen, Boyd and Wain, Al Baker and the Tule Quare and many others. Speakers will include Frances O'Grady and Tony Benn

Under the direction of **ROBB JOHNSON**

In the course of the afternoon several appropriate Gales will be sung



A webcast of this conference is available at
www.rmt.org.uk/members

CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BUS INDUSTRY

RMT's bus workers' conference calls for campaigns on safety, pay and renationalisation

RMT bus workers meeting in Bournemouth called on the union to campaign on safety, pay and the renationalisation of the industry.

Dave Gilbey South Devon Bus said that too many buses were leaving depots with non or malfunctioning equipment such as demisters, windscreen washers, CCTV and upper deck observation systems.

"Any bus and its equipment should be in working order, if it is not fit for purpose it should not leave the depot," he said.

Conference agreed to call on the union to approach the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) with reference to making its documentation for such requirements to be more user friendly in the interests of safety.

"We need to simplify the language and be more specific about what systems on the bus need to be more functioning so drivers and mechanics would have clearer guidelines to follow," he said.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that if a vehicle

is fitted with equipment it should work.

Andy Lister, Southampton No 5 added that the bus safety handbook had not been updated since bus deregulation and privatisation.

Conference called on the union to campaign for an updated version to be produced to take into account changes to the industry that have occurred over the last twenty years.

Joe Hayes, Salisbury No 3 called on the union to campaign for a change the law so that all buses must be fitted with observation devices which will enable the driver to observe the upper deck at all times and have washers and demisters that are working.

"We have a Parliamentary group which has effectively raised a number of issues for the union and we need that kind of profile on this issue," he said.

FIGHTING ON PAY

Conference called on the union to initiate a campaign to raise awareness of the low pay and poor conditions in the bus

industry.

Andy Bradford Exeter No5 said that a high profile campaign was required with publicity, leaflets and education with the help of the union's Parliamentary group of MPs.

He said that often drivers could be on different pay rates even on the same routes.

"The low wages are reflected in the very poor retention of workers within the industry," he said.

Mick Cash said that public money was still going into the industry in subsidies which should be used to pay decent pay rates.

"We are winning trade union recognition deals in the industry such as at Webberbus.

"Recognition deals are important as they stop employers picking off workers by undercutting pay in smaller companies.

"We will enter into voluntary recognition deals where possible and push for compulsory deals where necessary," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow outlined how anti-trade union laws were being used to block strike action by RMT members.

"Not only are the courts strictly interpreting these laws about requirements by the union to provide information about members, they have also given themselves the right to decide

what action is 'proportional'.

"The bottom line is that we will keep punching away because if we don't then the attacks on jobs and pay will get worse," he said.

RENATIONALISATION

Daryl Emberson, Poole and District said that it was time to implement longstanding union policy and campaign for the renationalisation of the bus industry.

"If we are going to do something about global warming and get people out of their cars we need a democratically planned bus sector free from the drive for profits," he said.

RMT president Alex Gordon agreed and said that the executive had to look at how to structure such a campaign.

"These bus companies are hated by local users due to the rising price of fares and the poor levels of service and now is the time to back bus renationalisation," he said.

He outlined how large transport giants were exploiting the European Union 'liberalisation' drive to develop transport monopolies across Europe, dominated by Germany and France.

He said that the takeover of transport company Arriva by German state railway Deutsche Bahn was just the latest

19

GREEK WORKERS FIGHT BACK



SOLIDARITY: All Greek Federation of Rail Workers president Nikolaos Kioutsoukis and national organising secretary Panayotis Latropoulos march in Athens against rail privatisation and job cuts

Greek trade unions lead the fight against European Union demands that any bail-out of the crisis-hit country must be accompanied by savage attacks on the working class

In exchange for a joint European Union/International Monetary Fund financial bail-out, Greek workers are facing unprecedented attacks on living standards, huge public spending cuts, reduced pensions and wages as well as higher retirement ages.

These massive austerity measures are being portrayed as the price being paid for the €94 billion bail-out to stop the country going bankrupt as a result of spiraling sovereign debt.

But proposed cuts of €26 billion are threatening all public services and have sparked general strikes and some of the biggest demonstrations since the overthrow of the military dictatorship in 1974.

At one demonstration in Athens, All Greek Federation of Railway Workers organising secretary Panayotis Latropoulos said that the government was privatising the rail network in line with EU directives.

"They are trying to privatise our railways and destroy everything that has been built in the last hundred years.

Basically, the rules of the European Union are very bad for the poorer countries like Greece.

"We used to have sixteen thousand rail workers now thousands are being axed," he said.

Greek seafarers unions are also locked in a battle with the government over wide scale social dumping in Greece's large maritime sector and over the right to strike.

Powerful shipowners are cutting jobs, training and pension contributions while bringing in non-unionised exploited foreign labour. Meanwhile the government is handing them huge subsidies by cancelling debts, offering cheap fuel and other handouts.

Government-backed courts also attempted to ban strike action last month launched in protest at the cuts.

However seafarers unions in the PAME federation took strike action anyway in protest at the latest attack on trade union rights.

A PAME statement outlined its determination to build a popular coalition.

"We demand a maritime policy based on people's needs, the nationalisation of the shipping industry and for workers' rights to be enshrined in law," he said.

EUROZONE CRISIS

Problems in Greece began when it fiddled its books in order to join the European single currency, which demands a budget deficit of no more than three per cent of gross domestic product as laid out in the draconian EU Maastricht treaty.

Inside the eurozone, Greece has no control over interest and exchange rates, these are set by the European Central Bank (ECB), an EU institution. But these crucial economic decisions are made to suit the needs of 'core' EU states such as France and Germany and not so-called 'periphery' states like Greece, Portugal, Spain and the others.

As a result, today the Greek deficit is 13.6 per cent and its debt has been downgraded to 'junk' status. As a result Athens owes French banks around €70 billion and German banks around €40 billion and any bail-out will be used to pay off debts rather than defending public services. In effect the EU is protecting Europe's largest banks.

Moreover, in the eurozone, Greece can no longer devalue its currency. Greece and other struggling eurozone countries can only slash public spending

and raise taxation, sending their economies into further crisis.

Last year Baltic state Latvia carried out the required cuts demanded by EU rules, resulting in a 30 per cent cut in public sector jobs and the remaining workers receiving a 25 per cent pay cut.

Communist Party of Greece (KKE) general secretary Aleka Papariga spoke for many labour movement figures when she pointed out that "it is impossible to have any pro-people, popular development within the structure of the European Union".

"The Greek working class cannot solve the problems of the whole of Europe but can solve the problems of Greece and offer our solidarity to workers elsewhere," she said.

BAIL-OUT

EU finance ministers have agreed a multi billion pound rescue package, in an attempt to stem the European debt crisis, which began in Greece, from spreading further.

Ministers agreed to a scheme of government-backed loan guarantees and bilateral loans worth up to £700 billion provided by eurozone members.

Ministers also agreed to create a 'stability fund', allowing the EU Commission to borrow up to £50 billion a year on international markets using the EU budget as collateral.

If a receiving country fails to pay back the loan, all 27 EU member states would be forced to pay into the EU budget to cover the default, meaning that British taxpayers would be liable for about 13 per cent of any losses.

Chancellor Alistair Darling said that "our exposure for the additional amount of money could be £8 billion".

The legal basis for the extension of the stability fund will be Article 122 of the Lisbon Treaty, which allows money to be sent to countries in the event of a natural disaster or other "exceptional event" beyond its control. The European Council had previously claimed that the use of Article 122 could not breach the EU Treaties now-shredded 'no bail-out' rule.

The European Central Bank also announced it would break its own rules and buy eurozone government and private debt. This is part of the political process of transferring budgetary powers from member states to unaccountable EU institutions.

However political unrest is growing as a result. Even euro-supporting conservative newspapers like the German publication *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* are dismayed by the developments: "All the principles of monetary union were sacrificed...now all stability rules will be broken in order to save the euro. More debt will lead us into the abyss".

PAME member Giorgos Didimopoulos, protesting in Athens, summed up the mood in Greece: "We fought against Persians at Marathon, the Germans during the Second World War and we will fight the IMF because in reality foreign forces are in charge of us now".



MARKING MAY DAY

This year to mark international workers' day I was privileged to help re-launch a novel by a former member of the National Union of Seamen, published in 1936 at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, as fascism stalked Europe and unemployment, poverty and depression disfigured Britain, before the welfare state, the NHS or nationalisation of railways.

"May Day" by John Sommerfield, has been republished in quality hardback courtesy of London Books. On Saturday, 1st May RMT hosted the launch at the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell. London Books revives out-of-print, popular, literature and "May Day" is of great relevance to trade unionists and especially to transport workers in Britain today. RMT members can order copies as part of a special offer in RMT News (page 26).

The book launch reminded me of our union's 2004 AGM decision to promote "classic trade union and socialist literature" to RMT members. Back then a young TV-historian by the name of Tristram Hunt wrote an article in *The Guardian* newspaper, sneering at the notion of our union promoting the classic socialist novel, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*.

My predecessor as RMT President, Tony Donaghey wrote to *The Guardian*, expressing shock at Mr Hunt's hostility to working class culture. As Tony wrote: "The history and literature of our movement are important for a whole range of reasons, not least because understanding and discussing our past helps us to fight the bread-and-butter battles of today and prepare for those of tomorrow."

Mr Hunt - a close friend of Lord Mandelson - turned up again recently, parachuted in as a (very) New Labour candidate for Stoke-on-Trent Central at the general election. Let's hope the people of the Potteries don't find their new MP manipulative or elitist.

RMT members Daren Ireland (Liverpool 5), Mick Tosh (Portsmouth) and Bill Rawcliffe (York) showed their commitment of time, energy and passion by standing as candidates in the 2010 general election. They showed that our union is not afraid to put our arguments for jobs, equality and socialism to fellow citizens across Britain.

Bill Rawcliffe's stand as a representative of 1,500 sacked Jarvis workers was particularly important in Doncaster North. Anyone who wants a treat should go on-line to YouTube and watch Bill's impressive performance demolishing the uncomfortable cabinet minister, Ed Miliband at the election night count by searching for 'Billy hammers Miliband', a rare treat.

Finally, myself and RMT Executive member Mickey Thompson were proud to move a motion of solidarity with Greek workers at last month's meeting of the European Transport Workers' Federation railway section.

The people of Greece are now suffering the consequences of a crisis caused by neo-liberalism, reckless financial speculation and the imposition of ruthless deflationary policies as a result of European Union treaties.

The financial 'loan' organised by the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund is to secure the debt of private banks, not to support the people of Greece who are being required to pay through massive cuts to public sector jobs, pensions and salaries and public services.

We applaud the Greek trade union protests against these attacks on workers and their families. In the coming months we should be prepared to stand up and emulate the example of the Greek trade union movement who are showing the bullies of the EU and the IMF that they are prepared to defend their society.

Alex Gordon

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL TRADES COUNCIL



SOLIDARITY: Geraldine Murray of the Norfolk County Association of Trades Councils addressing the supervisory and clerical grades conference in Great Yarmouth earlier this year

Geraldine Murray of the Norfolk County Association of Trades Councils outlines the importance of local trade union structures and why your branch should affiliate to your local trades council

Trades Union Councils stand for the values of the trade union movement.

They were originally formed soon after the birth of trades unions in the 19th century and are as necessary today as when they were founded.

Trades councils bring together unions at grass roots level to campaign around issues affecting working people in their workplaces and in their local communities. It is important to remember and to remind others that trades unionists are members of their communities, people with families, dependents, neighbours and friends.

They help raise public awareness of rights at work and the union role in enforcing those rights. They can promote recruitment at a local level as

well as being active in trade union and community campaigns for dignity and respect in the workplace and beyond.

The relevance of trades councils is greater than ever. Anti-trade union legislation has removed some of our traditional rights to organise and campaign. This has re-awakened interest in what trades councils can do.

As union branches become geographically bigger and sometimes more remote from their communities, your local TUC can help your union branch take on a public face. An example of this is the way that trades councils have organised or joined local campaigns where public services are being cut.

A combination of trades unions with members employed

in for example day care, the local trades council and the service users can have a big impact in campaigning. As well as strengthening a campaign it can also raise the positive profile of trades unions.

Trades councils have joined with other groups to combat racism and homophobia. In the euro and local elections they worked to expose the realities of the BNP and already they are helping to oppose the election of members of the BNP to Westminster and to local authorities.

The TUC describes the local structure: 'Trades Union Councils consist of branches of trade unions which meet within the area covered by that council, or which have members working or living in the area.

A union branch will

normally affiliate to the trades union council in the area in which it meets. Each branch will then send delegates to the trades union council's meetings. These branches pay an affiliation fee. Their delegates elect officers from amongst themselves to represent the views and priorities of the constituent branches and to take responsibility for working for and supporting the policy of Congress and the TUC General Council. This is because trades union councils are registered with the TUC, rather than being entirely independent bodies'. The Scottish TUC is independent of the TUC although they work closely together.

Your trades council also sends delegates to your regional TUC and has a vote for your representation on the regional

council. There is an annual delegate conference of trades union councils which elects a sororal/fraternal delegate to TUC.

The past few years have seen a revival and increase in the number of trades councils and RMT has played a part in this by recognising their importance by taking a motion to the 2009 TUC which entitled trades councils conference to send a motion to TUC.

Let me give an example of the activities of one trades council in the last year: March for Jobs, Justice and Climate, Hope not hate Campaign, Norwich Pride event, LMHR May Day gig, CWU Keep the Post Public Campaign, NUJ Save Archant jobs campaign, Burston Rally, LGBT month. Speakers have included: Workers' Memorial Day talk by Brian Rye UCATT, Tom Mellish on the role of trades councils, Tracey Yeates, RMT Vesta, Alan Waters, Unison, 'Tackling poverty in Norwich through the

living wage' and John Cook Labour PPC Norwich North. Conferences and courses attended by Representatives of Trades Council included: Inaugural meeting Hope not Hate Norfolk, Trades Councils Conference, TUC Policy Forum, GMB Norfolk and Lowestoft Activists Group Meeting.

Other trades councils will have their own particular emphases, depending on the makeup of the unions affiliated, the interests of their members and the situation in their locality.

In Norfolk, the Norwich and District Trades Union Council was able, with a TUC grant, to support reestablishment of trades councils in Great Yarmouth and district and King's Lynn and district. This has meant that we now have a Norfolk County Association of trades Councils, linking the trades councils together and exchanging ideas and information.

Some of you will already



belong to a branch which affiliates to the local Trades Council. If not, I hope that this account of how your branch can have a voice at local level will encourage you to affiliate and become active, bringing your members' experience and skills to local campaigns and playing your part in local democracy. If there is no local trades council

in your area why not contact your regional TUC for help in revitalising or setting one up and add your union's voice to influence what happens in your community. ■

To find out more and for details of your nearest Trades Union Council, go to the TUC website for TCs: unionsinthecommunity.org.uk or in Scotland: www.stuc.org.uk/about/welcome

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





LEGAL NEWS

RMT takes up members' legal cases free of charge, and, unlike commercial "no win/no fee" solicitors, takes no commission on successful claims

RAIL WORKERS WIN COMPENSATION

Three rail workers have received compensation for separate incidents after falling and injuring themselves on poorly maintained walking surfaces.

A member from South Yorkshire was injured in a fall while using a dust suppression sprinkler system.

The check to see that the sprinkler system was in working order involved the member using a walkway and road that was in very poor condition. The surface was covered in potholes, loose ballast, gravel, pieces of timber and other debris.

Having used the walkway and carried out the check, the member turned and proceeded to walk back. As he did so he tripped on the poor surface, falling backwards. As a result he fell backwards and dislocated two fingers on his right hand.

The company's insurer's refused to negotiate a settlement and it was necessary for the union's lawyer's to start court proceedings. Satisfactory settlement terms were agreed and the member was awarded £12,000.

A Kent-based member was injured while working as a platform assistant.

After seeing a train off, she was walking along the platform when she tripped on a drain cover which was bent upwards. The drain cover had been reported to management as dangerous some three months earlier. The drain cover was then repaired a couple of hours after the incident.

RMT lawyers commenced court proceedings against the company's lawyers after they initially refused to negotiate a settlement. As a result settlement terms were agreed and the member was awarded £3,700.

A member from West Sussex was injured when he lost his footing on slippery and worn timber near the railway line and suffered fractures to his right finger, left thumb, and both wrists.

The other side's insurer's refused to negotiate a settlement and it was also necessary for RMT lawyers to commence court proceedings in this case. Satisfactory settlement terms were agreed and the member received a cheque for compensation for £72,500.

BUS DRIVER COMPENSATED

A bus driver from Devon was injured when the seat on the vehicle that he was driving came off of its runners.

RMT lawyers had to initiate

court proceedings on the member's behalf after the other side refused to negotiate a settlement. As a result satisfactory settlement terms were agreed and the member received compensation of £5,000.

TRAPPED IN TRAIN DOORS

A West Midlands-based member was injured when train doors closed on her. She suffered bruising and swelling to her face.

Following correspondence and negotiation with the employer the member was awarded £1,600.

NORTH YORKSHIRE MEMBER INJURED

A member from North Yorkshire was injured when he slipped off the metal step of a train onto the platform edge and then slipped again on wet white paint on the platform. As a result he suffered a head injury, knee injury, and a twisted ankle.

Following correspondence and negotiation with the employer the member received compensation of £5,000.

RAIL WORKER COMPENSATED FOR BACK INJURY

A Hampshire based rail worker was injured after slipping on wet leaves when he descended a set of concrete steps.

While descending the stairs he slipped on the leaves falling backwards and tumbling down, suffering a back injury as a result.

After the union's lawyer's initiated court proceedings on the member's behalf satisfactory settlement terms were agreed. The member received compensation of £5,000

COMPENSATED FOR ROAD ACCIDENT

A North Wales member was injured when a car driver suddenly opened his door and knocked him off his bicycle. As a result of the accident the member suffered injury to his hip, buttock and thigh.

Following negotiations between RMT and the driver's insurers a settlement was negotiated without the need for court proceedings. The member received £2,000 compensation.

MEMBER INJURED IN CHAIR COLLAPSE

A member from Lancashire was injured when a chair that he sat on collapsed. As a result he suffered an injury to his lower back.

Following correspondence and negotiations with the company's representatives the member received a cheque for compensation for £3,700.



LEGAL NEWS *continued*

NETWORK RAIL PAY OUT FOR SERIOUS SAFETY FAULTS

An RMT member who suffered extensive injuries to his wrist after his employer exposed him to a risk they knew was dangerous has received £176,000 in compensation.

In July 2005 Maurice Marshall from Newark in Nottinghamshire who was employed by Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd was standing at an authorised access point opposite the railway tracks.

He had picked up a shovel when the 6.30am Derby to Barnsley train passed by.

The shovel was caught by the train's slip stream and his right hand was snapped back.

Mr Marshall suffered open fractures of the radius and ulna in his wrist which has resulted

in lack of movement, grip and strength. He has had three operations and two skin grafts on his wrist following the accident.

He still works for Network Rail as a trackman but will be on light duties for the rest of his working life as he has limited movement in his wrist and cannot lift more than five kilos.

Network Rail track inspectors had already highlighted that the access point was dangerous and should be moved, but nothing had been done to warn employees.

Following the accident Mr Marshall contacted the union which instructed its lawyers Thompsons to pursue a claim for compensation.

Mr Marshall said that his wrist was in a "horrendous

mess".

"It's now as good as it's going to get but I still don't have full use of the hand. I can't lift anything heavy and I'm on light duties.

"I can no longer take part in the hobbies I used to enjoy and I can't play football with my grandchildren for fear that I will fall on my wrist," he said.

Network Rail admitted liability and settled the claim out of court.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that track maintenance staff had an inherently dangerous job.

"That is why it is ludicrous to be threatening to get rid of 1500 of these safety-critical staff. Safe access points are vital to ensure workers are kept safe from trains, which often

pass at high speed.

"This access point had been assessed and recommendations made that it should be moved.

"Unbelievably Network Rail did not act immediately on those recommendations and Mr Marshall will live with the consequences of that failure for the rest of his life," he said.

Carol Wild from Thompsons Solicitors added that Mr Marshall suffered a horrendous injury which has caused huge personal suffering and had implications on the type of work he is able to do and what he can do socially for the rest of his life.

"His employers knew there was a problem with the access point and yet they did nothing to make it safe," she said. ■

PULLING TOGETHER

A Popular History of RMT

New free union publication gives an insight into the struggles, defeats and victories of members over 150 years

Pulling Together gives members an engaging and colourfully illustrated window on the history of the union up to the present day.

It tells the story of how the union developed under very difficult circumstances against very powerful opponents and maintained itself as a democratic, fighting organisation that today

represents members in all sectors and grades of the transport industry.

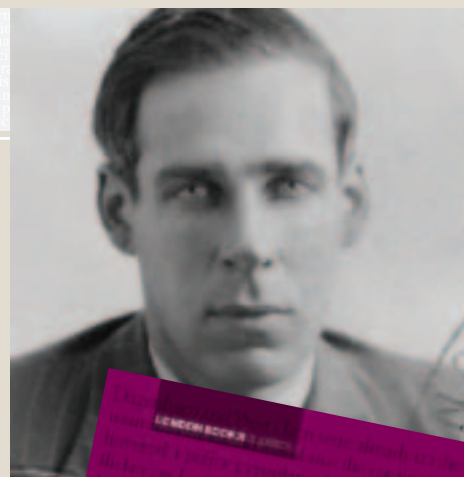
Pulling Together is available free to members from Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD with a stamped, addressed envelope or by e-mailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk



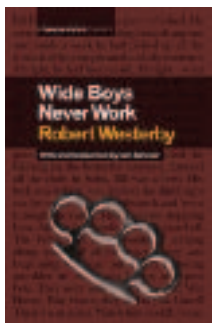
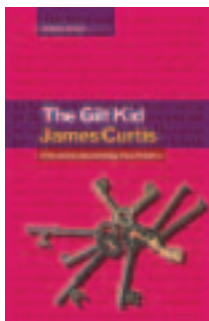
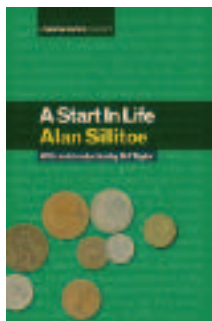
RMT and London Books are jointly re-publishing a classic working class novel by John Sommerfield called *May Day* and is available to RMT members for just £5.99

Set over a three-day period leading up to and including a May Day march in London, the novel follows the fortunes of a diverse

These books are forgotten gems – vibrant working-class fiction that still packs a



London Books can be contacted on
info@london-books.co.uk.



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This offer runs from May 1st until October 31st, while stocks last, and is valid within the UK.

UNION SECURES RIGHT TO TIME OFF

The number of Union Learning Representatives has increased at Network Rail and as ULRs started to request their rightful release it came to light how ill informed the company is when it comes to ULR rights.

ULRs have had statutory rights to reasonable paid release to train and carry out duties since 2002 and were finding their requests for release were being unreasonably denied.

In order to clarify the situation ULRs can put in a grievance and should seek support of their Local or Area Council Rep. This does not have to be a negative process and is an opportunity to inform managers of the benefits of learning and having an active ULR. Ultimately a grievance allows for a formal agreement to be made on paid release avoiding future conflict.

Kent area council rep Phil Boorman explains how a grievance has enabled ULR Chris Knight to obtain his rightful release.

"As area council rep on the Kent Route I always try to see members when out and about.

"I think it is important for members to know that you are there for them if they need support, help or advice.

"Chris contacted me and explained that he wished to undertake training that he believed was relevant to his duties as a ULR and when he explained that he had been denied release I was not surprised.

"There is a great deal of ignorance amongst managers regarding the roles of union representatives, and their rights in the workplace. I advised Chris to submit an 'Individual

Grievance' under the heading of 'Time off for Trade Union Duties' and explained that Chris should keep me informed.

"After a few weeks Chris had had no formal response to his grievance and it appeared as though he was being ignored.

"I telephoned his manager and asked what was happening and was told that he was still waiting for advice.

"I explained about the Tribunal Service and how complaints can be lodged, either sent using an Electronic ET1 form or submitted by post.

"I further explained about the time limits of three months less one day and if he needed help completing the ET1 form to contact the RMT regional office," he said.

Chris submitted his ET1 form and it was accepted. Finally the

employer responded with their defence of their actions, form ET3. A date for Chris's Individual Grievance was then set. Chris had prepared excellent paperwork concerning his case.

He thoroughly researched legislation and had created a list of dates and times for future relevant training in chronological order. The preparation ensured a successful result and Chris will be able to request paid time off for relevant training without hindrance in the future.

Chris Knight says "the message that I gave to the managers concerned was that the whole process had been totally unnecessary, and that they would have saved a great deal of time and money if they had actually engaged in resolving this.

"The positive is that the managers are now much more aware of the role and rights of a ULR and we gained assurances that time off for training would not be a problem.

"I would advise any Network Rail ULR to get in touch with their area council representatives at the earliest opportunity.

"Let them know what the ULR role is and what the ULR is setting out to achieve for RMT members.

"They can exchange contact details and keep in touch," he said.

If you are a ULR and would like further information on grievance procedures, please contact your local or area council rep or RMT head office and remember to keep your development worker informed.



RMT LEARNING REPS WIN AWARD



RMT Learning Assistant Project Manager Andrew Brattle and London Learning Organiser Sharon Allen collected an award from the Union Learning Fund at a prize giving event at the TUC.

The award was in the category of Information Advice and Guidance.

Comedian Lenny Henry spoke to delegates about how he recently completed a degree with the Open University and said he fully appreciated the role of union learning representatives and the importance of Lifelong Learning.

YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

RMT has renegotiated a free insurance benefit for members with Union Income Benefit (UIB)

Especially welcome at a time when many members are feeling the recession bite, RMT has recently announced the re-launch of a free membership benefit. Giving all members who are UK residents aged 18 to 64 access to £2,500 worth of Personal Accident and Accidental Death insurance free for one year, the cover is arranged by Union Income Benefit (UIB) – a leading provider of family protection insurance to UK workers.

So what does this free cover do for members? It means that if you are permanently injured or die in an accident inside or outside of work, the plan would pay out a lump sum of up to £2,500. So if

you suffer a fatal accident, it works like life cover, awarding £2,500 to those you leave behind. And in the case of permanent injury, you would receive a payout which depends upon the severity of your injury – loss of hearing or loss of one limb for example would pay £1,250, whereas complete loss of sight/speech or of two limbs pays the maximum benefit of £2,500. The insurance covers you anywhere in the world, the payout can be spent in any way, and the benefits are payable on top of any other insurance you may have. Benefits are not payable if death or permanent loss results from illness, disease or disorder, suicide or attempted suicide. Full details are

provided with cover.

And is it really free? Yes. RMT has negotiated this benefit at no cost to members or the union. We encourage members to taking advantage of it – and also to consider the optional payable plans that UIB offers to further protect yourself and your family against the financial impact of accidents and illnesses.

How do members claim their free cover? All RMT members who are eligible will be sent a letter about the free cover. To register your interest complete and return the coupon enclosed. Alternatively you can register by calling UIB on 0800 076 4990 or go online at www.RMTprotect.org.uk ■



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www.RMTprotect.org.uk or call 0800 014 7023*



This policy is available to RMT members who are UK residents aged 18-65 earning £8,000+ pa. This insurance is arranged by Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd and underwritten by Ironbridge International Insurance Ltd. UIB is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority: FSA registration number 207575. You can check this by calling 0300 500 5000.

* Lines open 9am-9pm Mon-Fri (excl public holidays) and 10am-2pm Sat. Calls recorded for quality and training.

5521 (04-10)

WHY I JOINED THE LGBT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



I joined LGBT advisory committee for a couple of reasons, for one I wanted to get more involved with union and, being gay, I thought I had a bit of inside knowledge.

But one of the main reasons is looking at what we have now, it's easy to be complacent and forget where we as a community have come from.

I'm only 30 still fairly young, I never knew about the stonewall riots or heard of the Gay Liberation Front. Because of section 28 (which I was unaware of) I didn't know anything about the gay community apart from the occasional bit in Eastenders.

So I think education is important and am pleased at last year's RMT AGM a motion was passed supporting "proud heritage" which amongst other things will be researching and developing a national museum of LGBT history and heritage.

In the 1920's Berlin had a flourishing gay scene and yet a decade later the fascists Nazis had come to power banning all gay organizations and later sending gays, lesbians and other

social deviants to prison or concentration camps.

We've had to fight for the rights we have today and yet there are still people and political parties, so called religious parties with "family" values who would happily take that away from us.

If you look outside the western world you will still see prejudice of a kind incomprehensible to you and I, and in about eight countries gay sex is punishable by death.

So through the work of the LGBT advisory committee and by being active at pride's or other events and marches with the LGBT banner and through our annual conference, we have the power to educate and motivate other people. With the weight of RMT behind us, I feel we could possibly do some good on an international level as well ■

Shaun Plume, Plymouth no5

More information can be obtained from Pat Wilkinson [p.wilkinson@rmt.org.uk] or telephone on 0207 529 8821

TAKING PRIDE

This year will see RMT Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transsexual (LGBT) members taking part for the first time at the Pride events in Birmingham and Manchester.

RMT's presence at these events is an enjoyable way of showing this union's commitment to equality and the LGBT community.

Members of the union's LGBT Advisory Committee have attended Pride in London and Brighton for over five years and thought the time was right to concentrate on other parts of the country.

Whilst union members take part in the big parades as a walking group, there is much else to do and experience.

Although members of the advisory committee will attend, the main focus is to encourage involvement by our ordinary LGBT members. These events show that getting involved with union activity can be fun and rewarding.

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE

The parade will start at 12 noon on Saturday, May 29 in Victoria Square. The route will end right in the heart of the Gay Village area for festival goers to continue the celebrations.

The theme of this year's Pride is Equality Over the Decades in recognition of what has been achieved since 1967 when homosexuality was legalised. For more details please email p.wilkinson@rmt.org.uk .

MANCHESTER PRIDE

The parade on August 28 will be the culmination of a week of festivities.

Martin and Shaun of the RMT LGBT advisory committee have been busy organising our walking group. If you want to join them, please phone Martin on 07 713258502.

Although the end of August may seem some way off, if you want to participate, it will be more than helpful to Martin and Shaun if you let them know you are interested – it will also be easier to find accommodation in Manchester. ■

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The high street gift voucher

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What's more you will only have to enter once and you'll have up to 12 chances to win as we'll be drawing a winner EVERY MONTH of 2010. Also take a look at our competitive deals on home insurance for RMT members.

Remember to enter the free prize draw* now at www.uia.co.uk/branchcompetition

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(Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat)

#For full terms and conditions of the vouchers please visit www.love2reward.co.uk

*For full terms and conditions of the prize draw please visit www.uia.co.uk/RMT/Competition/.

+Compared to the standard price you would be quoted if you called us.

†Lines are open from 8.30 am – 8pm Mon - Fri, 9am – 1pm Sat. For quality and protection your calls will be recorded. We exchange information with other insurance companies and police to prevent fraud.

UIA (Insurance) Ltd is a member of the Association of British Insurers, and is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act – No.2898R. RMT is an introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

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SMALL AND ECONOMICAL

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07/57 VW Polo 1.2 E 3dr Black 27k	£5,999
07/07 Toyota AYGO 1.0 VTI+ 5dr Silver 19k	£5,999
07/57 Seat 1.4 Sport 3dr Met Grey 29k	£6,999
08/58 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 16v Club 5dr Blue 29k	£6,999
08/58 Vauxhall Corsa 1.3 CDTi Ecoflex Club 5dr Silver 24k	£7,999
08/58 Toyota Yaris 1.0 VTI 3dr Red 16k	£7,999
09/09 Peugeot 207 1.4 HDi 'S' 5dr Silver 19k	£8,999
09/09 Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 'S' 5dr Black 29k	£8,999
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09/09 Peugeot 308 1.4 VTI S Grey Met 19k	£8,999
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08/08 Ford Focus C-Max 1.6 TDCi Zetec Blue Met 43k	£9,999
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09/59 Ford S Max 2.0 TDI
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Cars shown for illustration only. Registered Office: 1 Oughton Way, Sheffield S4 7DY.

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

CAPTAIN COOK INN

CAPTAIN COOK INN,
60 STAITHES LANE, STAITHES,
NORTH YORKSHIRE

The great explorer James Cook (1728-1779) drastically reduced the number of deaths of ships' crews by introducing a new diet.

The son of an agricultural worker he had first been a shop worker in Staithes at the age of 12 before becoming a ship apprentice in nearby Whitby at the age of 18.

After rising to become a captain he was appalled when 30 of his crew of 85 died on one voyage from scurvy and fever.

Determined to prevent this happening again he consulted medical experts and then introduced a new diet. This included spruce beer (made from the juice of wort), and celery boiled with peas and wheat. After this only one crew member died over three years, during which they sailed to the Arctic Circle and discovered New Caledonia and Southern Georgia.

His paper on this method of preserving seamen's lives earned him a medal from the Royal Society in 1776.

He was born in a small farmworker's cottage, which had previously been an alehouse called the Bear, at Marton in Cleveland.

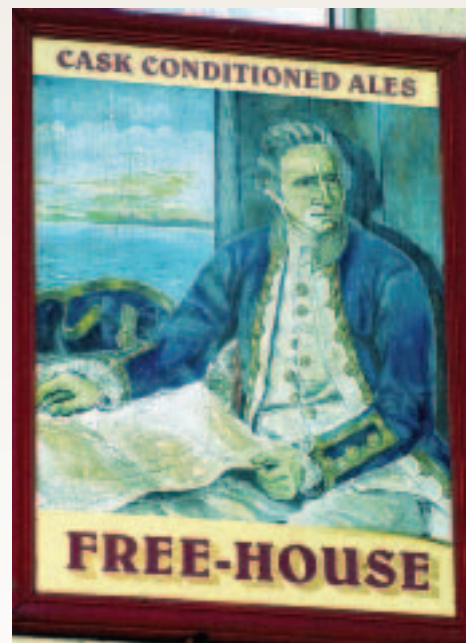
His first connection with the sea came when he sold fishermen's equipment and ale in a shop on the seafront at Staithes next to the Cod and Lobster pub. Smuggling was rife in the area and he soon learned to bring small boats inshore in the dark (a skill

which later proved useful when fighting the French in North America many years later).

After a disagreement with his boss he quit the shop job and became an apprentice at a shipping company in Whitby (living in an attic) and was soon sailing on colliers. This took him to the Thames in London where he volunteered to join the navy in 1755 at the start of the war against France, which was also fought in North America.

After the war he sailed around and charted accurately New Zealand and the east coast of Australia (New South Wales was so named because he thought it resembled the Welsh shores of the Bristol Channel).

His death came in the Hawaiian Islands



where he discovered that the local sugar cane made a very palatable beer (he also liked a glass of punch). The trouble flared up when his ship was anchored in Karakakoa Bay, and he had one of the natives flogged for stealing on board. Another of the natives stole one of the ship's boats and when Cook went to retrieve it he was surrounded, then clubbed and stabbed to death, and his body dismembered and partly burned.

His death is depicted in a painting in the Captain Cook Heritage Centre, High Street, Staithes, which has many other interesting exhibits. The shop in the village where he worked has now eroded into the sea. ■

WIGHTLINK PAYS ITS WAY

Dear editor,

I read with interest the article in March 20 10 edition of RMT News called "Close Ferry Owners 'Shameful' Low-Pay Loophole.

Unfortunately the article was accompanied a photo of a Wightlink vessel, the St Clare, which may mislead some of your readers to assume that Wightlink is one of the ferry owners referred to in the article.

Wightlink has collective bargaining arrangements in place with RMT and Nautilus. I can assure you that Wightlink does not pay any of its employees less than the minimum wage.

Yours sincerely

John Burrows

Wightlink operations director



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Aid for Cuba Garden Party

The 8th annual RMT Garden Party for Cuba
 in association with Cuba Solidarity Campaign
 June 22

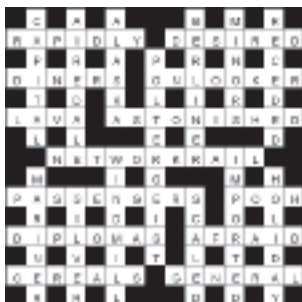
Maritime House
 Clapham Old Town
 London SW4

Special guests to be announced
 Live music, food, free bar
 Tickets at £15

RMT ★ CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Order by post, cheques payable to RMT, from: Cuba Garden Party, RMT,
 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.
 Credit card orders on 020 7387 4771

No. 59 solution...



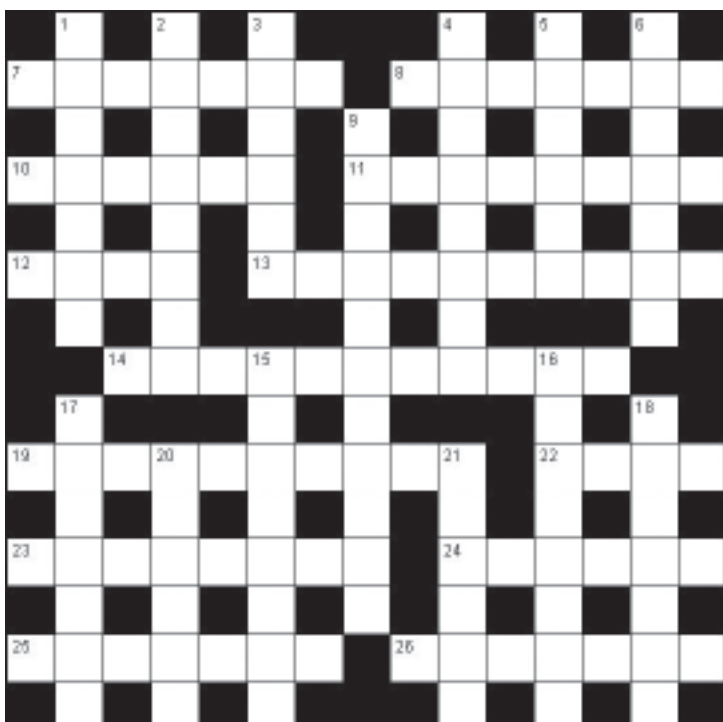
The winner of prize crossword no. 59 is
 Martin Shattock,
 Wilmslow.

Send entries to Prize
 Crossword, RMT, Unity House,
 39 Chalton Street, London NW1
 1JD by June 14 with your name
 and address.

Winner and solution in next
 issue.

RMT £25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 60. Set by Elk



ACROSS

- Items discussed at meetings (7)
- (Sword wielded by) member of Japanese military caste (7)
- Unbending, rigorous, severe (6)
- First Group subsidiary trying to impose driver-only operation (8)
- Present (4)
- (Car) sales franchise (10)
- Between childhood and adulthood (11)
- Africa, Asia etc (10)
- Heal (4)
- Most odd (8)
- Went to sea (6)
- Bravely resistant (7)
- Low-growing evergreen moorland shrub with purple flowers (7)

DOWN

- Hated (7)
- Shareholder's payout (8)
- As one (6)
- What north Americans call petrol (8)
- All trains should have them -- even on 11 (6)
- Ocean (7)
- Bump off for cash or political gain (11)
- Lamps (8)
- Road users usually on two wheels (8)
- Insured, hidden, protected (7)
- Colder than the fridge (7)
- Root vegetable (6)
- Female sibling or union colleague (6)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be 14th November each year. We will add a bonus dividend at the maturity date and pay the money direct to your bank account. There are no vouchers or

hampers or anything of that kind – you decide how you want to spend your money.

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

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

There is also a summer savings club account on the same basis and principle with a payout date of mid-June, so that you can have ready access to summer holiday spending money.

If you want to open a Christmas Club account and are already a credit union member simply complete the form below. If you are not already a credit union member you will have to complete the form below and the credit union membership application opposite.

Completed forms should be returned to our freepost address.

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

- You need to be an RMT Credit Union member to open an RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You have to save at least £5 per month into a regular RMT CU account in addition to your RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You pay a monthly or 4-weekly Direct Debit consisting of your nominated Christmas Club payment (min. £10) plus at least £5 per month to your main RMT CU account.
- Christmas Club 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 28th?		Or 4 - weekly (Fri)?		You can save by calendar month or 4 - weekly	
How much do you save in your RMT Credit Union Account?			£	min. £5 per month	
How much do you wish to save in your Christmas Club Account?			£	min £10 per month in £5 multiples	
The total each period for both accounts on my Direct Debit is			£	the total month/4 -weekly	
This is the total amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th or 4-weekly					

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

DECLARATION

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

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



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname		Address	
Forename(s)			
Home phone			
Mobile phone		Postcode	
Email address			
Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

2 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

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

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

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



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

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline
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Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It is also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

Members can do this via the RMT website, telephone the RMT helpline above, or writing to the membership department at RMT head office, Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

