

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

RMT SINKS RFA SELL OFF

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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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EDITORIAL

WINNING AT WORK



The three-year pay deal for Network Rail maintenance workers in 2008 contained a pay increase effective from January 1 2011 related to inflation.

As a result, I am pleased to see that all Network Rail maintenance employees will see a pay increase of 5.2 per cent.

RMT members at Merseyrail have also won an improved pay offer after rejecting a previous offer and voting overwhelmingly for strike action.

On the political front, RMT has fought off the privatisation of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary thanks to the hard work of RMT Parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP, who forced a debate on the issue in the House of Commons.

After John made representations against the cuts proposed as part of the government's Strategic Review the government abandoned plans to privatise the Royal Navy supplies lifeline.

However RMT will not accept any compulsory redundancies at RFA and a campaign will be launched to ensure this is the case.

It is also a positive development that the European Commission has offered kind words over the UK government's refusal to end the disgraceful situation where UK ship owners are allowed to pay foreign labour lower rates of pay.

But we must wait and see if any action will be taken against this kind of blatant social dumping which is allowing shipping firms like Merezon to use low paid foreign crews to undercut companies like the Isle of Man Stream Packet Company, threatening jobs and services.

That is also why the campaign to prevent the break up and privatisation of Scottish ferry services is a priority for the union.

Privatisation will directly lead to the same kind of profiteering and declining services we see in the bus and rail sector. That is why RMT will be hosting two very important conferences in the coming weeks in which you are invited to participate.

On Monday January 31 RMT will host an international forum to discuss how European Union rules are enforcing the privatisation of transport industries across the EU and beyond. Maritime and rail workers from across Europe will be coming to London to share experiences and plan a common strategy to resist the EU's privatisation drive.

The next day, February 1, RMT will hold a seminar in the House of

Commons considering the vital social, economic and environmental role of buses and will seek to set out a positive agenda for bus services, passengers and bus workers. MPs, bus workers, passengers, and a wide range of campaigning groups, including pensioner and youth organisations will, be taking part.

Bus services face the challenge of cuts to national bus subsidy, the squeeze on local authority budgets and changes in the funding arrangements for concessionary fares.

Find out more details and how to register on page 13.

January heralds not only the new year but a very unwelcome 13 per cent rise in rail fares, the UK is already home to the highest rail fares in Europe.

Rather than being reinvested in services, the massive increase will simply pump up the £2 billion already ripped off from the railways by privatisation and add extra cash to the ConDem coffers through the back door in an outrageous stealth tax on passengers.

It is a scandal that the private train-operating companies can simply chop 25 per cent of their services, install a 'special' timetable and avoid financial penalty.

This racket shows that the private rail franchise system is rigged in favour of the train operators, allowing them to provide what services they like, leaving passengers out in the cold while the TOC's are laughing all the way to the bank.

This kind of slash-and-burn mentality is alive and well at London Underground as RMT research reveals that nearly a third of Tube stations would be unstaffed during operational hours under the planned cuts - a direct contradiction of claims both by Tube bosses and Tory Mayor Boris Johnson.

There is no doubt that transport workers have a fight on our hands to defend their industries and we require the greatest unity possible to win. That will need a maximum turnout on the March 26 TUC demonstration in London against this government's cuts drive: I hope to see you there.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

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

NORTHERN RAIL CONDUCTORS STRIKE OVER BANK HOLIDAY WORKING

A thousand RMT conductors on Northern Rail took 'rock solid' 48-hour strike action late last month over a failure by the company to make any additional payment for working the extra Christmas bank holidays.

Pickets were out in force at major rail terminals across the North including Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Carlisle, Doncaster, Hull and Middlesbrough.

RMT accused Northern Rail of deliberately misleading the public over the extent of the disruption to services, leaving many passengers stranded as they turned up for trains logged on the Northern website but which in reality simply weren't running.

Some lines, including the Carlisle to Workington service, were completely closed and the others were running a fraction of their normal trains in what was little more than a skeleton service staffed by poorly trained

managers dragged in by the company as a PR stunt.

One train that actually originated in Dumfries, via Carlisle to Newcastle, had to be stopped at Carlisle due to a lack of crew with passengers dumped on a freezing cold platform and told to apply for refunds.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that Northern Rail had deliberately mangled up an agreement that applies to existing arrangements for Christmas Day and Boxing Day to create the bogus impression that it also covers additional public holidays that are added to the national calendar when Christmas falls on a weekend.

He said that members had sent a clear message to the 'Scrooges' who run the company that they will not accept flat rate money for working the extra Christmas bank holidays this year.

"Northern Rail generate tens of millions of pounds in profits



and dividends off the backs of their workers and it's about time they recognised the contribution of their staff in proper Christmas working payments," he said.

While the company was demanding that the workforce accept flat rate payments over Christmas, Northern Rail operating profits on normal activities have shot up by 87.5

per cent between 2007 and 2010 to a total for the four years of £85.9 million.

Over the same period the shareholders' dividends have totaled £80.5 million and have shown a 105 per cent increase between 2007 and 2010.

The company's highest paid director is paid £218,000 a year. ■

VICTORY AT MERSEYRAIL

RMT members at Merseyrail have won an improved pay offer after station staff, workshop grades, revenue protection, carriage cleaners, clerical and shunting staff overwhelmingly rejected the original offer and moved to ballot for strike action.

After the launch of the ballot Merseyrail quickly returned to the negotiating table and met regional organiser Andy Warnock-Smith and the Company Council reps for the grades concerned. Guards and drivers are covered by a separate agreement.

At the commencement of the talks, the offer consisted of 3.7 per cent for Year One and RPI in 2011. However, the

union argued strongly for including a flat-rate element in the offer.

Resulting from the discussions, an improved offer was tabled which included flat-rate elements for both years, together with a percentage protection for the second year of the award.

The deal gives an increase of 3.7 per cent backdated to April 2010, or £650, whichever is the greater, and, for year two February RPI, three per cent or £700, whichever is the greater.

The company has also given a commitment to hold a review on the subject of compensatory leave, where a rest day falls on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or any day designated as a substitute day. ■



ARRIVA TRAINS WALES DRIVERS' STRIKE ROCK SOLID

A 24-hour strike by Arriva Trains Wales RMT drivers over pay and conditions last month was rock solid with the Valley Lines totally suspended and services out of major centres like Cardiff reduced to a fraction of normal levels.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that ATW drivers had sent the clearest possible message to the company that

they are sick of poor industrial relations.

"It's time for this highly profitable company to reward their staff properly.

"Our members are rock solid and are prepared to continue the fight for decent pay and conditions, it is now up to the company to come forward with a decent offer on pay," he said. ■

THIRD OF TUBE STATIONS COULD BE UNSTAFFED REVEALS RMT

RMT has demanded an immediate halt to the Tube cuts programme as new documents released by the union show that 30.5 per cent of stations have been scheduled to be unstaffed during operational hours.

London Underground and Tory Mayor Boris Johnson have both claimed previously that no station could be unstaffed as a result of planned cuts.

Mayor Boris Johnson told Tory Party conference last year that staffing cuts would leave "no station unstaffed at any time".

Yet RMT research into the latest LU operational plans shows that of 249 LU-managed stations, 76 are scheduled to be unstaffed in the future for "part of the traffic day" which means during passenger hours.

The Office of Rail Regulation has also written to London Underground saying that unstaffed stations must be isolated incidents, not an everyday occurrence and not a part of normal working practice – a position flatly contradicted by LU's latest operational plans.

RMT believes that planning for over 30 per cent of stations to run unstaffed during

passenger hours breaches LU's Safety Certificate and Authorisation Document.

As well as the Mayor, his Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy, his Transport Advisor Kulveer Ranger, LU Managing Director Mike Brown and LU Chief Operating Officer Howard Collins have all told the media that despite the tube cuts "all stations will be staffed at all times" – statements now exposed by RMT as totally bogus.

General secretary Bob Crow said that the time for the lies and misleading statements about the true impact of the tube cuts must now come to an end.

"Nearly a third of London's tube stations will be left unstaffed for part of the working day if these cuts plans aren't brought to a halt.

"These aren't RMT's figures – they come direct from LU's own operational documents.

"It was Mayor Boris Johnson who told the Tory conference that no station would be unstaffed at any time.

"He should now be calling a halt to the lethal cocktail of jobs and maintenance cuts," he said.

Around 11,000 RMT and TSSA members have taken strike



action across the Tube network against the loss of over 2,000 safety-critical staff.

RMT parliamentary group MPs John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn have put down Early Day Motion 920 against the job cuts and the Greater London Assembly and London TravelWatch have attacked the dangerous proposals.

Tube drivers on the Northern and Bakerloo lines have taken strike action to defend victimised train operators Eamon Lynch and Arwyn Thomas.

RMT Bakerloo Line drivers' health and safety rep Eamon Lynch has been sacked but

remains on full pay following the union's victory on his behalf at an "interim relief" Employment Tribunal hearing.

Interim relief is only ever granted where there is the clearest evidence that an employee has been dismissed on the grounds of their trade union activities.

Bob Crow said that instead of harassing staff on trumped up charges London Underground should be directing their energies into reaching a settlement to the on-going disputes over tube safety and safe staffing levels.



MP CALLS FOR NEW POWERS FOR OFFSHORE SAFETY REPS

Parliamentary group member Labour MP Alex Cunningham has called on the government to provide far stronger standards for offshore industry safety representatives, including greater worker involvement, training and enforcement powers.

His Early Day Motion 1129 warns that the number of major accidents and significant hydrocarbon releases has increased over the last year and points out that 80 per cent of offshore installations need to improve compliance with the very limited regulations covering offshore safety reps.

The powers of offshore safety regulations are set out in the Law. The "Offshore Installations (Safety Representatives and Safety Committees) Regulations 1989" (SI 971) have existed for over 20 years. During this time there have been only minor changes to the regulations.

Ever since regulations came into being there has been ongoing debate about improving "workforce involvement" to

improve the industry's safety performance.

The Health and Safety Executive commenced an inspection programme looking specifically at industry compliance with SI 971 and how effective the regulations are. Surprisingly, there had never previously been such an inspection in the 20 years of HSE being the regulator.

Provisional data indicates that almost 80 per cent of installations inspected would need to improve their application of SI 971.

The Health and Safety Executive has major concerns about ageing assets and the fact that major and significant releases are up to 85 from 61 the previous year.

Major injuries have also increased during the last reporting year, up to 50 from 30 the previous year.

RMT offshore organiser Jake Molloy welcomed the call for the adoption of best practice in safety standards and in particular the adoption of the

Norwegian standards applicable to safety reps.

"This would result in significant improvement such as addressing the woeful lack of training provided to reps which is currently only five days.

"Importantly Norwegian standards also allow for reps to undertake not only regular inspections but also the right to

issue improvement notices.

"Safety committees and Reps holding these powers would be a significant deterrent to bad practice," he said.

RMT has submitted a written note to the current parliamentary inquiry into the Implications of the Deepwater Horizon incident. Ask your MP to sign EDM 1129. ■

EARLY DAY MOTION 1129

SAFETY IN THE UK OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

That this House applauds the work undertaken by offshore oil and gas workers in securing energy for UK homes and industry; believes there should be the best possible safety regime for those working in this dangerous and profitable sector; is deeply concerned that in the last reporting year there has been a 39 per cent increase in major and significant hydrocarbon releases and a 67 per cent increase in major injuries; is further concerned that the provisional data from the first ever Health and Safety Executive inspection of its kind has found almost 80 per cent offshore installations inspected need to improve compliance with the Offshore Installations (Safety Representatives and Safety Committees) Regulations 1989; is alarmed that the industry's official Workforce Involvement Group has found that less than 30 per cent of workers feel that they have had involvement in the safety case for offshore installations; notes that in response to the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico, EU Commissioners are calling for adoption of best practice of safety standards in Europe; and therefore calls on the Government to consider adopting Norwegian standards which provide far stronger standards for safety representatives, including greater worker involvement, training and enforcement powers.

Alex Cunningham MP for Stockton

RMT FIGHTS THREATENED CLOSURE OF BABCOCK RAIL DEPOT IN NEWCASTLE

Around 30 MPs have signed up so far to Early Day Motion 1119 tabled by Gateshead MP Ian Mearns to save the Babcock Rail depot in Newcastle which is facing the threat of closure.

The RMT parliamentary group MP has called on the government urgently to convene an industry summit which includes the trade unions to develop an integrated approach to enhance Britain's capacity and skills base rather than let the decline continue.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the closure plans were a shocking indictment of the lack of strategic rail planning, despite there clearly being a long-term demand for infra-structure renewals and upgrading.

"Protecting skilled, engineering jobs in the north-

east must be a political and industrial priority and the loss of all or part of the capacity at the Babcock Rail depot would be a hammer blow for the economy in Newcastle and beyond.

"For these workers it's the second time in less than twelve months that they have ended up with the axe hanging over their heads as most of these posts were transferred out of the collapsed Jarvis Rail company after RMT negotiated an arrangement to protect the jobs.

"That is no way to treat experienced, skilled rail workers that we need to keep our trains running," he said.

RMT is also writing to MPs urging them to get involved in the wider battle for long-term, strategic rail planning that brings an end the continuing uncertainty in the industry.

EARLY DAY MOTION 1119

"That this House expresses concern that Babcock Rail's Newcastle-upon-Tyne depot is threatened with closure and that there is no guarantee of employment at current levels for the skilled railway infrastructure workers at the depot after March 2011; believes that the loss of these track renewal jobs would damage the North East economy and undermine capacity for future rail projects in the region; notes that there is appropriate rail infrastructure work in the area planned by Network Rail which could safeguard the depot and on which these workers could gainfully be employed; recognises that Britain lacks a long-term, co-ordinated strategy for railway infrastructure and engineering; and calls on the Government urgently to convene an industry summit which includes the trades unions to develop an integrated approach to enhance Britain's capacity and skills base."

Ian Mearns MP for of Gateshead

SOLIHULL TAXI DRIVERS PROTEST OVER UNFAIR COMPETITION

RMT taxi drivers in Solihull demonstrated in the town centre recently against the local council's undermining of the licensed hackney-cab trade by giving unfair advantage to the private-hire sector.

The drivers marched to Solihull Town House in protest after the council created marshalled 'mobile pick-up' points for private-hire vehicles, while imposing ever-more draconian conditions on licensed taxis.

The union said that imposing an unrealistic age-limit on purpose-built taxis and requiring two MOT tests a year on top of the existing stringent supplementary test, while allowing private-hire vehicles effectively to tout for trade on the streets, would kill off the licensed taxi service.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said

that taxi driver members were being driven out of town by a council that is making life as difficult as possible for the licensed trade while effectively making touting legal for private-hire vehicles.

"The council says it has no money to conduct a survey on the town's taxi needs, yet it is paying for marshals to facilitate private-hire vehicles picking up fares on what amount to ranks that ought to be for licensed taxis," he said.

Solihull's 244 licensed taxi drivers have invested around £7 million in providing purpose-built taxis and have to pass knowledge exams, but they are being squeezed to the point that several have already been declared bankrupt or had their taxis repossessed.

"That is shortsighted and all we are asking is for some fairness and co-operation from Solihull's licensing office, and an end to the unfair advantage being given to a private-hire sector that is regulated far less rigorously," said Bob. ■



RMT taxi drivers demonstrate against Solihull's unfair bias

RMT SINKS RFA SELL-OFF

Union staves off Royal Fleet Auxiliary privatisation but vows to fight job cuts at the RFA

RMT has welcomed the decision by the government to abandon plans to privatise the Royal Navy supplies lifeline – the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – and to retain the current, directly delivered model for this vital service.

In a House of Commons debate secured by RMT parliamentary convenor, John McDonnell made representations against the cuts proposed as part of the governments Strategic Defence and Security Review.

John applauded the work of the RFA. He told parliament that the service not only serves as a supply line to the Royal Navy but also demonstrates unrivalled technical expertise through training, the deployment of ships in peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts around the world, and in efforts to combat piracy and drug smuggling.

He also emphasised the vital role that RFA played in sustaining UK maritime skills. The RFA now employs 2,300 UK seafarers and is the largest single employer of UK ratings.

John received support from former Labour minister Kevan Jones who asked the Minister about the Value for Money report which he believed demonstrated that there was no case to privatise the RFA. Support was also received from Conservative MPs who were alarmed at the threat to the RFA.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Andrew Robathan said that a market-testing exercise revealed “no enthusiasm was expressed for either acquiring the existing RFA flotilla – in whole or in part – or assuming both the capital and operating risks.

“On that basis, therefore,

there is insufficient evidence in favour of changing the current RFA business model, which has served us well for a number of years,” he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed the dropping of plans to privatise the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

“We hope that this is now the end of the matter and this union, through its parliamentary Group, will be watching closely to ensure that there is no reneging on the pledges that have been given to this vital, life line service to the Royal Navy by the government,” he said.

However RMT pointed out that it remained the case that jobs and vessels were under threat as a result of the defence review and the union will step up its fight to protect both the crew and the capacity of the RFA.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that no more time and money should be wasted looking at the privatisation of the RFA.

“This latest exercise only

confirms what the previous review said – that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a top-notch service providing excellent value for money and should be left to get on with doing its job.

“RMT is concerned that money that could have been used protecting jobs and vessels has been wasted on another round of market testing and our priority now is to hold back planned cuts at the RFA,” he said.

The union is also arguing for the retention of the existing RFA fleet.

Under the Strategic Defence Security Review, the Ministry of Defence plans to withdraw from service one tanker, the *Bayleaf*, a landing ship auxiliary, *Largs Bay*, and an auxiliary oiler replenisher, *Fort George*. The union has already advised the RFA that it will not tolerate any compulsory redundancies.

As part of the RMT campaign the union will be distributing postcards that members can use to lobby their MPs on the issue.



ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY SHIP DISRUPTS PIRATES



A Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship has disrupted a group of pirates operating in the West Indian Ocean during a recent patrol of the waters between the Somali Coast and the Seychelles. *RFA Fort Victoria* was alerted to a suspicious vessel in the area and intercepted the

suspected pirate boat – which was identified as a whaler often used by pirates in the Indian Ocean.

RFA Fort Victoria commanding officer Captain Rob Dorey said: “The combined actions of all onboard have saved merchant

ships from being pirated and made the area just a little safer,” he said.

RFA Fort Victoria is part of the counter-piracy mission Operation Ocean Shield and escorts UN and World Food Programme Shipping.



FIGHTING TO WIN



The national mood is darkening as the consequences of the coalition's ferocious attack on public services and working people begin to hit home.

Although they didn't persuade sufficient numbers of Lib Dems to defeat the massive rise in tuition fees, the student protests in Westminster reminded us all of the necessity of public protest when faced with a government pushing an extremist agenda that it did not campaign on in the general election.

In the New Year we expect the RMT parliamentary group's programme of work to grow, as the government's policies on rail, buses, shipping, offshore energy, London Underground and other areas become clearer.

We must enter the New Year with confidence and with the belief that we campaign to win. The union and its parliamentary group has secured a victory over the government on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary just before Christmas.

I secured an adjournment debate on the future of the RFA and, with the support of some unlikely allies on the Tory back benches, persuaded the government to back away from privatising this vital service.

This puts us in a strong position to argue against job losses in the RFA, although we are now talking smaller scale job cuts than would have been the case if the MoD had forced through George Osborne's preferred option of privatising the RFA.

On rail, the McNulty Review into the future of the railways will be published in March and Sir Roy has agreed to attend the annual RMT rail seminar which we will organise to coincide with publication of his report.

We do not expect good things from McNulty or this government. The report was meant to be making comparisons with railways in Europe, which as we know tend to be cheaper to travel on and cost less to run because they are far more integrated than our railways.

Instead McNulty's interim report makes worrying comments about 'incentivising' train operating companies by bringing track and passenger services 'closer together'. This sounds like a recipe for breaking up and selling off Network Rail

and we stand ready to oppose a Railtrack two with every means at our disposal.

Bus services and jobs could also face a major onslaught from government austerity measures and the RMT group will be hosting a parliamentary seminar on the future of the bus industry on February 1 at which the Buses Minister, Norman Baker MP, will be speaking, along with the main industrial figures, from other unions and passenger transport groups. We have already secured a slight victory in reducing the anticipated cut to the bus grant but, make no mistake, we have a major fight ahead on the buses.

There was also some movement on the campaign to address poverty pay on UK-flagged ships in UK internal and territorial waters. The working group on applying the national minimum wage for seafarers set up by the outgoing Labour government, following prompting from the RMT parliamentary group, met on December 20.

Following agreement from shipping minister Mike Penning representatives from RMT, Nautilus, the TUC and government solicitors met and we look forward to building on those initial discussions.

The fallout from the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico in October has intensified the debate about safety in the UK offshore industry and the parliamentary motion tabled by my colleague Alex Cunningham MP, calling for greater powers for offshore safety reps in line with European best practice, has certainly woken a few up in the industry and we will be pressing home the issue in the New Year.

It is impossible to mention safety without paying tribute to the magnificent solidarity displayed by RMT and TSSA members on the London Underground. They are an inspiration to us all and I am confident they will secure the successful outcome to their dispute that their determination deserves. Solidarity, determination and a belief we can win should be our guiding principles for 2011. Happy New Year.

John McDonnell
MP for Hayes and Harlington

RMT WINS EU SUPPORT OVER SEAFARERS' DISCRIMINATORY PAY

Any ruling should be used against shipping firms using low-paid crews to undermine companies like the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company

European Commission representatives have warned the UK government that action will be taken against it if there is no movement at the start of this year to end discriminatory pay against other EU national seafarers.

The UK government will be advised that it has two months to take action. Failure to do so will result in enforcement action in the form of a substantial fine.

The moves follow a meeting between RMT, TUC and Nautilus

International representatives with the Employment commissioner Laszlo Andor and a representative from the Competition Directorate.

They were both receptive to the unions' case following the original RMT-led complaint to the European Commission that was lodged in 2005 on the UK government's failure to uphold the EU free movement of workers provisions.

RMT has been working alongside Nautilus International

and the TUC to press for implementation of the Equality Act regulations that were drawn up by the previous government.

These regulations will reform the Race Relations Act which at present explicitly permits discrimination against seafarers, including those from other EU member states. The draft regulations came in response to the RMT-led campaign and were originally intended for implementation in October 2010.

Recently an independent Department for Transport commissioned review of differential pay found in favour of the RMT case for the abolition of all discriminatory pay on UK ships.

Despite this the coalition government did not carry forward the regulations but instead decided to extend the

provisions of the Race Relations Act.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that RMT would use every avenue possible to stop the blatant discrimination and low rates of pay on UK shipping.

"The first target should be companies like Merezon that set up a rival freight service to the Isle of Man Steam Packet using low-cost crew from Estonia in a blatant case of social dumping," he said.

In a joint statement the unions said that despite the Race Relations Act being replaced with the Equality Act 2010, protection had still not yet been extended to seafarers on UK ships, which means that some are paid as little as £2 per hour.

"The current situation disadvantages both seafarers from countries outside the EU/European Economic Area (EEA), who are paid low wages, and seafarers from UK and other EU/EEA states, who are at risk of being undercut by low-paid workers from other nations.

"In fact, just over half of the seafarers on UK ships are from the Philippines, which is not a member of the EEA.

"Surely the European Union did not mean to exclude these workers from the protection of the law in cases where they have a significant connection with a member state, yet that is exactly what many UK ship-owners are doing at the moment.

"Trade union research shows that many other European member states are obeying the law – why should UK ship-owners be allowed to continue to discriminate on the grounds of nationality?" it said. ■



STOP SOCIAL DUMPING: RMT national secretary Steve Todd, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber and Nautilus International Mark Dickenson with the Employment commissioner Laszlo Andor and a representative from the Competition Directorate.

TRAINING WITH WIGHTLINK

Claire Apsey joined ferry company Wightlink to deliver courses as part of the RMT learning agreement now she is learning the ropes as one of the crew



Claire Apsey with Mitch Roskilly



1st Mate Dave Muff shows Claire Apsey the hydraulics systems

Little did Claire Apsey know when she started delivering customer service courses for Wightlink ferries a couple of years ago that she would end up training as a crewperson, having already completed training in port operations.

In fact she has become an integral part of the Wightlink operation, delivering customer services courses and helping to develop qualifications like the Port Operations NVQs and the Crewperson NVQs which are now proving so popular.

Claire is part of Island Training, the Isle of Wight College's business training arm, where she is a principal NVQ assessor. Working in partnership with Wightlink has developed since the inception of the RMT/Wightlink learning agreement and her role has grown from assessor to include

mentoring and liaison between RMT, the company's human resources team and the college.

Developing NVQs for port operations and crewpersons meant training in these areas and she's still carrying out crewperson training.

"It's been a huge learning curve", she said, "but I'm really enjoying the challenge, and especially working with people who are keen to help and to learn".

Claire's enthusiasm for the task in hand is such that she's regularly seen on the night boats: "I'm happy to come out at midnight to speak to anyone wanting to do a course, or to assess those already on courses.

"It's important to be available to everyone when they're working – it helps to make the learning process

easier," she says.

"The courses are going well and, importantly, the people taking them are finding it useful, challenging and enjoyable.

"It's particularly gratifying because many of them, whilst they are excellent at their jobs and very knowledgeable about them, would previously have found the theory side daunting, but are now getting stuck in to it," she says.

RMT learning rep Shelagh Morris says that the part Claire plays in the learning agreement is vital.

"She has a great rapport with the students, the learning reps and the company.

"Her dedication and hard work has made learning easy and she has encouraged people and made them understand that adult learning can be fun,"

she says.

First Mate Dave Muff, who has gained NVQ Level II in Customer Service said: "I have not studied for years, and have really enjoyed the process this time around".

Phil Wicker, Crewperson and holder of NVQ Level II in Customer Service said: "If I had a query Claire was always contactable by email or phone and always ready to help".

Capt David Blake has been helping to train Claire as a crewperson so that she can further develop the NVQs.

"She always liaises with me to ensure that she does not interfere with the everyday running of the vessel.

"Claire is welcome on board at any time and she fits in so well, she's just become part of the team," he says.



VULNERABLE WORKERS

RMT vulnerable workers project manager Alec McFadden explains how the vulnerable workers survey confirms the need for action now

The results of the RMT national vulnerable workers survey are even worse than expected. Dangerous health and safety conditions, low salaries, exploitation and high levels of discrimination are being experienced by those working as cleaners, station retail shop workers, catering assistants, security guards, hotel workers and seafarers.

Over 50 per cent of those taking part in the survey are classified as "vulnerable". Vulnerable workers are, according to the TUC, people working in an environment where the risk of being denied employment rights is high, and who do not have the capacity or means to protect themselves from abuse.

The link between low pay and vulnerability is very clear, with results including:

- 67 per cent being paid only £6 to £8 an hour
- 23 per cent being paid the national minimum wage
- 23 per cent of accidents at work - the vast majority occurring in the first year of employment
- 21 per cent of vulnerable workers faced discrimination in the workplace with the main problem areas being racism, disability, ageism, sexism and pregnancy.
- 48 per cent of vulnerable workers felt exploited
- 31 per cent of vulnerable workers felt bullied

- 19 per cent of vulnerable workers were afraid even to complain
- 11 per cent of vulnerable workers felt badly treated, (or multiple reasons given) However each included sexism as a factor every time. Most had no sick pay, no pension or no shift pay.

Across the whole survey only 50 per cent of all workers employed for less than one year are RMT members, whereas the percentage rocketed up to 82 per cent of those employed between one to three years and to an average of 90 per cent RMT membership for workers employed for more than three years. This fully justifies the policy of RMT demanding that all workers should have full employment rights and protection by law in the workplace from day one of employment.

The findings of the national survey are clearly that companies are systematically bullying, exploiting, paying starvation wages and providing very bad health and safety conditions. The survey fully backs up initial fears and findings earlier this year when a "face to face" pilot survey was carried out. Clearly a major job needs doing to protect, assist and advise, then recruit these exploited, vulnerable workers.

24 per cent of all vulnerable workers who completed the survey are

employed by Carlisle Cleaners, where RMT has recently won a recognition agreement.

Carlisle is not a small cleaning company - it made a gross annual profit of £5.9 million in 2009 - but does pay low wages and provide bad conditions.

This is not just some academic exercise, these are the heartaches of mistreated and exploited men and women, many of whom have children to bring up. These companies are systematically exploiting them.

NEXT STEP

The next steps in the campaign are to build a special website for vulnerable workers to attract and provide for their needs and requirements and then draw them into the life and campaigns of the union. A special training programme needs to be developed for existing RMT reps to make them fully aware of the findings of the survey, the levels of exploitation and systematic exploitation and the bullying and misery created by these companies. An awareness and action plan needs to be developed to educate, agitate and organise.

This work is vital for both vulnerable workers being exploited in the workplace and to prevent members who could very easily become part of the "race to the bottom" in terms and conditions.

CLEANERS' VOTE 100% FOR STRIKE ACTION

RMT train cleaning crews servicing First Great Western services and employed by the MITIE company voted by 100 per cent to take strike action in a dispute over pensions, pay and failure to communicate with staff.

However due to tough anti-trade union laws, which requires the union to call strike action within 28 days, another ballot of members must be held.

Cleaning and security contractor MITIE recently announced a massive 13 per cent jump in profits - its 2010 revenue increased to £1,720.1 million - and brands itself as an "outsourcing specialist" mopping up contracts in both the private and public sectors.

MITIE claims it is benefiting from companies seeking to cut costs through outsourcing and is expected to benefit from government budget cuts.

As a result of lack of pension contributions by MITIE and wage discrepancies adding up to hundreds of pounds, a dispute exists between MITIE and RMT.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that a lack of promised pension provision, low pay and other attacks on working conditions had made a dispute inevitable.

"MITIE is using all sorts of disgraceful excuses to delay proceedings and have even blamed the previous contractor ISS for not passing adequate information to them during the TUPE process.

"RMT will not sit back and allow management to treat members with complete contempt," Bob Crow said.

MITIE is an acronym for 'Management Incentive Through Investment Equity', in which managers own a substantial minority stake in the business.

The management of any new business invests 49 per cent of the capital and if targets are met they may sell their share to MITIE for a sum based on profits.

This has incentivised MITIE managers to be among the most penny pinching of any of these kind of companies. ■

RMT STEPS UP CAMPAIGN AGAINST BUS CUTS

RMT moves up a gear in its campaign to protect the bus services from ConDem austerity cuts

Funding to bus services have faced a triple whammy of the threat to abolish the national Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), the huge squeeze on local authority budgets and changes in the funding arrangements for concessionary fares.

The union has already achieved some success joining with the Campaign for Better Transport and a number of other organisations, including

bus companies and user groups, to lobby the Bus Minister and MPs to protect BSOG.

In the end the 20 per cent reduction in BSOG was far less than many feared. But when the reduction is combined with the other attacks on funding the implications could be serious.

RMT will be submitting evidence to the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee inquiry into the future of the buses, which is seeking evidence

on the impact of the reduction in Bus Service Operators' Grant, including on community transport and the impact of the reduction in local authority grant support to bus services and other changes to the funding of local authority bus schemes and services by the Department for Transport.

The committee has also said it will be seeking evidence on the implementation and financial implications of free off-peak travel for elderly and disabled people on all local buses anywhere in England under the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007.

It looks like the Committee's ongoing inquiry will also overlap with the RMT

Parliamentary Bus seminar to take place on February 1 2011. The seminar is already attracting considerable interest amongst bus workers and members of parliament.

As well as the Bus Minister Norman Baker MP attending, RMT general secretary Bob Crow and Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Maria Eagle MP, key speakers include the Director of the Passenger Transport Executive Group, Jon Bray, and the Director of the Campaign for Better Transport, Stephen Joseph.

The seminar will be seeking to make the case for the bus, develop a broad coalition against the cuts to bus services and argue for the alternatives. ■

RMT PARLIAMENTARY BUS SEMINAR **DEFENDING BUS SERVICES**

Date: February 1, 2011

Time: 1400 hours to 1600 hours

Venue: Committee Room 10, House of Commons

The union and RMT's parliamentary group of MPs will be holding a seminar in the House of Commons to discuss the future of the bus industry in the light of the government's draconian Spending Review this month

Bus services and jobs are under serious threat with cuts to local authority funding and the possible withdrawal of the national bus subsidy and support for concessionary fares.

The government is reviewing the future of the only direct national funding for bus services – Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) – and may scrap it completely.

The grant is a rebate to bus operators on the fuel duty they pay. Operators who run local registered bus services are reimbursed for the major part of the tax paid on the fuel used in operating these services. These also include many rural, school and socially important services and the grant is also increasingly important to community transport providers.

Angela Smith MP has already put down Early Day Motion 402 warning that if government support for bus services were to be withdrawn it would lead to substantial fare increases, service reductions and job losses.

The seminar will be considering these issues and how to best set out a positive agenda for bus services, passengers and bus workers.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow will be speaking at the seminar, together with Bus Minister Norman Baker MP, public transport campaigners, Passenger Transport Associations and campaigning groups. All Members of Parliament will be invited to the seminar.

The seminar will be widely advertised and RMT would like to encourage the maximum possible attendance from RMT members and particularly bus members. Support for attendance is a legitimate item of expenditure from Branch funds. ■

RIGHT DIAGNOSIS- WRONG MEDICINE

RMT News assess the implications of the interim report by Sir Roy McNulty on the government's review of the railways

Who said this about the UK's railway at the start of the 21st century?

"Lack of clear industry leadership", "weakness in planning" "short term", "duplication" "decision making is slow and ineffective due to the need to reach agreement with numerous parties", "levels of trust and collaboration in the industry are low."

It could have been RMT describing how the privatisation and fragmentation of the railways by the Tory government back in the mid 90s is still having disastrous consequences today.

In fact it was some of the key points made in the interim report by Sir Roy McNulty, appointed by the government to examine how to achieve better value for money in the rail industry.

McNulty's interim report also admitted that "costs have increased significantly since privatisation", with the Secretary of State for Transport describing our railways as "the most expensive in Europe".

While McNulty has identified many of the problems of the UK rail industry his interim report seems to be arguing that the UK should continued with the failed

policy of fragmentation and privatisation.

McNulty says that the industry could be saving between £600 million - £1,000 million per annum by 2018-19, without cutting services or lowering quality, and that this can partly be achieved through "a cross industry focus on reducing costs and improving value for money" and adopting new structures for the industry to "assist more effective partnership between Network Rail and Train Operating Companies". Options for this new structure range from "informal joint working to full

vertical integration, plus several intermediate options".

Accompanying McNulty's interim report was a statement to parliament by Transport Secretary Philip Hammond. In a no doubt unwitting indictment of the privatised rail network, Hammond, like McNulty, also bemoaned the lack of leadership and whole-industry strategy that now prevails.

"There is no cross-industry focus on the fundamental purpose of the railway - moving people and goods efficiently across a network while securing the best long-term value for money for fare payers and



STOP THE GREAT EU RAIL SELL-OFF: Thousands of rail workers marched in Lille, France last year against the EU-led privatisation of rail networks.

Rail workers from countries gathered outside the headquarters of the European Rail Agency, an EU institution that oversees the opening up of rail services to the private sector.

The European Commission is now proposing a 'single European railway area' by 'recasting' the first rail package. This 'recast' represents a drive to completely "de-structure" (ie break down) public sector, state-owned rail monopolies and to use EU competition rules to create corporate, transnational EU transport and logistics monopolies.

taxpayers,” he said.

The Secretary of State has announced he will chair a high level group which will seek to drive down industry costs.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

In one respect all of this is nothing new. The July 2004, the *Future of Rail* White Paper also complained about the lack of strategic leadership in the privatised rail industry, describing its organisation as “inefficient and dysfunctional”, with the relationships between Network Rail and the train operators being characterised as mistrustful and unco-operative.

Following the White Paper, the then Labour government brought forward the Railways Act 2005 which scrapped the Strategic Rail Authority, transferring most of its powers to the Department for Transport which was charged with improving the network and delivering better value for money.

However a lot has changed since 2004/05, when the economy was relatively healthy and ‘boom and bust’ was supposedly a thing of the past, a claim that proved to be illusory. The last two years, have seen the banking crisis, the subsequent bail out and the election of the ConDem coalition that is intent on taking a very large axe to public services.

Put simply, RMT finds it difficult to believe the ConDem Secretary of State when he says his plan for rail is to save up to £1 billion a year without cutting services.

CUTS?

RMT believes that there is considerable waste and inefficiency in the rail industry, indeed the RMT submission to the McNulty Inquiry detailed billions of pounds of savings that could be made.

However it is unlikely that ConDem MPs want to root out private sector waste. Given the glee with which they celebrated George Osborne’s austerity budget, they are far more likely to entrench privatisation in the

rail industry and attack jobs, conditions and safety standards which will have a detrimental effect on the quality of services and the integrity of the railway infrastructure.

Perhaps as a precursor to this attack, McNulty argues that Network Rail is between 34 per cent and 50 cent less efficient than the top performing European railways. RMT argued in its review submission that this figure does not stand up to any serious scrutiny.

Nonetheless the interim report insists savings need to be made on top of the 51 per cent improvement in efficiency maintenance and renewals workers will have already made through thousands of job losses for the ten year period up to 2014.

For the ConDem government these future efficiencies will mean reductions in the frequency of inspections, job cuts and watering down safety standards. This method is described in the McNulty report as “improvements in cost-efficiency through a series of interventions relating to safety and standards management”.

The report says that it has yet to look into industrial relations and staffing levels but it made some worrying observations. For example, it is suggested that reforms to ticketing processes could help to save queues and “ticket office space at stations”.

There is also mention of taking into account the “significant risk to the GB rail industry’s costs potentially arising from the 2010 Railway Pension Fund valuation”. Rest assured that RMT is lobbying vigorously against any attacks on jobs pensions and conditions.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

So McNulty has identified the problem, fragmentation and cost escalation, but not the solution. As RMT argued in its submission, the reason we have the most expensive railways in Europe is that, despite the efforts of big business and the European Commission, railways

in Europe still remain far more integrated than the fragmented and privatised European Union model introduced by the Tories in the UK in line with EU directive 91/440. It is also no coincidence that the railways of comparable European countries have lower fares and more extensive high-speed coverage and electrification.

Indeed RMT’s submissions drew on independent research to demonstrate how public ownership would cut out waste and private-sector greed. Since privatisation, the big five train operators and rolling-stock companies alone have taken at least £2 billion out of the industry in shareholder dividends. These dividends should be subject to a retrospective windfall tax and future payments should be frozen rather than cuts and so called efficiencies made to services or the maintenance of the railway infrastructure. Under public ownership there would, of course, be no dividend payments; all surplus money would be re-invested into the network.

The RMT submission also argued that reintegrating track and renewals and enhancements

– whose separation from maintenance is another artificial legacy of privatisation – could achieve saving of over £400 million a year. An estimated further £300 million per annum could be saved in interface costs between the plethora of train operators and Network Rail, should government re-integrate services into one public-sector organisation responsible for track and train.

CAMPAIGN TO WIN

We know that the ConDem government is committed to making cuts to public services in the rail industry and beyond. The danger is that they will use the McNulty value-for-money review as a fig leaf to break up Network Rail, attack jobs, services and hard won terms and conditions.

RMT is campaigning instead for a different approach as set out in EDM 294, below, tabled by RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP. Get your MP to sign up. ■

For more detailed information on the government’s review of the railways and the RMT campaign visit the RMT website

EARLY DAY MOTION 294

“That this House notes that the Government has announced a review into the cost of the railways; further notes that the scoping study for the review states that since privatisation the overall cost of running the railway has increased and train operating costs in the UK are above pre-privatisation levels; agrees with the comments of the Secretary of State for Transport that ‘passengers and taxpayers will rightly ask why it is that railways in the UK are so much more expensive than those in the rest of Europe’; further notes that the most recent report by the European Commission on the European rail market found that in the 10 most populous European countries, other than the UK, the overwhelming majority of passenger services are owned and operated by the state; welcomes the fact that the value for money review will have no ‘no go areas’; and calls on the Government to ensure the review transparently and objectively undertakes comparisons with European railways to establish whether public ownership of the UK railways would provide better value for money for the passenger and taxpayer”

Deutsche Bahn über alles

RMT president Alex Gordon exposes how German state railways Deutsche Bahn is exploiting EU liberalisation rules to create a global transport monopoly

German rail company Deutsche Bahn and its web of subsidiaries have a significant and growing market share across Britain's domestic bus, light rail and tram, passenger and freight rail, ports and logistics services.

DB controls around 15 per cent of UK rail passenger train operations, 75 per cent of rail freight and 12 per cent of all land-hauled freight.

Since 2008, DB's regional railway arm, DB Regio, has operated passenger trains between London and Birmingham, as well as London Overground Rail Operations Limited. In February DB Regio won a seven-year private contract to operate 'Nexus' the Tyne and Wear metro, linking Newcastle and Sunderland.

In April 2010 DB paid £1.6 billion for Arriva plc, Britain's third largest bus operator with private rail operations across Europe and Britain from Wales to the 'Cross Country' route between Scotland and Cornwall.

The new 'DB UK Holding Limited' contributes around 10 per cent of DB Group's turnover. CEO Dr Rüdiger Grube described it as "a milestone for the passenger transport division of Deutsche Bahn".

DB now earns more foreign-generated turnover than any other company in the European passenger transport market. Arriva's 42,000 employees alone created a turnover of approximately €3.8 billion in 2009.

Hans Gerd Oefinger of German pressure group Bahn von Unten, (Railways from Below) points out that despite the postponement of DB privatisation in 2009 due to the global financial crisis DB has carried out EU rail 'liberalisation' directives by fragmenting the company.

"The process of privatisation started in 1994 when Deutsch Bahn was transformed into a stake-holding company and since then it has been split up into 300



EMPIRE: Deutsche Bahn transport and logistic activity across Europe

subsidiaries.

"The drive for profit has meant that there has been less investment in infrastructure and safety.

"The number of jobs has halved since the privatisation process started and contract Labour is almost slave labour.

"Recently we had a very harsh winter and it was revealed that a [DB] sub-contractor hired Bulgarian workers who were paid just two euros an hour to clear the snow from the tracks," he said.

He said that the German state railway was trying to create competition between German and French rail workers as the two countries battle for control of Europe's rail networks.

"They are trying to tell the German workers that the French are their enemies but what we need are rail networks under democratic control operating on the basis of co-operation not competition," he said.

EUROSTAR

DB is also determined to compete in international passenger rail services from London to the continent through the Channel tunnel.

DB is taking on Eurostar, which operates services to Paris and Brussels, by preparing to run its Inter City Express (ICE) trains, made by German manufacturer Siemens, from London to Frankfurt, Cologne, Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Yet trains through the tunnel have been operated since 1994 exclusively by Eurostar, which was born as a joint venture between the state-owned railways of Britain, Belgium and France.

RMT argued that Eurostar trains are purpose-built for channel tunnel operation. Cross-exits in the tunnel, which can be used for passenger evacuation are 400 metres apart – the length of Eurostar trains – for fire safety reasons. Siemens ICE trains are much shorter, which creates additional risk in the event of fire. Three fires – none involving Eurostar trains – in 1996, 2006 and 2008 have closed the tunnel completely.

RMT has demanded that new trains must be no less safe than current Eurostar trains, which are designed and built by French manufacturer Alstom, which have operated passenger services safely for 16 years.

The EU's European Railway Agency, which was set up to implement EU rules promoting 'liberalised' competition in the rail sector, will decide if the ICE trains are cleared for channel tunnel passenger operation.

Eurostar's only rival in a position to benefit from such a relaxation of safety rules is DB, which has lobbied strongly to open the way for commercial competition.

RMT organised an international protest for rail safety at the ERA headquarters last April as a part of the European Transport Workers' Federation day of action for rail safety.

In September 2010 Eurostar became an autonomous 'Euro-company', Eurostar International Limited (EIL) with a 55 per cent share ownership held by French state railways SNCF.

Recently Eurostar announced a highly controversial decision to order a new fleet of German high-speed ICE trains in preference to the existing TGV fleet manufacturer, Alstom.

French government ministers have attacked the decision to 'buy German'. However, the decision was influenced by Eurostar's commercial ambition to compete with DB not only over high-speed lines between London, Paris and Brussels, but also over 'conventional lines' to Cologne, Frankfurt and Munich.

EWS

Of more concern to RMT members in recent years has been DB Schenker's acquisition of EWS, representing 75 per cent of Britain's rail freight sector.

DB has ruthlessly closed several major EWS freight yards including state-of-the-art Trafford Park depot in Manchester, birthplace of Britain's industrial revolution. EWS' licence to operate freight services on the French rail network through its subsidiary, 'Euro Cargo Rail', no doubt made it a bargain for DBS.

DB has now taken over ten per cent of the French rail freight market from SNCF Fret. French rail unions have accused it of social and environmental dumping through dangerously long working hours and damaging practices.

The construction of a transport and logistics transnational backed by German economic power and the political and legal force of the EU is a direct threat to effective trade unionism across Europe.

DB merely consults with trade unions in Britain on redundancies and destruction of infrastructure and only if they accept DB rules. For RMT, which has long-standing policy for renationalisation of Britain's railways under democratic public control, such so-called 'social partnership' is impossible.

For German railway workers, social partnership has meant years of wage restraint as DB built up its war chest. What has now changed is the scale of DB's corporate ambition and its opportunism when presented with the global capitalist crisis.

The DB empire now stretches worldwide. The planned direct link between Frankfurt and London is part of a wider scheme to build European high speed rail networks.

But these developments are being met by protests inside Germany as well. The 'Stuttgart 21' scheme to rip up the city centre and build a new subterranean high-speed line provoked mass protests involving hundreds of thousands including school children, pensioners and others, which came under attack from police.

Faults with air conditioning on ICE trains led to passengers suffering heat stroke, dehydration and heart problems, while technical problems with ICE axles and wheels caused a derailment in 2008 on Cologne's famous Hohenzollern Bridge.

Professor Dr Vatroslav Grubisic has even questioned whether engineering standards for ICE axles have been sacrificed by DB in its competition with Alstom to be the winner of the high-speed race.

Strong economic growth with exports rising to 70 per cent of manufacturing in 2010 amidst rising unemployment and austerity at the behest of EU institutions made Germany's share of manufacturing for export the highest of any imperialist power worldwide.

The drive for such a global monopoly position in logistics and transport has not been seen since Britain was the workshop of a global empire in the 1850s. However, today's global economy is dominated by finance capital that sweeps up entire industries and ruthlessly shuts them down to relocate to 'low-wage' environments, or engineers 'social dumping' of hard-fought wages, working and living standards. This imperialism is vastly more destructive and volatile in mass, flow and speed than was the case even in the 19th century. This is a dangerous situation.

RMT has worked closely with German anti-privatisation campaigners 'Bahn für alle' – Rail For All – and has established a European Coalition Against Rail Privatisation.

In 2010 RMT co-sponsored a conference in Cologne on rail safety and the dangers of EU liberalisation, which ended with a large demonstration of rail workers and public transport campaigners from Germany and Britain on the steps of Cologne Cathedral.

RMT has also co-published a booklet in German and English 'Reverse EU Transport Policy Now! – Arguments Against Rail Privatisation'. Copies can be obtained by emailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk ■



RMT is hosting an international forum to discuss how European Union rules are the driving force behind the privatisation of transport industries across the EU.

RMT is calling this conference to discuss the growing crisis in the transport sector and how to resist the privatisation drive. If your branch wishes to participate in this conference please e-mail m.carty@rmt.org.uk or phone 020 7529 8307.

Nationalisation not Privatisation

An Open Conference of Fighting Transport Unions

London, Monday January 31, 2011

Agenda

09.30-10.00 -Registration

10.00-10.15 -Opening remarks – RMT president Alex Gordon

10.15-11.45 -The Origins of Transport Privatisation in the EU - Alex Gordon and French rail union and CGT representative Christian Joncret

11.45-12.45 -Lunch

12.45-13.45 -Privatisation and social dumping in the maritime sector – Cypriot seafarers union PEO representative Athos Eleftheriou, Greek seafarers union PAME speaker, RMT national secretary Steve Todd

13.45-15.00 -A Single European Railway Area and the prospects for nationalisation – Portuguese rail union SNTSF representative Jose Manuel Oliveira, German campaign group Bahn von unten representative Hans-Gerd Öfinger

15.00-16.00 -Agreement for action – RMT general secretary Bob Crow



EDUCATION IS A RIGHT

RMT member Eddie Dempsey, a transport worker and mature student, explains why the ongoing protests against education cuts deserve support

I am a member of both RMT and the National Union of Students and I am the first of my family to access higher education, which would have been impossible without the support of my union because of the already extortionate fees.

The decision to increase tuition fees to £9,000 a year is an ideological one. This government is happy to pay for Trident which government estimates will cost between £15 and £20 billion, Greenpeace estimates at least £34 billion, and allow thousands of tax loopholes that enable the rich to avoid up to £120 billion in lawful taxes. Britain's military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq this financial year has soared to more than £4.5 billion, an annual increase of more than 50 per cent.

Fee rises are part of an 80 per cent cut in higher education funding in the government's austerity programme designed to 'balance the books'. This is dishonest. The credit rating agency Standard & Poor's said there is "no important distinction" for the

UK's credit rating between borrowing for the existing system and borrowing for the new one being developed by ministers. By 2015, new borrowing for student loans is set to exceed savings in departmental expenditure.

This announcement exposes the lie that these plans are necessary to pay the deficit and follows figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility which show that the changes will actually increase government spending due to the extra borrowing to pay for the higher fee loans.

Cutting funding by over 80 per cent is just a small step away from saying it is not the responsibility of the state to provide higher education. It is clear these plans are designed to create a market in education.

These attacks on education have seen young people, trade unionists and activists take to the streets in defence of the right to education and RMT is right to support them.

Education is a right and as such should be accessible to all of society, not just the wealthy few willing to pay.

The right to education is enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is universally recognised and is integrated in many national constitutions.

While many countries have ratified this international convention, including the UK, few have integrated this basic human right into their national constitutions or have legislated to ensure its provision.

The assumption that the user should pay for this fundamental right undermines the very concept of a right.

Education is the tool through which we can develop the skills we need to secure other rights and the power to hold government to account.

The country is in the grip of a crisis of capitalism fuelled by the rapacious greed and reckless risk taking of the wealthy elite.

It is their crisis and they are determined to make us pay for it through our jobs, our welfare, our education and other services built up through our labour, paid for by our taxes, run by us, used by us and of which they have no use, only the desire to profit from them.

Out of the 29 cabinet members, 23 are millionaires. They act in their own class interests and their attack on our right to education is just one prong of an all-out assault on working people that will hit the poorest hardest and exacerbate the divisions in our already vastly unequal society.

The class war is alive and well and they seek to disarm us by taking away our right to education, the cornerstone on which all other rights rest.

RMT recognises education is the key to defending and extending the rights of working people. I have been on the outstanding political school and benefited from a week of education, debate and training of the highest quality.

With guest speakers, from professors to campaigners, we learned about a wide range of historical, economic and political issues. We learned how to influence MPs, run a campaign, write a press release, argue, research and how we can use political institutions to further our cause. I would encourage all activists to get on the next course.

Today, the right to education is denied to the working class and poor around the world. Now is the time to fight. Take to the streets in solidarity with the students. ■

TIME TO MARCH AGAINST AUSTERITY



RMT organiser John MacDonald and veteran member Geoff Revell explain why the union is joining the TUC national demonstration against government cuts in London on March 26

On October 20 a disgusting scene took place in the House of Commons.

As Chancellor George Osborne finished his long speech outlining the government's plans to make everyone pay for the economic crisis except those who caused it, Tory and Lib-Dem MPs waved their order papers and cheered with joy.

They cheered that at least 500,000 jobs were to go, that many of our citizens would be made destitute, that the public services millions rely on for their well-being, and for some their very lives, were to be destroyed - and that more was to come.

Squeezing and patting Osborne's arm, prime minister David Cameron, whose family owns a swathe of Berkshire and is married to a daughter of an aristocratic family which owns a sizeable chunk of Lincolnshire, beamed approval at his Eton chum.

Surrounded by the other millionaires in the ConDem cabinet they gloated because in their eyes they had dealt the welfare state a mortal blow.

But none would have been happier that evening than the city fat cats and pigs at the money trough - the bonus-gobbling bankers who created the crisis.

The government had served

them well: they had seized on the international economic crisis and turned it into a political opportunity to destroy their hated welfare state.

Those to suffer most would be the poor and needy, the disabled, the weakest in society, the old, the young.

On their hit list was anyone who needs or benefits from the welfare state - the safety net created by people who knew what society was like when it didn't exist: people who had experienced the 'five evils' described by its architect William Beveridge: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness.

From the moment of its birth, generations of the rich and their lackeys have longed for the opportunity to destroy it.

The news media had softened the people up, dredging up stories about the feckless and the workshy, about lazy public-sector workers in non-jobs living in the lap of luxury off the backs of 'real' workers in the private sector.

There were miles of newsprint about spongers galore, like parasitic university students poncing off taxpayers who never went to university: the people had to be made to understand that the rich earn every penny and the poor are undeserving idlers who must be

made to suffer in their own interest. Yes, their media did the job.

ALL IN IT TOGETHER?

So, on October 20, the government, with the battle cry of "we are all in this together" declared class war on millions, and openly mocked us.

Three days later we learned that in the preceding year the top 1,000 earners shared £7 billion in bonuses; four days later that £200 billion given to the banks in quantitative easing to pass on to borrowers had been stashed away in their vaults: in other words they'd pocketed our money.

That was followed by the news that the Greek government decision to sell its smaller islands, for anything from £25 million to £250 million had found great interest from British buyers; a vase put up for auction in London fetched £43 million, and a cola bottle used as a model by artist Andy Warhol fetched £18 million at Christies.

The revelation that the rich dodge taxation to the tune of £120 billion every year indicates how such purchases become possible.

As Ricky Tomlinson might say: "In this together? My arse!"

As the true picture of the destruction emerges, it is clear

that the time has come to make a stand.

RMT knows which side it is on, and as the cuts begin to bite there is no doubt that the union will close ranks to defeat the attacks, and we must prepare ourselves for them.

But the union is also on the side of all the victims of this crisis they didn't create.

The trade-union movement is faced with a broader struggle in which we must stand by our communities.

Cuts in council spending will mean jobs destroyed in the private and public sectors, the disappearance of support services for the old and the disabled, and deathly blows to education, emergency services and community projects.

Those left without work will be insulted and mocked with cuts in benefits, and hundreds of thousands will join the three million already struggling to pay their mortgages.

For all these reasons we urge all RMT members to mobilise colleagues, families, friends and neighbours and attend the national demonstration in London on March 26. ■

Organising committees for March 26's demonstration have been set up in every RMT region - call your regional office for details and check www.rmt.org.uk for details

BETTER OFF OUT

RMT parliamentary group member Austin Mitchell MP explains why he supports union policy agreed at RMT's annual general meeting last year to withdraw from the European Union

The ConDems massive programme of spending cuts will damage the fabric of a decent society, increase unemployment, slash demand and slow economic growth.

Therefore it is more than time to ask why the sauce for the British goose isn't sauce for the Euro gander.

The damaging costs of belonging to the European Union are heavy and rising and we get little benefit from it. So why should the EU be exempt from the cuts forced on pensioners, beneficiaries, housing and the public services?

The huge membership fee to belong to the Euro club has risen even higher thanks to Tony Blair's daft decision to

give away part of our rebate in return for cuts in the Common Agricultural Policy which won't happen.

Sterling's devaluation and the 2.95 per cent increase in the EU budget – which Prime Minister David Cameron has just accepted – at a cost of £310 billion a year. These are just the budgetary costs, add to that the £2 billion a year we contribute to Europe's satellite guidance system Galileo to replace what the United States now give us for free, and to other EU projects.

Then there's the £8 billion cost of the CAP which forces us to buy their high-priced food when we could get it cheaper elsewhere, the £6 million cost of



NO2EU-YES TO DEMOCRACY: RMT formed part of a temporary electoral coalition set up to stand in the 2009 Euro elections on a platform of decent public services, workers' right and against racism and fascism see www.no2eu.com

the Common Fisheries Policy through losing our fish and the jobs that go with them to other member states. Finally there's the cost of all the European regulations which pour out, many of them unnecessarily, which are variously estimated at between £20 and £40 billion.

Now there is more to come as we pay our share of the costs of the European Parliament, plus the costs of the new global diplomatic service to duplicate Britain's and to pay for the bullet-proof cars to protect EU diplomats from public affection in the countries they are sent to. Quite a total, say £40 billion a year, not quite as much as we lose to tax evasion and avoidance by the rich and the big corporations, but large enough to make all this year's cuts and most of next year's wholly unnecessary.

What do we get in return?

Supporters of EU membership reply that the benefits are so huge it's impossible to list them. But look at the big ones.

We are told we get access to a huge market. True, but that has only meant a larger and growing trade deficit as opposed to a surplus in trade with Europe before we went in 1973.

There is no sign that we'll be able to reverse it so great is the power and dominance of German exports. German production industry has been reorganised, massively invested and modernised while British industry has been closed down or allowed to slip into foreign control, losing a third of the big manufacturing firms, which powered our exports in the past.

How about mobility of labour and capital? The main effect of this has been the cynical abuse of hundreds of thousands of East Europeans to drive down



DVD: An RMT DVD film is available which exposes the EU's privatisation drive, how it attacks workers' rights and the increasingly undemocratic nature of the European Union itself. For a free copy e-mail bdenny@rmt.org.uk

wages here and fill a high proportion of the jobs Labour has created over thirteen years in power. Capital migration allows firms to export jobs to Eastern Europe where costs of production are lower and profits greater. As usual in Europe it's heads we lose tails we lose.

Consider the consequences of EU decision-making. I don't know the exact contribution made by EU requirements in breaking up the railways, forcing 'competition' into the Post Office to eat away its markets and compelling the clumsy system of charging by size. But I do know that it was the EU decision that brewers should divest themselves of pubs that began the rot which led to the closures now going on. As for the consequences for regional aid and aid to industry of any kind, it's a complicated story but my impression is that here and everywhere else we meekly obey, even gold plating, damaging regulations but they don't seem to have much effect on the French.

On balance we have lost out massively from EU membership and though the scale is obscured by the outpourings of Europe propaganda, much of which we pay for, to tell us lies at our expense. But I do know that we will never be able to manage our destinies for our purposes and that whinging decline into a pathetic European periphery is no destiny for this country.

It is time to think it through and we would be better off out. No contributions to pay, the ability to import food from wherever it is cheapest and to control our own fishing grounds.

That's not going to happen immediately as the issue isn't salient at the moment. But let's recognise realities, realise our real power and stop accepting everything forced on us, particularly more contributions to pay to prop up the disastrous Euro. A pick and mix EU might be acceptable but the present unquestioning deference isn't. Let's stop listening to the Euro-guff and start thinking. ■



SHIFTING GEARS

New year is a time to take stock of the enormous changes over the last 12 months and to look forward to challenges to come.

A year ago, when I was elected as your president I wrote: "If trade union leaders bow the knee to the demands of bankers and politicians for belt-tightening by working class people and collude in appeasement of the super-rich, we will fail."

That fundamental choice still confronts us. By standing up for jobs, pay and conditions through the worst economic recession for 70 years, RMT has helped keep a fighting spirit alive in the trade union movement. Last year together with TSSA, our members employed by London Underground took four days of strike action to defend station staff and to protect safety of the travelling public on the Tube.

We certainly haven't failed, but the choice before the trade union movement remains the same as it was in 2010 - fight or flight.

Since the May 2010 general election, an illegitimate 'ConDem' coalition without a mandate, has embarked on the most severe 'austerity cuts' since the 1920s, while continuing to privatise our public services. RMT members are at the forefront of the fightback. In towns and cities across Britain, RMT members through their branches, trades councils and community organisations are building 'Anti-Cuts Alliances' to defend schools, hospitals, libraries and community services as well of course as supporting students fighting 'ConDem' cuts to higher education.

From Edinburgh where RMT members turned out with banners to join 20,000 others determined to show 'There is A Better Way' on the Scottish TUC demonstration in October, to Wales where our Newport, Cardiff and Swansea branches are campaigning with the PCS union and the National Shop Stewards Network against cuts, to Bristol, Brighton and Liverpool where RMT branches supported the tremendous turnout - RMT members are getting stuck in.

We will all be coming together on Saturday March 26 for the National TUC Demonstration for Jobs, Growth and Justice in London. It promises to be the biggest working class political demonstration of our generation. Make sure your branch attends and bring your work colleagues and families along. This will be a day not to forget.

But don't wait until March to kick off the New Year's trade union activities. On Monday 31 January 2011 RMT is hosting an international conference for trade unionists in maritime and railway transport industries at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, a short walk from Unity House.

'Future Public Transport - Nationalisation NOT Privatisation' will bring together representatives from key transport trade unions across Europe to discuss the disastrous neoliberal transport model promoted by the European Union and recent trade union campaigns in the ferries and railways in various European countries to defend jobs and collective agreements against EU social dumping and privatisation. If you want to discuss opposition to ferry privatisation with Greek seafarers, or renationalising railways with Portuguese railway workers, come to London and join us. All RMT members are welcome to attend, but places are limited so please reserve your place now by emailing m.carty@rmt.org.uk.

The following day Tuesday February 1, 2011 RMT is hosting our parliamentary bus seminar at the House of Commons. This will be an extremely important opportunity for bus workers and users to question politicians about the threatened ten per cent cuts to our local bus services from the ConDems cuts to the transport budget. As we enter a new year RMT members should heed the motto of our union 'Unity is Strength' and remember the motto of our predecessors in the National Union of Railwaymen 'Workers of the World Unite'.

Alex Gordon



WINNING LEGAL CASES FOR MEMBERS

Last month RMT News highlighted the legal services provided by the union. This month we look at some of the results these services can bring for members

WELDER FORCED TO RETIRE EARLY

A welder who was forced to retire after he injured his back at work received more than £37,000 in compensation.

The member needed surgery after the accident at Network Rail Infrastructure in Sheffield. He worked as a track welder for the firm for 34 years.

He was lifting a heavy piece of equipment when he fell. This caused a slipped disc in his back and damage to his sciatic nerve. He was off work for several months but, after returning to light duties, his condition became so bad he found it difficult to walk and he took early retirement.

He contacted RMT about claiming accident compensation. The union instructed Thompsons Solicitors and the claim was settled out of court. The money will contribute to the cost of the private operation he needed on his back.

"I worked in that job for over 30 years but I will never be able to return to it," the member said.

"On some days I find just sitting still difficult so I can't even do a desk job.

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

"There was a long waiting

list on the NHS and because I was in so much pain I decided to go private," he said.

Many RMT members work in environments where moving heavy objects is a regular activity. Employers should be aware of the risks involved and should take appropriate action to avoid injuries.

Tristram Sterry from Thompsons Solicitors added: "This employer failed to comply with manual handling regulations or conduct an adequate risk assessment on the task the member was carrying out.

"As a result our client has been forced to retire early and will suffer from a debilitating back injury for the rest of his life," he said.

HGV DRIVER RECEIVES COMPENSATION

An RMT member who was forced to take nine weeks off work after he fell through an uncovered manhole has received compensation after help from the RMT.

The member drives HGV lorries for DHL. Having paid to park his vehicle overnight he fell down the manhole in the car park when he was checking his vehicle early the next day.

He suffered an injury to his shoulder meaning he couldn't

drive for nine weeks and had to take time off work.

He contacted his union for legal help after reading about the RMT's legal service in the union journal. RMT instructed its lawyers Thompsons Solicitors and they were successful in settling the claim for £3,000.

The member said: "I shudder to think what the long term consequences of this could have been. It wasn't as if the service station didn't know I was there and drivers were bound to get in and out of their cabs in the dark.

"What I had read in the RMT journal about other members being helped was true - the union helped me when I needed it.

"I'm relieved that I've now been able to return to driving. At one point I feared that I would have to give up my job but fortunately I have been able to carry on with only intermittent pain."

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the accident could have had very serious long term consequences for the member.

"He should never have been put in such a dangerous situation in the first place. Fortunately he has been able to recover and return to work," he said.

Karina Marriott from Thompsons Solicitors added that the car park owner exposed our client to a trap when they failed to ensure that workers replaced the manhole covers after they had finished their job.

"They had a duty to ensure the car park was safe for all users and they failed in that duty," she said.

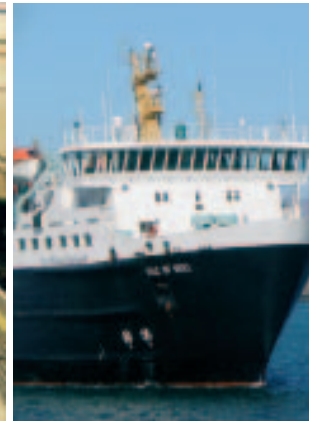
COMPENSATION FOR SERIOUS SAFETY FAULTS

An RMT member working for Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd, who suffered extensive injuries to his wrist after his employer exposed him to a risk it knew was dangerous, has received a substantial sum in compensation.

In July 2005 the member 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.

He 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 RMT which instructed its lawyers Thompsons to pursue a claim for compensation.

"My wrist was in a horrendous mess and I had to have three operations to fix it.

"It's now as good as it's going to get but I still don't have full use of my 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," the member 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 many 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 this

member will live with the consequences of that failure for the rest of his life," he said.

Carol Wild from Thompsons Solicitors added that the member had suffered a horrendous injury which had caused huge personal suffering for him.

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

SERIOUS BURNS REPLACING RAILS

A member whose leg was badly burned as he cut a section of rail track has received £9,750 compensation from his employer.

He was burned as he worked on replacing rails. A disc cutter ignited off a spark from the rail and caught fire, burning the member's leg through his clothing and he has been left with permanent scarring.

He had not been provided with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE).

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the health and safety of RMT members was paramount.

"Our member's injury could have been much worse and we hope that his employer, and other rail industry employers, will adhere in the future to the regulations that are designed to prevent such injuries," he said.

Clare Nash, from Thompsons Solicitors, said: "Since the member's accident, his employer has supplied overalls to wear when carrying out this sort of work.

"This is a good thing, but it

should not have taken an incident such as this to make it happen. The law is clear – if the employer cannot control risk by another means, then it must provide PPE to protect against the risk," she said.

CRAMPED TRAIN CAB CAUSES BACK INJURY

A Cardiff RMT member working as a train driver for Arriva Trains Wales has received £12,120 damages for a back injury caused by poor seating in 143 and 150 train units.

The seating in each unit was inadequate, with problems such as the seat being too far away from the desk, the seats being rigid and immovable and not having arm rests.

The company initially denied liability. But similar complaints had been made by drivers and a number had developed carpal tunnel syndrome as a result of the poor design of the cabs of other units.

RMT instructed Thompsons Solicitors to act for the driver and a failure properly to risk assess conditions in the cabs or to take action to rectify problems was identified.

A consultant orthopaedic surgeon examined the member and confirmed that his back problems were as a result of poor posture while driving the trains.

RMT regional organiser Brendan Kelly said that injuries like this were almost always avoidable.

"If simple steps had been taken to make sure our member's working conditions were safe and appropriate then

he would never have been injured.

"Fortunately RMT and Thompsons have produced a good result for our member.

"We hope Arriva Trains will now take seriously their basic health and safety obligations for members working in these train units," he said.

NETWORK RAIL WORKER RECEIVES COMPENSATION

An infrastructure maintainer with Network Rail was driving his van when another vehicle pulled out of a side street into his path. He suffered shoulder and neck injuries.

The other driver did not accept responsibility for causing the member's injuries. His insurer alleged that, although there had been an impact, it was at such a slow speed that it could not have caused an injury. But the injuries were confirmed by medical evidence obtained by RMT lawyers Thompsons.

The injured member was awarded over £2,500 in compensation after Thompsons issued court proceedings before his claim could be resolved.

HAMMERS CAUSE VIBRATION SYNDROME

An RMT member who worked as a trackman and developed the early signs of hand arm vibration syndrome due to the use of the Kango hammers while compacting ballast, has received £9,500 compensation.

A claim was brought against Network Rail for negligently exposing him to excessive levels of vibration.

Thompsons Solicitors, acting



Winning legal cases for members continued...

for the member, obtained supportive medical evidence, but Network Rail denied liability so court proceedings were started.

Network Rail continued to deny liability until just before the claim was listed for trial. They then offered to settle for £5,250, which the member was advised by Thompsons to reject.

An increased offer was also rejected and Network Rail subsequently agreed to pay £9,500 compensation.

SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGES FOR REPEAT BACK INJURY.

An RMT member has received substantial damages after twice straining his back trying to lift a platform shutter.

The member was off work for six weeks after the first incident, which happened when the shutter jammed as he tried to let passengers out of the station late at night.

He made a full recovery from his injury and accepted £2,000

compensation from his employer.

But six months later the shutter jammed again and his back injury was significantly more serious. He was off work for 12 months and medical opinion was that he could only return to more sedentary work.

His employer instead sought to terminate his employment and offered just £3,700 compensation.

Thompsons launched court proceedings and, ten days before the trial, the defendants agreed to settle the claim for £40,000.

IN BRIEF:

- A member working in the ticket office at London's Liverpool Street Station injured his head and neck when he hit his head on the underside of a wall mounted cabinet as he pushed his chair back to stand up. The cabinet, on which CCTV

cameras were mounted, protruded from the wall just 135 centimetres from the floor. The member's claim for compensation settled for an undisclosed sum.

- A driver whose train hit a motor vehicle on the tracks has accepted £5,000 compensation. His train had passed through Macclesfield station and, as he rounded a bend travelling at 90mph, he saw the vehicle on the line. It had been parked on a slope and rolled down onto the track. He applied the brakes but was unable to avoid a collision. He suffered neck, back and shoulder injuries as well as appreciable psychological trauma.
- A bus driver for Stagecoach Devon contacted RMT's solicitors following a road accident in which he suffered a whiplash injury and shock. He had been driving his bus along the A379 between

Exeter and Exmouth when a car coming in the opposite direction on the wrong side of the road collided with him head on. The other driver's insurance company admitted liability and agreed to pay for private physiotherapy to treat the member's injuries. The compensation claim was settled for £3,000.

- Two members have received compensation after falling while descending from their train cabs. In one case the rail suddenly became detached from the train, causing the member to fall and twist his back. In the other the rail was greasy and wet and the member twisted his knee when he fell.
- A conductor who suffered shoulder, arm and foot injuries when she slipped on black ice as she stepped onto a platform from a train received £8,000 in compensation. ■



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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





PROTEST: RMT young members
Gwynn Williams, Emma
Baldwin, Ashley Farrant on
Edinburgh STUC demonstration

ALL IN THE FIGHTBACK TOGETHER

As the movement gears up for a massive fight-back against government austerity cuts, Ashley Farrant, vice chair of RMT's Young Members' Liaison Committee, reports on an active few days in Edinburgh and London

The new government says "we're all in this together" – but so far we've seen nothing but broken promises and lies.

The ConDem coalition's promises of 'Making a Better Britain' have dissolved into creating an unemployed Britain – and, once again, the working class is being told to take the brunt of the cuts.

With the first of more than a million job losses in both the private and public sectors already becoming reality across Britain, with VAT increasing to 20 percent, benefits being slashed, students having to pay three times more in tuition fees and vital local projects being cancelled, the time has come to say 'enough'.

And with a string of broken promises and u-turns already, including health-service cuts they said they wouldn't make, and a massive assault on local council services, now is the time for all of us to stand up and say NO – and we should be clear

that the coalition CAN be beaten.

Recently I was one of a number of RMT young members from across the transport sector who travelled to Edinburgh to join the Scottish TUC's 'There is a better way' protest against the government's cuts plans.

Before the march we went on a course aimed at putting together new ideas for how to get the message across, both to ordinary people and to the government of millionaires.

Led by Alan Pottage and Dave Marshall of the RMT Organising Unit, it covered how to organise demonstrations, and looked back through history at some of the many examples where progress was made possible by civil disobedience and direct action.

We looked at the Suffragettes, the Battle of Cable Street and the fight against apartheid, where ordinary people faced arrest and even violence in order to fight for a better society

or to stop fascism.

RMT was prominent during this year's TUC calling for civil disobedience, and the young members at our course agreed that we needed to do more than march, make speeches and hand out leaflets.

We all agreed we were ready to join in and play our part, and we discussed ways in which we can make a difference.

My fellow young member Emma Baldwin and I were also at this year's AGM and heard the inspiring debate about the importance of standing up to racism – something we all agreed was important, whenever and wherever it happens.

The next day we joined RMT members from across Scotland to march through the heart of Edinburgh alongside trade unions and other organisations in one common goal – to make the government hear just how we feel about its cuts plan.

All of the RMT young members who went on the

march and the course couldn't thank the Organising Unit enough for their tireless hard work.

From Edinburgh I visited Victoria Train Station in London along with organisers Dave Marshall and Phil Boston to talk to the staff there and see how the government's proposed cuts would affect their lives.

Speaking to many members and potential new members from the shop outlets, Network Rail, Gateline and Platform staff, it became clear that everyone is concerned at what is to come.

To potential new members we emphasised the importance of being part of a trade union, as it is going to be a long and hard fight to keep people in work.

I hope this has been an eye opener to you all and hope to see you out and about fighting the good fight. Solidarity! ■

A video featuring the large RMT contingent on the Scottish TUC demonstration on October 23 can be viewed at www.youtube.com/user/RMTtelevision



PRO-CHOICE: Lorene Fabian of the Abortion Rights Executive Committee with Bob Crow at last year's TUC Congress in Manchester.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Abortion Rights campaign co-ordinator Darinka Aleksic assesses the outlook for abortion rights in 2011

During 2010 we heard a great deal about the savage cuts to public services and public sector jobs which the government is currently undertaking.

But under the radar there is increasing concern about the future of reproductive health services in the light of the £20 billion 'efficiency savings' the NHS has been told to make and the radical reorganisation that it is facing.

Abortion and contraception are hidden and stigmatised services, the poor relation of public health, vulnerable to ideological assault and often overlooked when tough decisions are being made about which areas should be prioritised.

But they are vital: one in three women will need to have an abortion at some point; and access to reliable contraception is needed for at least 30 years of a woman's life. Having control over when and whether to have children is at the heart of women's social, economic and educational equality. And it should be at the heart of Britain's public health strategy.

We saw real improvements in access to abortion services under the last government

– with the NHS paying for more treatment rather than leaving women to bear the cost of termination themselves, reduced waiting times and fewer delays, resulting in earlier abortions using safer procedures and significant falls in the teenage pregnancy rate.

Yet Abortion Rights is already seeing alarming signs of a lack of commitment and funding for this sector from the coalition government. Expert groups devoted to formulating strategy in these areas have been axed in the government's 'bonfire of the quangos'. Contraception and sexual health clinics are facing closure and there is virtual paralysis in the soon-to-be-axed Primary Care Trusts in commissioning training and other vital services amid uncertainty over how their responsibilities will be transferred to Local Authorities and what funding will be available.

Cuts to public services and benefits will hit women disproportionately hard – particularly low income and working class women. Economic hardship and reduced support and welfare services maternity grants, Sure Start centres, childcare, to

name but a few – make it harder for families to thrive. This has a knock-on effect on whether women feel able to start or expand their families – limiting genuine reproductive choice. Moreover, economic disadvantage is strongly associated with increased levels of abortion.

The ultimate effect of the government's spending programme could mean that abortion rates among teens and women of all ages start to rise again – something none of us want to see.

That's why Abortion Rights is campaigning to stop these cuts to public services and spending and it will be at the top of the agenda at our AGM on March 19, when we'll be hearing from TUC Deputy general secretary Kay Carberry. We'll be at TUC Women's Conference and marching under the Abortion Rights banner at the national demonstration in support of public services on March 26. We hope to see you there! ■

For further information about Abortion Rights or to join the campaign visit www.abortionrights.org.uk

BRISTOL BRANCH DOES THE HONOURS



Back row - Left to right: Chris Cook(Bath Spa station staff 10 years); Alex Gordon (RMT President); Harvey Brant (Signaller, Bristol Panel 25 years); Keith Martin (Shopman, St Philips Marsh depot, Bristol 25 years); Phil Boston; Pat Ethridge (Conductor Guard, Bristol 10 years); Mark Nicholls (Conductor Guard, Bristol 25 years); Dave Adlam (Train Manager, Guard Bristol 25 years); Phil Rogers (Signaller, Bristol 25 years);
Front row - Left to right: Tony Gulley (Train Manager, Guard, Bristol 40 years); Gary Abbott (Bristol branch secretary); Peter Kelly (Bristol Temple Meads, Station Supervisor 40 years)

NEASDEN BRANCH PRESENTS 40 YEAR HONOURS



From Left to Right- Branch Secretary Les Bruty, Keith Slade, Jennie Rose(Branch Chair), Bob Crow and 40 year badge holder Keith Wetherell

RAIL CREW HONoured FOR BRAVERY

Three rail workers who helped lead passengers to safety after a train from Glasgow derailed and hung over an embankment honoured for heroism

The train crew that led 60 passengers to safety after their Glasgow to Oban train struck boulders and derailed at the Falls of Cruachan have been honoured by British Transport Police.

Eight people were injured when the front carriage was left hanging precariously over an embankment after running into a landslide on the evening of June 6.

Drew Hinde, a steward from Glasgow, received a British Transport Police Area Commander's Commendation from Chief Superintendent Ellie Bird at an awards ceremony at the City Chambers.

Train driver Willie Dickson

from Grangemouth, and guard Angus MacColl of Oban, were also honoured.

The three men led passengers off the train and put out a fire sparked by leaking diesel fuel.

Driver William Dickson was the last man out - before crew member Drew Hinde climbed back into the teetering carriage to ensure no-one was left inside.

Mr Dickson said: "I'm not one for the limelight. I thought I'd got a speeding ticket when I saw the British Transport Police envelope".

Describing the moment near-disaster struck, he said: "These two big rocks were in front of me.



"I heard the passengers scream, then the adrenaline kicks in and the first thought is your passengers," he said.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch is still investigating the cause, but its initial findings concluded the train struck a boulder that had fallen on to the track.

Chief Superintendent Bird said: "The bravery of all three men is without question, they are truly deserving of their

awards.

"Thanks to their swift action and quick thinking all the passengers were speedily led to safety.

"The Scotland area of British Transport Police is grateful to the officers and public-spirited individuals for their hard work and assistance.

"This ceremony is our chance to say thank you and recognise their contributions," he said.

JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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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.



COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS AND WIN £100 FOR YOUR BRANCH!

RMT launches competition to find the best branch newsletter and best branch website

RMT has launched a competition to find the union's best branch newsletter and best branch website, winners to be announced at this year's annual general meeting.

The competition will be judged by Press Association industrial correspondent Alan Jones and National Union of Journalists magazine editor Christine Buckley and the winners will each receive £100 for the branch courtesy of RMT insurance partners UIA.

RMT's Edinburgh branch has become the latest to launch its own website.

It has already received around 2,000 hits and raised a lot of interest. Branch secretary Graham Buchanan said that as a result of this popular branch initiative - attendance at the last branch meeting doubled and a special branch surgery attracted thirty members.

"Our website is completely free so we would encourage all our branches to set up a branch website," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed the fact that yet another RMT branch had improved communication with members by launching their own web site.

"The Edinburgh branch's site is both punchy and informative and it's no surprise that it's

already popular with members'," he said.

Many other branches have set up branch websites as a means to keep members up to date with local and national issues. These branches include Bakerloo, Basingstoke No 1, Bristol Rail, Cardiff Rail, Carlisle City, Finsbury Park, London Underground Engineering, Offshore, Portsmouth, Surrey and Hants, Three Bridges and Waterloo.

Regional councils have also taken the plunge and set up sites including South East regional council and London region has a web site called *London Calling*. Company councils at Arriva Trains Wales and South West Trains have set up sites to keep members up to date on industrial matters.

Other websites are picture-led, highlighting local initiatives and include details of local events.

Branch and regional newsletters are also proving an invaluable source of local information that does not appear in RMT News due to time and resource constraints. Branch officials can receive training in producing newsletters and RMT News will be running a series of articles about how to set up websites and blogs etc in the coming months.



UIA is a mutual insurance company with over 100 years' experience of providing great value, high quality insurance to members of selected trade unions. Being mutual means UIA are owned by their policyholders; which enables them to keep premiums low, provide excellent products and employ highly trained staff. Products include home, motor, travel and pet insurance. For details call 0845 842 8421 or access www.rmtinsurance.co.uk

*Terms and conditions apply. RMT is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd and UIA (Insurance Services) Ltd, which are both authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Travel insurance is underwritten by Ageas Insurance Ltd. Motor insurance is arranged and administered by UKAIS Limited. UIA Pet Insurance is arranged by Thornside Pet Healthcare Insurance and is underwritten by AXA Insurance UK PLC and administered by BDML Connect Ltd. All these companies are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

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COME TO RMT YOUNG MEMBERS' CONFERENCE!

RMT young members explain why members 30 or under should get themselves nominated to attend young members conference

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

A few years ago I got into a spot of bother at work and my union membership saved me from a lot of trouble. From that point I decided that I'd like to give something back to the union and ended up attending the Young Members Conference in Birmingham in 2008.

Now the word conference sounds boring and I was a bit apprehensive. I wasn't really that active within the union and to be honest, I was imagining something really military and formal however the weekend turned out great!

On the first night, not knowing anyone, I waited where I thought I might stand the chance of finding young members – the bar! And guess what, I was right. I made friends with lots of people and I still keep in touch with them today.

I got nominated to be on the Young Members Liaison Committee and through that, I have been able to get involved in several events over the last couple of years geared towards young members.

If you are given the opportunity to attend then you should. By attending you will open up the doorway to so many options, make lots of new friends and have a great time! Don't worry about going on your own, most people do, but I can guarantee that when it comes to the end of the conference you'll leave with great memories and several new friends.

Gwyn Williams, Holyhead shipping branch

CHANGING TIMES

I've taken part in many interesting and cool projects in the last 11 years as an RMT member and have had the privilege of getting involved with the youth side of things on a numerous occasions.

When the Labour Party came to power in 1997 things seemed to be looking up. Things are very different now. I really did think when Tony Blair and "new labour" got into power we were all going to fix things together.

I don't want to come across as all down on labour, far from it. The Labour Party have done many great things for this country and I will stand by that statement. My point is that it's really easy to become very disillusioned by politics and politicians. You got to ask yourself this, who best represents me as a working class person today? Yes looking back now I was probably naive, but I've learned some valuable things from that time.

Getting involved with the trade union movement was and still is the best decision I've ever made. I've met lots of like-minded and genuine people with all the qualities I mentioned earlier and much more.

The union's youth conference is a really worthwhile event and you will feel welcomed and valued. So I urge all the young members reading this to get the info

conference and attend. It's a bit cheesy but it's so true "we are the future" and the government that's in right now ain't giving anyone a easy ride it seems. So I hope to see some new faces and make some more great friends in the very near future.

Christopher Lonie, Glasgow Shipping Branch

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In my three and a half years of working on the railway I have met some wonderful people, but none so great as the members of RMT, in particular, the passionate group known as the young members.

RMT young members have a lot of enthusiasm and great belief in their union. Attending the young members conference was one of the best things I ever did as I gained knowledge and a better understanding of the union movement and also acquired some friends for life (whether they like it or not! ha ha)

Now don't think it's all boring and like being back at school. We're adults and we are there for a reason, to share our passion and knowledge. I would urge everyone who is undecided to give it a go. You won't regret it. Get yourself to the 2011 young members' conference – it could be the time you start to make a difference :)

Sarah Collinson, young RMT member and new mum

If you wish to attend as a delegate to the RMT Young Members' Conference taking place in Plymouth on February 24/26 please contact your branch secretary for details

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

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

59 Maison Dieu Road, Dover

The smiling face of legendary trumpeter Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) singing "What A Wonderful World" belies his strong stand against racism which attracted the attention of the FBI.

His mother, Mayann Armstrong, was an ex-slave who was only 15 when she gave birth to him in New Orleans.

At the age of just five he experienced segregation on a bus visiting his sick mother, when he was dragged from the whites-only front to the back. His next lesson in discrimination was at the age of 12 when he was sentenced to an indefinite period in a reform school (called the Coloured Waifs' Home) after a mock trial of just 15 minutes for the heinous crime of firing a pistol into the air during New Year's Eve celebrations.

He went on hunger strike in protest for three days before ending it and being rewarded with a place in the school's brass band where he learned to play the trumpet. After a year he was released and got a job playing in bodellos and brothels which were outlawed the

following year. At the age of 17 he was arrested randomly by police looking for a black man who had committed a robbery, and was only saved by the Mafia, who owned the club where he was playing.

His nickname of Satchmo came from part of his act at this club, lampooning a lecherous and avaricious singing preacher called Rev Satchelmouth. While performing on a New Orleans radio show a white announcer refused to introduce "that nigger man" as he called him.

Uncowed, Armstrong seized the microphone and introduced himself, so becoming the first black man to speak on that radio station.

On tour in Memphis the band was stopped by police who, annoyed at seeing Armstrong sitting next to a white woman, arrested all the black musicians and took them to the jailhouse issuing racist threats. The theatre management was only allowed to bail them out for the performance on condition they make a radio broadcast for the benefit of police funds.

Armstrong got his own back by dedicating the first song to the Memphis police force - it was *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You*. As the police rushed towards the band they feared for their lives - only to be thanked by the police who had never had a tune dedicated to them before.

White supremacists were outraged by the 1937 film *Artists And Models* because a white actress danced seductively next to Armstrong as he blew his trumpet. For the next 30 years he was not allowed to be seen interacting socially with whites in his films.

When the desegregation of



schools was being resisted in 1957 Armstrong saw a white mob spitting on a small, terrified black girl at Little Rock in Arkansas. He immediately called off his next government international goodwill tour and declared: "The way they are treating people in the South, the government can go to hell. It's getting so bad, a coloured man hasn't got any country."

Pulling no punches, he accused President Eisenhower of being two-faced and gutless. It was then that the FBI opened a file on Armstrong.

Later he also refused to play at the White House for the newly elected President Richard Nixon in 1969. "The only reason he would want me to play there

now is to make some niggers happy," explained Louis.

As he became richer he resisted pressure from his wife to move to fashionable Long Island in New York. He preferred to stay in the Queen's area "with the rest of the coloured folk and the Puerto Ricans and Italians and Hebrew cats."

The pub in Dover was named after him just after his death in 1971, and regularly has live jazz, as no doubt many of the union's seafaring members will know. ■

"A Pub Crawl Through History, The Ultimate Boozers' Who's Who," by Mike Pentelow and Peter Arkell, is published by Janus. ISBN 978-1-85756-701-4.



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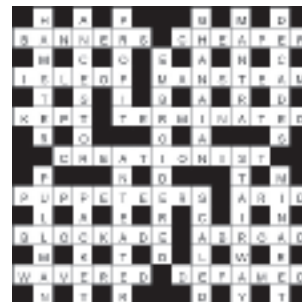
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£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

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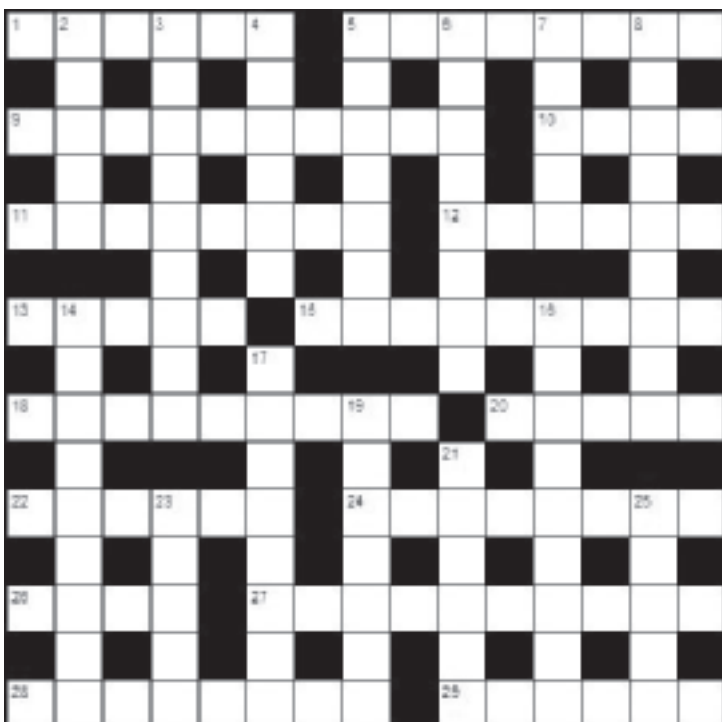
No. 65 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 65 is Mr C Williams of Ventnor, Isle of Wight

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by February 10 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- 1 Season when lambs do just this! (6)
- 5 Outer garment (8)
- 9 See 25
- 10 See 25
- 11 Arabic word for (Palestinian) uprising (8)
- 12,13 Date in 25 to 25, 9, 10 (6-5)
- 15 Flags; benchmarks (9)
- 18 Travelled (9)
- 20 Found where there's muck or music? (5)
- 22 Passed into disuse; out of benefit; no longer a member (6)
- 24 Wiggly things found in sandy seashores, often used for bait (8)
- 26 Cubes used in games: chop very small (4)
- 27 Woodworkers (10)
- 28 Thaw (8)
- 29 Implement with curved blade for mowing (6)

DOWN

- 2 Follower of ancient nature-worshipping religion (5)
- 3 One who starts something (9)
- 4 Container (or generator) of hot air?! (6)
- 5 Throw out (or one thrown out) (7)
- 6 Constructing; putting up (8)
- 7 Circular process - ride a bike (5)
- 8 Positions, physical, emotional or political; postures (9)
- 14 Detachment (from); quarantine (9)
- 16 Fit to fly (9)
- 17 Problem - pain in the bonce (8)
- 19 Make bigger (7)
- 21 Concurs (6)
- 23 Weapon with small blade on long shaft (5)
- 25, 9, 10 What RMT members will do in London - on 25, 12 13! (5)

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.

** NB: Past bonus rate is not an indication of future bonus rate*

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 anticipate a dividend bonus as accrued through the year
- All of your money will be paid to your bank account on the first working day after 14th November.
- If you cancel your payments the 2% dividend is not applied and you cannot withdraw your money until after 14th November. If you think you will need access to your money before 14th November, this account is not suitable for you.
- The Christmas Club will continue year-on-year, so payments after 14th November start the next year's account. Of course if you wish to cancel your payments you are free to do so at any time.

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

Cut here

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB APPLICATION

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

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

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

DECLARATION

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

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



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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 accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you seven working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If you request RMT Credit Union Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- —If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when RMT Credit Union Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.





National TUC Demonstration AGAINST GOVERNMENT CUTS



London - March 26 2011

Support the national TUC demonstration against the savage Government cuts and attack on the welfare state.

Help play your part in ensuring a big turnout by telling your workmates family and friends.

Get involved. RMT organising committees are being set up in your region.
Contact your Regional Office to volunteer.

See www.rmt.org.uk/cuts or www.falseeconomy.org.uk for more information

