

RMT *news*

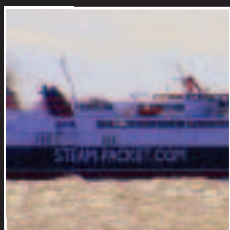
Essential reading for today's transport worker

March against ConDem cuts!

Join the RMT contingent on the TUC demonstration on March 26 in London against spending cuts

Assemble Embankment 11am move off Noon to Hyde Park

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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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

3 Sex.

Male ☐ Female ☐

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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

ALL OUT MARCH 26



The City-funded Tories and their Lib Dem lackies not only intend to do nothing about the insane greed of the bankers but it is imposing a huge cuts programme to pay for it.

We will all have a chance to show our outrage at this attack on our public services on the demonstration in London on March 26.

Within spitting distance of the City, Barts Hospital is sacking over 200 nurses while in the Square Mile £6 billion is being lashed out in bonuses to those who drove the UK economy over the cliff.

The disgraceful sight of Tory London major Boris Johnson telling a bunch of these drunken bankers that he is now planning to sack thousands of tube drivers is also act of provocation that will be met with fierce resistance.

Budget and job cuts on the tube have already led to delays in maintenance, unstaffed stations and vicious assaults and we will continue our campaign to stop them.

Safety concerns at Network Rail sparked an investigation which has concluded that up to 40 per cent of lost time injuries over the past five years have not been reported as required by law.

This has confirmed what RMT has been warning for years – that the commercialisation of our rail infrastructure has created a climate where profit has overridden safety reporting.

A recent RMT bus seminar heard that the industry is facing a Beeching-style shut down as this ConDem government prepares to slash subsidies and let many essential rural services whither away altogether.

An international RMT conference heard that EU policies are privatising rail, shipping and local transport services across Europe. The latest evidence of the damage this causes is the shut down of Britain's most popular railway, the Wrexham and Shropshire railway company, by German state railways Deutsche Bahn.

These huge global transport monopolies created by EU diktats are only interested in extracting profits from public services and if it cannot make money then the axe comes down.

However social dumping and the race to the bottom in terms of pay and conditions can be defeated as shown by a significant victory in the battle to save the Isle of Man Steam Packet ferry service.

Rival operator Mezeron, paying poverty wages and offering appalling working conditions, has thrown in the towel its attempt to take over the container route from Liverpool to Douglas.

The defeat of Mezeron's attempts to undermine the Steam Packet should secure the future of nearly 300 jobs.

However the threat of jobs cuts and privatisation in the shipping sector still remains over Scottish ferries and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Our position is clearly supported by the public – vital services need to be in the public sector in order to service the people not big business.

Meanwhile, while the Tory media seem to be getting away with one hacking scandal after another, the High Court granted Serco Docklands an injunction preventing RMT from organising strike action on the Docklands Light Railway.

Yet again an employer has run to a High Court judge to use the anti trade union laws to ignore the democratic will of members. This decision has ramifications not just for RMT but across the whole trade union movement.

This latest judgment demonstrates just how the anti trade union laws are being exploited to prevent unions calling lawful industrial action. The burden being placed on unions to administer ballots are becoming ever more onerous and we cannot allow this decision to stand.

Talking of the murky world of the media, police are looking into whether my phone was hacked at a time when the *News of the World* accepted they paid the police for information. According to *Private Eye* magazine, an ex-copper has now got a job with them.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

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

RMT DEMANDS TUBE SAFETY INQUIRY

RMT has called for a full Office of Rail Regulation investigation into breaches of safety on London Underground after the union revealed that stations were left unstaffed last month due to cuts-led staff shortages.

The news followed a brutal assault at unstaffed West Finchley station which nailed the lie repeated by Mayor Boris Johnson that “no station will be left unstaffed at any time” as a result of plans to cut thousands of safety-critical jobs.

Buckhurst Hill, Theydon Bois, Debden, Chigwell and North Acton have all been left unstaffed.

In a flagrant breach of safety regulations, both North Acton and Debden were left without

supervisory cover even though a station supervisor is required to at all times.

RMT recently released details of LU's new rosters showing that the company is planning to leave nearly a third of stations unstaffed for part of the working day.

London commuters also faced a chaotic journeys as signal failure knocked out large sections of the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines leading to severe delays in the latest of a continuing list of infrastructure failures overshadowed by TFL's £5 billion cuts programme.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was time for the mayor and LU to stop lying about the impact of the job cuts and admit that they are



planning for the de-staffing of stations on a regular basis.

He said that throughout the dispute Transport for London had accused RMT and TSSA of scaremongering over the safety dangers of station staff cuts instead of meeting directly with the tube unions before more passengers are put at risk of violent assault.

“Repeating rubbish about ‘no

stations being unstaffed at any time’ is an insult to our intelligence.

“Leaving stations with pointwork unstaffed just ratchets up the safety risk a few notches and is the most flagrant breach of regulations, it requires an urgent intervention by the ORR to stop this reckless gamble with safety from becoming institutionalised,” he said. ■

LONDON UNDERGROUND JOB CUTS HOTLINE

Following the implementation of new rosters and job cuts, London Underground staff may have increased anxieties about workplace health and safety.

RMT has set up a confidential reporting line for members.

If you have a genuine safety concern owing to staff cuts then let your union know by emailing luljobcuts@rmt.org.uk

You will not be obliged to give your name but you will need full details of any hazardous occurrences, including:

- Date and time of incident/hazard/near miss
- Location
- Full details of the incident or hazard
- How staff cuts have affected the situation

You can also contact the RMT Helpline on 0800 376 3706. If appropriate, your call will be fielded by our health and safety section. CIRAS, the confidential reporting line for all railway employees, is available on 0800 4 101 101 (see page 14)

RMT WINS INTERIM HEARINGS FOR UNION REPS

RMT has demanded an end to London Underground's campaign of bullying and harassment of union activists after winning two Employment Tribunal “interim relief” hearings.

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

The judge found in favour of sacked Northern Line train operator Arwyn Thomas and offered the company the

opportunity to reinstate, but it refused. Arwyn will now be paid by the company as he awaits a full ET hearing in May – wasting yet more time and money in what is the clearest case of trade union victimisation.

RMT Bakerloo Line drivers' health and safety rep Eamon Lynch has also been sacked and, although he remains on full pay following the union's victory at another interim relief hearing, the company has shown total contempt for the Tribunal

process and refused to reinstate.

In a further case, Peter Hartshorn, long-term union activist on the Piccadilly Line Green Park group, has been reinstated.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was time for LU managers to recognise that it is against the law to victimise trade union activists for trade union activities.

“We are demanding that they call off the campaign of harassment, stop wasting public money and get these members

back to work,” he said.

RMT has held two strikes on the Bakerloo and Northern lines in support of Eamon and Arwyn to try to get management to see sense. LU now stands accused of forcing disruption on Londoners as its trumped up cases are ripped to shreds.

“Instead of harassing our members management should be directing its energies into reaching a settlement to the ongoing disputes over job cuts,” Bob Crow said. ■

DEUTSCHE BAHN SHUTS WREXHAM AND SHROPSHIRE RAILWAY

German state railways Deutsche Bahn has closed the Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company (WSMR), Britain's most popular railway.

The last WSMR service left London Marylebone bound for Wrexham at 18.30 on January 28, 2011, leaving 55 members of staff out of work.

The rail company was an "open access" train operator set up about five years ago following a successful campaign led by RMT Wrexham branch with support from the Welsh Assembly government and Department of Transport following a sustained campaign by communities and businesses in Mid and North Wales for a direct train to London other than Virgin's West Coast service.

The decision to close the company was made on the same day that rail user watchdog Passenger Focus announced that it had been voted best operator by passengers, with a 96 per cent satisfaction rating.

Deutsche Bahn's local and regional service provider, DB Regio, owned WSMR as part of the deal to win the franchise to



LAST TRAIN: Some of the 55 Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company staff facing redundancy on the last service out of London Marylebone bound for Wrexham at 18.30 on January 28 2011.

run Chiltern Railways in 2008.

RMT is demanding an inquiry into how DB got away with pulling the plug on the service potentially leaving £1 million of public investment on infrastructure at the Wrexham end of the route to rot into the ground.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the closure of the service was an act of corporate vandalism and a bitter blow to the UK rail industry.

"It is a scandal that a giant company like Deutsche Bahn

can play fast and loose with our rail services in this way and then cut and run when they decide the profit margins aren't fat enough for their liking.

"The government should now step in and nationalise the route to protect both the jobs and the popular services and there should be a full inquiry into how this operation, set up with Welsh government and taxpayer support, has been ground into the dust.

"Public ownership would protect that public investment

rather than allowing the private rail asset strippers to walk away from the wreckage," he said.

RMT supported the call from the union's parliamentary group in Early Day Motion 1363 to call for a full public inquiry into this issue and will continue to campaign to restore the service.

It has also written to local authorities, the Welsh Assembly and MPs who have constituencies along the route asking them to support the reintroduction of the service.



ANTI-UNION LAWS HIT STRIKE ACTION

RMT has called off a strike by Rdrivers at Arriva Trains Wales pending a legal challenge to a court decision banning strike action on Docklands Light Railway.

Following legal advice on the changing nature of the anti-trade union laws, the 24-hour strike at Arriva Trains Wales was called off and members will be re-balloted.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that while the fight for pay justice for driver members on Arriva Trains Wales remained on the union had received further legal advice in respect of recent court

judgments.

"Nobody should be in any doubt about just how the noose of the anti-union laws has been tightened around workers' necks and it's the full weight of those undemocratic laws that has been brought in to play in this dispute.

"It remains the case that ATW drivers are some of the worst paid in the country and that all they are fighting for is a comparable wage, a pay increase that protects their standards of living without strings, and working conditions that ensure a decent work/life balance," he said. ■



STRIKE BAN: Docklands Light Railway operator Serco Docklands won an injunction to prevent 48-hour strike action from going ahead.

RMT members at DLR voted overwhelmingly for strike action over failure to consult over redundancies, imposition of new pensions arrangements and rosters and the victimisation of members Julian Harper and Ian Peavot.

The strike was deemed unlawful after the judge agreed with Serco Docklands' lawyers that the notices were defective because some job titles and categories were incomplete.

EAST COAST SLASHES CATERING SERVICES IN RUN UP TO RE-PRIVATISATION

RMT has slammed proposals from East Coast that would result in the slashing of on-train catering services along the prestige inter-city route.

The move would leave only four trains a day on the national rail network, excluding the Scottish sleeper services, with a dedicated restaurant car, when British Rail provided 249.

The union has warned that the East Coast cuts plans, code-named EUREKA, will put dozens of restaurant and chef jobs at risk and are seen by RMT as a blatant exercise in slashing quality of service to maximise profitability in advance of re-privatisation.

RMT is seeking an urgent meeting with the company and is mobilising a political campaign in an all-out effort to slam the brakes on the cuts plans.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the mad dash to axe East Coast's catering

facilities from May in the run-up to re-privatisation shows that quality of service counts for nothing in the drive to fatten up profitability before the route is auctioned off again in the wake of two previous failures on this prestige service.

"Those responsible for pushing forward with this planned carve-up should be ashamed of themselves.

"It underscores RMT's demand that this route be retained as a genuine public service and not merely a staging post before it is offered up as a cash-cow to the next bunch of opportunists and chancers in the private-sector queue.

"RMT will fight these plans politically, publicly and industrially and we will not stand by while passengers are fleeced for top-dollar fares in return for a third-rate quality of service and while our members' jobs are left in the balance," he said. ■

CARDIFF AND SWANSEA TRAIN CLEANERS' STRIKE OVER WAGES AND PENSIONS

RMT train-cleaning crews, employed by the Mitie company and servicing First Great Western trains took 24 hour strike action earlier this month following a 100 per cent vote in a dispute over pensions, payment of wages and failure to make a realistic pay offer for 2010.

Mitie, which recently announced a massive 12 per cent jump in profits, brands itself as an "outsourcing specialist" mopping up facilities contracts in both the private and public sectors.

As a result of wage discrepancies members have been short-changed by hundreds of pounds, revealing just how these facilities companies operate and how they treat their low-paid staff.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the continued

lack of pension contributions by Mitie was nothing short of a scandal.

"Despite numerous promises made by Mitie to resolve the matter with urgency, there has been no resolution and as a result of these combined attacks on working conditions RMT members have returned a rock-solid mandate for action.

"Mitie are using all sorts of disgraceful excuses to delay proceedings and have even taken to blaming the previous contractor (ISS) for not passing adequate information to them during the TUPE process.

"RMT does not accept that and we will not sit back and allow management to treat our members with complete and utter contempt," he said. ■

VICTORY IN FIGHT TO SAVE ISLE OF MAN STEAM PACKET

RMT welcomed a significant victory in the battle to save the Isle of Man Steam Packet ferry service to the mainland as rival operator Mezeron, paying poverty wages and offering appalling working conditions, pulled out of its attempt to take over the container route from Liverpool to Douglas.

The defeat of Mezeron's attempts to undermine the Steam Packet should secure the future of nearly 300 jobs and sends out a clear message that those who seek to engage in a race to the bottom on pay and conditions can be defeated.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the Mezeron operation was an opportunist move and that its plans had



been torn apart by a union and community campaign that has forced the company to back off.

Mezeron introduced two Estonian-flagged ships into service operated with Eastern European seafarers on rates of pay are as low as £2.92 per hour

for a Bosun. The captain of the ship was on £7.48, which is half of the Bosons' rate on the Isle of Steam Packet.

The company had already secured a number of key container accounts, including retail giants Shoprite and Tesco,

freight business that Steam Packet services rely on to subsidise passenger ferry services, particularly in winter.

"RMT, our sister unions and the local community have sent out the clearest message that we will defend proper rates of pay and the highest quality of service in the UK ferry industry and that warning should be heeded by others thinking of undermining our members' jobs, their rates of pay and their working conditions.

"I want to pay tribute to our members at the Isle of Man Steam Packet who, along with their colleagues, have led this campaign from the front.

"They are a credit to the trade union movement," he said. ■

SCOTTISH FERRIES PUBLIC MEETING

RMT general secretary Bob Crow will be addressing a public meeting on February 28 in Barra, the southernmost island of the Outer Hebrides, against the privatisation and cuts in Scotland's ferry services.

The meeting at 19.30 hours will be held at Castlebay Community School and will be chaired by Jessie MacNeil of Voluntary Action.

The Scottish Executive is conducting a review that will influence the next round of tendering as demanded by European Union competition rules as well as the ownership and operation of assets.

The Scottish TUC has placed on record its disappointment over the decision to commission the Transport Research Institute, which has a bias against the publicly owned company that runs the services Caledonian

MacBrayne, to look into the operation and organisation of ferry routes.

The review is examining how services are organised, including whether the Clyde and Hebrides, or the Northern Isles services, should continue to be one network.

Separating certain routes to be tendered on an individual basis will mean fragmentation and privatisation for seafaring crews.

RMT has already sent a detailed submission to the Scottish government outlining its opposition to the break up of the Clyde and Hebrides network.

Bob Crow said that the threat of cuts and privatisation to Scotland's lifeline ferry services was very real and the current climate of austerity measures should alarm the communities that will be affected.



"The Scottish ferries are at severe risk of being broken up with some routes closed, others handed over for private profit and whatever remains left at the mercy of exploitation as cross subsidies are removed and fares are jacked up.

"Now is the time for the communities and the workforce to stand shoulder to shoulder to resist any attack on the ferry services which are such a vital component of the infrastructure of Scotland," he said. ■

STOP ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY CUTS

Shipping members will receive a postcard with this magazine to send in support of Early Day Motion 1315 against plans to shed RFA ships and jobs

The Ministry of Defence is planning to withdraw from service the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) ships the Fort George, the Bayleaf and the Largs Bay.

Even with the proposed regeneration of the Fort Austin this represents a significant loss of RFA crews.

RMT is asking you to add your voice to the campaign by filling in your postcard, using the Freepost address provided, to ask your MP to support our campaign by signing Early Day Motion 1315, Future of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

RMT parliamentary group convenor John MacDonnell MP has already won cross-party support in the campaign to stop the privatisation of the RFA, but the fight to retain jobs and ships goes on.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the Value for Money review being undertaken could mean a further ten per cent cut in ships and RFA crew numbers.

"Money that could have been used to protect jobs and vessels has been wasted on another round of market testing.

"Our priority now is to fight any cuts to vital RFA services by this ConDem government," he said.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary service has a long and proud history of providing efficient and economical worldwide combat support and strategic sealift to the Royal Navy and other armed forces.

It has always been a civilian crewed fleet with seafarers



playing a key role in sustaining the employment and training of UK seafarers.

The RFA not only provides a lifeline to the Royal Navy but also plays a significant role in underpinning UK maritime skills. UK ratings numbers have declined from 30,000 in 1980 to 11,000 today. In the same period, UK deck and engineer officer numbers have fallen from more than 28,000 to barely 11,000. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is the largest employer of UK seafaring ratings and officers, employing 2,300 seafarers from around the UK.

Under the Strategic Defence Review the Ministry of Defence plan to withdraw three ships from service.

The RFA not only serves as a supply line to the Royal Navy. The service also demonstrates unrivalled technical expertise through training, the deployment of ships in peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts around the world, and in

undergo specialist training in such areas as helicopters, fire-fighting and damage control, use of self-defence systems, specialist navigation and warfare, naval communications and command systems.

Besides their ever-present involvement in military support, RFA vessels now provide a wide range of sophisticated roles – including amphibious support and secure strategic sealift, aviation training, casualty reception, and forward repair functions.

In recent years, RFA ships have become increasingly involved in providing relief after natural disasters in such areas as Africa, Sri Lanka and the Caribbean, as well as recently working with the US Coast Guard on successful counter-drug smuggling operations in the Caribbean.

Early Day Motion 1315

FUTURE OF THE ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY

That this House is concerned at the substantial cuts proposed for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) fleet; notes that the RFA is Britain's essential supply service to the Royal Navy and recognises that the service also demonstrates unrivalled technical expertise through training, the deployment of ships in peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks around the world, in addition to its work in combating piracy and drug smuggling; acknowledges that the RFA also plays a very significant role in underpinning UK maritime skills; further notes that in addition to the planned loss of ships under the Strategic Defence and Security Review, a value for money exercise is also being undertaken that could mean a further 10 per cent cut in ships and crew numbers; and therefore urges the Government to protect the Royal Fleet Auxiliary from these proposed cuts which threaten to undermine this lifeline service to the Royal Navy.

John MacDonnell MP

GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO END PAY DISCRIMINATION AT SEA

ConDem government shipping minister Mike Penning will not uphold draft regulations drawn up by the last Labour government to outlaw pay discrimination on UK ships in UK waters.

The government is now proposing to stop discrimination for EU nationals but allow discrimination to continue for non-EU nationals.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that whilst it may stop discrimination against EU seafarers it was not enough.

"We will have to ensure that EU maritime unions put the squeeze on their governments to end such discrimination," he said.

The minister also intends to completely ignore the findings of the Carter Report which recommended the outlawing of section nine of The UK 1976 Race Relations Act which explicitly allows for pay discrimination.

Last month the European Commission issued a 'reasoned opinion' under EU infringement procedures which provides the UK government with two months to act.

RMT solicitors first lodged the complaint with the European Commission in March 2006 following years of inaction by the Labour government. Since the complaint was made the Department for Transport has continued to delay action.

The previous government did put down serious proposals to outlaw discrimination, with draft regulations drawn up for implementation alongside other Equality Act measures in October 2010.

The previous regulations would remove discriminatory pay applied to EU nationals on UK and some EU flagged ships in UK territorial waters. It would also have covered some non-EU nationals on UK ships in UK territorial waters.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the minister was shamelessly hiding behind EU critical opinion to prevent pay justice on UK ships.

"This ConDem government wants to continue with the modern day slavery on the ships of shame that taints the UK fleet.

"RMT will continue to fight for pay and conditions to be applied without exemption," he said. ■

Parliamentary column



RENEWING TRANSPORT POLICY

With the McNulty review into the railways due to report in April and the Secretary of State for Transport probably introducing a rail white paper this year our railways are approaching a policy cross roads and decisions that are made this year and next could determine the shape of the industry for the next generation.

This month I have tabled Early Day Motion 1383 to contribute to that debate. My motion focuses on an area of railway work that is absolutely vital to the safe and efficient railways but receive scant public attention, that of rail renewals which includes installing overhead lines and signals, and laying track.

My motion expresses concern that currently renewals work is carried out by numerous contractors and subcontractors and Network Rail is making the mistake of managing these contracts by prioritising short-term budgetary objectives over the needs of the railway infrastructure.

I and many of my colleagues believe this "feast and famine approach" has resulted in essential renewals being delayed leading to a poorer service and increased costs in the medium and longer term.

RMT members will know all too well that this policy has also directly resulted in the loss of thousands of skilled rail jobs and railway knowledge, as demonstrated by Jarvis being forced into administration.

Such an approach is a false economy and it would be far better for if Network Rail instead took all its renewals functions in-house.

We know from McNulty that the decision by Network Rail to bring its

maintenance function in-house from 2004 has delivered maintenance cost savings of over £400 million per annum, of which at least £100m is reported to be a direct result of reduced interface costs.

Renewals and enhancements account for three quarters of Network Rail's expenditure and it is clear that also bringing renewals in-house could provide significant substantial savings. It would also provide more security of employment and stability than the current policy of deferring renewals which can lead to involve an extension of agency and sub-contracted labour and worsening conditions of employment.

I shall be raising bringing renewals in – house with both the government and the Labour's policy review process.

Congratulations to RMT and its parliamentary group for an excellent seminar on the bus industry, another area of transport policy that does not get the attention it needs. It was good to see over 100 people pack into the seminar. It was also welcome to see so many of my parliamentary colleagues there who will know that buses face a triple whammy of cuts in national and local funding and changes to the arrangements of funding for concessionary bus passes. And like so many of these callous government cuts it will be the young, poor and vulnerable who suffer most, yet another reason to join the TUC's March for the Alternative on March 26. I hope to see you there.

Kelvin Hopkins

Labour Member of Parliament for Luton North

BEECHING FOR THE BUS INDUSTRY

RMT bus seminar piles pressure on government to save bus services squeezed by unprecedented austerity measures as councils reveal plans to pass cuts on with Beeching-style cuts



More than two-thirds of councils in England are planning major cuts to their bus budgets, a RMT seminar in the House of Commons heard earlier this month.

MPs, bus workers, passengers, pensioners and youth organisations discussed how services and jobs will be affected by the planned cuts by the ConDem government.

According to an RMT study carried out by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) some councils intend to end all subsidised services, with Cambridgeshire council planning to phase out all council bus services over four years to save £2.7 million.

The report also found that 13 county councils were planning cutbacks of more than £1 million, including Norfolk, Suffolk and Devon. Many rural, hospital and off peak bus services are also at risk.

Bus services are under threat from multiple funding cuts. Local transport authorities provide buses that are socially necessary but not commercially viable, but these are in jeopardy as a result of an overall 28 per cent cut to local authority transport revenue funding.

Bus companies provide most services on a commercial basis, however a 20 per cent drop in the fuel tax rebate (known as BSOG) available for buses from 2012, will combine with a cut of £54 to £100 million to annual public expenditure on concessionary journeys from 2011. This loss of revenue will result in higher fares and reduced service and the Local Government Association has warned many bus routes would disappear as a result of government cutbacks.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow warned that the attacks amounted to Beeching-style cuts on the bus industry.

"Many rural bus routes came about due to the substitution of buses for rail from the 1920s onwards, today this government wants to shut the lot down," he said.

RMT parliamentary group chair John McDonnell MP

warned that social deprivation would increase and average life expectancy drop as a result of the cuts especially for the elderly or disabled as health care would more and more be inaccessible.

Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Maria Eagle MP took questions and pledged full support for the campaign against the cuts and will be holding discussions with RMT and other unions to help develop alternative transport policies as part of Labour's policy review. Unite executive member Martin Meyer also made the case for municipal ownership of bus services.

Sophie Allain of the Campaign for Better Transport said that cutting financial support for bus services would end up with young people unable to access college courses, older people being stuck at home, and jobseekers having to stay on benefits because they have no way of travelling to work.

Members of the leading national children's charity, NCB, told the meeting how cuts to public transport will have a negative impact on the lives of young people across the country.

Young NCB member Lily Coulstock-Cockeram, 16, of Cambridge, said: "Education is a young person's right, and transport to access education should also be our right."

POOREST HIT

CBT director Stephen Joseph said that the cuts to bus services would hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest.

"We believe any short-term savings will be outweighed by the long-term cost of a vastly depleted bus network.

"These unprecedented cuts will be especially disastrous for people on low incomes and could effectively mean the death of rural bus services.

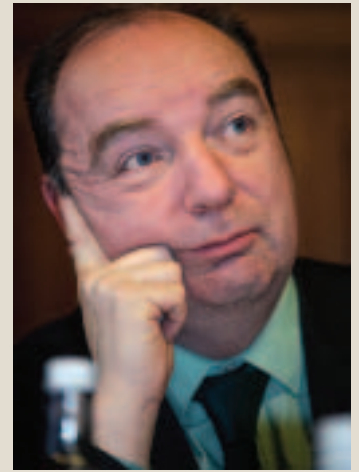
"Politicians must consider the social, economic and environmental consequences of failing to protect our bus services," he said.

Bus minister Norman Baker

told the meeting that while he accepted the funding settlement was "challenging" he claimed that most bus services would not be affected.

He said that the warning outlined at the meeting by Passenger Transport Executive Group director Jonathan Bray about Cambridge cutting all bus services was a lie as 'only' 40 per cent of services would be cut this year.

Mr Bray rose to respond to the accusation, pointing out that he had said the cuts would be carried out over four years but Mr Baker held already fled the meeting. ■



Bus minister Norman Baker



John MacDonnell MP



RMT general secretary Bob Crow

BUSES MATTER

RMT report on bus services exposed the impact that ConDem government cuts will have across the UK. The key findings are:

- The loss of revenue will result in higher fares and reduced services.
- Bus services face cut after cut, which could tip services into a spiral of decline
- Evening and weekend services will become a thing of the past in many areas, and additional provisions like concessionary fares are in jeopardy
- Lifeline countryside bus services are under particular threat from local government budget cuts
- Vulnerable people across the UK who rely on buses for essential journeys could be left stranded, magnifying social and economic problems
- There are 123,000 employees in the bus industry, however as revenue is lost this number will reduce
- Reform of the industry need to be examined including a greater role for municipal ownership and not-for-profit services.
- Politicians appear to be out of touch on this issue and do not appreciate the social value of buses. Buses matter and must be attributed the funding that they deserve.

info@rmt.org.uk. You can also join the campaign for Save our Buses by visiting <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses>

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT UNIONS RESIST PRIVATISATION AND SOCIAL DUMPING

Transport unions met in London last month to resist European Union diktats demanding the privatisation of maritime, rail and local transport industries



Cypriot union PEO rep Athos Eleftheriou



German campaigner Hans-Gerd Oefinger



Greek PAME rep George Pontikos



Swedish union SEKO rep Jorgen Lundstrom

Over 40 transport unions from Greece in the south to Sweden in the north gathered in London at the meeting hosted by RMT to share their experiences of the disastrous effect of right-wing, neoliberal EU legislation on their respective shipping, rail and local transport sectors.

Opening conference, RMT president Alex Gordon reported European Commission plans to establish "a single European railway area" based on EU rules demanding complete 'liberalisation' of the rail sector.

"The move mirrors the EU's drive to deliver European ferry services, from the Greek islands in the Aegean to Scottish ferry services in the Clyde and Hebrides, to private-sector competition and social dumping of seafarers' pay and conditions.

"In the bus sector, corporate takeovers sanctioned by the EU Competition Commissioner, such as the acquisition by German state railways, Deutsche Bahn (DB) of Arriva plc, are creating EU-wide transport monopolies," he said.

He said that a deeper understanding of the EU's transport privatisation drive was required in order to resist this real and growing threat to members' jobs and communities and to transport networks.

Greek union PAME international secretary George Pontikos said that Greek transport was being privatised at a massive rate following demands from the EU.

"The promotion of capitalist exploitation is a key part of the EU Lisbon 2000 strategy as demanded by monopoly finance capital.

"This has increased fares, reduced safety and increased accidents and Greece has lost its sovereignty over ports, shipping, railways energy and other resources," he said.

Swedish rail union SEKO representative Jorgen Lundstrom said that the rail network was nearly completely privatised following years of implementing EU directives, leading to huge job losses and a decline in safety.

In train traffic over half the workforce had been done away with, the number of workers in maintenance had declined by a third while train use had increased by 60 per cent.

As a result only 50 per cent of the public now had confidence in railways with four workers and one passenger losing their lives last year.

"The train fleet and infrastructure are deteriorating yet budget pressures mean all maintenance is reduced to an absolute minimum.

"This fragmentation and the experiment with the market was alleged to have meant "more money for the railway" yet what has happened is more money from the railway.

Hans-Gerd Oefinger of the German campaign group Railways From Below outlined how German state railways

Deutsche Bahn was using EU liberalisation rules to build a global transport and logistics monopoly.

"DB did not buy EWS freight company to develop the freight sector in this country but to conquer the French freight market.

"DB is locked into an economic war with the French to dominate Europe and to become a global player," he said.

He said that it was still moving towards privatisation by fragmenting the industry in Germany and outsourcing work by "sub, sub, sub-contracting" with terrible results.

Unite union representative Martin Meyer said that local bus services were also under threat across Europe as a result of EU legislation agreed in 2007 which introduces EU-wide rules on the procurement and funding of contracts for passenger transport services.

"We have seen this process in Britain since the bus industry was privatisation in 1986 – cuts in jobs, wages and services.

"When buses are operated simply for profit you get lower levels of service and the development of private monopolies," he said.

NO TO SOCIAL DUMPING

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that he recognised the experiences of other unions with the development of social dumping in the shipping sector.

"We have foreign labour employed on rates of less than £2 an hour working next to UK seafarers.

"It is not about what nationality these workers are, that every seafarer should be on the same rate of pay in order to stamp out this race to the bottom," he said.

EU competition rules had enforced rapid 'liberalisation' in the maritime ferry and deep sea sectors since 1986, with drastic consequences for seafarers' jobs, pay and conditions of employment through widespread social dumping and abuse of cheap labour in the shipping industry. Alongside their attack on labour costs, shipowners had enjoyed unprecedented increases in profits.

Steve outlined RMT's campaign to stop the privatisation of key lifeline Scottish ferry routes as demanded by EU competition rules.

"We need to be working together and let them know in Brussels and Strasburg that our members do not support this social dumping and other attacks in their industry," he said.

Cypriot shipping union Segdamelin representative Athos Eleftheriou bluntly put it that the EU was implementing neoliberal globalisation on behalf of big business.

"At the same time EU structures ensured that bigger powerful EU states like France



and Germany had complete domination of smaller states in order to implement policies that benefited their interests," he said.

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

In the final session RMT general secretary Bob Crow proposed a statement, which was agreed after debate and changes, outlining joint strategies to fightback against the EU's privatisation drive (see opposite).

"This is not about setting up new organisations but simply agreeing strategies and analysis which can deliver an alternative to capitalist chaos.

"The Commission is now exercising the powers it handed to itself in December 2009, marking another shift in sovereignty away from elected governments and to appointed officials acting on behalf of corporate interests.

"Our call is for public service, not private profit – for nationalisation, not privatisation and trade unionists across Europe must make common cause with transport users to roll back this fundamentally undemocratic attack," he said.

RMT produced a pamphlet for the conference outlining the history of EU directives on the maritime and rail sector and the devastating impact they have had on the industries. ■

A free copy is available from bdenny@rmt.org.uk, or write to Brian Denny, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

STATEMENT AGREED BY:

Open Conference of Fighting Transport Unions

Future Public Transport - Nationalisation not Privatisation
London, January 31 2011

We congratulate participants at this conference for contributing to the discussion between organised transport workers to build resistance to European Union liberalisation measures.

EU transport policies promoting privatisation, fragmentation, social dumping, outsourcing and attacks on collective employment conditions are designed to increase profitability at the expense of labour. The European Commission now governs public sector workers' pay bargaining in Ireland and Greece. As the global capitalist crisis and the crisis of European banks and the 'Euro' intensifies other workers will suffer similar attacks on their fundamental democratic rights. European Court of Justice decisions attack trade union rights and freedoms and promote the rights of capital and business in the EU, while austerity measures of national governments and EU institutions target the social gains of previous generations.

We send solidarity greetings to all trade unionists fighting privatisation and other effects of liberalisation and defending public transport as a nationalised, essential public service.

We call on participants at today's conference and those who could not attend to continue to build and extend dialogue and cooperation between fighting transport unions, to improve analysis and exchange of information and to coordinate joint initiatives and activities.

The latest consequences of EU liberalisation for public transport workers include:

1. A renewed attack in 2011 on nationalised railway systems through the European Commission's 'recast' 1st Rail Package to enforce privatisation and fragmentation of transport planning, investment and services;
2. New attacks on publicly owned railways through the Commission's 4th Rail Package, to enforce competition in domestic passenger train services, leading to widespread attacks on occupational and public safety, pay, conditions, pensions, trade union organisation and collective bargaining;
3. Continued catastrophic decline in maritime employment conditions and lifeline ferry services as a result of EU liberalisation of 'cabotage', EU Treaties governing 'freedom of establishment' and continuing disastrous consequences from 'flags of convenience';
4. Enforced privatisation of urban transport networks under the EU Regulation (2007) on public service obligations in local public transport by road and rail;
5. Abandonment of 'socialised transport' in favour of services run in the interests of corporate monopoly capital, where profit becomes the only criteria and transport policy is designed solely to promote 'Euro companies' competing in global markets;
6. More expensive, less efficient public transport for citizens and consumers, where greed, the domination of financial interests

and profit are allowed to destroy jobs, public transport services and communities.

We therefore condemn:

- Those EU liberalisation directives, including the various railway packages and rules on state aid, which are increasingly leading to the privatisation of Europe's railways and leading to less democratic accountability and the growth of corporate transport monopolies;
- Those governments, EU and other institutions, which increasingly demand privatisation, liberalisation and fragmentation of transport as a condition of investment.

We believe that, unless employers are effectively challenged by trade unions fighting for nationalised, publicly accountable transport systems, attacks on workers through privatisation and social dumping will be assisted by recent judgments in the European Court of Justice, which represent a fundamental attack on collective bargaining and the right to strike.

We therefore call for a European-wide demonstration by trade unions representing transport workers before the end of 2011. The purpose of the demonstration will be to:

- Protest against EU institutions that demand privatisation and liberalisation of rail and ferry services;
- Argue for high-quality, integrated, publicly owned public transport that puts people before profit;
- Demand an end to social dumping and call for defence of workers' and trade union rights and national collective bargaining.

To achieve this end we agree to:

- Coordinate our activities where possible and work together to maximise participation by transport workers' trade unions and transport users' associations in coordinating national opposition to EU transport liberalisation policies, including developing a multilingual website through www.rail4all.org/ European Coalition Against Railway Privatisation;
- Establish a Conference Coordinating Committee to help plan future initiatives and to create the basis for united, coordinated national industrial action by all fighting unions across the transport sector and to integrate information and analysis of the true cost of privatisation and successful experiences of renationalisation.

Agreed by participants at the Open Conference of Fighting Transport Unions organised by RMT on 'Future Public Transport - Nationalisation not Privatisation' held at SOAS in London, January 31 2011



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GOVERNMENT PAVES THE WAY FOR MEGA LORRIES

The ConDem coalition government has announced plans to allow an increase in the length of HGVs of up to almost seven feet (2.05 metres).

Existing maximum length for HGV semi-trailer is 54 feet (16.50 metres) but the Department of Transport has commissioned research, due for publication, to evaluate increasing trailer lengths by up to 2.05 metres, thereby increasing HGV length to 18.55 metres (61 feet).

Any increase in semi-trailer length seriously risks opening up the current circulation EU Directive 96/53 EC. Once opened, amendments can be made for increasing the length and weight which could lead to mega trucks of 25.5 metres and up to 60 tonnes in weight coming to the UK.

Philippa Edmunds of Freight on Rail said that such an approach not only ran counter to government policies to reduce freight's emissions and improve

road safety but risked ushering in mega trucks of 25 metres 82 feet from Europe, to which the coalition has explicitly said it was opposed.

"Does the coalition government want to be blamed for mega trucks coming to the UK?" she said.

The London bendy bus is being phased out at considerable public expense due to road safety concerns. Bendi buses, at 18 metres, are a similar length to the new proposed HGV length, and caused more than twice as many injuries as other buses.

"It seems a perverse decision to increase lorry lengths.

"Instead, the government should be working with the industry to improve efficiency of existing HGVs, improve compliance with existing road regulations instead of undermining low carbon energy efficient safe rail, which reduces long distance road congestion," Philippa Edmunds said.

She pointed out that rail freight produces 70 per cent less carbon dioxide emissions than the equivalent road journey and an aggregates train can remove up to 160 HGVs from roads.

HGVs are also more than three times more likely to be involved in fatal accidents than cars on major roads, due to a combination of size, lack of proper enforcement of drivers' hours, vehicle overloading and differing foreign operating standards.

"Previous increases in lorry lengths have led to more HGVs driving around with less cargo – currently one in four lorries on our roads is empty and many more only partially loaded.

"This is the reverse of what was claimed would happen by the proponents of longer HGVs, who are using the same old flawed arguments again.

"The question is will the road haulage industry ever stop asking for bigger and heavier lorries?" she said.

EU HARMONISATION OF HGV DIMENSIONS

The current directive which governs maximum HGV dimensions HGV for manufacturers, (vehicle type approval 92/27/EC for commercial vehicles), is being revised as part of EU harmonisation of general safety of motor vehicles.

Supporters of longer and heavier lorries will push to get the dimensions increased to 25 metres and 60 tonnes in this directive and then get it replicated in the directive which dictates where vehicles can go in the EU directive EC 96/53. Currently member states can vary dimensions but this new regulation would end variations and would mean that member states could no longer refuse vehicles approved elsewhere in the EU. ■

For more information go to website www.freightonrail.org.uk

RMT DEFENDS AMEY RAILWAYS PENSIONS

Union sees off attempt to reduce pension benefits for members working for Amey

RMT has successfully blocked an attempt by Amey management to freeze pensionable pay for and remove unprotected employees from the Railway Pension Scheme (RPS) with effect from November 2010.

RMT immediately objected to Amey management's proposed changes to the Amey Rail Section of the RPS when proposed last July which would have reduced pension benefits at retirement.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that had these pension changes been accepted employees with 'protected' and 'indefeasible rights' would have seen the real value of their pensions fall year on year until retirement and those unprotected members would have been forced out of the RPS and offered in its place a grossly inferior money- purchase scheme.

"RMT's position was clear that management proposals like these which attack members' pension benefits are totally unacceptable and must be resisted with every means possible.

"Although the union recognises the difficult financial situation many final-salary pension schemes face, this does not give employers the green light to alter or close workers' deferred pay benefits," he said.

However, following a number of meetings between the union and

management Amey modified its original proposals to the following:

- Unprotected members will remain members of the RPS.
- For any pay increases related to pay anniversary dates or promotions after December 31 2010, the increase in pensionable pay will be restricted to a maximum of the increase in Retail Prices Index, plus one per cent. This will include pay increases resulting from promotions.
- The capping of pensionable pay increases would only be for three-year period and therefore would be re-examined in 2013.

RMT's also made strong representations over the replacement of the Amey Defined Contributions Scheme (Saver Plan) which will be replaced by a different scheme called 'Amey Group Personal Pension Plan.'

This change is the result of the introduction of the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) which is intended to be introduced by the government in 2012 and will make it mandatory to enrol employees into a pension scheme which meets or exceeds certain legal standards.

Unlike the Saver Plan, in which Amey 'double matches' contributions, the new scheme will only 'single match' contributions for employees below senior manager level up to six per cent.

Employees who are current members of the Amey DC Scheme will be consulted about this change and informed of their options but those who are not in a pension scheme will, unfortunately, not be consulted.

However, Amey has said that those employees who have been employed for less than six months will still have the option to join the current DC Scheme. Amey stated that employees with more than six months' employment 'may' be able to join the present DC Scheme, but this is not guaranteed.

The union has asked for further consultation on the new DC arrangements and will continue to keep union members who are affected informed on any developments.

RMT regional organiser Brendan Kelly said that the changes which have been agreed represent a significant shift away from management's original proposals and go some way protecting members' of future pension entitlement.

"The decisive role played by RMT representatives should not be underestimated in protecting members' future pension entitlement and without such representation and trade union organisation members' future benefits would continue to be eroded and attacked by employers," he said. ■





Stop the cuts!



**Join thousands of trade unionists on the
TUC Demonstration Against Austerity Cuts
on March 26 in London.
Bring your friends and family.**

STOP THE CUTS

CONDEM CUTS WILL WRECK BRITAIN

The government has unleashed what threatens to be the biggest ever attack on welfare and public services.

Every part of the transport sector from buses, rail and shipping will feel the impact of these cuts in the form of privatisation, outsourcing and cuts in subsidies.

RMT will be producing sector by sector leaflets outlining exactly how these cuts will affect you and your job.

The government has decided that working people will pay for a financial crisis they did not create.

The ConDem coalition is using the cover of paying off the debt created by rescuing the banking sector to pull a vicious stunt on working people. We are told cuts are necessary to save our economy, but their real aim is to ensure the rich pay as little contribution to society as possible. The Tories don't care about decent public services because they don't need them. They don't care about working class communities, or the poor

and vulnerable because they are the party of the wealthy.

This short guide explodes the myths Tories are using to drive through their cruel cuts programme and argues there is a sensible alternative. In order to resist the cuts we must be united. For more info see www.rmt.org.uk/cuts

DO WE HAVE TO SLASH GOVERNMENT SPENDING TO SAVE OUR ECONOMY?

In 2008 the global banking system was plunged into chaos and was rescued by public money – billions of taxpayer pounds propped up Britain's major banks to stop them going bust, increasing the national debt.

To reduce the debt, the government wants to cut the amount it spends each year by at least £83 billion by 2015, or 14 per cent of all public spending.

The government argues that cuts are necessary because Labour overspent when it was in power. This is absurd. The crisis was the result of an economic crash caused by capitalism and

the unregulated greed of banks sent the world into recession.

Our debt is not out of control. The cuts are a political choice and not an economic necessity. The government is deliberately not telling the truth. It has used the scale of the debt to frighten people into accepting deep cuts.

Our debt is smaller than Japan, the US, France and Germany. Our debt is smaller than the UK debt 50 years ago, but that didn't stop us building the welfare state, establishing the NHS and building millions of council homes.

- The cuts are unfair and will hit the poorest and most vulnerable, hardest
- Cuts will destroy jobs and damage public services for everyone
- The cuts will destroy private sector jobs too
- The cuts won't work and could plunge us back into recession
- There is an alternative: A fair and just approach to reducing the deficit based around tax justice, public investment and

job creation

The cuts are unfair and will hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest

Working people will lose money by the following tax and benefit changes: -

- Higher VAT: Lose £275
- Abolition Health in Pregnancy grants and Baby element of Child Tax Credit: Lose £1,000 for first babies (£1,500 less for second and subsequent babies)
- Child Benefit frozen: Lose £50 in 2011, £100 in 2012 and £150 in 2013 for the first child (further money will be lost for every other child)
- New restrictions on Child Tax Credit: Lose £545 (families with one child on household income above £26,000 and those with two children, household income above £32,500 from April 2012)
- Working Tax Credit frozen: Lose up to £124 in 2011, £248 in 2012 and £372 in 2013 (families on low pay with children)

Cameron says "we're all in this together", but the cuts fall



STOP THE CUTS

heaviest on the most vulnerable who did nothing to create the financial crisis whilst the real culprits, the bankers are not penalised. Lone parents, for instance, will lose 18.5 per cent of their net household income, or £3,121. Single female pensioners will lose £1,326. Anyone earning £20,000 or below is likely to face a significant blow to their incomes and to the services they use as a result of the cuts. TUC research found that cuts to services will hit the poorest 13 times more than the richest.

MANIPULATING BENEFITS AND PENSIONS

George Osborne cynically changed the method of how benefits and pensions will be increased in future. The government moved the measure of inflation used in calculation away from the commonly accepted Retail Price Index (RPI), to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Crucially, CPI runs at a lower rate than RPI so benefits and pensions will increase at a much slower rate than they would have done had

RPI continued to apply. For example, if we take the last decade, benefits in cash terms went up by 31 per cent. If CPI had been applied the increase would have been just 20 per cent.

Using CPI to calculate benefit increases in future will cost households on benefits:

- Up to £100 in April 2011
- Up to £200 by April 2012
- Up to £300 by April 2013
- Up to £400 by April 2014

LOWER PENSIONS

Millions of people will see lower increases to their pensions in retirement because they will now be linked to CPI. It is disgraceful that public sector workers, including RFA members, were told that they were contributing towards a pension that would go up by RPI.

Some private sector pensions will now use CPI in the calculation of the minimum required increase to pensions. RMT is fighting to resist a move for CPI to be used for the Railways Pension Scheme.

The government has said that the state pension will increase by the higher of earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent; however, the rate of inflation used will be CPI. Pension credits too will now be increased in line with CPI.

THE CUTS WILL DESTROY JOBS AND DAMAGE PUBLIC SERVICES

The government claims that it can make cuts of up to 40 per cent and still protect front-line services. This is impossible, front-line services are being cut and it is the essential work done behind the scenes by support staff which allows teachers, nurses and others on the 'front line' to do their work.

When the Tories made huge cuts in the 1980s public services were damaged for years. People had to wait years for an NHS operation and children were taught in crumbling schools.

THE CUTS WILL DESTROY PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS TOO

Private sector jobs will be lost directly and indirectly as a result of the government's public spending cuts. 38p in

every pound of public spending goes to the private sector through buying supplies and services.

When people are made redundant or their pay is frozen they spend less, removing money from the private sector and this will inevitably lead to job losses.

As many as one million people in the public and private sectors will lose their jobs because of the government cuts.

THE CUTS COULD PLUNGE US BACK INTO RECESSION

George Osborne is making a dangerous gamble with Britain's economy, taking a political choice over sensible economic planning. The ConDem cuts risk plunging the economy into a second recession; Ireland's experience shows how massive cuts to public spending damage the economy.

GOVERNMENT PLANS ATTACK WORKERS' RIGHTS

The government has said that it wishes to ease the burden on businesses and create jobs by extending the qualifying period



STOP THE CUTS

for unfair dismissal from one year to two years; introducing an upfront fee for making an application to an Employment Tribunal; and reducing the number of days of sickness absence that would be covered by statutory sick pay. Similarly, it wishes to dilute health and safety legislation and is slashing the number of health and safety inspectors, both of which will lead to more workplace illnesses, injuries and deaths.

AUSTERITY BUDGETS – MADE IN BRUSSELS

A meeting of EU finance ministers, which included Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, last December announced that "budget policies in European countries cannot be national policies any more".

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the EU can slap economic sanctions and fines on countries which do not slash public services in order to cut deficits and maintain "budgetary discipline".

These EU-backed austerity measures are being repeated in all members states, especially those locked into the disastrous single currency.

EU DEMANDS WAGE CUTS

European Commission spokesman Marco Buti also launched EU plans to slash public sector wages.

"When wages in the public sector damage competitiveness and price stability then the country will be requested to change this policy.

"And the wage development in the public sector does of course have a great influence on the private economy," he said.

European Trade Union Confederation general secretary John Monks has written to the European Commission in protest over the EU "intervening" in national collective bargaining rights in Ireland. He slammed the use of "diktat pressure" on the Irish government to cut minimum wages and pensions.

Monks warned that the EU was acting like the "governor general or grand vizier of some quasi-colonial administration".

The Lisbon Treaty gives EU



LABOUR: After the Second World War bankrupt Britain built the NHS

institutions all the powers necessary to unleash a free fire zone for finance capital, creating a direct threat to jobs, public services and standards of living.

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

A sensible long-term approach the deficit based around tax justice, public investment and job-creation.

Rather than punish working class communities for a financial crisis that was not of their making, there is an alternative way to reduce the debt built around higher taxes for the rich, a clampdown on the multi-billion pound tax dodging industry which allows £120 billion annually to escape Treasury coffers, and public spending to create jobs.

Hundreds of thousands of jobs could be created with sustained investment in renewable energy technology, building much-needed council houses and in public transportation.

A serious long-term approach would acknowledge that billions could be saved by public ownership, including publicly-owned transport and the introduction of a land tax.

INTRODUCING THE FALSE

ECONOMY WEBSITE

The False Economy website is for everyone who thinks the ConDem coalition is cutting too much, too fast and wants to do something about it.

It is run by local campaigners, those who rely on or support good public services and those who work to supply them.

You can log in and upload your own campaign through blogs, notices and pictures in

order as the campaign develops and we have these initial objectives:

- To gather and map information and personal testimony about the cuts and their effects
- To show that there are alternative economic approaches
- To provide resources and tools for campaigners and campaign groups



falseeconomy.org.uk

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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.



THE GREAT SWE



Swedish journalist Ingemar Göransson reports on how decades of liberalisation and competition has devastated the once-famed 'Swedish social model' and the country's rail network



SWEDISH SELL-OFF

The 'Swedish model' state has long been praised by many people as the example of how labour and capital can co-exist in harmony and maintain the Swedish welfare state – but no longer.

The Swedish Social-Democratic Party (SAP), similar to Britain's Labour Party, was captured by right-wing 'neo-liberal' ideas as far back as the 1980s. At the time it was called 'reform' and 'innovative thinking' – this may sound familiar.

The widespread privatisation of the public sector, including schools, healthcare, care of the elderly and other vital parts of the welfare state became a political battleground.

The SAP neo-liberals were carried away by the new orthodoxy, especially when the ideas came from Britain and Tony Blair argued for deregulation and extensive privatisation.

Transport was one of the key sectors targeted for privatisation.

Sweden's state-owned railway was split between an infrastructure owner ('Banverket') and a train operating company (SJ), even before Britain's disastrous experiment with rail privatisation.

SJ managed rail traffic and Banverket was made responsible for track maintenance, but now, after years of continued deregulation Swedish Rail is on the edge of total collapse.

In recent winters late or cancelled trains have become much more common. In recent months, about 30 per cent – some say even 50 per cent – of trains do not arrive on time

and confidence in the railways is rock bottom in polls, with daily jokes about the failing train services becoming a part of the Swedish way of life.

The deregulation policies initiated by the SAP have been continued by the present Swedish Conservative-Liberal government under Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt – a role model for UK premier David Cameron.

Today, ever more private companies compete to win lucrative contracts to maintain the neglected rail infrastructure – no wonder that rail accidents have increased in recent years.

Workers who clear the tracks of snow, drivers of work vehicles and other workers have been casualties as communication between the various companies and contractors has deteriorated or even failed completely.

Swedish rail users would recognise the alarming picture painted in Ken Loach's film *The Navigators*, and many fear that sooner or later there will be a serious major accident on the Swedish network.

Last September saw the biggest electoral defeat for Sweden's labour movement since 1914, with the SAP winning just 30 per cent of the vote, compared to 45 per cent 15 years ago.

As the party has moved further to the right and become increasingly neo-liberal in its outlook it has entered electoral free-fall and is without real leadership beyond the neo-liberal influence, leaving a huge political vacuum.

The conservative-led government, meanwhile, continues with the 'liberalisation', coupled with

repeated tax cuts and cuts in health insurance and other social benefits, and the unemployment rate, close to ten per cent, shows no sign of improving.

Sweden is in a situation that is strongly reminiscent of Britain in the 1980s.

Individual unions are trying their best: RMT's sister union, SEKO, is taking up the fight against rail deregulation, but with little co-ordination it is hard for the unions to make a real difference, and a disorganised SAP is conspicuous by its political absence.

The Swedish trade-union movement has traditionally been very conservative when it comes to engaging in militant action, with the number strike days the lowest in the Western world – a fact rooted in the former ability of the social-democrats to deliver, combined with the close ideological relationship between the unions and the former SAP government.

Since adopting Blairite politics the party has slid towards its most embarrassing election defeat, but few have questioned the consequences of accepting mass unemployment and mass privatisation as the norm.

It is arguable that Sweden today has the most run-down railway system in Europe: maintenance is much neglected, trains are worn out and an injection of some £360 million is urgently required.

If anything clearly describes the failure of Sweden's adoption of Blairite neo-liberalism it is the collapse of the country's railways – a pitiful mirror of a welfare state in decline.



ACCIDENTS UNDER-REPORTED AT NETWORK RAIL



RMT demands end to commercialisation of rail infrastructure as rail report exposes under-reporting of injuries

An independent investigation carried out by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has concluded that up to 40 per cent of lost-time injuries to workers in Network Rail and its contractor companies over the past five years have not been reported as required by law.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the report confirmed what RMT had been warning of for a number of years – that the commercialisation of rail infrastructure has created a climate where business-led targets have overridden safety reporting.

“The report is a wake up call for the government which is under pressure from within its own ranks to re-privatise Network Rail creating the nightmare prospect of Railtrack Two – dragging the organisation even further away from the ethos of public service and setting us on course for a return to the dark days of Hatfield and Potters Bar.

“The last thing we need now is another poisonous dose of privatisation,” he said.

The Reporting of Injuries,

Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) requires employers to report to the relevant enforcing authority any workplace accidents which cause major injuries to workers or injuries which prevent the workers from undertaking their full range of normal duties for more than three days.

The RSSB investigation arose out of concerns expressed by the Office of Rail Regulation in their 2010 Health and Safety Report regarding the ratio of major injuries compared to the reportable three day lost time injuries within Network Rail, which seemed very high in comparison with other industries.

The RSSB report states this has occurred because of pressure of work and, in some cases, fear felt by Network Rail staff and contractors if they report accidents or incidents.

These pressures have arisen from the implementation of an overall strategy for safety based upon the use of safety targets, league tables and contractual requirements linked to the

number of reported lost time injuries.

Other management actions, such as the frequent company re-organisations and procurement practices leading to job insecurities, the strict application of a punitive attendance policy, and financial disincentives such as loss of overtime etc.

Part of the investigation involved confidential interviews with managers and staff, during which many expressed the view that Network Rail was not a company where an open and active dialogue can be held about accidents/incidents or safety concerns without fear of reprisals. There was also some evidence that local managers were under pressure to get the job done, which in some cases could have led to safety and safety reporting being compromised.

A culture of fear was also found within the Network Rail's contractors which employs around 65,000 staff on various aspects of railway infrastructure work, increasingly on a temporary or casual basis.

Amongst companies and individuals alike, there was a strong belief they would be less likely to be selected for work if they reported a lost-time injury. The workers also had the added disincentive of being stood off without pay during the course of any related investigations into the accident.

The report puts forward a number of suggested actions that Network Rail could take to promote a better safety and reporting culture, and RMT will be meeting with the company to discuss these over the coming months.

“The report makes clear than in the kind of cuts led environment that has dogged Network Rail in recent years bullying and corner cutting are rife with potentially dire consequences.

“Now is the time to pull back from the brink, protect and increase the investment in Network Rail and rebuild the organisation as the crucial public infrastructure service that we need to take our railways into the future,” Bob said.



NETWORK RAIL MUST BE HELD TO ACCOUNT FOR WORKER'S DEATH

RMT has called on the Office of Rail Regulation to prosecute Network Rail for serious breaches of health and safety that led to the death of member Malcolm Slater, who died in horrific circumstances while working on an overhead railway line.

An inquest at Chelmsford Coroner's Court ruled recently that Mr Slater's death in June 2008 was "accidental".

Mr Slater, 64, died from serious head and spine injuries sustained when he fell 15 feet to the ground after a metal basket of a hoist fell from its hydraulic arm. He endured three weeks of agony in hospital before finally succumbing to his injuries.

Network Rail has previously admitted liability for the accident in civil claims arising from the accident brought by RMT and Thompsons Solicitors.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that Malcolm was a loyal and hardworking member and he had his life taken in the most miserable way as a direct result of Network Rail's negligence.

"This is an accident that should never have happened, not least because concerns about the adequacy of the weld attaching the basket to its arm had already been raised with Network Rail.

"RMT wants to see Network Rail held accountable for its negligence so that our members are not put in harm's way like this again," he said.

Henrietta Phillips from Thompsons Solicitors added that Mr Slater was required by his employers to use defective equipment, which is a breach of the law.

"We're disappointed with the outcome of the inquest but hopeful that the Office of Rail Regulation will consider taking a criminal prosecution against Network Rail," she said. ■



President's column

FIGHTING FOR SAFETY AT WORK

Last month the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) claimed to be surprised to discover that up to 40 per cent of serious injuries to workers of Network Rail and its contractors in the last five years were not being reported, as required by law.

The RSSB now admits that pressure and fear caused by job insecurity, a punitive attendance policy and financial disincentives such as loss of overtime led to failures to report accidents or incidents. In confidential interviews with RSSB many managers and staff expressed fear of reprisals.

RSSB also found a culture of fear among Network Rail's 65,000 contractor staff. Many strongly believe they will not be selected for work if they report an injury. These temporary or casual workers, often on 'zero-hours' contracts also face being stood off without pay during investigations into accidents.

RSSB suggests Network Rail should promote a better safety and reporting culture. Yet, Network Rail chairman Rick Haythornthwaite claims that he took some comfort from the report's "clear conclusion that there was no link between under-reporting and executive bonuses", a reaction reminiscent of the theatre critic who asked: "apart from that Mrs Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?"

The link between insecure, sub-contract work and abuse of safe work practices has been known for years. It is ten years since release of the award-winning film *The Navigators*, directed by Ken Loach and written by RMT Sheffield and District branch secretary Rob Dawber who died from work-contracted mesothelioma ten years ago this month. His film is about five rail workers from Yorkshire trying to survive after their BR Civil Engineering depot is bought by a private company.

Yet last year Network Rail bosses decided to trigger the insolvency of railway engineering contractor, Jarvis Rail. If this had been done in order to take the work and the workers 'in-house' on union-

negotiated terms and conditions with full protection for pensions and seniority as RMT argued, it would have given a massive boost to safety. But instead, Network Rail washed their hands of responsibility for 1,500 workers with essential engineering skills and watched them go out of the rail industry, or to work for labour-only agencies on minimum wage.

Now the privatisation lunatics in the Department of Transport are dusting down plans to break up Network Rail into separate regional companies, ready to be flogged off to train operating companies.

If carried out, this would return our rail network to the kind of engineering chaos and fragmentation that characterised the worst period of Tory rail privatisation under Railtrack plc.

Under-capitalised train operators, dependent on credit from private banks would increasingly come to rely on sub-contractors for engineering work. Any attempt to further smash up Network Rail must be resisted by all means necessary.

There is an alternative. RMT has already played the leading role in developing a framework to reinforce the legal rights and facilities afforded to trade union health and safety representatives within Network Rail.

Following intensive work with Network Rail by RMT, a new health, safety and welfare procedure is being developed. For the first time there will not only a proper three-tier structure of local, area and national health and safety representation in Network Rail, but will give lead union safety representatives a right to interview, intervene and represent trade union members working for Network Rail sub-contractors.

Health and safety at work is too important to be left to so-called management 'champions'. A real safe work culture requires freedom from fear, democratic representation and independent trade unions.

Alex Gordon

HAITI: STILL PAYING THE PRICE OF FREEDOM



A year after Haiti's earthquake, RMT black and ethnic minority advisory committee chair and Tube engineer Frank Murray explains why slavery remains an issue for a people who fought to free themselves two centuries ago

LAST SEPTEMBER the TUC Congress called for a massive boost in aid for the people of earthquake-ravaged Haiti, and agreed to build links with the Caribbean republic's unions.

The devastation wrought by the quake in January 2010 – a quarter of a million dead, tens of thousands hospitalised and two million made homeless – has since been amplified by disease, including thousands stricken by cholera, spread through contaminated water.

The appalling conditions Haitians have had to endure have been magnified by poverty – and that poverty can be traced directly back to ruinous conditions imposed by former slave-masters.

Established on January 1, 1804 after 13 years of fighting, Haiti's entire history has been one of struggle.

Freeing itself from slavery after years of fighting against imperial forces of France, Spain and Britain, the Haitian republic was virtually bankrupted by 'reparations', equivalent to around \$22 billion today,

extorted by France until 1947.

Haiti was the second republic in the Western hemisphere, after the USA, and the first in Latin America, but little is taught about a country founded on the victory of 'uneducated' slaves who defeated the most powerful nations on earth to win their freedom.

France had lost its colony, seriously affecting its ambitions of expansion into America using Haiti as a staging post, and so it decided to sell Louisiana, 75 times the size of Haiti, to America for 60 million gold francs.

France refused to recognise Haiti's independence, and in 1825, egged on by former slave-owners, France issued a 'royal ordinance' which demanded that Haiti pay 150 million gold francs in reparations.

In addition, France also decreed that French ships and commercial goods entering and leaving Haiti should enjoy preferential tariffs by as much as 50 per cent – and to ram the point home,

France's demands were delivered by a blockade of dozen warships armed with 500 canons.

Up to 80 per cent of the country's budget went to pay off this 'debt', calculated on a multiple of the profits 'lost' by the colonists during the liberation war.

And so it was that the former slave masters shamelessly extracted reparations from the people they once affected to own and, astonishingly, continued to take the money until half way through the 20th century.

The money paid would be worth \$21.7 billion today – although if the formula applied in 1825 were applied today it would be more like \$4 trillion – and just imagine what that could do for Haiti's rebuilding effort and the longer-term health of its economy.

It is hard to believe that former slaves had to pay compensation to their erstwhile masters for more than a century – and it is high time it was returned to Haiti to help it rebuild. ■



AID: RMT members in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary played their part in the immediate relief operation to Haiti a year ago, when the RFA ship Largs Bay took vital supplies from Southampton, including 40 Land Rovers, materials for building shelters and equipment to help rebuild port facilities.

HEALTH & SAFETY WEEK OF ACTION



HEALTH & SAFETY CRIMES

HUNDREDS KILLED
THOUSANDS INJURED
MILLIONS MADE ILL

WED 2ND MARCH 2011

12.30pm GATHER ON COLLEGE GREEN

2pm RALLY

**COMMITTEE ROOM 14
HOUSE OF COMMONS**

From 3.30pm LOBBY YOUR MP!

THE
**TRADE UNION
CO-ORDINATING
GROUP**



WATCH YOUR GRADES CONFERENCES

RMT's grades conference season is fast approaching and members can follow the debate and discussion live via the union's online webcast service

A total of eight RMT conferences are being webcast this year, beginning with the all-grades Health and Safety gathering in Doncaster on February 16 and concluding with the Annual General Meeting from Fort William between June 26 -29.

In order to access the webcasts RMT members must first register at www.rmt.org.uk/members. Once inside the members' area of the RMT website it is then simply a case of choosing the webcast option.

If you already have a user name and password for the members' area then you can go directly to www.rmt.org.uk/webcast.

Conferences will be broadcast on the dates below. But proceedings will also be archived online for six months following the conclusion of each event.

HEALTH and SAFETY	Wednesday, February 16	Doncaster
SUPERVISORY GRADES	Saturday/Sunday, March 19/20	Bournemouth
BLACK and ETHNIC MINORITIES	Thursday/Friday, March 24/25	Newcastle
ENGINEERING GRADES	Thursday/Friday, April 14/15	Rugby
BUSWORKERS	Thursday-Saturday, April 14-16	Exeter
CATERING GRADES	Friday-Sunday, April 15-17	Scarborough
STATION STAFF	Friday/Saturday, April 29/30	Rhyl
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Sunday-Wednesday, June 26-29	Fort William

Members who wish to attend any grades conference should contact their branch secretary

NEWCASTLE RAIL & CATERING BRANCH

SUPPORTS

CRAIG JOHNSTON

FOR RMT RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER - NORTH

MANCHESTER VICTORIA BRANCH

SUPPORTS

CRAIG JOHNSTON

FOR RMT RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER-NORTH

WORKING FOR ALL GRADES

AYR BRANCH

NOMINATES

CRAIG JOHNSTON

ELECTION OF RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER - NORTH

STANDING UP FOR ALL GRADES!

EAST LANCASHIRE BRANCH

NOMINATES

CRAIG JOHNSTON

ELECTION OF RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER - NORTH

"PUTTING THE MEMBERS FIRST!"

CARLISLE CITY BRANCH

NOMINATES

CRAIG JOHNSTON

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER - NORTH

COMMITMENT - EXPERIENCE - DEDICATION...

BLACKPOOL & FYLDE COAST RMT BRANCH

PROUD TO NOMINATE AND SUPPORT

CRAIG JOHNSTON

FOR RELIEF ORGANISER (NORTH)

WE VALUE HIS EXPERIENCE, COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION.

IN MEMORIAM



Ronald Kendall passed away on November 7 2010 following a short illness he was 78 years of age.

He worked at Blackfriars and Bank as a leading railman. He was a member of the NUR and retired from LUL in June 1996. He was married to Eileen for 53 years and leaves a daughter, three sons, eight grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.



Joe Connor who served on the union's national executive in 1987 and 1988, died recently.

Joe was a stalwart of the catering grades, working on the east coast mainline out of Kings Cross, and was an active fund-raiser for the then NUR Widows and Orphans' Fund.

He is pictured here with miners' leader Arthur Scargill in the 1980s.

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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

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

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



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



NEW LEARNING AGREEMENT FOR LONDON UNDERGROUND

RMT Learning Development Worker for London Sharon Allen explains new and improved Learning Agreement covering members working on London Underground



LEARNING: London Underground union learning reps at the launch of the new Learning Agreement.

A new Union Learning Agreement covering all members on London Underground, including the former Metronet members, was signed off recently.

Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) have been instrumental in raising interest in training and development, especially among those with literacy and numeracy needs.

The amendments to the new agreement, which were hard won and have been under discussion for nearly three years, include increasing the release for ULRs from half a day a month to one day a month.

ULRs across the combine have been hampered in attempts to fulfil their roles by the poor release.

As all ULRs will need to be re-elected to fill the new constituencies, it will also present an opportunity for members who want to become more active to become ULRs.

Current London Underground Lead ULR Bjorn Bradshaw-Murray, a Victoria Line driver, welcomed the improvements: "This will give us the opportunity to get our teeth into learning on the Underground and will make it easier for ULRs to use their release effectively to support members in starting their learning

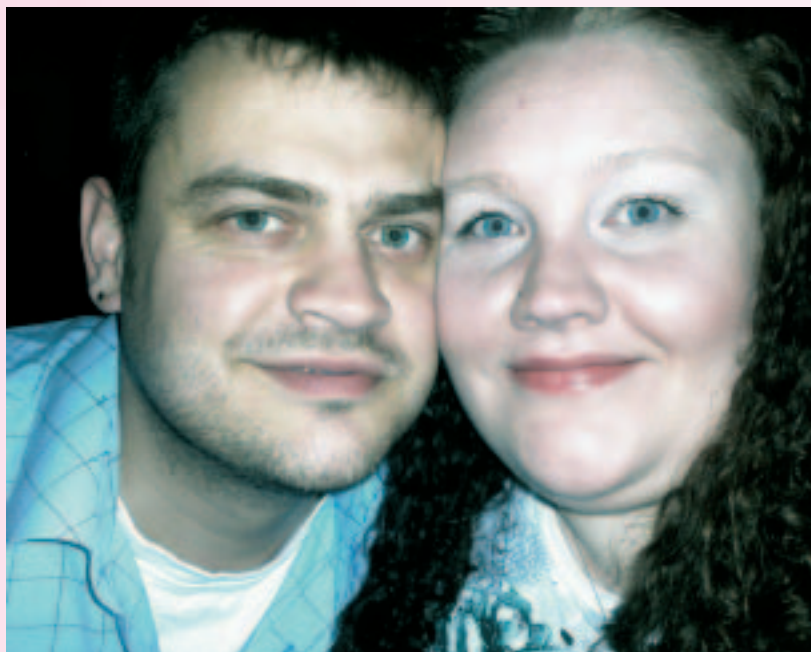
journeys".

London Underground launched the new agreement at a development day for ULRs where they also launched the LU Skills for Life Project. LU employees will all have access to e-learning through an arrangement with LearnDirect and the opportunity to use LearnDirect's 60 or so drop-in centres around London.

If you would like more information on Union Learning activity on London Underground contact Sharon Allen, the RMT's Learning Development Worker for London, on 07533125166 or s.allen@rmt.org.uk



A TRANSPLANT FOR LOVE



RMT member Jennifer Rose gave her partner and fellow RMT member Gareth Wilson the ultimate love token by donating one of her kidneys to him

RMT Neasden branch chair Jennifer Rose and Gareth Wilson have been together for about ten years.

They met during training to be station assistants for London Underground at Ashfield house, LU's training centre, in 2001.

They both joined RMT immediately when a representative of the union came to talk to them about the importance and benefits of being a member of a fighting union.

Today they are both train operators at Neasden on the Metropolitan Line and Jennifer has been the depot's RMT rep for around five years.

About three years ago Gareth was sent to see specialists at the Luton and Dunstable hospital to have a check up on his kidney function.

Gareth was born with blockages between his kidneys and bladder which caused large amounts of damage to his

kidneys as a baby. At four weeks old he underwent lifesaving surgery to remove the blockages. Unfortunately the damage was done and he has had to live with severely reduced kidney function for most of his life with the equivalent of only one kidney working.

From the day Jennifer and Gareth went to his first appointment their lives changed, with regular six weekly check-ups and lots of dietary restrictions to adhere to in order to preserve the kidney function Gareth had left.

Jennifer says that it was November 2009 when Gareth was given the devastating news that he had entered end-stage renal failure.

"I knew there and then that if I could help him then I would," she says.

She expressed her wishes to be tested to see if she was a compatible match for donation

to Gareth when they went to see the transplant co-ordination nurse at the Lister hospital in Stevenage.

Shortly after that Jennifer underwent initial testing as did Gareth's mum, sister and aunt.

"In July I underwent further testing and at the very beginning of August we were both given the fantastic news that I was a compatible match and the operation had been scheduled for August 2010.

"We had one last hurdle, to see an independent assessor to ensure that I was donating my kidney of my own free will and for the love of my partner and nothing untoward was going on.

"Our friends were fantastic helping to supply us with pictures of the two of us together and the independent assessor was great, giving us the green light," she says.

On the big day everything went well with Jennifer going down to theatre at 8am and

returning at 2pm and Gareth returning from theatre at about 7pm. They were both told that the transplant had been a complete success and Gareth continues to make a good recovery and his is due to return to work very soon.

Jennifer also made a good recovery and she was back representing members at an important meeting regarding the displacement of drivers from Neasden depot to Harrow depot only 14 days after the operation! And she has continued to do so during this important transitional phase in their careers with London Underground.

"It has been great to have the support of all our brothers and sisters in RMT during this difficult time in our lives," she says.

We are sure that members across the country would like to join *RMT News* in wishing them all the best for the future. ■

letters

CLARIFICATION AT SUBSEA 7

Dear editor,

Following the letter from the supposed Atlantic Dive Crew member in the November/December issue of the RMT News, I was asked as the RMT rep at the company SubSea 7 and as one of the diving supervisors on the accused vessel to be part of the investigation team into the allegations made in the letter.

Clearly such a letter is distressing to read when the policy on the vessel with regard to Health and Safety issues is openly transparent, with all members of the crew invited to make complaints and raise safety matters to either their supervisors or senior managers and there is no malice in raising issues.

As the RMT representative, members are free to raise issues with myself if they feel uneasy with a certain matter which I will openly raise to senior management.

Following the allegations in the letter, that when undertaking a sub-sea control module (SCM) change out an incident was averted by the quick intervention of others, resulted in an onboard team, which involved myself carrying out a full investigation on all SCM change outs by the vessel to source the issue.

This resulted in reviewing all diving logs which are mandatory in law, hazard operation cards, task risk assessments, shift hand over reports and job close out reports. I can categorically state that to date not one shred of evidence has been found or produced to support the claims made in the letter.

The primary responsibility with regard to health and safety in the UK is that of the diving contractor, not the oil and gas producer and all project or tasks on the vessel are fully engineered, risk assessed and any changes to procedures that would present new hazards are further assessed. The assessments involve all parties involved in the task on the vessel including client's representatives to ensure no items that would pose a risk are missed.

As for the requirements in the letter referring to the OGP, this document has no legal precedence in law in the UK. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the presiding law in statute with corresponding regulations made under the act. The OGP is a document written by the international association oil and gas producers setting out the minimum standards required for a clients representative when they are engaged working for one of the clients mainly in areas of the world where no national laws exists with regard to diving health and safety.

Those who work in this new state of the art diving vessel find the allegations not only distressing but defamatory given the open policy on the vessel with regard to working practices and it is clear from the letter that a certain individual with a hidden agenda, for what ever reasons, constructed the letter to create an aura of mistrust, something of which is the complete opposite prior and following the publication of the letter.

Yours Faithfully,

Derek Moore

RMT Rep for SubSea 7 and Diving Supervisor on the Seven Atlantic

A DEVON AND CORNWALL THANKS

Dear editor,

I have just retired after 24 years working for Western National, now Devon and Cornwall.

I would like to thank the many union reps that have helped and advised me over the years – Margaret groves, Dave Evans, Dave Letcher, John Robins, Gary Hitchens and Roger Jenkins to name a few. I can't remember them all and sorry if your name isn't here.

Publishing this letter may raise morale in the depots in Cornwall as they are going through tough times. Remember RMT membership is more important than ever.

Thanks

Ellen Ferguson

Ex-travel clerk Camborne bus station

DEFENDING MEMBERS

Dear editor,

I would like to thank RMT, especially my local rep Raja Amin and Jessica Webb in RMT's legal department, for engaging Thompson Solicitors to defend me when I was wrongfully charged by the British Transport Police of assaulting a passenger.

I removed a passenger who was breaking railway bylaw 19, by remaining in a part of the train where he should not have been, using reasonable force, a gentle push, as per railway bylaw 24.

He complained to the BTP who charged me instead of the passenger, despite the evidence of an independent witness that I had acted correctly.

I attended court to plead not guilty and the case was adjourned for review but before that date the prosecution dropped the charges.

I have submitted a complaint to the Independent Police Complaints Committee suggesting that no-one in the BTP appeared to have read railway bylaws. Thompsons Solicitors tell me this happens frequently so perhaps RMT could take it up with the BTP and advise members not to speak to the police without a solicitor present.

Yours sincerely

David Langthorne

Senior conductor Crosscountry Trains

DON'T SINGLE OUT DEUTSCHE BAHN

Our president's article in the last RMT news about Deutsche Bahn strikes me as anti-German.

Starting with the puerile title "Deutsche Bahn uber alles" it goes on to inform us that the "German state railway was trying to create competition between French and German railworkers". This is bad because we want co-ordination between workers from different countries, but why single DB out, they are not the only ones doing it? The same is happening at SNCF, the French state railway, for instance.

What is the significance of including figures for German manufacturing output in the article? What difference

does it make to us that "Germany's share of manufacturing for export [is] the highest of any imperialist power worldwide [70 per cent]"? Incidentally China has a figure of 89 per cent.

Is the president concerned with any other companies trying to achieve global monopoly positions? Either way, what has it got to do with us who owns the company? Are there different methods of struggle to be employed against a German as opposed to a French boss? Do we strike against British capitalists but only work to rule against Spanish ones?

By all means attack dreadful bosses because of how they treat us especially as DB has just pulled the plug on the

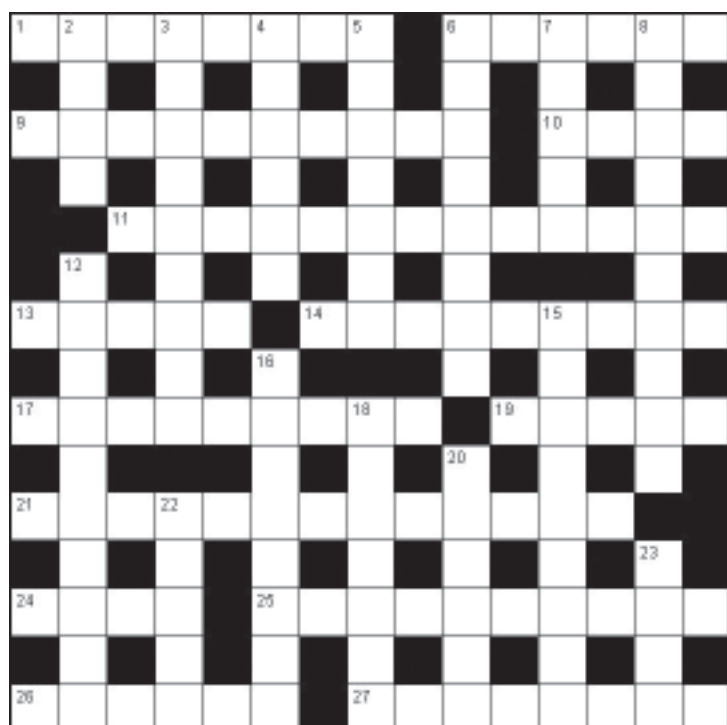
Shropshire-Wrexham railway and hasn't released my region's elected Council of Executive member; but don't attack them because of their nationality. RMT organised an excellent meeting recently with other European trade unions to co-ordinate our response to anti-worker EU legislation; let's not spoil that. There is a strain of anti-German chauvinism in the UK workers movement and articles like this one from the president will do nothing to lessen it.

Tony Byrne

RMT East Midland Central branch

£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 67. Set by Elk



No. 66 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 66 is Sheridan of North Wales

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Sifts untidily, through sale bargains perhaps? (8)
- 6 13's Number 1 (6)
- 9 The past, lyrically (10)
- 10 Tots up; finds total; says further (4)
- 11 People on two wheels (13)
- 13 Awdry's island - home of 4, 6 across, 19, 20, 22 and, sometimes, 5 (5)
- 14 Sport of three endurance events (9)
- 17 Remark made (9)
- 19 13's Number 5 (5)
- 21 People from the low countries (13)
- 24 Family group, especially in Scotland (4)
- 25 Nautical skill (10)
- 26 Waxy drawing implement (6)
- 27 Any branch of manufacture, trade or the economy, such as transport (could be heavy or light) (8)

DOWN

- 2 Not new (4)
- 3 Mechanical device for keeping musical time (9)
- 4 13's Number 4 (6)
- 5 Arrogant occasional visitor to 13 (Marks's partner); (7)
- 6 Renegade (8)
- 7 Central African mammal with zebra-like stripes, related to giraffe (5)
- 8 Tried out for theatrical part (10)
- 12 Large black-and-tan German dog breed (10)
- 15 You could rest your head on them! (9)
- 16 Body of troops stationed in a particular place (or the fortress containing it) (8)
- 18 Round, unleavened bread from the Indian subcontinent (7)
- 20 13's Number 2 (6)
- 22 13's Number 3 (5)
- 23 Platform projecting into water as breakwater, promenade or landing stage; masonry support (4)

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

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

DECLARATION

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

Your Signature				Date			/			/				
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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

PHOTO COMPETITION FOR MARCH 26 DEMONSTRATION!



When you come on the rally on March 26 with RMT against ConDem cuts be sure that you have your cameras with you.

RMT Learning is looking for as many exciting images as possible on the day for use in a future publication of *RMT News*.

We want to see pictures from your kids as well as adults and we will be judging the best ones in three categories - **1. Under 12 2. 12 to 18 3. Adult**

We want interesting and quirky, something to smile at or something memorable.

Please send your images (In as high resolution as possible!) before April 30, 2011 to bdenny@rmt.org.uk

Winning entries will feature in future RMT News. Go on! Get clicking and good luck.