

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

RMT WINS RIGHT TO STRIKE FOR MILLIONS

Historic court victory paves the way for workers
to take action over cuts to jobs and services

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME
& TRANSPORT WORKERS
Bristol Rail Branch
FOR SOCIALISM

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CONFERENCE
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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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EDITORIAL



RMT SECURES COURT VICTORY

RMT has secured a major victory in the Court of Appeal that will pave the way for millions to take action over cuts to jobs and services in the months ahead.

This judgment has massive implications for ongoing disputes, including on Arriva Trains Wales and London Underground, and clears a path for unions in all sectors planning ballots over jobs, pensions and cuts to living standards.

The original injunction on the balloting process would have more or less completely banned the right to strike if it had been allowed to stand.

We said on the steps of the High Court last year after the Network Rail case that it was round one to the employers. Well, this is round two to the trade unions and the millions who count on them to defend their jobs, pensions and workplace rights. And workers are going to need it.

We have seen that gold-plated bonuses and pensions for the bankers and speculators who caused this crisis are still the order of the day while workers are lined up for a kicking.

It is clear from Labour Lord Hutton's pension review that, from nurses to transport staff, the government intends to make staff work longer, pay more and get less.

There is no question that this is the issue where co-ordinated strike action is on the cards as we fight to stop the ConDem pensions robbery. The anger generated will find an outlet on the picket lines

and on the streets of London on March 26.

The coalition's cuts and privatisation agenda can be seen across the transport sector with attacks on jobs and safety on London Underground and London Midland to attempts to re-privatise Network Rail and to break up lifeline Scottish ferry services.

RMT is also fighting coalition plans to wipe out rural bus services by withdrawing fuel subsidies. The union's seminar in Parliament on the issue was the first step in this crucial campaign.

You can see by this month's RMT News that health and safety is the latest target for the spivs and carpet baggers that want to rip up vital legislation and protection for workers in order to make more money.

RMT will be fighting on all these fronts and more in order to protect members whatever grade or job they do. The latest tool to do this on a daily basis is the union's relaunched TV station RMTv which is back on-line. After a major makeover, the station now boasts four channels that can bring you the news on issues that face transport workers.

Finally International Women's Day this month is celebrating its centenary. The first global day celebrating the achievements of women past, present and future took place in 1911, may it long continue.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

TUBE DRIVERS BALLOTTED FOR STRIKE ACTION OVER VICTIMISATION

RMT is balloting all train drivers on London Underground over the victimisation of reps and the sacking of drivers Eamon Lynch and Arwyn Thomas.

The union called on the company to reinstate the pair immediately and stop the "concerted disciplinary clampdown" against drivers across the network.

RMT demanded an end to the campaign of bullying and harassment after winning two Employment Tribunal "interim relief" hearings.

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

An Employment Tribunal found in favour of sacked Northern Line train operator Arwyn and he will be paid by the company as he awaits a full ET hearing in May.

RMT Bakerloo Line drivers' health and safety rep Eamon Lynch also remains on full pay after winning another interim relief case. However the company has shown total contempt for the tribunal process and refused to reinstate the men.



Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North, said that he was appalled that London Underground was refusing to reinstate the men when the tribunal has already ruled that their dismissal was because of their trade union activities.

"It is vital that we stand up for our local trade union reps who are in the frontline of protecting workers interests," he said.

John McDonnell, MP for Hayes and Harlington, said that the London mayor and LU management were presiding

over deteriorating industrial relations and a climate of fear which will inevitably impact on the service.

"It is essential that workers are free to act as trade union representatives without fear," he said.

The union received a threat from the employers to dash to the courts under the cloak of the anti-trade union laws but RMT's recent court victory over the right to strike may deter the company from going down that road.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that the fact that both members have won interim hearings at the Employment Tribunal showed that they were victimised.

"As a result LU has had to put them both back on wages and the time has come to get them back to work driving Tube trains.

"This trade union remains rock-solid in our support of our victimised members and that message should be received loud and clear," he said.

TUBE PRIVATISATION KILLED OFF

The decision to switch maintenance of trains on the Jubilee Line from Alstom back in-house was the "final nail" in Tube privatisation, RMT has said.

Transport for London said the fleet maintenance work will move in-house from May to have full control over management and costs.

It is being implemented via a clause in Alstom's contract with Tube Lines, whose work is being taken over by LU.

A TfL spokesman said that 115 staff currently employed by Alstom, which has maintained the fleet since 1997, will be

transferred to Tube Lines, which is wholly owned by TfL.

"This will help London Underground to provide a full, reliable service to Jubilee Line passengers during an important period in the line upgrade when more trains are needed for the new timetable, and the entire fleet is due a maintenance overhaul.

"Alstom and Tube Lines will work closely to keep all staff fully informed during the transitional period," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the shambles at London Underground deepened by the day and mayor Boris

Johnson had presided over chaotic management, and now he had the embarrassment of admitting through this private contract collapse that the union was right and he was wrong.

"Passengers have had people put up with months of chaos with some forced off trains and sent up tunnels as this contract has been allowed by Johnson and his officials to drag on.

"The collapse of this contract should be the final nail in the coffin of Tube privatisation," he said.

RMT WARNS OF CHAOS AS SAFETY-CRITICAL TUBE INSPECTIONS SLASHED

RMT warned of more tube chaos for passengers after Transport for London revealed plans to cut the frequency of safety-critical inspections from twice a week to once a week.

In a safety licensing concession requested by London Underground the twice weekly inspection of track and infrastructure in sidings and depots will be cutback to just once a week.

These inspections are in the areas of highest traffic anywhere on the network with the fleet constantly being shunted in and out.

The latest target for cuts is the White City Depot but it is just part of a rolling programme of maintenance and job cuts that London Underground are seeking to roll out across the network by stealth.

RMT has warned that key faults like broken rails and loose bolts and fittings will not be picked up with the end result that trains will be stranded, adding to delays and disruption for passengers.

LU admit that this latest cutback is cash-led and part of their programme of reducing "head count" - management speak for axing jobs.

As part of its concession request TfL uses contradictory language such as the need to "extend" patrolling frequency to once per week, from the current twice per week in the interests of "safety".

TfL claimed that it was "preposterous" to suggest the change would have any impact because it was "where trains run at very low speed".

RMT has pointed out that the speed on these sections is irrelevant - the frequency is what matters and the weight of the train is no different.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that LU had been caught out again halving vital inspections and making a total nonsense of London mayor Boris Johnson's claim that there will be no cuts at the front line.

"This move, ludicrously dressed up as having safety benefits, will trap the fleet in the sidings and depots leaving passengers waiting for trains that never come because an accountant decided that halving safety inspections to cut costs was a good idea," he said.

OLYMPICS DEBACLE

TfL has claimed to the media that a working party has been

set up with unions to investigate running Tube services for 24 hours a day during the 2012 London Olympics despite not even informing the trade unions involved.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that despite a campaign of spin suggesting that all was sorted, the hard fact is that there is no agreement for operating hours, volume of service, staffing levels or payments the Olympics.

"Continued job cuts and attacks on maintenance schedules mean that the tube is short of capacity and prone to regular breakdowns, let alone when we've got another million people to shift around the City.

"None of this is helped by Boris Johnson's continued refusal to talk directly with transport unions on the crucial issue of the cuts programme being driven by his officials," he said.



LONDON MIDLAND PLANS JOBS MASSACRE AND TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

RMT slammed London Midland for a campaign of dirty tricks over the statutory consultation on plans that would axe 122 full time jobs, slash the opening hours at 86 out of 90 ticket offices and close nine ticket offices.

The union has demanded a total halt to the consultation after it emerged that posters displayed at London Midland stations asking passengers for their views were found to contain incorrect contact information, making it impossible for the public to record their opinions.

The union also revealed that key information relevant to the cuts and redundancies, including the jobs and grades in the firing line, had not been made available and existing agreements on redeployment were not being adhered to.

RMT has demanded the withdrawal of the proposals has warned of a ballot for industrial action to defend jobs and terms and conditions.

Regional transport organisation Centro has already opposed the planned cuts and the union is running a high profile campaign stop the proposals in their tracks.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the consultation on the plans had been exposed as flawed and the company had not even followed agreed procedure to deal with potential redundancies.

"The very least that they should now do



is pull back, scrap the proposals and get down to some proper discussions on a way out of this mess.

"To try and bulldoze these cuts through would be a scandal and denying the public a genuine opportunity to have their say makes a total mockery of the consultation process.

"We will not tolerate the company's total

disregard for agreed procedures and may be forced to ballot for action to defend our members" he said.

Unions are concerned about the impact on jobs and the dire consequences for services and security together with access for older people, those with disabilities and parents with prams.



MITIE TRAIN CLEANERS TAKE FURTHER STRIKE ACTION

RMT train cleaning crews employed by the Mitie company and servicing First Great Western trains out of depots at Cardiff and Swansea took further 24 hour strike action earlier this month following a 100 per cent vote for action in a dispute over pensions, payment of wages and a failure to communicate.

All RMT members employed by Mitie at Swansea High Street Station and Cardiff Central Station on the First Great Western contract took the action.

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.

The company is using all sorts of excuses to delay a settlement and have even taken to blaming the previous contractor (ISS) for not passing adequate information to them during the TUPE process

The dispute was sparked as a result of wage discrepancies which have short-

changed staff by hundreds of pounds and the continued lack of pension contributions by Mitie.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that despite numerous promises made by Mitie to resolve the matter with urgency the combined attacks on working conditions had continued.

"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. ■

NO TO RAILTRACK MARK TWO!

RMT warns that rail privateers are ramping up pressure for Network Rail privatisation

RMT is warning that pressure from the business sector is building up for the re-privatisation of rail infrastructure in a move which would drag the industry back to the days of Hatfield and Potters Bar with the creation of "Railtrack two".

Suggestions have been circulating in the media that Merseyrail and Scotrail could be the testing grounds for infrastructure privatisation.

RMT has raised serious concerns that recent Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) analysis into the efficiency of Network Rail was carried out by an organisation called Railconsult - a subsidiary of Balfour Beatty Rail, who would clearly be beneficiaries from any move to break up and sell off Network Rail.

In a letter to the National Audit Office, RMT general secretary Bob Crow warned that Network Rail was being set up for privatisation through a mixture of poor quality research and pressure from the private sector.

"We believe the ORR's approach to Network Rail efficiency is far from thorough, narrow in scope and has been

compromised by its relations with vested interests.

"The McNulty review into the future efficiency and structure of the railways is jointly sponsored by the ORR which means the rail regulator's shortcomings, which have already seriously damaged the rail industry, will lead to a poor deal for the taxpayer and passengers," the letter said.

Bob Crow said that no-one believed in reform of Network Rail more than RMT - the union wanted to see the organisation transformed into a public body to deliver the highest quality of public service free from the greed of the private sector.

"However, all the drive from the private sector is to rip up the publicly-owned infrastructure and re-privatise it in an action replay of the Railtrack experiment that led to avoidable disasters on our railways.

"All the dice have been loaded to achieve that outcome and RMT will continue to expose the manoeuvring that is going on behind the scenes, and fight for a genuinely, publicly-owned railway system that ends the rip-off of privatisation," he said (see page 14/15). ■

FRESH CALLS FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY ON GRAYRIGG ANNIVERSARY



There were fresh calls for a public inquiry last month on the fourth anniversary of the Grayrigg train crash near Kendal that killed one and injured many others.

A Rail Accident Investigation Branch inquiry ruled that the Glasgow-bound train left the West Coast Main Line at nearly 100 mph in 2007.

But a public inquiry into Grayrigg and a similar earlier accident at Potters Bar was ruled out in 2009.

RMT executive member for the north west Craig Johnston said that an inquiry was needed as structural

deficiencies remained.

"Some say four years is a long time but we should just forget about it but that's what happened after Potters Bar - then we had Grayrigg," he said.

Westmorland MP Tim Farron agreed that there should be an inquiry into the links between two different points-related disasters.

"There is clearly a management and systems failure to securely monitor points and there is no evidence that adequate systems are now in place," he said. ■

RMT WINS RIGHT TO STRIKE FOR MILLIONS

Union secures major court victory on right to strike paving the way for workers to take action over cuts to jobs and services



ROUND ONE: Bob Crow with RMT president Alex Gordon and executive committee members outside the High Court in London last April after Mrs Justice Sharp granted an injunction to Network Rail banning legitimate strike action

RMT has secured a major victory in the Court of Appeal over UK strike laws that will pave the way for millions to take action over cuts to jobs and services in the months ahead.

The union had appealed an injunction granted in the High Court in January preventing a 48 hour strike on Docklands Light Railway.

That injunction - which would have taken the anti-trade union laws in this country to within a whisker of effectively banning the right to strike - was overturned in the Court of Appeal.

Lord justices Mummery, Eatheron and Elias rejected the previous ruling which said the ballot notice to Serco were not

"as accurate as reasonably practicable".

The judges upheld the right to strike and said that the any minor inaccuracies were a matter of human error.

They ruled that the legal test for ballot notices was "as accurate as reasonably practicable in the light of the information in the possession of the union".

The judgment has massive implications for ongoing disputes, including on Arriva Trains Wales and London Underground, and clears a path for unions in all sectors planning ballots over jobs, pensions and cuts to living standards.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that the judgment was not only a victory for staff on Serco Docklands and RMT members but it is also a massive victory for the seven million trade unionists in the UK.

"The Serco Docklands injunction on balloting process would have effectively banned the right to strike if it had been allowed to stand and would have tightened the noose around the necks of nurses, firefighters, ambulance crew, home helps and others engaged in fighting back to the point of strangulation.

"This victory today helps clear the path for those workers to take action," he said.

He said that the landmark victory for working people in

this country could not have been secured without the sterling work of Richard Arthur and Doug Christie from Thompson's solicitors and the advocacy of RMT's standing counsel John Hendy QC.

The result means that the best part of £100,000 in RMT's legal costs will be paid back to the union.

"We said on the steps of the High Court last year after the union lost the Network Rail case over the right to strike that it was round one to the employers.

"Well, this is round two to the trade unions and the millions who count on us to defend their jobs, pensions and workplace rights," Bob said.



RMT/SERCO JUDGMENT

Lawyer Richard Arthur explains the significance of RMT's court victory

The Court of Appeal has given a landmark judgment on industrial action. The judgment overturns the injunction granted against RMT in respect of its planned industrial action on Serco.

For the first time in the United Kingdom, the Court of Appeal recognises the right to strike in the context of the United Kingdom's obligations under international law.

The only reason why the injunction was granted was because of a technicality. Serco couldn't convince the High Court that the RMT's detailed lists and figures for members was inadequate. But the High Court held that the union's explanation as to how it had arrived at those figures was inadequate.

The Court of Appeal ruled unanimously that the union's explanation of how it had arrived at the figures was more than adequate. It also unanimously rejected Serco's cross-appeal that the figures for members were not sufficiently accurate.

There has been a series of cases over the last few years where the courts have interpreted the industrial action legislation in ever more restrictive ways against trade unions. This judgment should put a halt to that trend. The union must pass on the information that it has about members in its notices, but that is all. It shouldn't be tripped up by inadvertent errors in complying with the extremely complex balloting requirements.

Industrial action legislation in this country is still amongst the most restrictive in the western world. RMT maintains that the United Kingdom has failed to comply with its obligations under international law, a matter which it is pursuing against the government in the European Court of Human Rights. This landmark judgment goes some way to showing why RMT has been right all along. ■

Parliamentary column



DEFENDING PENSIONS

The Tory-led Coalition continues to hack away at the public sector, especially the terms and conditions of workers, with an ideological zeal that surpasses those launched by Thatcher in the 1980s.

The growing consensus in our movement is that the anticipated attack on pensions is the most likely to trigger co-ordinated trade union industrial action.

Government plans for an increase in retirement age, increases in employee contributions, replacing final salary pensions with a 'career average' settlement, reductions in the annual increase of all pensions (the switch in indexation from the higher RPI to the lower CPI rate), will seriously devalue pensions and kick-start a race to the bottom in pension provision in the private sector.

RMT members will be well aware of the liberties private employers take with workers' pensions. The experience of the ex-Jarvis workforce losing, in some cases, up to 40 per cent of the value of their pension because the company went out of business is a particularly distressing example of the lack of protection that private sector employees have from the vagaries of the free market.

Members of RMT's Parliamentary group met ex-Jarvis workers last month and heard the heart-rending accounts of these men who have lost wages, pension entitlements and other basic rights despite government guarantees given at the time of privatisation which have since proved worthless. The group continues to seek a debate to highlight this rank injustice and to demand government action.

More widely on the pensions issue, the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group, an alliance of progressive unions has convened meetings of the relevant officials from the ten constituent unions to discuss how best to challenge the change in the indexation of Public Sector Pension Schemes from RPI to CPI, which is estimated to wipe nearly £3 billion out of public sector pensions.

To date the official Labour Party line has to been to abstain and it is clear that the trade union movement and all of us as individuals must increase the pressure on the party's leadership.

Lord John Hutton, the Blairite former Minister, also published his recommendations to the Con-Libs for reform of public sector pensions.

Unsurprisingly, Hutton proposes that the government introduce and complete the reform of all public sector schemes in the next three years which will force staff to pay more and work longer, for less in retirement. This is despite recent agreed changes to public sector pensions that the National Audit Office has confirmed mean they are affordable now and sustainable in the future.

When even Bank of England governor Mervyn King admits that this concerted assault on people's pensions would mean the wrong people were paying for the recession it is clearly obvious that the official opposition needs to be bolder in opposing these attacks.

John McDonnell
MP for Hayes and Harlington

SCOTTISH FERRIES CAMPAIGN HITS BARRA

After a successful public meeting on Barra against the privatisation of Scottish Ferries RMT to hold meetings in Gourock on April 12 and Stornoway on May 19

RMT general secretary Bob Crow addressed over 100 people during two meetings in Castlebay on the Scottish island of Barra along with local SNP MP Angus MacNeil and local RMT and community activists.

The meeting was the latest event in the campaign to stave off the threat from the Scottish government ferries review which is proposing to tender individual routes opening the door for new operators to take over individual routes currently run by the publicly owned Caledonian Macbrayne.

On top of that there is now concerted pressure from the European Union for wholesale privatisation.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow told the meeting that the threat of cuts and privatisation

to Scotland's lifeline ferry services was very real and the current climate of austerity measures has turned up the volume on the warning sirens in the communities where we are organising resistance.

"The Scottish Ferries are at severe risk of being broken up and cut to bits 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 through the roof.

"On top of that we now face the added threat of privatisation driven by the European Union.

"The livelihoods of our members and their families are on the block and 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.

MSPs from RMT's Parliamentary group in Scotland have tabled a motion opposing the tendering of single routes on the Clyde and Hebrides network.

Every member in Scotland has received a postcard with last month's RMT News and the union is advising all members to fill it in. They can also be

given out at branch meetings, on board ship and to friends and family.

"We must continue to press the MSPs of all political parties on this matter and convince them that tendering individual routes threatens fragmentation, privatisation and ultimately poorer services," Bob said.

Further details of public meetings planned over April and May will be made available as soon as possible.

RMT CAMPAIGNS FOR ISLE OF MAN STEAM PACKET

Unions hold public meeting on April 5 2011 to defend Isle of Man Steam Packet services against social dumping

Shipping unions RMT and Nautilus International are joining forces with the Isle of Man trades council as part of the ongoing campaign to defend Isle of Man Steam Packet services against low cost rivals paying rock bottom wages.

Although the new low cost service run by rival operator Mezeron has been reduced, the

threat to security of employment for shippers employed by the Isle of Man Steam Packet remains.

Mezeron are still running services to the Isle of Man from Glasson Dock and Belfast on the backs of low paid Eastern European seafarers on Estonian registered ships.

RMT also believe there is

every prospect of a new roll on roll off ferry service being introduced which would represent a major threat to the existing Isle of Man Steam Packet service.

The campaign will be seeking protection of RMT members under UK TUPE regulations, whereby workers automatically transfer to the new employer if their work is taken over by another company. It is also vital for Isle of Man Steam Packet pensions to be protected.

The union has already organised demonstrations in both the Isle of Man and

Liverpool against the low cost service.

Alongside the regional official Ken Usher, Bob Crow met with the Minister for Infrastructure Phil Gawne and made representations for action to be taken to safeguard the future of the Isle of Man Steam Packet. Trade unions also intend to meet the Isle of Man government again to keep up the pressure.

Further details of the public meeting in Douglas will be made available as soon as possible.

ASSAULT ON TUBE STATION STAFFING

RMT London region secretary John Kelly explains latest assault on jobs

London Underground has delayed the introduction of an enhanced Automatic Fare Machine (AFM) facility thanks to efforts of RMT station reps.

AFM machines would enable a ticket clerk to carry out certain Oystercard transactions outside of the ticket office in public areas of a station.

Of course, the introduction of the enhanced AFM facility is part of LU's strategy to close ticket offices and was set in the background of the dispute over the loss of 850 station jobs.

Anyone using the Oystercard system will know that quite often, through not fault of your own, you can be incorrectly charged for a journey. Currently you would go to a ticket office where a ticket clerk would assist and if established that you were wrongly charged refund the disputed journey to your Oystercard. The ticket clerk can only resolve the last journey, any other disputed charges have

to be done through the Oystercard Helpline, a real bone of contention for passengers!

All of this is done with staff in the safety of their secure ticket office and issues around incorrect charges and disputed journeys can be very tense affairs.

The enhanced AFM facility coupled with the closure of ticket offices now means ticket clerks will have to deal with these situations without any place of safety.

In addition, Customer Service Assistants (CSA) will be put in a difficult situation. When the ticket office is closed passengers will expect them to resolve journeys in the same way as the ticket clerks but CSA's do not normally hold a ticket selling license.

This will inevitably result in more abuse and verbal assaults on CSAs. LU have suggested CSAs with ticket sellers licenses should carry out this higher

grade work with no extra payment as a 'development opportunity'.

The impact on all staff will be increased abuse and verbal assaults, increased workload, further job insecurity, further job losses and increased workplace stress.

For passengers it will mean more frustration with the already under resourced Oystercard ticketing system.

The enhanced AFM facility will be used to justify more ticket office closures and a deterioration in service. Our opposition to the enhanced AFM facility is not a Luddite reaction to new technology. We are in favour of new technology which improves the service. Automated systems can be used to supplement and improve existing services but not at the expense of safety and customer service.

The issue has already gone before the RMT executive



committee and there may be industrial action short of a strike around the imposition of the enhanced AFM.

Enhanced AFM functions are a symptom of a drive to force through job losses and cuts to services. We are seeing an attack on jobs, safety and terms and conditions across the country led by Bullingdon Club old boys in the Con-Dem government and Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson. So lets do everything we can to get a massive turn out at the TUC anti-cuts demonstration on March 26 and kick start the fightback. ■



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HEALTH AND SAFETY IS A CLASS ISSUE

RMT's annual Health and safety conference discussed big business attacks on hard-won health and safety laws

This year's RMT health and safety conference assembled in Doncaster against a background of attacks on regulation and enforcement driven by a right-wing campaign to denigrate the concept of a safe working environment.

Nearly 200 RMT delegates and visitors from across the country, and from all grades and services, attended this highly-successful annual event and the fighting spirit was there right from the off in the opening comments from conference chair Greg Hewitt.

Greg called the conference to order with a minutes silence to mark the anniversary of the Tebay disaster in February 2004 where four rail workers lost their lives before launching a full on attack on the ConDems systematic attempt to undermine workplace safety inspections and enforcement:

"We have a battle on our hands. Laws that are there to

stop workers from being killed are called "red tape" by a Government following an agenda driven by the Institute of Directors and the rest of the business organisations.

"The proposed cuts to the Health and Safety Executive will mean a massive fall in inspections, enforcement and prosecutions and it's the derogatory comments from the likes of Jeremy Clarkson, designed to mislead, that are setting the pace."

Greg was followed by RMT president Alex Gordon who picked up the theme - homing in on Tory grandee Lord Young who had been hand-picked by the Government to lead the assault on workplace safety:

"Lord Young is an old-school, privatisation-obsessed Thatcherite with roots right back into the darkest days of her administration and the fact that he has been dredged up to front the assault on workers safety

rights should come as no surprise.

Lord Young's consultation document "Common Sense - Common Safety" was branded as a charter for corporate killing before Alex turned his fire on the British Safety Industry Federation - outriders for the Lord Young attack:

"The British Health and Safety Industry Federation - a bosses club for the safety industry - is supporting the proposal to cut RIDDOR reporting, the recording of incidents that lead to a member of staff being logged off work, from three days to seven days in the name of cutting red tape.

"That proposal - which would totally compromise the monitoring of workplace health and safety - has nothing to do with a "common sense approach" and everything to do with the Daily Mail and their parody of "elf and safety" as some kind of joke rather than a life saver."

Alex went on to talk about the importance of the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group's week of action on health and safety, which RMT is playing a major role in and the need to put the fight back on this issue right at the heart of the campaign against the ConDem cuts agenda.

After hearing from former Metronet Director Ian Prosser, now a Chief Inspector at the HMRI, and Hugh Robertson from the TUC, conference was addressed by Hilda Palmer from the Greater Manchester Hazards Centre.

Pulling no punches, Hilda opened up by explaining why the business sector are serial killers and why health and safety is a class issue: "The attack on workplace safety is just another front in this government's class war against working people.

"They attack on us from cradle to grave and all in the name of deficit reduction.

"Our message to Clegg and Cameron is clear and straightforward - we didn't vote to die," she said.

Hilda spoke about the massaging of the statistics to play down the real level of workplace deaths and the sheer scale of the numbers suffering illness from workplace stress - one million and rising as the impact of the ConDem cuts hits home.

Manchester Hazards of played a key role in helping the

Families Against Corporate Killing (FACK) campaign to achieve a high profile and conference delegates saw the full horror of the impact on workers families as Hilda took us through a slide show of shocking individual cases describing it as a "catalogue of unnecessary deaths and total inaction".

Senior Assistant General Secretary, Mick Cash made a rousing call for continued campaigning and action right

across the union on health and safety.

"RMT has a proud record of leading the fight for safety in the sectors where we organise, not just for our members but for the public who use our services.

"We know only too well what happens when corners are cut - you end up with the disasters of Hatfield and Potters Bar and the rest of the catalogue of tragedies that are ingrained in the fabric of this trade union.

"If Jeremy Clarkson and his ilk think that safety is such a big joke I would challenge him to meet with the Families Against Corporate Killing - they would soon wipe the smirk off his face as the reality of dealing with the totally unnecessary death of a loved one is laid out in the starkest of terms.

"RMT will keep the issue of health and safety centre stage as we fight back against the ConDem attacks and cuts," he said. ■



RMT SUPPORTS OLYMPIC SITE ANTI-BLACKLIST PROTEST

Anti-blacklist protesters demonstrated outside London's Olympic Park recently after an RMT member electrician Frank Morris was sacked after blowing the whistle on the use of an illegal blacklist on the construction project.

His dismissal by subcontractor Daletch Services followed weeks of intimidation and threats of violence by members of senior management after he had raised concerns about the dismissal of a co-

worker.

The co-worker was dismissed from the Olympic Media Centre being built by Skanska and Carillion after his name appeared on a blacklist of trade union members, many of whom were targeted for their health and safety activities.

After Frank raised concerns about this illegal practice, he says he was victimised, bullied and threatened with violence by senior management to the point that he had to call the police for

his own protection before finally being dismissed.

RMT is backing his unfair dismissal claim to an industrial tribunal. RMT regional organizer Steve Hedley said that in over 25 years representing workers he have never seen such a blatant stitch up, victimisation and even threats of violence to a union activist whose only 'crime' was to expose an illegal blacklist operating on the Olympic site.

Site worker Paul Tattersfield

has become the latest worker to win a blacklisting tribunal. It found Balfour Beatty Engineering Services Ltd has refused him employment because he was on The Consulting Association blacklist. The company is known to have been a major support of the covert blacklisting operation.

The tribunal awarded him just under £24,000 including loss of earnings, injury to feelings and aggravated damages. ■

STOP THE BREAK UP

RMT signalling grades conference vowed to resist any break-up and privatisation of Network Rail – pledging to use strike action if necessary



OF NETWORK RAIL

The union's annual signalling grades conference, which met in Liverpool last month, heard that the company is being broken up into nine separate regions. This, warned conference president and North Staffs delegate Tim Breed, was "a precursor to a sell-off by the government."

Tim used his presidential address to highlight the dangers of such a move, adding: "We need to be strong and develop resolutions through this conference to hold the company and the government to task. If not we'll go down. And we need to fight."

"If Network Rail is split up and we are sold off to the train-operating companies then we will suffer like we've never suffered before," he said.

His motion, which was unanimously backed by delegates, warned that any steps to re-privatisation should be met with "an immediate ballot for industrial action".

RMT president Alex Gordon said that the move formed part of the government's broader attack on services.

"The proposals for rail are as radical as for any other part of public spending," Alex told delegates, adding that at the same time as the government is implementing severe cuts across society, it is preparing to spend £22 billion of taxpayers' money to privatise Network Rail by writing off the company's historic debt.

"This shows the incredible ideological commitment these people have to privatise anything that is publicly-owned," he said.

Conference also pledged to fight to defend the final salary pension scheme, warning Network Rail that signalling grades would ballot for action should the company attempt to close it to new or existing members.

"This is the one issue that will galvanise people for strike action," said Mark Bellenie, North Staffs, moving the successful motion.

He was backed by Dave Gott, Bassetlaw, who said: "Make no bones about it – this coming year, as far as the pension scheme is concerned, it's going to be extremely difficult".

Dave Crawford, Three Bridges, said: "If there is one issue I know we can get members out and voting yes for action, it's this one".

Conference voted for the pension's motion to be sent for debate to the RMT annual general meeting along with a resolution condemning the failure of Network Rail to consult the workforce over changes to rules.

"People around the country don't know if they're coming or going. Sooner or later a rule's going to be changed and someone's going to be killed," said Tim Breed.

Ann Joss, Aberdeen No1, described the situation as an "utter shambles," adding: "We've got to get in there we're the experts".

Conference unanimously passed an emergency motion instructing members not to use a new system called Auto Route Setting (ARS+), warning that no formal consultation has taken place between the union and Network Rail over its implementation.

Delegates heard that the equipment could have "grave implications for members' jobs and currently not compatible with members' job descriptions."

Phil Borman, Ashford No1, said that the ARS+ system could see signallers' workload "go through the roof," adding: "It's going to be serious people are really going to struggle".

Delegates condemned Network Rail for "abuse of the disciplinary procedure and breaches of the PTR&R agreements".

Paul Hooper, North Staffs, said: "The rulebook bears no resemblance to the rulebook when I started in 1975. It's now about getting the job moving with the minimum amount of safety application.

"Sooner or later we're going to have a mishap," he warned,

Conference heard that Network Rail was misusing the existing drug and alcohol policy in order to intimidate workers.

Kelvin Eastham, Three Bridges, explained that newer managers often failed to grasp the full meaning of legislation which came into force in 1993. As a result, their interpretation of drug and alcohol policy sometimes results in using it as a tool to threaten individuals.

Paul Kemp, Surrey and Hants, reported that management in his area were ordering automatic drug and alcohol testing even for minor accidents at work, leading to a soaring unreported accident

rate.

Delegates heard that Network Rail has been in breach of grievance and disciplinary procedures by taking an inordinate amount of time to deal with cases.

Dave King, Stirling No1, explained that members accused under the procedures have had to wait up to 18 months to find out what is happening with their case.

"When Network Rail was questioned on the length of time it was taking to deal with these matters they were dismissive, believing they had done nothing wrong," said Dave.

Conference declared itself "appalled" at the culling of mobile operations manager (MOMs) jobs by Network Rail, warning that it would have a detrimental effect on track safety.

Gary Abbot, Bristol Rail, accused the company of "playing fast and loose with safety," adding that the emergency services refuse to go onto an area of track unless there is a MOM present.

Paul Kemp, Surrey and Hants, said: "We want to move the great British public from A to B safely and on time.

"MOMs play a vital part – they are the signaller's eyes and ears on the track," he said.

Network Rail may have breached the Data Protection Act by releasing private information on staff to the polling organisation Gallup as part of its Q12 employee survey, conference heard.

Delegates backed a call from Mark Bellenie, North Staffs, for the union to seek legal advice over the matter with a view to launching a prosecution.

"This process Q12 is being abused throughout the country with members being hounded out of their jobs," said Mark.

Delegates were told that the implementation of safety-critical communications by management is being done in a "counter-productive" way that is detrimental to safety.

They backed a call from Peter Brocklehurst, Chester, who said managers were putting too much emphasis on correct protocols being used in these communications rather than a clear understanding of what is actually happening.



RMT BACKS HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT LOBBY



RMT was one of the many unions which backed a lobby of Parliament called by the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG) in defence of health and safety enforcement in the teeth of a co-ordinated assault by the government and right-wing commentators.

The lobby demanded a halt to cuts at the Health and Safety Executive - the organisation that inspects and enforces minimum standards of safety.

The HSE has revealed that between April 2009 and March 2010, 152 people were fatally injured at work, 26,061 suffered major injuries at work and 1.3 million people who worked during the last year were suffering from an illness believed to be caused or made worse by their current or past work.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that commentators and politicians who try to trivialise and denigrate health and safety enforcement would be the first to run to their lawyers and the press if it was one of their relatives killed in a preventable accident at work or on public transport.

"I will tell you what happens when corners are cut on safety regulations - you end up with the carnage of Potters Bar and Hatfield and our trade union will fight tooth and nail to stop our industry from being dragged back to that cavalier approach to maintaining safe standards.

"In the services where RMT organises - transport, shipping and out on the oil rigs - safety is the watchword and if people like Jeremy Clarkson think it's a big joke they should have the guts to meet the families of those who have lost their lives because some employer decided health and safety was a soft touch for cuts.

"No one should be under any illusions - the ConDem cuts will kill," he said.

Current health and safety legislation and enforcement is failing to protect workers.

Over 150 people were fatally injured at work in the last year and there were over 26,000 major injuries. The ConDem government is threatening to make things even worse by diluting health and safety standards and slashing the funding of the Health and

Safety Executive by 35 per cent.

TUCG, which brings together ten unions which represents almost 1 million workers, called a health and safety week of action and called the lobby to take the message to MPs that workers demand fair and adequate protections at work and that health and safety breaches are crimes.

TUCG convenor and RMT Parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell MP has tabled the Early Day Motion number 1302 which over 50 MPs have signed.

CUTS MEANS STRESS AT WORK

A new survey undertaken by the TUCG has revealed that stress levels at work have soared over the last year as job cuts hit. The survey revealed that as a result of worsening conditions at work over one in four workers are more stressed now than a year ago.

The survey carried out by the Electoral Reform Society revealed that one in five workers have to work harder as a result of job cuts in their workplace, with one in seven in fear of losing their jobs.

Eight out of ten of these workers feel things have got worse at work over the last 12 months.

As a result of worsening conditions at work 26 per cent of all workers feel more stressed now than a year ago.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said that the survey revealed the rising levels of stress and insecurity in the workplace.

"With government plans for further cuts to jobs, pensions and pay on the horizon this situation is only going to deteriorate in the next 12 months," he said.

Bob Crow said that the research revealed that a culture of fear is sweeping through Britain's workplaces as employers use the threat of the sack to demand longer hours for less money.

"Bullying and harassment is rife and the first thing to take the hit is safe working practices as the ConDem cuts agenda threatens to turn the tide on all the gains on worker's rights and workplace safety that have been secured since the Second World War," he said. ■

HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS DON'T KILL JOBS: LACK OF REGULATION KILLS WORKERS

Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) outlines why claims that health and safety laws must go are bogus

The business lobby claims that pesky safety regulations and meddling inspectors are bringing the economy to its knees and stifling job creation.

But Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) spokesperson Linzi Herbertson pointed out there are a couple of big problems with this deregulatory fantasy – their arguments are bogus and the statistics behind them are rigged.

She pointed out that 2008 HSE analysis estimated that less than a quarter of the costs of work-related injuries and ill-health is borne by the employers and the bulk of the cost fell “externally on individuals and

society”.

“Wherever you go the business lobby is trotting out the same arguments claiming businesses are closing and jobs being lost due to the burden of regulation with health and safety rules targeted as a top ‘job killer’.

They are trying to hoodwink government, the media and the public, but it’s not true and the burdens on us.

“The arguments that it is too expensive for business to obey health and safety rules is bogus as they fail to take into account all the benefits they gain in lower insurance, less lost production and damage, lower sickness absence bills and less

compensation that good health and safety provides to their business.

“But they also fail to count the cost of their failure to manage health and safety properly which exceeds by many times even their bogus inflated figures for complying.

“Even more important the business lobby completely fails to tell everyone that they pay less than 25 per cent of the cost of injury, death and illness, as 75 per cent is borne by workers, their families and the state.

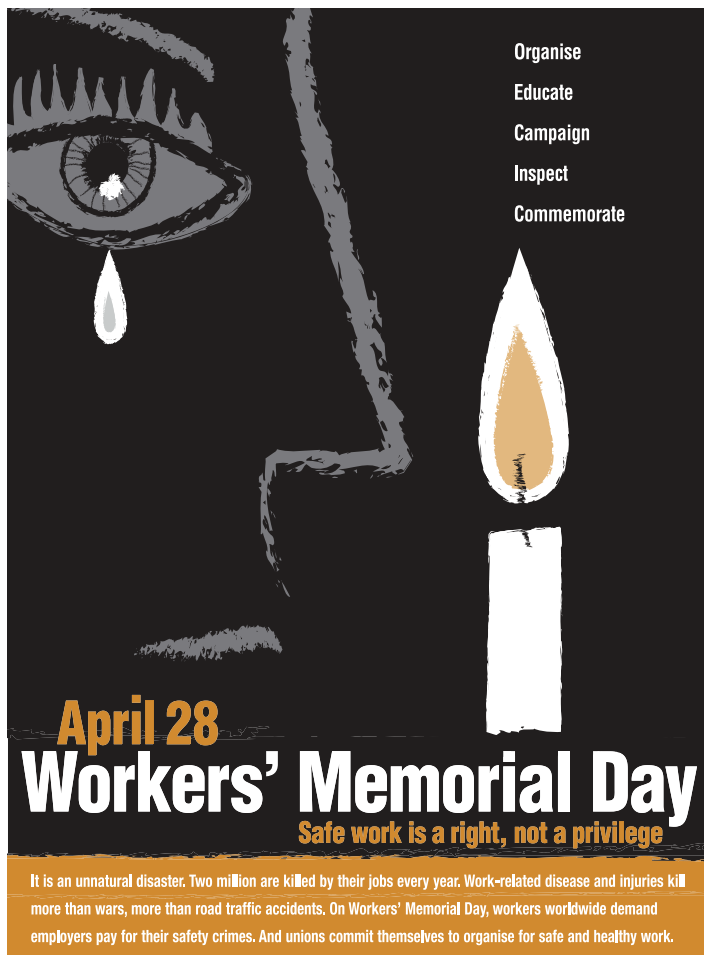
“We want the government to listen to the true facts not the burdens on business lies and listen to us, the ones who pay the cost of poor health and

safety in blood and tears,” she said.

FACK founder member Linda Whelan attended the TUCG event to tell MPs and the government that it’s not employers who bear the burden “but people we love who went to work and never came home, killed by employers’ negligence and by a regulatory and enforcement regime which is too lax”. ■

Useful websites

Families Against Corporate Killers was set up in 2006 see www.fack.org
Workers Memorial Day April 28
www.hazards.org/wmd
Job Killers
www.hazards.org/votetodie/jobkillers.htm
We Didn't Vote to Die at Work Campaign
www.hazards.org/votetodie



Organise
Educate
Campaign
Inspect
Commemorate

April 28
Workers' Memorial Day
Safe work is a right, not a privilege

It is an unnatural disaster. Two million are killed by their jobs every year. Work-related disease and injuries kill more than wars, more than road traffic accidents. On Workers' Memorial Day, workers worldwide demand employers pay for their safety crimes. And unions commit themselves to organise for safe and healthy work.

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.



YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

Thompsons solicitor Doug Christie looks at how the 2010 Equality Act can help you fight discrimination at work

The Equality Act 2010, the brainchild of the Labour government, came about because of a much-needed overhaul of discrimination legislation that had become more and more complex.

Sadly much of the complexity remains, but at least now the rules (some of which have been extended and improved) are all under one “roof”.

Effective from October 1 last year, the Act outlaws discrimination for nine “protected characteristics” - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Crucially, the new Act extends the old definition of discrimination to include situations when people associate with someone who has a protected characteristic, or when someone is perceived to have a protected characteristic.

It also specifically prohibits three different types of harassment - unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic; sexual harassment; and less favourable treatment of someone because they agreed to or rejected sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex or gender reassignment.

And employers are now liable for harassment by third parties (such as customers), provided that they knew the worker had been subject to harassment on two previous occasions, but had done little

or nothing to prevent it.

The Act creates a new concept of discrimination arising from disability, so that it is now discriminatory to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising “in consequence of” their disability (for instance, a tendency to make spelling mistakes because of dyslexia).

And it is also now unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a job candidate’s health before offering them work.

The big changes, though, are around pay. Although they don’t go nearly far enough, it is now possible for a person bringing an equal pay claim to rely on a hypothetical comparator, if they can show they have been directly discriminated against.

Employers can no longer stop their employees from having a discussion about whether there are differences in their pay related to protected characteristics, nor can they enforce “gagging clauses” in people’s contracts.

However, they can stipulate that employees keep pay rates confidential from certain groups outside the workplace, for example competitor organisations.

The missed opportunity, though, was around pay audits. Although the Act allows for compulsory pay audits for organisations with more than 250 employees from 2013, it is not clear (given this government’s preferred voluntary approach) when or if this section will ever be enacted.

The government has, however, agreed to extend the public sector equality duty to all nine protected characteristics (from three previously), as of April this year. The “general duty” applies not just to public bodies, but also private companies carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority.

To decide whether the company has a public function depends on whether it is publicly funded; it is taking the place of central or local government; it is exercising powers covered by statute; or is providing a public service that works closely with the delegating state body.

Trade unions can then require the company to abide by the general duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups.

Finally, the Act allows employers to treat someone with a protected characteristic more favourably during the process of recruitment and promotion.

Despite headlines inferring that “positive action” would lead to men being sacked or passed over for women candidates, this just means that employers can now choose one candidate with a protected characteristic over another if they think they have been disadvantaged in some way, as long as they are as qualified as the other person.

RMT LEGAL SERVICES



UNION WINS DISCRIMINATION CASE FOR PORT WORKER

A disabled RMT member whose damaged back was aggravated after his employer refused to make adjustments to his work environment has won his case for disability discrimination.

Manchester Employment Tribunal found that Andrew Russell was discriminated against when his employer Heysham Port Ltd refused to allocate new equipment to him.

Mr Russell was a general operative at the port where for 90 per cent of his time and for up to four hours at a time he used a machine called a tugmaster to unload vehicles off vessels.

Mr Russell had back problems from 2006 and was off work with back pain from November 2008 until January 2009.

On returning to work in January 2009 Mr Russell asked to be allocated with one of 14 new tugmasters which had better suspension and enabled the driver to move more easily. He explained that the older tugmaster (of which there were 16) was causing further damage to his back.

The Port's response was that the vehicles were allocated on a first come first served basis and they wouldn't change the system saying it would be unfair for the other employees.

Mr Russell ended up having to take three months off work in 2009 because of back pain and work related stress. In September 2009, the Port finally agreed to allow Mr Russell to drive a new tugmaster.

Following the time off he contacted RMT which instructed Thompsons Solicitors to fight Mr Russell's case at Employment Tribunal.

The Tribunal agreed that Mr Russell had a disability and was discriminated against and ordered Heysham Port to pay £6,000 in damages.

Mr Russell said: "I've suffered from back problems for a while and whilst I try to live as normal a life as possible my employers knew all about my disability and it was obvious the old tugmasters were aggravating my problem.

"I wanted a new tugmaster because they had better suspension and being able to turn the seat around meant I didn't have to twist which would have avoided me having more time off.

"I ended up having to go to tribunal to get the Port to listen to its disabled employees' in the future."

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the member was forced to work with machinery which was aggravating his disability.

"His employer could easily, with a little flexibility, have made adjustments and saved him further time off work.

"Whilst it is an indictment of the Port that he had to fight his case at an employment tribunal he has stood up for his employment rights and woken the employers up to their duties to disabled staff," he said.

Rachel Halliday from Thompsons Solicitors said that employers had a duty to look after their employees' health and safety at work.

"Where a working practice places a disabled employee at a substantial disadvantage the employer should make reasonable adjustments to improve the situation.

"Heysham Port conceded at the Tribunal that it could have taken steps to alleviate the disadvantage suffered by Mr Russell very easily and at little or no cost.

"If the Port had taken these steps promptly, instead of delaying for nearly eight months, then a Tribunal claim would have been avoided," she said

IN BRIEF...

- A member was injured during the course of his duties as an Ultrasonic Rail tester. At the time of the accident he left the track via a ramp at the end of the platform. As he walked up the ramp his left foot fell into a void between the ramp and the platform edge wall and he injured his left elbow on the lower bar of the platform edge rail causing injury to his upper arm. Following detailed negotiation a settlement of £7,500 was made.
- A driver member has been awarded £58,000 in compensation following an injury incurred while driving a company vehicle. The vehicle was struck from behind by another vehicle and suffered back and neck injuries. The other side's insurers refused to negotiate a settlement and it was necessary for the union to commence court proceedings.
- A member has won £2,250 in compensation following a back injury at work. The member was injured while carrying out benchmark testing of the decibel levels of the speech and intelligibility of announcements on trains at various locations and depots. The bulky test box weighed 27lbs and the repetitive nature of the work caused the injury.
- A train driver member has won damages of £1,850 following an injury due to a faulty cab seat. While the train was stopped the member stood up and leant against the driver's seat and the seat ratchet gave way, trapping his right hand in the seat mechanism. The member suffered lacerations and ongoing swelling.
- A train crew member won £2,451.11p in compensation following an injury received whilst pulling a trolley. The train braked suddenly causing the trolley to jerk, wrenching the member's chest, arms, upper and lower back.
- A member received £1,500 in compensation after suffering noise induced deafness as a result of excessive exposure to noise throughout his employment.
- A member has received £1,350 in compensation after tripping on defective bolts that had been allowed to become a hazard at the workplace. Following correspondence it was possible for the union to negotiate a satisfactory settlement.
- A welder member has won £20,000 in compensation after suffering an injury to his lower back while moving a grinder from a van to trackside. The other side's insurers refused to negotiate a settlement making it necessary to commence court proceedings and a settlement was subsequently agreed.
- A member won £35,000 in compensation after falling down a manhole, fracturing bones in his right leg. The other side's insurers only accepted settlements terms after the union commenced legal proceedings.
- A member gained £3,877.84p in compensation following any injury gained whilst trying to pull the levers to move the '50' points. The lever was very stiff and moved half way before springing back causing muscular injuries to the back and neck.
- A member received £8,500 compensation after suffering injuries to the head, neck and lower back. He was asked to locate a rail sleeper from a cage-sided bass wagon and the only way to do this was to climb into it. He climbed in to put a sling on the sleeper to lift it out. He was nine feet up on the side of the wagon when the side came down, flinging him to the ground. Following court proceedings being commenced the other side's insurers paid out.

WELCOME BACK! TO YOUR BIGGER, BETTER RMTv

As RMT videos sail past their first 100,000 on-line views, RMTv is re-launched with four channels



IT'S BIGGER, it's better and it's back on-line.

After a major makeover, RMTv, the online station that brings you the news on issues that face transport workers, now boasts four channels.

The relaunch comes as RMT videos notched up their first 100,000 online views.

With videos from picket lines and demonstrations, urgent news bulletins, updates from

around the movement and films that chart the history of our movement, the new RMTv will have something for everyone – and you choose what to watch and when to watch it.

RMTv has films made by its own communications team, some by long-standing labour-movement chroniclers Platform Films and others by a growing network of movie-makers around the country.

As ever, RMT will alert you by text and email when new bulletins appear on issues affecting your sector or workplace.

"RMTv is now bigger and better than ever, and will bring a steady stream of videos that reflect the huge amount of activity that RMT members are involved in," general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Today's RMT members need

the news that affects their working lives as it happens, and RMTv has become an important part of a communications network that includes instant messaging, alongside RMT News, the RMT website and RMT Junction.

"RMT videos have already been viewed more than 100,000 times, and with the new-look site we expect the second 100,000 to come in record time."

CHANNELLING IN TO WHAT MATTERS TO MEMBERS

CHANNEL 1

RMT in Action brings you news from the industrial front line – from picket-lines and campaigns when RMT members are at the sharp end.

CHANNEL 2

The Bulletin channel has updates and other key news about your workplace, your industry and your union.

CHANNEL 3

RMT History will add films on your own union's heritage as well as documentaries charting key moments in trade-union history. Already added are: The Miners' Film charting the epic 1974-75 struggle that brought down the Heath government; Whose Conspiracy, the 2009 documentary on the jailing of the Shrewsbury pickets, with Ricky Tomlinson, and the 1970 Cinema Action film of the momentous campaign against the 1970 Industrial Relations Bill. We will aim to bring you new films each month.

CHANNEL 4

RMT Extra will bring you news, views and action from around the trade union and progressive movements – from the latest anti-cuts demonstrations to international issues and solidarity with the industrial battles fought by colleagues in other unions.

MOST WATCHED VIDEOS

1. No2EU election manifesto, June 2009 :: **6,017**
2. RMT taxi drivers take on BAA over private-hire touting at Heathrow, July 2010 :: **4,510**
3. RMT AGM highlights, July 2008 :: **4,433**
4. Network Rail workers lobby against 1,500 job cuts, December 2009 :: **3,785**
5. Alabama 3: Woke up this morning – Joined (the) RMT, April 2010 :: **3,364**
6. OCS cleaners at Eurostar strike for pay justice, September 2009 :: **2,942**
7. Solidarity with PCS on strike to defend conditions, October 2010 :: **2,831**
8. Grayrigg: three years on, RMT lobbies the DfT for safety, February 2010 :: **2,643**
9. RMT & TSSA members lobby Network Rail for jobs and safety, March 2010 :: **2,592**
10. Rail Against Privatisation, Part 1, May 2005 :: **2,398**
11. RMT – Your Union, with Sue Johnston, December 2006 :: **2,390**
12. RMT & TSSA announce strikes for NR safety and jobs, March 2010 :: **2,231**
13. Vestas campaign for jobs, with Bob Crow, Isle of Wight, July 2009 :: **2,210**
14. Tube strike for safety and jobs, with Bob Crow, September 2010 :: **2,162**
15. Solidarity with striking firefighters, October 2010 :: **2,109**

COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS AND WIN £100 FOR YOUR BRANCH!

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

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

The competition will be judged by Press Association industrial correspondent Alan Jones and National Union of Journalists magazine editor

Christine Buckley and the winners will both receive £100 for the branch courtesy of RMT insurance partners UIA.

Branch officials can receive training in producing newsletters and RMT News will be running articles about how to lay out newsletters, set up websites and blogs etc in the coming months.



UIA is a mutual insurance company with over 100 years' experience of providing great value, high quality insurance to members of selected trade unions. For details call 0845 842 8421 or access www.rmtinsurance.co.uk

RMT MEMBER WINS NATIONAL LEARNING AWARD

John Wright, a guard at Merseyrail and RMT member for over 11 years, has won the Go Skills Achiever of the Year Award for Literacy, Numeracy and Language, sponsored by the life long learning organisation NIACE 2010.

John left school in the eighties with no formal qualifications, when comprehensive education in Liverpool was on its knees due to the Thatcher government's so-called educational reforms.

He joined the railway and the union as a young member in 1999 as an underground station assistant but quickly progressed to his current role as a guard.

After a number of years in the role of guard and after Merseyrail's recognition of the Union Learning Representative (ULR) role, John was encouraged by his ULR to take advantage of the adult learning opportunities that were being organised.

He enrolled on to an on-line learning programme with LearnDirect and immediately began his long learning journey with the support of his local ULR.

Such was his desire to learn that he quickly progressed to the nationally recognised Level

2 qualification in both literacy and numeracy. Throughout his learning, it was his enthusiasm and self-belief that helped him to achieve the qualification despite very difficult personal circumstances at the time.

Due to his learning successes, John has now developed the confidence to undertake the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) IT training programme and believes that the opportunity to access educational development, supported by his trade union, has led to him being able to look at and further his own career progression.

Level 2 qualifications are recognised as being the equivalent to GCSEs and John can use his qualifications as a springboard for access to higher academic qualifications – as many other RMT members have already found. John would not have been able to aim higher without the confidence gained by achieving his level 2 qualifications.

"The work that union learning representatives do is integral to the success and sustainability of the trade union movement of the future.

"To help support the learning



AWARD: John Wright (right) with TV's Dom Littlewood

needs and skills required to make sure that our members have the right tools to adapt to the ever changing demands of their job roles," said John.

John's successes have certainly given him the 'learning bug'.

"The opportunity to access courses which fit around my work and home commitments, with the support of RMT, have made it possible for me to be such a successful learner.

"I really think it has made all the difference to my life by turning me into a lifelong learner," he said.

John went on to say how

proud he was to have been awarded the Go Skills National Learning Award and how it will spur him on to continue his learning journey.

John acknowledges that RMT Learning, and its team of development workers support the efforts of ULRs across the union and especially in their work to improve the English, maths and IT skills of all RMT members. He is certainly a successful outcome for the government funding behind RMT Learning.

*John Dougherty
RMT learning Midlands development worker*

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF TRADE UNION LEARNING IN SCOTLAND



LEARNING: left to right Graham Smith, Dan Henderson, Mary Jane Herbison, Margaret Hanlon and Kevin Lindsay.

RMT was presented with a certificate of success in Edinburgh recently for the union's contribution to the workplace learning in the last ten years in Scotland.

The presentation was made to RMT project worker Dan Henderson by STUC general secretary Graham Smith and Michael Russell MSP and cabinet secretary for education and lifelong learning.

A further presentation was held at a Scottish union learning event in the Scottish parliament as part of trade union week. This was to commemorate 10 years of learning and the certificates were presented by graham smith

and Kevin Lindsay, vice chair of the Scottish union learning board.

Receiving the certificates on behalf of the union were learning rep and conductor Mary Jane Herbison, Dan Henderson and RMT member and conductor Margaret Hanlon, a student has benefited from trade union learning.

Workplace learning has seen a lot of changes in Scotland over the last ten years and the RMT learning team north of the border is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that the next ten years will bring to RMT members.

KINGS CROSS STALWART



Long standing Kings Cross member Bernard Kimmins received his 25 year membership badge from senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash recently.

Bernard originally worked on the Kings Cross Dining cars then moved to the Central Despatch Office. When that closed down following BR privatisation he transferred to Thameslink as a booking clerk, and is currently working in the ticket office at Luton Airport Parkway.

IT AWARD FOR WHITTINGHAM



After struggling with computers for a while Chester branch secretary John Whittingham decided to do a bit of IT learning himself.

Having been invited to the Open Day at the Learn Direct IT centre run by Chester University, he chatted to several of the tutors who persuaded him to have a go.

After a brief introductory test, they agreed that he should take a Level 2 computer skills course. This was on the basis of "drop in when you can" and work from the programme explained on the computer, no lessons or teaching, just get on with it.

As the months went by, John persevered and gradually managed to complete the various modules.

Finally he received his Certificate from Centre Manager Connie Hancock (Photo) who was pleased with the progress he had made.

RFA STALWART



Royal Flett Auxiliary veteran Vincent Gray receives his RMT 40 year long service medal from national secretary Steve Todd on board RFA Largs Bay.

President's column



PRIVATISATION DOES NOT EQUAL SAFETY

RMT's health and safety conference last month remembered workers killed or injured at work, in particular our members Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess, Chris Waters and Gary Tindall who lost their lives in the Tebay rail disaster on February 15 2004.

By coincidence, on February 15 this year a jury at Winchester Crown Court was the first to use corporate killing legislation to find an employer, Cotswold Geotechnical Holdings guilty of safety breaches leading to the death of a worker.

If you've never heard of this company, don't be surprised. Safety campaigners predicted when the last Labour government introduced corporate killing legislation that it was too weak to be effective and would be used to prosecute small fry and allow big corporate criminals to go free.

Also last month, the British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) announced it supports government proposals to extend the qualifying period for reporting of serious injuries or accidents leading to absence from work (RIDDOR) from three days at present, to seven days. Certainly, that is one way to reduce statistics of work injuries.

BSIF boss David Lummis said: "Amending RIDDOR will contribute to eliminating the burden of paperwork for small businesses".

The miserable failure of the 'health and safety industry' to stand up to corporate interests demonstrates why workers need trade unions. Safety professionals can advance their careers by jumping from one gravy train to another.

Regulation of rail safety for both national rail and metro systems, including London Underground was removed from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the 2005 Transport Act and given to the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) – a body with responsibility for commercial regulation.

Now the European Union's European Railway Agency (ERA), which RMT led an international trade union lobby against in Lille last year, is able to oversee rail safety regulation. We saw this when permission was given apparently to Deutsche Bahn to compete against Eurostar in international passenger services through the channel tunnel with Siemens-built trains that do not meet

safety standards set by current rolling stock. In the view of the ERA, safety is a barrier to competition and competition must be encouraged regardless.

Even the Con Dem proposals to reduce RIDDOR-reporting will not remove the requirement for reporting 'over three-day injuries'. New requirements will shortly be enforced for all EU countries to provide this data to the EU statistical office Eurostat. The latest government proposals simply make responsibility for injury data compilation the preserve of the EU, more remote, less accountable to elected union safety representatives and more open to abuse and corporate lobbying.

On 3 March I attended a European parliamentary hearing organised by the left-wing MEPs in Brussels into the European Commission's new proposals to extend rail 'liberalisation' across the EU.

I was privileged to hear testimony from Italian families from the small town of Viareggio, in Tuscany where 32 inhabitants were incinerated on June 29 2009 when a dangerous goods train carrying LPG tanks derailed. The train composed of vehicles of Polish Railways (PKP), Deutsche Bahn (DB), GATX Rail Austria and KVG Kesselwagen, a division of GATX leased to ExxonMobil was able to operate as a result of the EU's second rail package, which liberalised rail freight from 2006.

The testimony of Daniella Riombi and other members of the 'Viareggio 29 June Association' echoes the experiences of families in Britain who lost loved ones because of rail privatisation. They conclude that these disasters are the result of policies pursued by the EU for decades.

Yet today, the European Commission's answer to criticism of its neoliberal policies is to tell us: "there is a positive correlation between liberalisation and safety".

That is a lie. The truth is that the European Commission is driven by corporate ideology. According to them, whatever the issue, privatisation must be the answer. They must be defeated in Brussels, Lisbon and London by a movement led by trade unions going beyond the workplace into the streets.

Alex Gordon

DERAILING BRUSSELS TRANSPORT PRIVATISATION DRIVE

Hans-Gerd Öfinger of the German campaign 'Railways from Below' reports on RMT's recent transport conference in London against European Union plans to privatise and break up transport networks across Europe



Recently RMT brought together representatives of over 40 transport unions from across Europe in London to build the fight against rail privatisation and social dumping in public transport.

The British were among the first victims of the European Union's drive to fragment and privatise rail networks in Europe. They can give a thousand good reasons for the renationalisation of the transport sector under democratic control and management. But new plans by the EU Commission promise total 'liberalisation' of the railways and even sharper attacks on standards and wage agreements, which could be life threatening for workers.

EU policy encourages European railways, especially the German railway company Deutsche Bahn (DB) and the French SNCF, to be ruthless in their expansion efforts. Meanwhile the interests of employees, passengers, safety and the environment remain stuck in the sidings.

Conference began with a minute silence for the victims of train accident near the German town of Oschersleben in Saxony-Anhalt two days earlier where two trains run by private companies collided killing ten people and injuring around 50 more.

Conference was also overshadowed by the affects of the expansion strategy of German state railways DB in Britain. A few days earlier, DB run Wrexham and Shropshire Railways passenger services between North Wales and London were closed and employees quickly dismissed.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that this was just another reason to demand the re-nationalisation of the fragmented railway system.

"We need high standards and democratic control not a constant drive for profit

"We need to develop common assessments and strategies as an alternative to the current capitalist chaos," he



CRASH: Conference delegates stood for a minutes silence for the ten people killed in a train crash in Hordorf, near Oschersleben, eastern Germany on Sunday, Jan. 30, 2011. A passenger and a cargo train both run by private companies were involved in the head-on train crash which killed more than 10 people and injured more than 40 people.

said.

RMT president Alex Gordon condemned the European Commission for proposing a 'single railway area' which demanded the comprehensive 'liberalisation' of the rail sector undermining workers' rights, labour relations and safety standards.

These developments can be clearly seen in many EU member states. Sweden experienced the fragmentation and privatisation of its railways, destroying jobs and undermining the safety, reported Jörgen Lundstrom of the Swedish transport union SEKO.

He said that currently only 50 per cent of the Swedish population has confidence in the railways, "probably the 50 per cent who never travel by train," he said.

He said that such 'liberalisation' had led to the deterioration of rolling stock and rail infrastructure while servicing and maintenance were kept to a bare minimum.

This fragmentation has led to unprecedented winter chaos in the industry in both Sweden and Germany.

RMT secretary Steve Todd described the disastrous situation in the UK maritime sector where legal loopholes are used to replace trade unionists from the ferry sector with cheap foreign labour working for starvation wages.

"Many earn less than two pounds an hour," he said. He demanded equal pay for equal

work regardless of the origin of the workers.

BUILDING RESISTANCE

It is clear that Europe-wide resistance is possible as shown by the successful struggle of European port workers against the European Commission attempts to liberalise port work known as Port Package II.

Under the auspices of the European Transport Workers' Federation, in 2005 and 2006 massive pressure was exercised through European-wide strikes and a large demonstration outside the EU Parliament. Port Package II was voted down and what port workers achieved, rail workers can and must learn from.

In order to develop this campaign the newly-created German rail union EVG, which did not attend the conference, must renounce old illusions of 'social partnership' with the employers. The fact that EVG now opposes privatisation of the freight division DB Schenker is a step in the right direction.

EVG chairman Alex Kirchner has also condemned European Commission plans to undermine the right to strike contained in the so-called 'recast' of EU directives to create a so-called 'single European railway area'.

He said in a press release that the EU Commission and European railway employers would like to limit the right to strike by back door methods.

"The opportunity: the so-called first railway package is to

be restructured and, in addition, further steps to liberalisation are provided.

"In connection with these plans, the EU Commission has suddenly decided that a so-called minimum service level, as it is referred to in the official language must be guaranteed in the event of strikes.

"Employers want to raise the stakes even more sharply, in plain language this means that the impact of industrial action should be weakened.

"Thus, the right to strike is being severely restricted and we cannot allow this interference with the fundamental rights of workers," he said.

Mr Kirchner said that the EVG would oppose any move to put the freedom of the market before protection provided for workers.

This was also the view of those attending the London conference and expressed in its final statement calling for an international protest of transport workers before the end of this year against EU institutions demanding the privatisation and liberalisation of rail and ferry services. ■

** A full version of the conference final statement can be found on the RMT website www.rmt.org.uk RMT has also produced a pamphlet outlining the history of EU directives on the maritime and rail sector and the devastating impact they have had on the industries. Copies are available by e-mailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk or write to Brian Denny, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.*



RMT MEMBER GETS RED CARPET TREATMENT

RMT member Ann Burkin hits the big time in her role in the award-winning film *Zebra Crossing*

Kings Cross-based clerical worker and RMT member Ann Burkin appeared in *RMT News* some time ago after landing a starring role in the film *Zebra Crossing*.

To date the film, written and directed by Sam Holland, has picked up seven awards from various European festivals including the Best Independent European Film as well as scooping Best Director and Best Actor from the London Independent Film Awards.

The film was premiered at Empire Leicester Square in January and the red carpet was rolled out for Ann.

"To be invited to a film premiere that I was actually in was pretty terrifying and exciting at the same time.

"I didn't know what to expect and was just completely overwhelmed as we did receive the red carpet treatment with interest from the press, celebrities and, of course, lots of free bubbly.

"To experience people you see on the television coming up to you and praising your work is pretty surreal.

"For me I really enjoyed meeting up with all the cast and crew again as they were just a fantastic bunch of people to work alongside," she said.

On a normal weekday Ann works for National Express and

she joined the union early on in her career.

"It's nice to know there is back up support and they are a good bunch of people in the union here" she says, adding that she shares an office with RMT branch secretary Ray Knight.

Ann landed her role by chance during acting lessons in Islington at a school known for giving students a distinctive natural acting style.

As luck would have it, at her first lesson there were people there casting for the film *Zebra Crossing*.

Ann went for an audition and got the part of Donna, a girlfriend of one of the main characters. Set on a south London council estate the film tells the story of four lads lives, which are characterised by petty crime and violent retribution. The film shows that despite their violent lifestyles everyone deserves a chance of redemption.

When it came to filming Ann booked the days off work. Then there was the long wait as the film went through a year of editing before it was finally ready for screening.

It scooped a Golden Ticket Award at the Social festival in Los Angeles and won the audience award at the Raindance Film Festival in

London.

Asked if she would like to pursue acting full-time she says "acting is a dream job, but I love the job I do now.

"For the past year I have mainly been involved with theatre work but there are a

couple of more film projects which I may be involved with and of course I will wait and see if anything else arises following the release of *Zebra Crossing*," she says.

Zebra Crossing is now widely available to buy on DVD. ■



LONDON MAYOR SET TO DECIMATE LONDON TAXI TRADE

London Taxi branch secretary Stan Marut slams plans by London mayor Boris Johnson to impose 15 year age limit on vehicles

London mayor Boris Johnson has unveiled plans to impose an age limit on London black cabs that will mean no vehicle over fifteen years of age since first registration could be licensed as a hackney carriage.

This decision due to come into force next year will have a substantial impact on drivers' livelihoods and decimate the London taxi fleet.

Just a few years ago former London mayor Ken Livingstone introduced a requirement for all London taxis to meet the Euro 3 requirement for emissions controls.

The tariff was increased by just 0.20p per hiring as a way to pay back the drivers for their investment of about two thousand pounds to have the necessary systems fitted to reduce nitrous oxide and particulate emissions. The amount recovered did not in any way pay the overall costs for those drivers who were affected. Now the current Mayor has gone a stage further by not allowing a consideration of retro-fit of systems on older taxis to meet the requirement for stricter emissions controls, but instead wants them off the road.

The London Taxi branch has asked the union to fight this imposition on the taxi trade. It appears that the mayor and his cohorts are singling out taxi drivers for polluting London's streets. Yet there is no proof that it is taxis that are responsible for the number of

deaths that occur in London each year due to respiratory disease.

Since the imposition of licensing of private hire vehicles the number of cabs licensed has remained reasonably constant at about 22,000 or slightly more. Yet, there has been a prolific increase in the number of private hire vehicles competing for the limited work available due to recession, anything between 70,000 and 80,000.

Coupled with this is the illegal activity of private hire owners and operators which goes uncontrolled and unpoliced. It seems that the only people doing anything about it is the RMT London Taxi branch who, despite being vilified by other taxi organisations, has managed to keep the issues at the fore front and does not stand for any nonsense.

The issue of emissions is based on a consideration of air quality strategies that are incumbent on the mayor. RMT branch members believe that working and living in a clean air environment is important. But we question the way that the consultation has taken place.

Firstly, the London Taxi branch, which submitted a reply to the consultation, is concerned that there may be flaws in this process. Other groups representing taxi dealerships, fleet proprietors and the taxi manufacturers as well as rival trade organisations were invited to participate. This is an invite to those who make and sell



MAKING A STAND: RMT branch secretary Stan Marut and branch chair John Kennedy

taxis and are concerned with selling more taxis to replace old cabs and make more profits. Even the poor London cabbie is victim to the pressures of making profit for shareholders.

The mayor must take into account the social costs of these decisions and how in the first year alone of these measures that more than 3,500 vehicles will be de-licensed. This becomes an ongoing process in subsequent years. The consultation process should have at least included submissions from all those who would be affected by these measures. This patently did not happen. Once again it is those with vested interests who hold the sway over the rank and file.

The branch would like to see a hold placed on any implementation of these proposals until a full process of negotiation and compensation

measures are agreed.

Many drivers would no longer be able to meet the costs of financing new taxis which cost about £35,000. This will also mean that many older drivers who are over retirement age and have only the state pension to live on would be reduced to possible penury.

The RMT London taxi branch are the only organisation to oppose the 15-year policy until equitable measures are negotiated to ease the elimination of older taxis whilst keeping a viable taxi system in the capital and men in work. Boris has a fight on his hands and we are prepared to organise to defeat him by any legal means. He is quite happy to spend millions on the Barclays' bike scheme but is offering nothing to the Taxi trade by way of compensation for these drastic and unfair measures. ■

BUILDING THE UNION

Alan Pottage of the union's organising unit explains RMT's organising strategy, recently described by Professor John Kelly as 'an example for other unions to follow'



RMT has just held the first ever five day training course on organising at the union's education centre in Doncaster, purchased as a result of over 30,000 new members joining RMT in recent years.

Eleven activists attended to learn more about our union's successful organising strategy that has seen membership rise and the union's database of activists and reps double to 5,000.

It was particularly good to see activists from road, maritime and rail backgrounds attending the course, as it reflects RMT's priority of treating all members equally.

The course emphasised the need to stick to the union's organising strategy in order to strengthen organisation, protect more workers and achieve more for members.

The course looked at the need to have branch plans in place, including essential dates for organising activities.

It also looked at how branches should map their area of responsibility.

One example identified 14 locations that will be visited every month, and the branch concerned has set two days every month until the end of 2011.

Each location has also been mapped to show the density of existing membership and the

number of non-members.

Branch plans should be simple and effective. They don't need to be complicated academic exercises that look great but in themselves achieve nothing.

And that was the key conclusion: keep it simple, keep it regular and keep on organising at full volume.

Preparation is vital in all our organising endeavours.

We need to prepare what we say and we need to prepare recruitment materials.

Notice-boards need to be updated and colourful.

We need to plan in advance and involve all reps and activists.

The activists on the course appreciated the role-play exercises that were set to show the difficulties encountered when out organising.

They also developed presentations aimed at groups of workers, such as induction classes. One group was so inspired that they went down to Doncaster railway station and started organising the taxi drivers – and Trevor Howard from Leeds Goods and Cartage branch reported a positive response with 60 potential new members.

You can't get a better indicator of the success of our course than that.

But organising isn't easy.

Sometimes we get the theory right but don't implement it.

For example, in 1997 the union created lead recruiters in all RMT regions. These activists were to be the union's 'best recruiters' and were to provide a much-needed focus on organising.

So lead recruiters, including myself in Scotland, were elected and the union held an impressive launch at Unity House.

But despite the feeling that at long last an important step forward had been made, there was no long-term sustainable plan and the lead recruiters were soon left to their own devices.

Fourteen years on it was felt important to rejuvenate this important role – but this time to ensure they get the support they deserve.

YOUNG MEMBERS

The course also looked at how the Young Members' section has been transformed into a vibrant and energetic outfit that is a tribute to the union.

Only nine delegates attended the annual young members' conference in 2008, but this year more than 50 registered for the recent conference in Plymouth. So a bit of energy and self organisation can work wonders.

The course also looked at our

history – to 1919, just after the First World War.

Conditions were extremely hard, yet over 550,000 members were organised into the forerunner of RMT.

This was achieved while dealing with hostile private employers without the benefits of recognition, email, mobile phones, direct debits or paybill deductions.

It was achieved by hard graft, with branches and officials visiting workplaces day in, day out. Today's strategy is based around learning from these real life experiences, and it is important to put our difficulties into perspective: if our forebears could do it in 1919 then we can do it in 2011.

Examples of union organisers facing the most severe consequences were also discussed which again gave us an important perspective.

The activists felt the course, put together by the Organising Unit's Donald Graham, was a huge success, and we look forward to helping organise many more activists in the years to come. ■

Recent publications Organising Strategy and Recruitment Guide are free to members and explain the RMT organising strategy in depth. They can be ordered by email: org.unit@rmt.org.uk or freephone 0800 376 3706.

ORGANISING CARLISLE CLEANING STAFF

RMT launches campaign to recruit Carlisle Cleaning and Support Services workers into the union

RMT launched a campaign to organise workers employed by Carlisle Cleaning and Support Services in Manchester last month.

The launch coincided with a Vulnerable Workers pilot education course being held in the city.

Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski said that the start of the organising campaign was a great success with over fifty workers joining the union.

"I spoke to many Carlisle workers and

heard their concerns.

"There is no doubt we have a lot to do but getting organised is a vital start

"We now need to ensure regular activity is sustained throughout all the different contracts.

Our regional organisers and branches need to set up proper plans to ensure that our campaign is a success," he said.

Please contact your regional office for more details of the campaign in your area. ■



ORGANISE: Assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski talks to staff

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



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

LAND OF LIBERTY, PEACE AND PLENTY

Long Lane, Heronsgate, Herts

This pub is named after a Chartist land experiment on an adjoining settlement in the 1840s.

The settlement was called O'Connorville, after its founder Feargus O'Connor (1794-1855), a fiery orator who was jailed several times for his campaign to grant votes to working class people. He was charged with sedition, tumult, riot, and encouraging labour stoppages.

This was in the days when only people with land or property had the vote.

O'Connor saw the unequal distribution of land as the main cause of economic injustice.

But his plan to give land to a select few workers through a lottery was opposed not only by the government, which later ruled it illegal and suppressed it, but also by some fellow Chartists who saw it as a diversion from the main struggle.

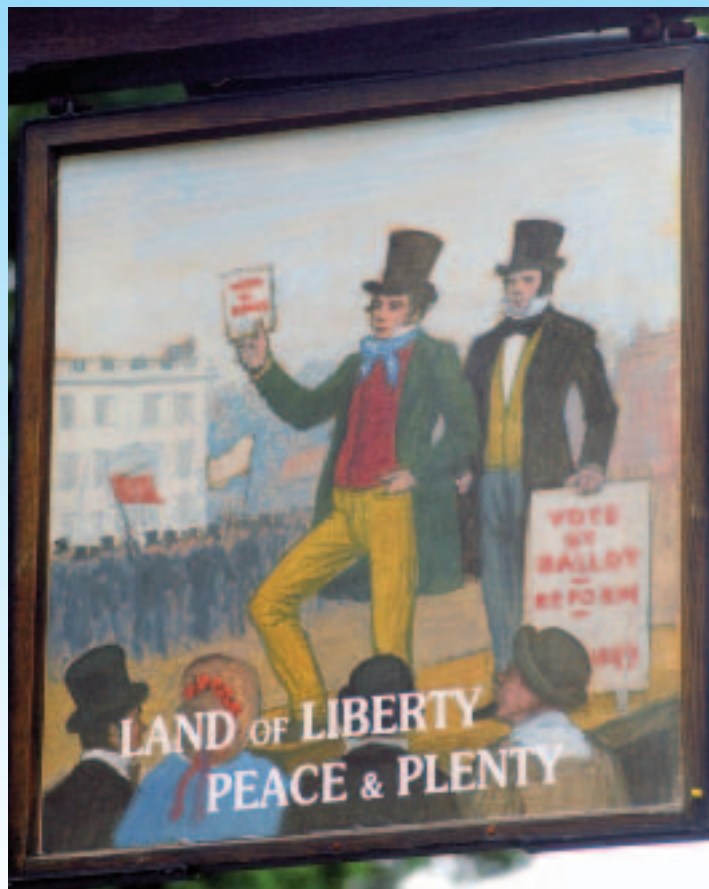
The aim was to provide smallholdings to a lucky few working men as an alternative to factory employment. O'Connor felt he had the farming experience necessary to make the project a success, as he had published a book called

"A Practical Work on the Management of Small Farms" in 1843.

So he went ahead with it in 1845 through and advert in the Chartist journal, the Northern Star (a journal he had founded with a circulation of 40,000), for shares in the National Land Company for a few pennies a week. These entitled the holders to be included in the lottery for plots of land.

Enough money flooded in to buy five settlements around the country - the first being 103 acres near this pub which was divided into 35 smallholdings of four acres each with a cottage. A school was also built, and a cricket match organised between the bricklayers and the carpenters on the village common.

The settlers took over their land on May Day, 1847, when O'Connor warned them: "There is a beer shop adjoining your land. Avoid it, I beseech you, as a pestilence, for if any enemy can be the means of ousting you from the lovely spot on which it was my pride to locate you, it will be man's greatest, most vicious and inviting enemy, drunkenness."



The beer shop became this pub that now honours the Chartist colony (and is recommended by CAMRA).

By Christmas 1848 "Chartist pork" reared on the smallholdings proved very popular in London shops.

The reactionary government of the day resented the initial success of the settlement and passed an Act to make it illegal and force its closure, forcing the sale of the land between 1851 and 1858.

One of the Chartist cottages has now been restored by the National Trust at one of the other settlements. This is Rosedene Cottage in Victoria Road, Dodford, near Bromsgrove, Birmingham, which originally grew strawberries, pears and plums, and reared pigs. It is the last of the original 40 cottages on this site and can be visited by the public.

The memory of O'Connor lives on through a statue of him in the Arboretum (known as the

People's Park) in Nottingham, for which he was elected as a Chartist MP in 1847. It is near the corner of Peel Street and Addison Street. A plaque marking the 150th anniversary of O'Connorville can be seen at the Memorial Hall in Chorleywood, near Heronsgate.

On O'Connor's release in 1841, after 18 months in jail for so called seditious libel, there were huge celebrations and the poet Thomas Cooper wrote about him:

"The lion of freedom comes from his den,

We'll rally around him again and again."

An O'Connor Liberation Medal was struck with a portrait of him and the words "Universal Suffrage and No Surrender."

His funeral was attended by 50,000 people. ■

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



letters

THANKS FROM EXETER

Dear editor,

I had an accident at Exeter Central Station in October 2006 and my right leg was broken in two places.

I eventually returned to work but due to ongoing problems my employment was terminated on the grounds of ill health. A satisfactory settlement has now been reached regarding my claim for personal injury compensation.

I would like to express my gratitude to Exeter Rail branch secretary Ken Battishill for his interest and concern at the time of the accident and up to the present.

I would also like to thank Malcolm Cherry of Thompsons solicitors for his patience and professionalism in obtaining such a good result. My experience demonstrates the value of RMT membership and the support members receive.

Yours fraternally
Merv Sergeant

THANKS FROM BRIGHTON

Dear editor,

I feel you should be made aware of the fantastic help, service and support I have received of my RMT rep Martin Staker based in Brighton station.

I have known Martin for over 10 years as a fellow worker and I have always had a good working relationship with him. Just recently I experienced some problems at work and I needed some advice and guidance.

I spoke to Martin about the matter and he immediately agreed to help and support me. He accompanied me to a meeting with management and was instrumental in supporting me and reprimanding a manager over how the meeting was conducted.

He has been a source of great comfort to me, taking his own time to chase up various people on my behalf to deal with my problem.

Many people are quick to criticise and complain in this world today but not as quick to praise and thank. I feel Martin deserves great praise and thanks and he is a credit to the union and an example to be followed by others.

Yours sincerely
Patricia Ladner

AYE FROM AYR

RMT executive committee member Gerry McGann presents Brian Hart with his 40 year service badge at Ayr railway club. Brian started as a freight guard at Falkland in

1970 and became a conductor based at Ayr station in 1972. Gerry said that Brian had always been loyal to the union and his workmates.



40 YEAR BADGE



RMT Council of Executives member Tony Lloyd presented a 40 year medallion and badge to seafarer Tony Hutchinson for his services to the union. Tony was a member of the National Union of Seamen and before it merged with

RMT. He works hard as a Bosun for James Fishers and Sons of Barrow in Furness and is a very active member of the union. Manchester shipping branch would like to thank him for all his hard work.

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.

Right to reply

SAYING 'NO' TO EU PRIVATISATION IS NOT XENOPHOBIC

Tony Byrne's mischievous letter in last month's RMT News ('Don't single out Deutsche Bahn', Feb' issue) tries to misrepresent me as an "anti-German" xenophobe.

I have spent a lot of time and energy over many years building links and friendships with trade unionists and campaigners against rail privatisation in Germany.

In 2007 I was invited to address an anti-rail privatisation seminar at Saarbrücken University and in 2008 organised an RMT delegation to a Conference against rail privatisation in Cologne.

I co-published a bi-lingual pamphlet in German and English outlining the dangers of EU rail 'liberalisation' directives - available from Unity House - and have written numerous articles on the danger of rail privatisation for German socialist newspapers, which in 2008 led Hugh Mortimer, the Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Berlin to write to a German newspaper challenging my "assertions about the alleged detrimental effect of privatization on the safety of Britain's railways."

These are not the activities of a xenophobic anti-German.

I have also consistently supported German anti-privatisation campaigns opposing the expansionist ambitions of Deutsche Bahn, which damage the interests of railworkers across Europe. In 2008 I took part in negotiations with DB in Berlin to try to restore recognition rights for RMT reps following DB's acquisition of EWS Rail Ltd. Sadly, as we know DB has maintained EWS' hostile attitude to RMT reps.

Tony bases his allegation of racism against me on a headline, which

he doesn't like and on false claims that I have not dealt with the activities of French state railways SNCF. Yet I have been in constant contact with French trade unionists over SNCF's acquisition activities (as well as those of Dutch, Spanish and British companies) for many years and have written and translated copiously on EU deregulation of the French rail network. The significance of DB and the German economy as even Tony must be aware, is that it is the most powerful political and economic actor in Europe and is reshaping other economies including our own, in its own interests using the rules of the European single market.

In the same issue of RMT News Swedish journalist Ingmar Goransson outlines how EU 'liberalisation' and competition rules have devastated Sweden's rail network and its famous 'social model'. Is Ingmar guilty of being an anti-Swedish Swede?

While I can dismiss ill-informed insults, Tony's letter is very unhelpful to RMT members currently suffering as a result of attacks from DB at Arriva Trains Wales and DB Schenker. DB has even shut down Wrexham and Shropshire Railway as part of its asset-stripping programme. The company is also undermining the democracy of our union by refusing to release RMT member, Paul Walker who has been elected to serve on the union's Council of Executives.

I will continue to defend RMT members under attack and expose the rapacious activities of monopoly finance capital regardless of its origin. Claiming that it is xenophobic to do so is not only a dangerous diversion it actively assists the class enemy.

Alex Gordon, RMT president

£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 68. Set by Elk

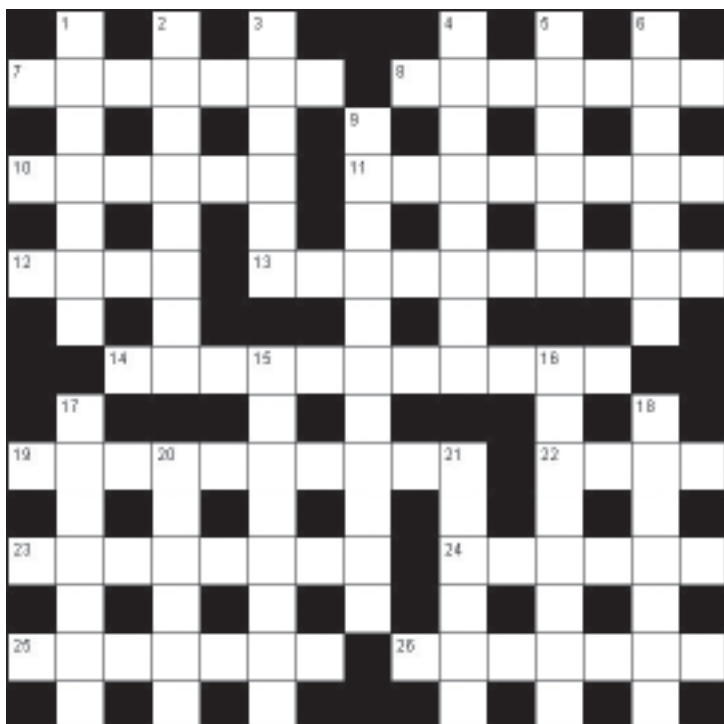
No. 67 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 66 is P Dickinson Mansfield, Notts.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by April 4 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- 7, 8 Systems of deferred wages paid after retirement - see 9 and 20 (7)
- 10 They have half the legs that 3s have! (6)
- 11 Something that causes discomfort or annoyance (8)
- 12 Something owed (4)
- 13 Office consumables (10)
- 14 Kill to order or for political motive (11)
- 19 Glasses (10)
- 22 Summit, or rush hour (4)
- 23 Story teller in film, play etc (8)
- 24 Clever collie of the silver screen (6)
- 25 Originally Gabriel, Rutherford, Banks, Philips and Stewart (7)
- 26 See 20

DOWN

- 1 Unit of sound measurement (7)
- 2 Nasty building material (8)
- 3 Equine animals (6)
- 4 Arachnid with a segmented abdomen and a nasty sting in its tail (8)
- 5 Isaac - 17th century mathematician and physicist (6)
- 6 Clergyman's home (7)
- 9 The sort of 7, 8 that Hutton wants to scrap (5,6)
- 15 Slaughter house (8)
- 16 Stitched picture, wall-hanging (8)
- 17 Clothing (7)
- 18 ABs (7)
- 20, 26, 7, 8 What Hutton wants to replace 9, 7, 8 with (6)
- 21 Moisture produced in the mouth (6)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be 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.



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline
(Now with two operators)

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.

