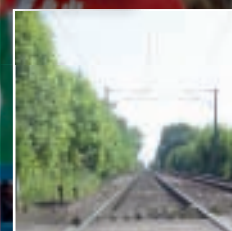


RMTnews

Essential reading for today's transport worker

LATEST PAY DEALS
East Coast 6% • Eurostar 5.8%
Network Rail offered 5.2%

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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

2 Your Employment.

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

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Male ☐ Female ☐

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Direct Debit (you must complete form below) ☐ Paybill Deduction (complete separate form) ☐ Your Pay Number
I confirm my paybill mandate has been sent to my pay office. ☐
Phone Freephone 0800 376 3706 to confirm your company offers paybill facility.

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Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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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.
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- 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.



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL



VOTE NO TO AV

Thousands of RMT members joined around half a million people to march in London last month against this dreadful government's attacks on working people and our public services.

This government of millionaire public-schoolboys is attacking workers and cutting services out of ideology not necessity and this monster demonstration must be only the beginning of turning the tide on their right-wing anti-working class agenda.

Make no mistake, last month's class war budget has its roots deep in the playing fields of Eton and is designed to shift the balance even further towards big-business and the wealthy elite who finance the Conservative Party and their Lib Dem lackies.

On May 5 there will be local elections that should be used to kick out Tories and Lib Dems that care more about the bankers than working people and their families. It is also a chance to vote No in the referendum on replacing the first-past-the-post voting system with the Alternative Vote method. This AV referendum which no-one asked for is the price the Lib Dems extracted for being part of this horrendous government. Yet AV is not proportional representation. It is a system designed to keep unpopular coalitions and the Lib Dems in power.

The Lib Dems promised us a referendum on membership of the European Union during the election.

They have now reneged on that promise and they are now forcing a referendum on us about a voting system they directly benefit from. With such rotten politics, this mob doesn't deserve local council seats.

Nevertheless we must never forget that economic crisis and political turmoil is the perfect breeding ground for the far right and fascist groups. So make sure you vote on May 5.

The cuts drive is also being felt in the workplace from attempts to slash ticket

offices and jobs on London Underground and London Midland to plans to privatise Scottish lifeline ferry services.

The fight to defend bus services has also intensified following RMT's Parliamentary bus seminar and the publication of the RMT report *Buses Matter*. An open letter has been sent to the Prime Minister signed by numerous organisations fighting to protect bus services.

Ultimately, Bus cuts are a false economy, damaging the economy and adding to unemployment. Surveys have shown that a third of jobseekers say poor transport options are the biggest barrier to finding work. Redundancies in the bus industry, and the associated negative social and economic impacts, will be felt as a result of bus cuts.

This union will fight for every job and for decent public services where ever possible in the workplace, in parliament and on the streets.

This determination to defend members' interests has paid off for Eurostar members as the union has secured a 5.8 per cent companywide pay award from May 1.

Network Rail operations staff have been offered 5.2 per cent and travel facilities up to 75 per cent. RMT is committed to supporting workers of all grades to attain decent pay deals and dignity at work.

Finally RMT has sent sincere condolences to Japanese unions following the disastrous earthquake and tsunami which has killed thousands and sparked a nuclear catastrophe.

Japanese workers face a huge task in rebuilding their country but it is only the working class that can carry it out.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

RMT DEMANDS SAFETY REVIEW AFTER TUBE FLOODING

Tube seconds away from disaster due to poor communication, lack of training and absence of proper command and control

RMT demanded an urgent review of safety procedures on London Underground after flooding of Charing Cross station by water from the Trafalgar Square fountains revealed that the incident almost ended in disaster.

On the morning of March 24, a pipe feeding the Trafalgar Square fountains was severed by contractors with the result that 375,000 litres of water flooded in to Charing Cross tube station.

LU activated their "Silver Control" procedure, overseen by Chief Operating Officer Howard Collins, and shut down services and began pumping out the water.

Throughout the incident log it was clear that there was pressure to get the service back on as soon as possible.

At 16.38 a decision was taken to turn the current back on, that request was just about to be actioned when it was realized that there were still staff on the track at Embankment. That lack of

"command and control", admitted to in the report's findings, could have led to a disaster.

In the "Silver Control" conclusions, LU admit that:

- Charing Cross should have "remained closed to all traffic"
- There should have been one single point of contact to "monitor track access"
- A member of staff should have been logging "staff/contractor movements"
- "All involved" should have been using "correct lines of communication"
- Management did not have appropriate Formal Incident Management training

RMT general secretary Bob Crow demanded urgent assurances that the kind of shambolic management that happened at Charing Cross, guided right from the very top, should never be allowed to happen again.

"We were just seconds away from a potential tragedy and the

LU internal report says clearly that those failures were down to poor communication, lack of appropriate training and an absence of proper command and control.

"A year away from the Olympics Londoners will be rightly shocked at these findings," he said.

The union pointed out that the combined pressure to keep services moving at all costs and the London mayor's planned £7.6 billion cuts would make matters even worse.

"Rather than their usual barrage of misinformation we want Boris Johnson and his officials to start taking this crisis management of the tube seriously before we have a disaster on our hands.

"We are already in the process of balloting for action on the Victoria Line over major safety concerns and we will have no hesitation in taking similar action to protect safety on the tube network," Bob said. ■

ENTIRE MITIE CONTRACT BALLOTTED FOR ACTION

RMT train cleaning crews employed by the Mitie company and servicing First Great Western trains at all depots are to be balloted in the long-running dispute over pensions, payment of wages and a failure to communicate.

Cardiff and Swansea train cleaners' have already taken three days of 24 hour strike action in the fight for dignity at work.

Mitie recently announced a massive 13 per cent jump in profits and the company brands itself as an "outsourcing specialist" mopping up facilities contracts in both the private and public sectors.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the bosses were forever demanding that low paid workers should bend the knee in the name of profit.

"But in Wales we have a group of cleaning staff who are standing up to the bullies and they deserve the full support of the whole trade union movement.

"The Mitie cleaners are shining a spotlight on just how these facilities companies operate and how they treat their low paid staff," he said.

Mitie has only offered 1.25 per cent pay rise for 2010 and no more than one per cent from April 2011.

The company is also dragging its feet over sorting out wage discrepancies and pensions and has even taken to blaming the previous contractor (ISS) for not passing adequate information to them during the TUPE process.

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

NO TO LONDON MIDLAND CUTS

After receiving more than 18,000 letters, postcards and petitions from passengers opposing London Midland plans to cut its ticket office opening hours at 87 stations, Passenger Focus has lodged a formal objection.

The independent passenger watchdog received petitions with more than 14,500 signatures, including 3, 271 pre-paid RMT postcards from across the region and almost 100 letters from passengers in Winsford and Hartford alone.

Parliamentarians, rail user groups, unions and local government also contacted Passenger Focus opposing the closures.

London Midland cuts plan would axe 122 full time jobs, slash the opening hours at around 80 out of 90 ticket offices and close nine ticket offices in their entirety.

Regional transport organisation Centro has already opposed the planned cuts and RMT is running a high profile political and public campaign aimed at stopping the proposals in their tracks.

Passenger Focus chief executive Anthony Smith feared the plans would lead to

passengers paying more for their tickets than they should.

"Ticket vending machines are important, but while they don't offer all ticket types or provide advice to ensure passengers get the cheapest fares, there will be a need for station staff.

"Finally, passengers want staff on hand for help on the station and for security reasons. For all these reasons we're calling on London Midland to address the concerns passengers

raised," he said.

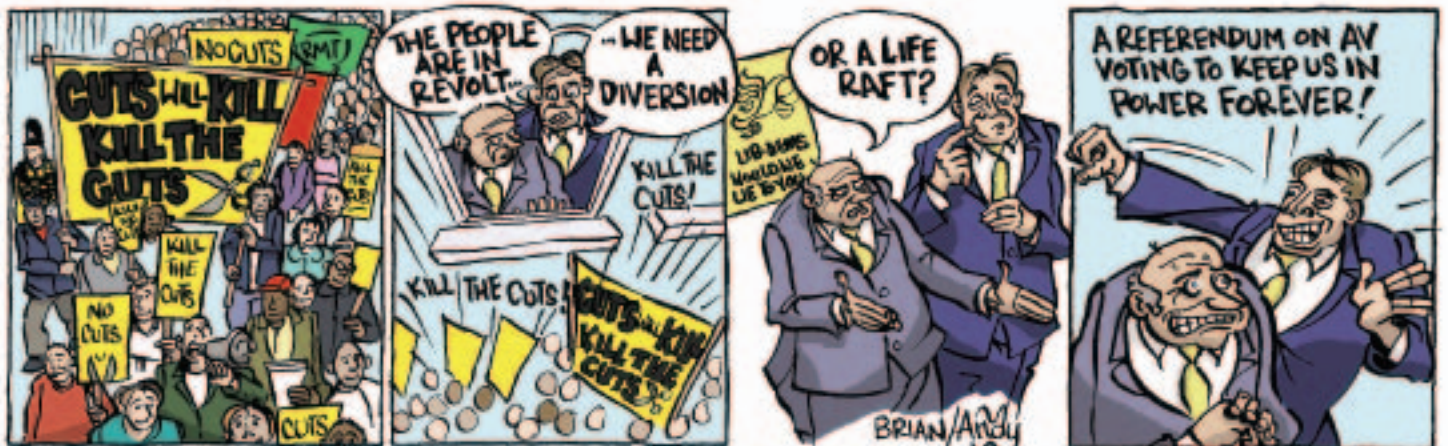
RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed the objections and said that Passenger Focus had clearly acted in the passengers' interest.

"It would be a travesty if the government were now to allow these profit-driven cuts plans to go ahead.

"RMT congratulates all those who responded to the formal consultation calling for the cuts package to be resisted.

"Their voices should be heard loud and clear and it would make a mockery of the consultation if the plans are not now scrapped," he said.

RMT is formally calling on the Department for Transport to throw out the proposals and to consider public ownership to stop private operators from milking the service for every penny of profit they can get out of it.



DEFEND ISLE OF MAN STEAM PACKET SERVICES

Unions provide postcards for islanders to send to Isle of Man government to demand future service is safeguarded

Maritime unions including RMT are providing every household on the Isle of Man with a freepost postcard to send to the island's chief minister to demand that the 180 year old Isle of Man Steam Packet services are defended.

The recent entry into service of Mezeron vessels has placed in jeopardy the future employment of Isle of Man Steam Packet workers.

Mezeron, which operates on the backs of Eastern European workers paid below the minimum wage, have now scaled back their service but continues to operate services from Glasson Dock and Belfast.

The threat of the introduction of a roll on roll off service by another operator utilising cheap labour remains and it is essential that IOM Steam Packet workers are provided with basic employment safeguards.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd told a meeting on the island that the trade unions wished to see the application of TUPE guidelines for seafarers engaged on Isle of Man shipping operations.

"We must not allow the unfair practices and social dumping of Mezeron or another



rogue shipping company threaten to drive out the Isle of Man Steam Packet.

"The skilled jobs of seafarers and other workers in the Isle of Man cannot be placed in jeopardy through the exploitation of labour.

"People in the Isle of Man cannot afford to live on pay rates below the National Minimum Wage.

"We stand ready to support the campaign for employment safeguards for all and we thank you for your support," he said. ■

HANDS OFF CALMAC ROUTES

Maritime unions RMT and Nautilus International have challenged the Scottish government to confirm that it does not intend to privatise Clyde and Hebrides ferry routes following a verbal assurance given at a public meeting in Dunoon by Scottish cabinet member Michael Russell.

Mr Russell accused the unions of misrepresenting the Scottish government's position, and when confronted with the wording of the government's consultation questionnaire – which specifically asks if routes should be market-tested – repeated that the government had no intention of privatising any CalMac routes.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd, who

spoke at the Dunoon meeting on April 12, said that the Scottish government should confirm what Mr Russell had told the meeting.

Further meetings are taking place in May with RMT general secretary Bob Crow and Steve Todd, one in Uists on Wednesday May 18 and one in Stornoway on Thursday May 19.

The meetings are the latest events in the campaign to stave off the threat from the Scottish Government Ferries Review which is proposing to tender individual routes currently run by the publicly owned Caledonian Macbrayne.

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 services face the added threat of privatisation driven by the European Union.

"The Scottish government and their civil servants cannot be trusted to protect Cal Mac ferry services on the Clyde and Hebrides network when, despite their public pledges, they are conspiring to do just the opposite in private," Bob Crow said. ■

JARVIS ONE YEAR ON: ANNIVERSARY OF A NATIONAL SCANDAL



Former Jarvis workers held a public meeting in York last month to mark the first anniversary of the collapse of the rail contractor Jarvis - a collapse that has ripped apart the lives of 1,200 skilled rail workers and their families.

When Jarvis went bankrupt Network Rail refused a rescue plan and the workers' pensions were slashed.

A majority of Jarvis workers are still on the dole, while Network Rail has re-let former Jarvis contracts to agency labour paying low wages.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the skills of these workers were vital in ensuring the highest standards of rail safety and their loss would inhibit future major infrastructure projects such as High Speed 2.

"These people deserve better than the appalling treatment they have suffered for the past year.

"RMT is pursuing legal claims and the union's parliamentary group is pushing to safeguard skills in danger of being lost," he said.

RMT Parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell MP secured an adjournment debate and told minister Norman Baker MP that the treatment of Jarvis workers was a national scandal.

He had earlier met with a delegation of former Jarvis workers, together with RMT group member Katy Clark MP and other MPs.

He used the powerful testimonies to graphically illustrate the human tragedy of the Jarvis collapse.

"These are tales of broken

marriages and of men separated from their families because of the strain of the loss of their jobs and no income, of losing homes and the family car," he said.

He told the minister that other contractors had taken advantage of sacked engineers desperate to find work, enforcing low wages, poor terms and conditions, long hours, zero hours working and long driving times.

He was told by one worker there was "a culture of keeping quiet about safety for fear of not being picked for contracts are happening right now, I hope my fears about accidents and death on a railway prove to be untrue".

John urged the minister to convene an urgent industry-wide jobs seminar to examine

rail engineering employment needs now and the importance of safeguarding and enhancing skills for the future.

RMT members watched from the gallery as the minister promised to provide a full written response to these demands.

RMT's Parliamentary group also met with Transport Minister Theresa Villiers and Network Rail has agreed to hold a round-table discussion on Jarvis with MPs and RMT.

A new Early Day Motion number 1678 has been tabled demanding that all former Jarvis employees are transferred to new contractors with former terms and conditions respected, make sure your MP has signed up.



THALES JOB CUTS 'HAMMER BLOW TO RAIL INDUSTRY'

Rail contractor Thales announced plans to sack 80 staff by the end of June adding to hundreds of jobs already slashed from the tracks - making a mockery of government claims to be investing in rail infrastructure.

RMT slammed the job cuts that the company blames on a "number of business challenges" and a cut back in orders.

The company has identified 220 members of staff who are at risk across the country

taking in depots at Waterloo, Cheadle, Crawley, York, Ashford, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was the latest hammer blow to the UK rail industry.

"These are skilled workers who face the prospect of being dumped on the dole because of the shambolic and disjointed management of the UK's rail infrastructure.

"RMT will be doing everything that we can to protect our members interests but t many more rail workers jobs remain under threat as budget cuts start to bite.

"These cuts will mean that essential works required to deliver a safe railway are shelved or scrapped with potentially dire consequences for the travelling public," he said.



DEFENDING RAIL RENEWALS

Every member will receive a postcard with this magazine to send to their MP in support of Early Day Motion 1383 calling for rail renewals to be brought back in-house

The government is undertaking a review of the railways and the Secretary of State for Transport will probably introduce a rail white paper this year.

RMT parliamentary group member Kelvin Hopkins MP has tabled an Early Day Motion 1383 to contribute to that debate.

The motion focuses on an area of railway work that is absolutely vital to the safe and efficient railways but receive scant public attention, that of rail renewals which includes installing overhead lines and signals, and laying track.

The government says it is undertaking the review because railway costs are too high but one of the main causes of high costs is because railway renewal work is carried out

by a complex web of private contractors and sub contractors who are all trying to make a profit. As well as being expensive and inefficient, this system has led to a delay in essential rail works and the loss of thousands of skilled rail jobs.

Substantial savings could be achieved if renewals were carried out in-house by one organisation, as was the case before rail privatisation.

Independent research has demonstrated that substantial savings could be achieved if such renewals were carried out in-house. Please send off your postcard to ask your MP to sign EDM 1383 which urges the government to assess the benefits of this proposal.



RMT APPOINTS NETWORK RAIL SAFETY REPS

Network Rail has agreed a new health and safety procedure which includes seconding six RMT health and safety reps to improve the safety culture within the company.

The newly-appointed lead union safety reps (LUSRs) are Steve Wallace based in the union's Glasgow office, Adrian Yates and Alan Clews based in the south east, Sean McGowan based in the Doncaster office, Adrian Fricker based in Birmingham office and Barry West based in the Bristol office.

The group met with officers and

executive committee members to conduct a detailed examination of the objectives of the new committee which included the need to identify and recruit health and safety reps to fill any vacancies up to the agreed number.

The new procedure allows health and safety reps to attend TUC Stage I and II training and other training "as may be agreed from time to time". The group also needs to establish a series of regular meetings with senior managers within Network Rail to promote health and safety.

During their period of six-month

secondment the reps will continue with their current RMT roles whether as a local health and safety rep or area council rep.

As well as having an RMT base office the group will liaise with regional organisers and attend as many branch and area council meetings as possible.

Newly-appointed rep for Scotland Steve Wallace welcomed the creation of the new group and hoped it would be the start of a more permanent arrangement overseeing health and safety within the company.



EARLY DAY MOTION 1383

That this House welcomes the railway renewal work undertaken by rail workers including installing overhead lines, signals and laying track which is vital to a safe and efficient railway; notes renewals are undertaken for Network Rail by numerous contractors and subcontractors and is deeply concerned Network Rail is managing these contracts by prioritising short-term budgetary objectives over the needs of the railway infrastructure; believes this feast and famine approach has resulted in essential renewals being delayed, such as work that could be undertaken by Babcock Rail in the North East, which will lead to a poorer service and increased costs; is alarmed that this policy has already directly resulted in the loss of thousands of skilled rail jobs and railway knowledge, as demonstrated by Jarvis being forced into administration, and is being used as a deliberate strategy to worsen conditions of employment and to extend agency and sub-contracted labour; further notes research undertaken by the RMT union and academics demonstrating that the complex network of contractors and sub-contractors means there are tens of thousands of rail workers employed by a multitude of companies undertaking renewals and that substantial savings could be achieved if renewals were instead carried out in-house as was the case before railway privatisation; and urges Network Rail and the Government to assess urgently the benefits of bringing renewals in-house under the control of Network Rail and to convene an industry-wide summit, including trade unions, to develop a co-ordinated strategy for railway infrastructure and skills retention. ■

Kelvin Hopkins
Labour MP for Luton North

Parliamentary column

VOTE NO TO AV ON 5 MAY

It is welcome that RMT has joined a number of major other unions in recommending their members vote NO to changing the system by which we vote for our MPs in the referendum on May 5.

As a strong supporter of trade unions in Parliament I can say without hesitation that it is vitally important that as many trade unionists as possible vote NO.

This is because the new system, known as the Alternative Vote (AV), breaks the principle of one person one choice, because supporters of fringe parties, such as the BNP end up having their vote counted several times while supporters of mainstream parties only have their vote counted once. Under AV the candidate that comes in second or even third place can end up winning!

I believe that this is fundamentally undemocratic because it means the voting system rather than the voter's ends up determining who is the best candidate.

It is perhaps not surprising then that only three countries use the complicated system - Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea - and Australia has compulsory voting to make sure people turn up.

As well as the fact that AV is less democratic than our current system we should also not forget that when we vote on May 5th we are being asked to vote on a new system that is a direct result of the shoddy Tory Lib Dem deal to form a coalition government.

The price for the Lib Dems of agreeing to be part of a government which is launching an all out assault on the welfare state, privatising our health services and attacking trade

union and employment rights is the hope that they can win a referendum on AV.

And why are the Lib Dems so desperate for you to vote Yes on May 5? It is for the simple reason that they hope to be the main winners of the new system by winning many more seats through being everybody's second choice.

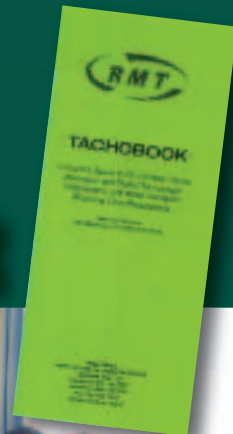
And that's the reality of AV, it's a politician's fix which will take even more power away from voters and allow the Liberal Democrats choose every government in the future. And we now know that their preferred partner in all future governments will be the Tories.

Coalition government can happen under our current system as well from time to time. But the introduction of AV will make Coalition government, with the Lib Dems in the driving seat, permanent outcome in future British elections. As the Labour campaign against AV has argued, the only vote that really counts under AV is Nick Clegg's. Where is the democracy in allowing the party that comes third to decide whether Labour go into government or not?

Our current tried and tested voting system delivers clear outcomes and everyone's vote is equal and it is therefore more democratic than AV. Our current system also gives Labour a fighting chance of getting the Tories out in the future. In contrast if AV comes in we could be saddled with this Tory led coalition for generations. Vote NO to AV on 5 May.

John Cryer is the Labour MP for Leyton and Wanstead

FIGHTING FOR DIGNITY IN THE ROAD FREIGHT SECTOR



RMT road-freight activists condemn Freightliner for “total disregard and lack of respect” for union members

Delegates to RMT's annual road freight conference, which gathered at South Milford in Yorkshire last month heard that union members were being given a rough ride by Freightliner.

Mick Williams, Leeds Goods and Cartage, told delegates that the situation at Freightliner was “really getting out of hand,” with bosses targeting RMT members. “Take note of this because it's going to spread like a disease,” he warned.

Maurice Hamilton, Leeds Goods and Cartage, said that 60 drivers had recently been employed at Freightliner on 12-month contracts. “Our chances of recruiting them are minimal,” he added.

Conference agreed that the motion should be sent for debate at the union's annual general meeting in Fort William this summer.

Delegate numbers at this year's conference swelled to more than double that of last year – 22 members from eight branches and one regional council – following a concerted drive by the union to improve attendance.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash hailed the meeting as “one of the best-attended road-freight conferences in many years”.

In his conference address

Mick told delegates that the road-freight industry was a “bellwether of the economy” as a whole.

“Your pay is down, your earnings are down. Why?”

“Because people are not willing to spend and they do not want the goods you carry.

“In difficult times confidence can drop. But if we pick the right issues we will be able to get workers into the union and organise.

“Where you have trade union organisation we are holding the line and preventing the worst excesses of the employer.

“Where we're best organised and ready to fight we get better results and better rates of pay”.

Mick accused the government of trying to curtail workers' rights, their access to healthcare, pensions and the right to strike.

He said that RMT activists should not restrict themselves to solely workplace issues but be aware of the broader political fight against the ConDem government. He cited the 500,000-strong national march against cuts in London on March 26 as the kind of mobilisation that was possible in defence of public services that ordinary people rely on.

Many delegates repeated their experience that the number of agency workers and others on

short-term contracts, on lower rates of pay, continues to grow in the industry. They warned that these workers have little incentive to join the union.

Mick Cash suggested that the union can “map out the situation around the county, raise it with the companies and take them on over it”.

Conference called on the union to negotiate with the employers for the full cost to replace drivers' expired digital tachograph card.

Bosses are suggesting to drivers that the cards – which last five years and cost up to £35 to replace – are the responsibility of the driver. “Companies are saying ‘they're your card, you pay for them’,” said Andrew Hill, Leeds Goods and Cartage.

Delegates also backed a motion from Ian Foster, Coventry No1, for the union to negotiate with DHL (Marks and Spencer contract). “The rate paid for overtime working must be increased to bring it in line with basic pay, without jeopardising the annual basic pay award,” said Ian.

Kevin Hughes of RMT lawyers Thompsons addressed conference, fielding questions on legal issues surrounding pensions, personal injury claims and holiday entitlement.

Kevin explained that health

and safety legislation was under attack – its ridicule by the likes of television presenter Jeremy Clarkson was part of a wider agenda to undermine the advances in this area won by the trade-union movement since the 1970s.

“Government cuts to Health and Safety Executive inspectors mean that the chances of an employer getting a visit from them is already just one in a thousand.

“It's going to be even less in future, therefore more responsibility will rest on the shoulders of the trade union health and safety reps,” he said.

Kevin hailed RMT's recent victory in the Court of Appeal over Serco Docklands where the judges overturned an earlier ruling which would have effectively banned the right to strike in Britain. Serco had originally successfully argued that minor irregularities in industrial action ballots were enough to render them void, even if a huge majority had clearly voted for action.

“It was a great victory for RMT and a great victory for Bob Crow sticking to his guns.

“The gamble paid off and a great victory was won not just for RMT but the trade union movement as a whole,” said Kevin. ■



BUS CUTS DAMAGE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Following the successful RMT Parliamentary Bus seminar and the publication of the RMT Report Buses Matter, an open letter has been sent to the Prime Minister signed by numerous organisations who all fighting to protect bus services. A full version can be found on the RMT website

To Prime Minister David Cameron,

We are writing to express serious concern that reductions in local authority support for bus services as a result of funding cuts will have severe negative knock-on impacts for people, communities, the economy and the environment.

Campaign for Better Transport has been tracking the cuts and estimates that 70 per cent of local authorities are already looking to buses as an area to make cuts, with some councils planning to lose all their supported bus services and 13 councils reducing support by more than £1 million.

These cuts, combined with the reduction in the fuel tax rebate for buses in 2012, could tip buses into a spiral of decline. Two thirds of public transport journeys are made by bus. Cuts in bus services will affect government objectives in a broad range of areas.

They will hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest. Poorer people are less likely to have a car. Young people need affordable bus services in order to give them a chance to take up opportunities in education and work, and to take the first steps to independence. One in five students has considered dropping out of further education because of financial cost and transport is the greatest cost of participation. Older and disabled people have benefited from free bus travel, enabling mobility and associated economic activity; however bus cuts could mean that concessionary pass holders end up with no buses to get on. Disabled people use buses more often than non-disabled people, and are less likely to have the choice to take a car.

Bus cuts are a false economy, damaging economic recovery and adding to unemployment, contrary to government commitments. Surveys have shown that a third

of jobseekers say poor transport options are the biggest barrier to finding work. Local businesses depend on customers getting to the shops and services on the bus. Redundancies in the bus industry, and the associated negative social and economic impacts, will also be felt as a result of bus cuts.

Bus cuts will result in more car journeys. Buses are an essential part of the strategy for reducing carbon as well as tackling congestion and social exclusion.

We are therefore asking you to ask government departments find ways to pool budgets at a national and local level to mitigate the worst impacts of cuts.

We also ask you to bring together local authority leaders and transport operators to identify ways for local authorities to support bus services through better contracting of services to more effectively deliver essential bus services.

Finally, we ask you to consider reviewing the proposed cut to the fuel tax rebate for buses (BSOG) in 2012. The proposed 20 per cent reduction will deal a severe blow to bus services and bus users.

*Campaign for Better Transport,
Action with Communities in Rural England, AgeUK,
British Youth Council, Bus Users UK,
Campaign to Protect Rural England, Campaign for Real Ale,
Community Transport Association UK, Guide Dogs for the
Blind Association, Greenpeace, Living Streets, National
Children's Bureau, National Federation of Women's
Institutes, National Pensioners Convention, Road Peace,
RMT, UK Youth Climate Coalition, UNISON, Sustrans,
National Council of Women of Great Britain Transport
Salaried Staffs' Association*

MPS BACK RMT ON OFFSHORE SAFETY



RMT Parliamentary Group convenor John McDonnell MP intervenes in Parliament for safety in the offshore energy industry

Following the Mexico Oil spill, the European Commission is consulting on safety in offshore drilling industry. RMT Parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell MP recently intervened on behalf of RMT members at the Parliamentary Committee scrutinising this consultation.

He attended the Parliamentary European committee and discussed the issue with Energy Minister Charles Hendy MP. John acknowledged the UK offshore industry has a different safety culture to that of the Gulf of Mexico in part due to the Offshore Installations (Safety Representatives and Safety Committees) Regulations 1989 introduced following the Piper Alpha disaster.

But John stressed that “if the government and we are to rely

on the argument that our existing regulations are sufficiently robust—which is as a result of the involvement of members of the work force and safety representatives—it is critical to review them regularly”.

John reminded the Minister and MPs of the recent recommendation of the Energy Select Committee which “expressed concern about the about bullying and harassment on rigs, particularly with regard to whistle blowing on safety issues”.

John said in this respect it was and that what was important for the government to address the recognition of the right of health and safety representatives and that “many who work in the industry point to the Norwegian model, which is based on more of a right to

representation.

“In fact, there is an election on every installation of a full-time safety representative to be involved in all safety decisions.

“Safety representatives are involved not only on the shop floor on the individual installations, but all the way up to the boards of the companies themselves,” he said.

John pressed home the point by stressing “our trade unions want the recognition that the Norwegian regime gives to the rights of safety representatives to be replicated in this country” and “doing so would enhance our health and safety regime”.

He concluded by saying he would “welcome the Minister meeting trade union representatives to discuss further some of the problems in our regime, in particular the issue of harassment and bullying raised

by the Select Committee, and to review other regimes.

“In that way, we can reassure ourselves, as well as the Commission, that we have a robust regime that will stand the test of time and is based on the full involvement of the work force in securing safety,” he said.

The Minister agreed to arrange a meeting to discuss these issues further as soon as possible.

The government has also announced the appointment of an independent panel to review the UK’s oil and gas offshore regulatory regime, chaired by Geoffrey Maitland, Professor of Energy Engineering at Imperial College. The union’s parliamentary group will be seeking an early meeting with the panel.





PARLIAMENTARY BATTLE OVER RAIL POWERS IN SCOTLAND

RMT group convenor in the Scottish Parliament Elaine Smith MSP established through questions to the Scottish government that under current legislation it has the power to plan, specify, let, manage and finance Scottish passenger services which begin and end in Scottish borders, which is the current Scotrail Franchise.

Elaine's questioning has established that the Scottish government has almost complete freedom over the provision of these passenger services but with one important exception.

According to further replies legislation also means that Scotrail services must be put out to tender and that Scottish government does not have the power to take passengers services back in house when the Scotrail franchises expires in 2014. It is clear that unless national legislation is changed, Scotland will have to rely on Scotrail services being run by the private sector.

Together with sister union TSSA and with the support of the RMT Parliamentary group at Westminster the union has embarked on a campaign to the change this legislation.

The union has argued that national infrastructure should remain owned by Network Rail as a national body. However it is wrong that the Scottish government should be compelled to tender rail passenger services that begin and end in Scotland.

The Scottish government is responsible for the provision of health and education services so it is appropriate that it should also decide whether to tender its rail passenger services.

The unions saw an opportunity to change the legislation by persuading MPs to put amendments to the Scotland Bill which deals with devolving powers to Scotland and is currently passing through the Westminster Parliament.

The opening shot in the campaign came from RMT regional organiser Ian Macintyre who, as part of a Scottish TUC delegation meeting Scottish Labour MPs, argued that Labour should back an amendment to the Scotland Bill that would mean in future the Scottish government would not have to franchise Scotrail passenger services.

The union then made representations to the Westminster Scottish Affairs Select Committee which was scrutinizing the Scotland Bill, which was then followed up by Labour backbencher Tommy Docherty MP, seconded by RMT group member Katy Clark MP, tabling an amendment.

During the debate on the amendment Tommy Docherty MP argued that "the new clause had a great deal of support for the measure from the trade unions in Scotland".

Official opposition spokesman Tom Greatix argued "the new clause deals with an issue that was probably neglected in the

transfer of powers to the Scottish Parliament in relation to rail, and it is appropriate and sensible that we use the opportunity of this Bill to resolve that.

"On that basis, we intend to support it and assume, given that it is a sensible proposal on a technical issue, that the Government will not have too much of a problem with it," he said.

However government spokesman David Mundel MP said that the government was opposing the legislation because they were committed to a network that "is publicly specified, and funded in the public interest" but is "provided by the private sector".

He went on to say the "government do not agree with that proposal because we believe that it would open the opportunity to fundamentally alter the national framework by allowing a renationalisation of the railway in Scotland".

Without government support the amendment fell by 293 votes to 172. However the campaign continues, the Scotland Bill still has a long way to go through Parliament during which time unions will be campaigning hard to win majority support for the amendment.

Watch this space to see how you can support the campaign and read more of the parliamentary debate by visiting www.rmt.org.uk



RMT WOMEN FIGHT TO DERAIL CONDEM CUTS

The need for solidarity against savage government cuts and to get more women active in the union were key messages from the biggest RMT women's conference for many years

RMT women will play their full role in the mushrooming movement to stop the government destroying jobs, pensions and public services, the union's women's conference resolved.

It was imperative that working women fight together to derail cuts that will hit the most vulnerable hardest, the Cheltenham forum agreed.

Analysis of the horrific catalogue of attacks by the millionaires' government revealed that women had been targeted to pay the price for nearly three-quarters of the cuts, said Jo Parry, TfL.

Two-thirds of the half-million public-sector jobs set to be axed were done by women, while single mothers stood to lose nearly 20 per cent of their income thanks to £18 billion of cuts to welfare and social security, said Jo.

Delegates, who held brainstorming sessions on

getting women into the union and active, agreed to support campaigns that highlighted the disproportionate impact of cuts on women.

The thievery of the ConDem government made gangland scams look small, said general secretary Bob Crow, "but we can beat them if we stand together and say enough is enough."

Urging delegates to take part in the March 26 TUC demonstration, Bob accused ministers of robbing pensioners of billions by changing its inflation measure from the Retail Prices Index to the lower Consumer Prices index.

The biggest attack on working people since the 1920s had been started by a government with an ideological

hatred of the welfare state, he said.

It was important to expose tax-dodging companies like Vodafone and Boots as well as oppose the cuts, said Ruth Strong, East Midlands Central.

The importance of lobbying MPs as well as taking the road of union and campaigning action was stressed by Maggie Thompson, Sheffield.

NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SEAFARERS

The global problem of violence against women seafarers was highlighted by delegates, who backed a campaign by the International Transport Workers' Federation to help women in the shipping industry to find help in

reporting and tackling it.

Jo Parry, TFL1, pointed to ITF research underlining serious scale of the problem and the enormous difficulty faced by women isolated on ships, even finding cases of women who had 'disappeared' after reporting violence.

MORE WOMEN'S REFUGES NEEDED

The need for more refuges for women and children facing domestic violence was highlighted by delegates.

With increasing reports of domestic violence it was a matter of grave concern that there were so few places of safety available, said Caroline



Parry, Gloucester,

Many refuges had already been closed as a result of cuts, although, thanks to their necessary anonymity, few people noticed their closure.

Supporting the call for the union to campaign for more resources and support, Cheryle Seedhouse, Three Bridges, pointed out the difficulties faced by many women in pursuing complaints against abusers.

Reporting on progress made on issues raised by 2010's conference, Executive Committee rep Janine Booth – the third woman ever to serve on the RMT executive – said that a survey on the impact of sexism in transport would be carried out through RMT News, and that a campaign would be based on its findings.

The scandalous way in which employers had stopped the pay of people unable to get to work in bad weather – and the disproportionate effect this had on women – had been raised with employers with a view to negotiating arrangements that would ensure that workers no longer had to pay for management inadequacies.

The union had also asked employers for assurances that the wearing of name badges would be voluntary. Most of those that had replied had indicated that staff could use pseudonyms, although there was still work needed to ensure that women were not put at risk through compulsory name-badges.

The need to increase the already growing number of

women becoming delegates and reps at all levels in the union was highlighted by president Alex Gordon, who pointed to key campaigns among low-paid and vulnerable workers.

There was still a long way to go and it was important to continue to build on the 11 per cent of RMT members who were women, said Alex.

END GENITAL MUTILATION

The campaign against the still shockingly common female genital mutilation (FGM) was highlighted by guest speaker Rita Buhanda, Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development.

Rita pointed out that as many as 66,000 women in Britain had been subjected to illegal mutilation, and that tens

of thousands of girls under 15 were at risk.

Information on the campaign against FGM is at www.forwarduk.org.uk

TOO MANY WOMEN IN PRISON

Many of the 12,000 women who end up in prison each year have been victims of domestic violence, and prison staff often agree that many simply should not be there, said Juliet Lyon, Prison Reform Trust.

Many have offended to feed their family, to feed a drug habit or as a result of selling sex, but are unlikely to have profited from their offences, and the £45,000 spent on keeping each woman in prison could be better spent on finding ways of keeping them out, Juliet said. ■

www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

WOMENS' TUC DEFENDS PUBLIC SERVICES



VOTING: RMT delegates Jan Jones, Deborah Rios Alonso, Ann Joss and Agnes Lingard

276 delegates from 31 unions attended this year's women's TUC meeting in Eastbourne which attacked the government's cuts agenda.

The report by Labour Lord Hutton attacking public sector pensions was published during conference and it became a topical subject.

Delegates agreed that women should not bear the brunt of austerity measures caused by the greed of reckless bankers.

A composite resolution, which included an RMT motion, noted that that women will lose out more than men as a result of the cuts.

Cuts in welfare spending will fall disproportionately on women. Lone parents and single pensioners, the majority of both groups are women, will suffer the greatest reduction in standards of living.

RMT delegate Deborah Rios Alonso moved a successful motion regarding women and safety on public transport.

She revealed that a Department for Transport report found that passengers were reassured when staff were visible on transport networks.

"Crime or anti-social behaviour on our public transport systems not only costs

women through higher fares but also impacts on their freedom to get out and about.

"Few lone women choose to travel home on late night services yet my union has been forced into dispute with London Underground about redundancies which will cut the number of staff at stations," she said.

RMT delegates spoke on various matters ranging from gender impact of the welfare reforms to breast screening awareness and the plight of Haiti's women since the earthquake over a year ago. ■



FIGHT FOR JOBS AND DEFEND OUR INDUSTRY SAY CLERICAL AND SUPERVISORY GRADES

A gathering of RMT clerical and salaried grades was in fighting mood in Bournemouth's spring sunshine

The need to fight to defend jobs, living standards, pensions and services was the mobilising message from a determined RMT supervisory and clerical grades' conference meeting in Bournemouth last month

Delegates drew the direct link between attacks on transport staffing and the ConDem government's onslaught against

all workers, public services and the fabric of the welfare state.

The conference promised a tooth-and-nail fight against further dangerous fragmentation of the industry through the threatened "vertical integration" of train-operating companies

Welcoming delegates to "the cradle of trade unionism", Dorset Rail branch secretary

Pete Brown said that, just as in the days of Tolpuddle, unions were once more under attack, but that RMT members would not "lie down and take it while the government screws up our children's future".

The private sector had made obscene profits out of Britain's subsidised transport industry, but now the government was

turning not on them but on the staff and working people in general, said conference president Dave Rudland.

A plea for unity among transport trade unionists was made by general secretary Bob Crow, who reminded delegates that the principle of a single industrial union was enshrined in RMT's constitution.

"When we are under massive attack it is clearer than ever that there is no need for several unions in the transport industry," said Bob, explaining that the union had sought formal merger talks with sister union TSSA.

The trade union movement was gearing itself up for the fight of its life, said RMT president Alex Gordon, noting that the March 26 demonstration would be among the biggest in decades.

RMT's contingent would be prominent among them, marching alongside colleagues in sister union TSSA – a practical demonstration of strength in unity.

There had been an attack on staffing levels across the train-operating companies, said assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski.

The attack on transport jobs was a part of the ConDems' general onslaught, and it was crucial for RMT activists to be bedded into anti-cuts committees as well as taking fighting industrially.

Organising unit manager Alan Pottage urged branches to put the union's organising strategy into practice, pointing out that it had yielded a 60 per cent increase in membership since being adopted in 2002

STOP CLERICAL CUTS

Delegates called for an industrial campaign to end the continued displacement of ticket-office staff by machines and to end the creeping closure of ticket-offices.

The coming Olympic games offered an opportunity for the union to get across the need for proper staffing levels and for a campaign of industrial action to achieve them, said Mike Sargent, Dover District General Grades.

The need for adequate station staffing was an issue that had the support of the travelling public, said Wally Levy, King's Cross 1.

"The majority of people want a face to look at, not a machine,

and every day members of the public still seek help from our members, who are the face of our industry."

"You can't make eye contact with a machine, and we mustn't lose sight of the human element," said Duncan Braithewaite, King's Cross 1, who pointed out that the number of ticket windows at King's Cross had been halved.

Eurostar had also replaced windows with concourse computers, but had created massive problems, because passengers, said Jenny Kissi Debra, European Passenger Services,

NO MORE FRAGMENTATION

Dangerous plans to impose 'vertigal integration' of Merseyrail with the infrastructure it runs trains on must be defeated because in reality it means more fragmentation, delegates agreed.

Allowing TOCs to sweat infrastructure assets would take the railways back to the days of Railtrack, but this time with even more fragmentation and the danger of another Potters Bar or Hatfield, said Billy Laing Central and North Mersey.

"We beat this off once, and now history is repeating itself and we have to beat it again," he said.

DEFEND PTR&R

Train-operating companies must honour promotion, transfer and redundancy rights, conference agreed, calling on the union to ensure that all employers were held to them.

Alongside the attack on jobs, employers like South West Trains were also attempting to displace long-standing PTR&R rights in order to deprive members of benefits they were entitled to, said Mike Campbell, Feltham.

END BULLYING AT NETWORK RAIL

A PUSH to organise among clerical and supervisory grades in Network Rail in order to take on institutionalised bullying was agreed.

Chris Smart, Manchester South, pointed out that morale was at an all-time low, and Billy Laing noted that some members had even been bullied into changing unions – and subsequently found themselves out of a job.

The only way to beat bullying was to focus on organisation, and the organising unit should work with existing reps to draw up a recruitment and retention plan, conference agreed.

PROTECT RMT REPS

The importance of the union defending elected reps was underlined by delegates, who expressed full support for Chris Smart and Will Tisdale, victimised by Network Rail.

"We cannot allow them to pick us off, because without reps there is no union --- and that's why they try to do it," said Chris.

Mick Tosh recalled that he had been victimised twice: the first time there was no organisation, but the second time he had RMT behind him – and he was still in the job.

"Once you become an effective rep you become a thorn in their side, and an injury to Chris is an injury to everyone in this room," said Mick.

ONE RATE FOR THE JOB

A campaign to end personal pay rates and secure a single 'rate for the job' on Network Rail was called for.

NR was getting away with paying varying rates for the same work and this had to stop.

The 'role clarity' contract was never agreed and should be covered by the collective bargaining procedure, and the only personalised part of the contract was the salary.

Agnes Lingard, Waltham Cross, pointed out that no two of the eight band 5s on her patch were on the same pay.

FAIR PROMOTION SOUGHT

A fair promotion system recognising the experience of

seafarers seeking to advance to become ship's master on Wightlink was called for by delegates.

The company had introduced a new matrix which took scant account of on-the-job experience and amounted to a 'blue-eyes' approach, explained Mick Tosh, Portsmouth.

Fairness demanded a promotion system that takes account of experience, and not just academic qualifications, said Mick.

PUSH FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The union should undertake a survey of clerical and salaried grades to get a better picture of the health and safety problems faced in such jobs, delegates agreed, with positive action taken to force employers take health and safety more seriously

Working lives were blighted by the blinkered behaviour of firms who saw clerical roles as less dangerous than others, delegates agreed.

- The union should campaign for passengers to be able to obtain the cheapest-possible travel ticket centrally, without the need to book separate journeys with separate TOCs.
- The imposition of 'e-pay' and the unilateral abolition of pay slips is unacceptable, delegates agreed. The move stood to save employers millions, yet staff were being offered no compensation – and at the very least should have the choice.
- London transport users need a passengers' charter, delegates agreed Continupous "sleight of hand" of Transport for London and the metropolitan train-operating companies meant that transport users were being misled. The union should be liaising with all relevant organisations to bring this about, said conference chair David Rudland,
- Delegates agreed to update the conference constitution and standing orders to reflect changing times. ■

WINNING FOR MEMBERS



RMT legal services provide an essential insurance for transport workers that are members of the union and their spouses

ROAD RAGE COMPENSATION

A bus driver member employed by Stagecoach SouthWest, has been awarded compensation by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) for injuries he suffered in a road rage attack.

The member asked a car driver to move forwards to allow him to pull into a bus stop to pick up passengers.

The driver gave him a two-fingered gesture and ignored him, carrying on with unloading his car.

The member got out of his bus and again asked the driver to move his vehicle.

When the driver refused, the member telephoned the police on his mobile. As he was talking to the police, the car driver attacked him, pushing him into the road and into the path of oncoming traffic.

The member fell backwards and struck his head on the road, fracturing his wrist in four places and suffering a gash to the back of his head.

He developed carpal tunnel syndrome in his wrist. The Criminal Injuries

Compensation Authority awarded him £5,390 for his injuries.

In another attack, a coach driver member employed by Rosalyn Coaches, was driving a coach full of passengers from London to South Mims when he was assaulted by a car driver. He had stopped at red traffic lights when a man appeared in front of his coach waving his arms about and shouting.

The driver opened his window and the man shouted: "didn't you see me? ...you've trashed my mirror." Mr Bennett was not aware he had actually

hit anything and as he looked round, he was punched in the face and the car driver ran off.

Mr Bennett suffered a broken nose, chipped teeth and has been left with a permanent scar. He was awarded £2,300 by the CICA.

COMPENSATION FOR YOU?

If you have suffered injuries in similar incidents, you may be entitled to compensation from the CICA. This is a government organisation that pays compensation to people who have been physically or mentally injured as a result of a violent crime.

To be eligible, the application for compensation should usually be made within two years of the incident and be for injuries suffered in an act of violence in England, Scotland or Wales. The injuries also need to be serious enough to justify a minimum award of £1,000.

NO CRIME NECESSARY

It is not necessary for the offender to have been convicted of or charged with a crime. It is a requirement under the scheme that the police or other organisation, for instance an employer, is informed of the assault as soon as reasonably possible.

If you think you may be eligible for compensation from the CICA, you should contact RMT solicitors Thompsons, who would be able to help with and advise on a claim and also advise on the possibility of any other claim for compensation, for instance against an employer or the assailant personally.

LEVEL CROSSING COMPENSATION

An RMT member received

damages of over £10,000 following injuries sustained when a train struck an uninsured vehicle on a level crossing.

The member was working as a conductor on the train when the collision took place, and suffered an ankle injury in the accident.

RMT instructed Thompsons solicitors to pursue a claim for the member against the uninsured driver and it was re-directed to the Motor Insurers Bureau which compensate the innocent victims of uninsured drivers.

Settlement terms could not be agreed and court proceedings were issued after which Thompsons were able to negotiate an acceptable settlement.

HGV DRIVER COMPENSATED

A member working as an HGV driver suffered back and shoulder injuries when the tail lift of his lorry dropped and he tried to stop the consignment he was delivering from falling.

Although the employer accepted that the accident was their fault, they made no offers to settle the claim until after Thompsons issued court proceedings, eventually settling for £20,000.

TRACKMAN DOUBLES CLAIM

A trackman had to undergo surgery on his shoulder following an accident at work. He was required to assist in lifting a grinding machine off the back of a flat bed lorry.

The machines had not been properly secured and had subsequently moved and become entangled.

As he and a colleague

attempted to disentangle the machines, the one he was holding fell causing a tendon and bicep injury to his arm. Network Rail accepted liability for the accident but failed to make an offer of settlement.

Thompsons Solicitors prepared court proceedings to be issued and with this the defendant started to negotiate settlement. An offer of £4,900 was made. Following advice the member rejected this and a settlement of £10,000 was reached.

HIT BY SLEEPER

A member suffered a dislocated shoulder when he was hit by a sleeper that fell from a road railer.

He had been working as leading trackman on site overnight and was directing the driver of the road railer who was transporting a bundle of 12 wooden sleepers when the banding on the sleepers snapped causing them to fall.

A claim was brought through the RMT Legal Assistance Scheme. Network Rail sought to defend the claim alleging that the injuries were the fault of the member and making allegations that he failed to set up an exclusion zone and failed to use additional lighting.

Neither of these were necessary for the job he was doing and the defendant ignored the actual cause of the accident – that the banding around the sleepers failed.

Court proceedings were issued by Thompsons solicitors and the case prepared for trial. Following negotiations, the member accepted a settlement of £7,500.



WHAT'S NEW ON RMTV



www.RMTv.org.uk

SEVERAL NEW videos have been posted on RMTv since last month's successful re-launch

The massive demonstration in London on March 26 and the battle against victimisation of RMT reps head up the additions to RMT in Action, and there is news of a crucial legal victory, Captain Ska's classic Liar! Liar! video – and a lot more.

CHANNEL 1: RMT IN ACTION

March 26 – the day Britain said NO – footage and interviews from the historic TUC March for the Alternative

Reinstate Arwyn and Eamonn: exposing the outrageous refusal by London Underground to re-instate two RMT reps, despite them winning 'interim relief' at an employment tribunal

CHANNEL 2: NEWS BULLETINS

RMT wins the right to strike for millions: Legal update on RMT's historic appeal-court win

CHANNEL 3: HISTORY

Old Hands – The shocking story of British labour camps between 1929 and 1939

CHANNEL 4: RMT EXTRA

Liar! Liar! – Captain Ska's acclaimed song and video exposing the ConDems' lies.

The Big Con – RMTv's entry to the TUC's 60-second ad contest, made by Chris Reeves of Platform Films, was shortlisted – but no cigar!

Bob Crow on Barra Island Discs – the RMT general secretary reveals his eclectic musical tastes while on Barra campaigning to keep CalMac services public.

We'll let you know about material relevant to you as it is uploaded – but why not add RMTv to your favourites?

Know your rights

A rare court victory

The UK has the most restrictive trade union laws in Europe. And it's not often that a court rules in favour of unions, against employers.

Unions are forced to clear higher and higher hurdles in order to take lawful industrial action. They must comply with balloting procedures that allow very little room for error. No other type of voting process, including general elections, are so easily challenged in the courts.

These laws were used against RMT to stop a strike on the Docklands Light Railway in January and by London Midland against ASLEF.

The employers were granted injunctions by the High Court on the grounds that the notices given by the unions were defective and the explanations given by them to describe the steps they had taken to identify which members to ballot were inadequate.

The law which applies, the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA), allows for small, accidental failures by unions when they ballot their members.

But the Metrobus case against Unite a couple of years ago gave employers the opportunity to persuade courts that even minor errors in the notice of ballot and action – the sending of ballot papers to a small number of members who shouldn't have had them for example or a typographical error – were enough to render a strike unlawful.

And so the Docklands Light Railway employer SERCO succeeded in its injunction application because the RMT's explanation was "too generic" and failed to show what the union had done, when it had done it and who had done it.

But now, in an important judgment that explains the proper extent of the statutory obligations on trade unions, the Court of Appeal has overturned both the SERCO and the London Midland injunctions.

The Court of Appeal described the analysis of the law advanced on behalf of the rail companies as one that would amount to setting "traps or hurdles for the union which have no legitimate purpose or function". The Court dismissed the various criticisms of the unions' notices to the rail companies as invalid and not amounting to evidence of any failure by the unions to comply with their statutory duties.



In a decision that restores the law to where it was before Metrobus, the Judges said that international recognition of the right to strike must be reflected in UK laws.

The court was clear that the small, accidental failures provisions of the law should have applied to the notices in both cases and went so far as to say that the High Court judge "misdirected himself as to specificity required" in the explanation given by the unions.

This is not the "green light" to a summer of discontent that some sections of the media have claimed. Employers are unlikely to cease relying on technical legal arguments to try to stop strikes, though their ability to succeed will now be more limited.

And unions must still comply with the complexities of the balloting procedures if they are to take any form of legal collective industrial action. The difficulties in doing so remain. But it does restore common sense to how minor errors are treated and restores to some degree the fundamental human rights of trade unions and their members. ■

Richard Arthur
Thompsons solicitors

RMT PERSONAL INJURY HELPLINE 0800 376 3706



The pamphlet sets out a clear alternative based around tax justice, public investment and job creation. Get your copy free by writing to RMT Unity House, 39 Chalton Street NW1 1JD or by emailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk ■



TAXI COURSE TAKES OFF



Photo from left to right. Paul White, Ray Knight, Sean Kellet, Matt Howe, John Kennedy and Mick Tosh

The RMT London Taxi branch's inaugural, workplace level one rep course in London finished recently and was voted a great success. Students roundly praised the course for being very informative and thought provoking.

The London Taxi branch was set up two years ago and has already represented many members. The idea behind the course was to enable students to hone the skills they have learned over years representing members against spurious claims and grievances.

The course was set up by London Taxi branch committee member Mike Tinnion who worked closely with RMT's education officer Andy Gilchrist.

Andy said that due to the drivers self employed status the course needed some thought especially about the location of the course and the members potential loss of earnings.

Andy and Mike organised a course over four Tuesdays at the union's building in Clapham, Maritime House, instead of the usual five days at the education centre in Doncaster.

Maritime House has been newly refurbished as a learning resource centre and is a great facility not only as a learning

centre, the London Taxi branch recently held a committee meeting there.

Course lead tutor Ray Knight said that it was a challenge as some of the basic format used in any other reps course had no bearing on a taxi drivers day to day working.

Some of the course content needed to put it into a taxi based context. As a result the students, ably lead by branch chairman John Kennedy and two of the Ranks and Highways Committee, Paul White and Sean Kelle, took to the task. The finished product should help tutors and students from taxi branches across the country to understand their role as taxi trade reps.

The dates have just finalised for the branch's second reps course to be held in May.

"This is the first of what I hope will be many courses for our taxi driver reps.

"It has certainly opened my eyes to taxi drivers' conditions and I look forward to the next course," said Ray Knight.

London Taxi branch member Mat Howe said: "This course has given me the confidence to go out and be more active within the branch

and the wider taxi trade, and its really nice to know that I belong to a strong and supportive union".

Jim Philp of Fife branch and Mick Tosh of Portsmouth branch also made contributions to the

course that were informative and helpful throughout.

Mick Tosh said: "coming onto a course with workers that I haven't worked with before gives me the option not just to teach, but also to learn".

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RESISTING EU RAIL LIBERALISATION IN FRANCE

RMT president Alex Gordon looks at how French railways are being slowly privatised under EU directives

France's state-owned rail company SNCF and its subsidiary Keolis were shortlisted last month to run West Coast Main Line train services from 2012 to 2026.

Keolis owns 35 per cent of Govia and operates rail franchises at Southern, Southeastern and London Midland. Since 1997 SNCF has expanded, buying rail franchises in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. In March 2010 SNCF narrowly lost out to German railways Deutsche Bahn in the race to take over Arriva plc.

France combines a strong public service ethos with private companies that compete aggressively worldwide: socialism at home - privatisation abroad. SNCF highlights this hypocrisy.

Unlike in Britain where private speculators led the 19th century 'railway mania', in France the state built the railway system. From 1842 France chose a compromise

between Britain's free-market chaos and Belgium's state-run railways. The state built all France's rail lines while private companies operated them on 99-year leases, with the state guaranteeing rail operators' dividends and taking two-thirds of excess profits in exchange.

This may sound familiar to RMT members. State-funded rail infrastructure and privately operated train companies in Britain are the outcome of two decades of EU rail liberalisation. This model failed in 19th century France where just as in Britain today, private railways regularly went bankrupt and had to be rescued by the state.

French railways were finally nationalised in 1938 to form SNCF. Since the 1950s SNCF has undertaken massive modernisation, in 1981 opening the new 'LGV' high-speed rail system and in 1994 the Channel Tunnel link to Britain.

The European Commission attacked France's high level of

rail investment following the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which limited state debt and borrowing. Moves to sell off parts of SNCF followed in 1997 along with implementation of EU rail directive 91/440 to set up a French Network Rail, RFF.

In February 1997, French Communist Party transport spokesman Jean-Claude Gayssot warned: "RFF won't solve any of SNCF's problems including debt, but it's dangerous because it opens up the prospect of dismantling, fragmentation and privatisation of parts of SNCF".

Prophetic words. In June 1997 Gayssot became Transport Minister in a Socialist-led government promising to reform RFF. Instead, French governments have followed EU directives by privatising parts of SNCF and opening others to competition.

When the French National Assembly transferred SNCF's historic debt to RFF in 1997 it totaled £16 billion, climbing to

£26 billion by 2001). RFF serviced this debt by pushing up track access charges, cutting back track maintenance and embarking on a program of privatisation.

In February 1998 Frantour (travel agencies and hotels) and France Rail (advertising) were sold. SNCF also created commercial subsidiaries such as Telecom Development (TD) and several 'European Economic Interest Groupings' to take part in foreign privatisation ventures.

In February 2000 SNCF sold 60 per cent of its parcel service SERNAM to private road freight company, Geodis with a dowry of £150 million. Geodis immediately sacked nearly half the 5,200 workforce.

In May 2003 SNCF sold 49 hydroelectric power stations, which provide 20 per cent of SNCF's electricity. Eurostar meanwhile was transformed into a limited company in which SNCF remained majority shareholder.

PROTEST: RMT members in Paris in 2008 on a ETF demonstration against EU rail directives





FREIGHT: A TEST-BED FOR RAIL PRIVATISATION

EU competition has led French rail freight into decline. In 1980 up to 60 per cent of French freight was moved by rail, as against only 14 per cent today. SNCF is now experiencing Beeching-style cuts that threaten its surviving single wagonload freight service.

The second EU rail liberalisation package that introduced rail freight competition in 2006 was a test bed for full rail privatisation. Today five private operators carry 17 per cent of French rail freight, including DB subsidiary Euro Cargo Rail (ECR), which rail unions accuse of social dumping and poor safety.

In 2008, a Veolia freight train ran through Montauban station at over 60 km/h. In 2009 near Bordeaux an unsecured ECR trainload struck an SNCF train on an adjacent line hospitalising the driver, another ECR train "derailed, tearing up 350 metres of track at Forbach", while a Colas Rail train derailed at Saint-Hilaire-au-Temple "tearing up track and overhead lines".

CGT railworkers general secretary Didier Le Reste said freight liberalisation has provoked "a spate of proven incidents and accidents calling into question private freight operators".

SNCF's response is to divide

freight into five subsidiaries to prepare for privatisation. SNCF freight traffic halved from 2002 to 2010, while rail unions have fought yard and depot closures, job transfers and compulsory redundancies.

SNCF's perilous situation today derives from EU competition directives amplified by decisions of successive governments and SNCF bosses to fragment operations and repeatedly attack rail workers' conditions while private firms cherry pick profitable traffic.

RFF has replaced SNCF debt with track access charges and sucks up SNCF operating profits to disguise cuts in state funding for rail maintenance and renewal. Track access charges increased from 900 million euros in 1997, to two billion euros in 2002, 3.2 billion euros in 2010 and are projected to increase 150 per cent by 2015.

Since the third EU rail liberalisation package in 2009, international passenger traffic is open to competition. Private train operator, Trenitalia-Veolia will run passenger trains between France and Italy this year. SNCF's 'New Eurostar' is intending to compete with Deutsche Bahn on the Channel Tunnel route.

A fourth rail package of EU Directives and regulations currently being prepared will split up SNCF domestic passenger services. SNCF has created a new subsidiary

company "Stations and Connections" to service competing passenger operators. The logic of this internal market will lead to rapid privatisation for station staff.

2010 saw a new Regulatory Authority for Rail Operations (ARAF) to ensure "free and undistorted competition".

In 2011 14,000 Operational Safety staff transferred to a Directorate of Rail Traffic under RFF control. Rail unions are warning that a diverging approach to overall safety planning, which was an SNCF tradition, is leading to fragmentation of responsibility for safety and multiple interfaces between operators in which everyone avoids responsibility.

Faced with increasing levels of accidents and fragmentation as in Britain in the 1990s, rail unions are demanding a return to a publicly-owned rail service to meet the needs of the whole community.

The SUD-Rail union "continues to denounce policies, which not only worsen railworkers' working conditions, but are dangerous for railway safety, the economics of the rail system, service to users and environmental impact".

These issues are not unique to France, which is why we need international cooperation between railway unions to bring together a network of resistance and struggle against neoliberal EU transport policies. ■



The Banner Man



The exhibition of Ed Hall's work, including many of his RMT designs, will open at the People's History Museum in Manchester will run from May 14 until October 30. See www.phm.org.uk for details.

To contact Ed Hall about his work, email edmundhall44@aol.com or call him on 020 8318 0420

Coming soon on RMTv Extra: The Banner Man – a look at the work of Ed Hall at www.rmtv.org.uk

Derek Kotz meets Ed Hall, the man whose quiet dedication is the driving force behind a revival of one of the labour movement's most vibrant traditions and looks forward to an RMT-sponsored exhibition of his work

Few people had as high a profile on London's monster TUC March 26 as Ed Hall, whose presence was in evidence the entire length of the half-million strong procession.

This quietly spoken former architect is one of the unsung heroes of the labour movement, although his name is familiar to an increasing number of activists and his work is seen by millions.

Since he stumbled into the art as a Nalگو union activist during battles against Thatcher in the early 1980s, Ed has designed and created more than 400 banners for the trade-union, anti-racist and anti-war

movements.

Between 50 and 60 of them have been for RMT branches from the Western Isles to Plymouth, via Swansea and Norwich and all points in between.

RMT News caught up with Ed in his tiny London studio as he worked on yet another – this time for Rugby RMT – after barely drawing breath from a marathon stint getting banners made in time for the big day.

“Everyone wanted their banner ready in time for March 26, and I don't think I've ever been so busy,” he says.

And with each banner requiring anywhere between 80

and 100 hours' work – and often more – his prolific output is astonishing.

Some of that work will be on display in an RMT-sponsored exhibition, which opens at the People's History Museum in Manchester on May 14.

Keenly aware of the significance of banners in trade-union history, Ed's art takes an obvious nod to the past, but has an unmistakable modernism about it.

His designs, developed in close consultation with the people who will carry them, include local scenes, historic events such as the Peterloo massacre and the anti-fascist

battle of Cable Street, and key historic figures such as the Tolpuddle Martyrs, Robert Tressell and Tom Paine, but they also resonate with the battles of today.

His art is recognised way beyond the labour movement, but making banners for trade unions remains Ed's biggest pleasure and, fortunately for us, that is what he intends to keep on doing.

“Seeing all those banners paraded by trade unionists through the streets on a massive demonstration is about as big a thrill as you can get,” he says. ■





BIGGEST EVER BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY CONFERENCE

More than fifty delegates gathered in Newcastle recently for the union's annual Black and Ethnic Minority conference.

RMT member Frank Murray presented a report to conference on behalf of the national black and ethnic minority advisory committee and took the opportunity to explain how lay member democracy inside the union worked in practice.

He explained how a resolution on Haiti arising from last year's conference was endorsed by the union's annual general meeting and was then put forward to the national TUC where Frank spoke on its behalf - securing the backing of Congress delegates.

"A motion that started at the grass roots ends up being broadcast on national TV and becomes national TUC policy.

"That's democracy in action," he said.

RMT North East Regional Council president Bob Potts welcomed delegates to Newcastle and gave us a history of the area, focussing on the region's radical roots.

A presentation from Northern

Rail on the companies "ambassador" project, reaching out to black and ethnic minority communities in their area, sparked some interesting comments and discussion - not least the general secretary Bob Crow pointing out that if the company employed enough representative and highly-visible staff in the first place they would be perfectly placed to do all the outreach required to engage with all sections of the public.

In his conference address, Bob warned that working people are under "unprecedented attack".

He talked about a recent union visit to New York as a guest of local trade unions and how rapacious speculators were using the collapse of the property market to buy up whole streets and blocks and drive the black and ethnic minority population out of their own communities, heightening racial tension.

"In Wisconsin, workers rights are being ripped to shreds by the Republicans with six other states set to follow suit, again sharpening the attack on black and ethnic minority workers. "The anti-union noises coming out of the ConDem government mean that we have to be prepared for exactly the same kind of assault being imported from across the ocean," he said.

RMT president Alex Gordon reinforced the anti-BNP message with a reminder the fascists had suffered a major setback at the general election and had been wiped out in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham thanks to labour movement campaigning.

"However they certainly have not gone away and we need to be gearing up to fight again in the May 5 local elections," he said.

Conference discussed a motion about Mumia Abu Jamal - a former Black Panther who has spent 29 years on death row

in Pennsylvania.

The motion - calling for support for his campaign for release from imprisonment- was carried unanimously with both mover and seconder explaining how his trial was a travesty of justice that has left him facing the death penalty for nearly three decades.

Following an excellent presentation from Etienne Attala from RMT solicitors Thompsons updating delegates on the Equalities Act, and a comprehensive report back from Micky Thompson on behalf of the Executive, Glenroy Watson of Finsbury Park branch closed conference, homing in on the continuing campaign to recognise the legacy of slavery.

"Whilst of course we recognise the evils of modern day slavery we must never forget the atrocities that were committed against African people and that the fight for recognition and reparations carries on today," he said. ■



HOPE not hate

Celebrating Britain's diverse society

BRINGING HOPE NOT HATE



Nick Lowles of Hope Not Hate looks ahead to next month's local elections on May 5 and calls for a vote against the far right

In last year's general and local elections Hope not Hate, RMT and other unions and the wider Labour movement joined forces to halt the march of the British National Party.

Before those elections Nick Griffin had bragged how he was on his way to Westminster, and how his party was set to seize control of councils up and down the land.

By the end, he had suffered a national humiliation, with his personal dreams of becoming an MP shattered, and his hopes of his party's town hall take over laying in ruins.

In next month's local and regional assembly elections we have another opportunity to challenge Griffin and his fascists. And this time, instead of simply stopping him in his tracks, we have the chance of finishing off him and his extremist party for good.

The BNP is in meltdown. Griffin has squandered the money his party receives from the Europe and its other shadowy financiers. It's been

estimated that the BNP is over £500,000 in debt, and the bailiffs are already knocking on Griffin's door.

The party is also split down the middle, with Griffin now facing a leadership challenge from his own grassroots. One key former Griffin aide, Eddie Butler, who still works in his taxpayer-funded role as a BNP advisor in the European parliament in Brussels, said BNP members have, "no chance to vote on anything, no chance to decide anything."

"He [Griffin] will never allow anyone any the chance to vote on anything," he said. Butler has become so disillusioned with Griffin's leadership he has even called on BNP members not to renew their membership in a desperate bid to withhold funds, and in his words, "starve out" his former boss.

Indeed, the BNP is now in such disarray that even the party's own former communications officer, Paul Golding, described their image as "completely toxic". Former

friends of Griffin have described him as a "jealous personality", a "sinking tyrant" and a "curse".

But though fatally wounded, Griffin and his party still represent a threat. Hope not Hate has identified 11 battleground seats that the BNP will be defending this May, seats that with the right organization and mobilisation we can snatch from under their noses. If we take out those seats, we take out Griffin and smash the BNP.

It won't be an easy fight. Griffin is fighting for his political life. We all know how vicious and violent the BNP and their supporters can be at the best of times. Now they are facing annihilation we can expect them try every dirty trick in the book as they try to defend their agenda of division and hate.

But they are weaker than ever before. And those of us who oppose them are stronger.

At Hope not Hate we have learnt from the successful campaign we mounted 12 months ago, and we're prepared

to deploy those tactics to the same devastating effect. We'll be organizing mass leaflet drops, canvassing, targeted days of action, a local media offensive and targeted mail shots. The bulk of activity will be focused on those 11 battleground seats. But everywhere the BNP is standing will be there to confront them.

Everyone knows this is a challenging time for the trade unions. You face competing priorities, from employment protection to fighting the cuts. But the fight against the BNP remains a vital one.

If we can seize this moment, and sweep away Griffin and his dwindling band of followers, then we will have purged their poison from our politics and our communities for good.

This May we have an historic opportunity to demonstrate that whatever the challenges, hope will always conquer hate. Let's seize that opportunity together. ■

For more information go to www.hopenothate.org.uk



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RMT OFFER THE MAYFAIR IN WEYMOUTH

The Mayfair offers friendly, comfortable, bed and breakfast accommodation in Weymouth. We are situated on the sea front overlooking the beach. The guest house has been graded three stars by Visit Britain with a special award for the quality of our breakfasts!

We have been here five years and we regularly have RMT members as guests. One member enjoyed their stay so much that he suggested we contact the union to spread the word about what a great place it is to visit.

The Mayfair is just two minutes walk from Weymouth station. The town has many attractions aside from being a traditional family destination. We are located in the middle of the World Heritage site Jurassic Coast stretching from Exmouth in the west to Swanage in the east, serviced

by the Jurassic Coast bus route.

There is even a daily service from Weymouth to the Channel Islands or St Malo in France. Weymouth and Portland will also be hosting sailing events during the 2012 Olympic Games.

And what is the best way to get to Weymouth? By train of course! As a special promotion for RMT members, we are offering free wine and chocolates on arrival for guests staying this year for three nights or more.

Prices range from £30-£42 per person per night for bed and breakfast. There is a reduced tariff for weekly stays, and senior citizens over 65 can claim a further reduction of £10 from the weekly tariff.

For further details, please contact The Mayfair in Weymouth 01305 782094 or visit the website at www.mayfairhotelweymouth.co.uk

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letters

THE UNION FOR TAXI DRIVERS

Dear editor,

I've been driving a Taxi in London for coming up to nine years. In those few short years I've seen the problems facing my colleagues and myself multiply tenfold. Uncapped licencing of Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) is reaching breaking point, Pedicabs working illegally and without fear of prosecution, PHV actively and illegally plying for hire, with no sign of an enforcement officer or police intervention, these are just a few issues from an ever increasing list.

Reading RMT News from January this year, I have become aware that the issues we have in London affect all the other Taxi licencing areas, the length and breadth of the country. This was ably shown in Solihull, where my brother taxi drivers have issues with PHV and the local authority.

I joined RMT because it is the "only" specialised transport union, in my opinion you can't get anymore specialised than a licensed taxi driver.

I truly believe that the union is the only one that has an interest in my working conditions, assist in improving those conditions and have the power and influence in negotiations with licensing authorities.

I have seen from the news and other media outlets, when RMT speaks, whoever they represent, management stop and listen.

I've been in the union for less than two years, but in that time I have been able to see the benefit the union can bring to my trade.

So I urge you, not just members of the taxi trade, but across the whole transport sector, get active within your branch and outside while doing your days work, tell your work colleagues about the benefits of being an RMT member. Tell them about the support you get, tell them about the fantastic legal advice and representation.

You can join another union, but you won't be joining RMT, Nulli Secundus (second to none).

Mike Tinnion

RMT London Taxi branch

ORGANISING

Dear editor,

The latest magazines created by the Organising Unit, Organising Strategy and Recruitment Guide have been sent out to all branches. As a branch secretary I found that these documents are of great importance and upon receiving them have ordered more copies so I can distribute them to all of the branch representatives and officials.

These documents are colourful and are user friendly to read. Waterloo branch can confirm that it is never easy to set up a strategy for each branch but the end result is good and is worth the effort. This branch works and meets on a regular bases with the Organising Unit and would urge that all branches do the same.

Regards, Rickey Goodman

RMT Waterloo branch secretary

ORGANISING COURSE

Dear editor,

I recently attended a pilot course at the union's education centre in Doncaster which highlighted the importance of building an organised workforce and gave us the confidence and know how to do it.

As a shipping activist it is important to communicate with members in other industries in order to support our comrades in any way we can, whether it be by helping to organise, supporting them in political campaigns or highlighting and tackling workplace issues.

This is the beginning of a new chapter for all members on the course. It will help us to engage regularly with each other and the tutors, to drive forward as a union and to ensure more workplaces are organised to protect workers in the transport industry.

Best regards, Darren Procter

RMT rep Pride of York.

KINGS CROSS GATHERING

Members of the Kings Cross branch gathered at the Lucas Arms, Grays Inn Road to present members with their 10 year membership badges.

Members left to right: CoE member Mick Lynch, branch secretary Ray Knight, at the back Trevor Wright (Bounds Green train maintenance), at the

front Alan Keary (Travel Centre Company Council rep), Reg Hopkins (branch chair), the general secretary, Patrick Wells (chef), David Reid (Stations Customer Service Assistant), Claudine Demel (On board CSA), Nick Gaughan (IT technician) and David Glover (Chef and on board health and safety rep).



THANKS FROM LOWESTOFT

I wish to express my thanks to my local RMT rep Alan Brooks and the RMT Helpline in London.

As the only RMT member on the staff at a leading local bus company I was given all the help and assistance needed to pursue a grievance against a retrospective change of employment status despite the hurdles placed in my way.

RMT was there when I needed them and a satisfactory outcome was achieved. I have nothing but praise for Alan's help and support at a difficult time.

Thanks and best wishes

Jonathan Ward

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LEARNING POLITICS

Jenny Gray of Bristol branch collects comments on an intensive week of learning at the union's political school which included discussions around the economy, policy development, the European Union, solidarity, anti-fascism, trade union councils and the media

I went to political school and presumed that this course would give me a greater understanding the political side of the union. Well, I got a lot more than expected. I believe the thirteen of us on the course came away truly inspired to do greater things. Judging by these comments from some of my fellow brothers and sisters they felt the same:

"I found the school to be a very worthwhile.

"It was well-organised and the content of the course was very insightful.

"I would recommend the course to anyone and everyone interested in the trade union movement.

"I walked away from Unity House on the final day inspired and optimistic," Paul said.

"I found the political school a great learning experience, before I went I had no idea what RMT had to do with politics, after a week of intense listening I now think I understand.

"I have brought back all I learnt to the workplace and now bore anyone when they mention anything about the political school!" Kelly said.

"I would say the course awakens

something inside everyone.

"I didn't take much notice with the political implications of our unions actions and I have subconsciously hidden the inclinations to participate in political activities but since the course I have rejoined the Labour Party.

"I also made contact with the Leeds Trades Council and committed to attend the next meeting and I will be contacting the anti fascist organisation Searchlight," Maurice said.

"I found the whole week very uplifting and if anything made me even more proud to be an RMT rep especially as I had a disciplinary to attend when I returned to work.

"It filled me full of pride to be part of the union and more reason to fight the good fight for our members. "There is nothing I despise more than this Con Dem government and bosses that try to walk all over the ordinary working man.

"It was an honour and a privilege to be part of the course and make some new friends whose company I enjoyed," Gordon said.

"I went on the political school with an open mind and it showed me the union and

politicians should work closer together and how can things move on if this is not done.

"Still uncertain about joining the Labour party but I do think RMT should be more involved, how can transport policies be taken forward without all transport unions round the table," Mick said.

"After a busy four days I had learnt much on the work of the union in the political arena, both at home and abroad.

"I'm looking forward staying in touch with my fellow delegates and maintaining the friendship, solidarity and comradeship that we built over the week, for many years to come.

"Take the opportunity to go on this course if it comes your way it's well worth going," Martin said.

The course students were Ronnie Ash, Lee Balance, Kelly Berry, Toni Fisher, Jenny Grey, Maurice Hamilton, Richard Howard, Gordon Lewis, Dave O Donnell, Martin Reed, Paul Shaw, Michael Williams and Michael Wornes. ■

The next RMT Political School is October 23-28, for more information contact your branch secretary or James Croy at Head Office (j.croy@rmt.org.uk)



RMT MEMBERS DONATE TO RAILWAY CHILDREN CHARITY

RMT Council of Executives members Gerry McGann and Mick Lynch won £500 for their designated charity Railway Children after winning the pub quiz put on by RMT and union solicitors Thompsons.

Railway Children exists to provide relief and support to children and young people who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress and in particular to those living on the streets.

For these children, the streets are often the only means of support available but also where they suffer abuse and exploitation.

Since its inception in 1995, Railway Children has helped many thousands of children and young people living alone and at risk on the streets. For more information go to www.railwaychildren.org.uk ■



The Railway Children challenge

Make 2011 your year to have a life changing experience and achieve amazing personal goals, whilst raising funds for Railway Children. By taking on an overseas challenge, you will have the opportunity to embark on a once in a lifetime experience whilst visiting some of the most amazing sights in the world.

TREK TO KILIMANJARO

October 5 to 16

Bookings are now being taken for Kilimanjaro 2011. Mt. Kilimanjaro is the highest free standing mountain in the world. Your challenge is to reach its summit. This

trip also includes a visit to a Railway Children project in Tanzania, a fantastic opportunity to meet some of the children who you help by taking part in the challenge.

TREK TO MACHU PICCHU

September 10 to 19

This beautiful and remote four day trek begins in the ancient city of Cusco and leads to the mysterious Machu Picchu ruins. It's a

journey through forgotten wind-swept valleys, over wild mountain passes and isolated villages, giving you a rare taste of the real Peru away from the crowds of the Inca Trail.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Katie Mason, Railway Children Events Manager

Email: events@railwaychildren.org.uk

Telephone: 01270 757596

www.railwaychildren.org.uk/events



WANTED

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WESSEX REGIONAL OFFICE RELOCATION

RMT's Wessex Regional Office has now moved from Ocean Village in Southampton to a conveniently situated office near Southampton Central train station. The full details for the office are as follows:

RMT Wessex Regional Office
2nd Floor, The Podium
Queens Keep
1-4 Cumberland Place
Southampton
Hampshire SO15 2BH

WATERLOO SUNSET

Bill Read branch chairman of Waterloo branch closed the branch meeting for the last time recently as he is retiring from many posts that he has held over the years including Health and Safety/LDC Rep for the drivers at South West Trains.

RMT president Alex Gordon presented Bill (bottom left) with a farewell gift on behalf of the branch. Alex said that Bill was an inspiration to the union and had campaigned and fought long and hard for the members over the years.

"He will be missed by this union but can now enjoy his retirement," he said.

Bill said it will be important for all grades to get together and fight against these privatised companies.

Branch Secretary Rickey Goodman said it was a pleasure to work with Bill over the years said that he hopes to see him back as an honorary member at the branch. Rickey also read out thank you messages from regional organiser Brian Whitehead and Joan Twelves widow of the late Greg Tucker.

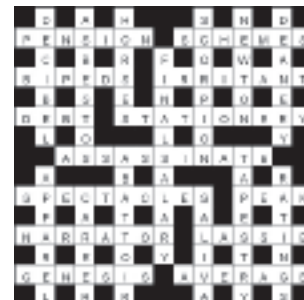
At an earlier meeting Bill Read presented loyal Waterloo branch member Owen Ming (top left) with his 40 year membership award as he retired after 40 years working for British Rail and South West Trains. Branch secretary Rickey Goodman wished Owen a happy and prosperous retirement and hoped to see him as a honorary member at future branch meetings.



£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 69. Set by Elk

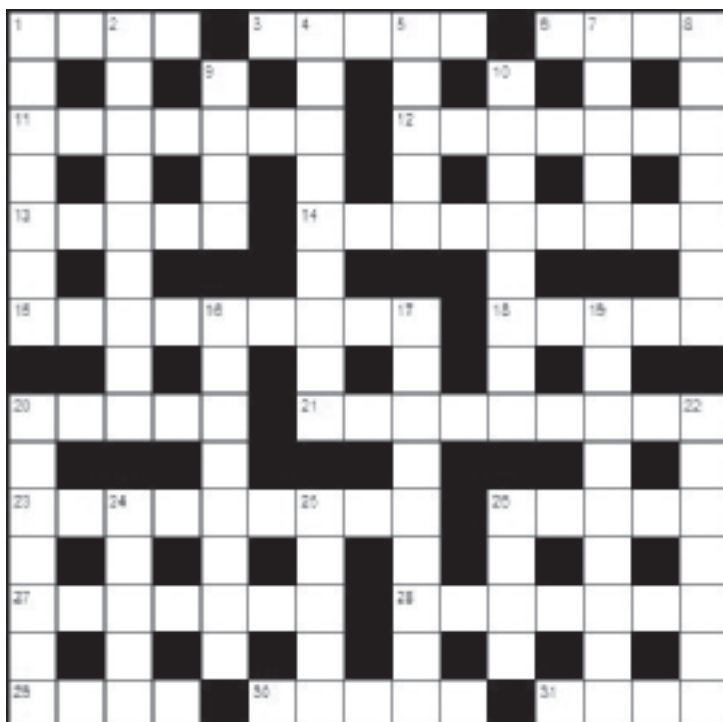
No. 68 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 68 is M Harris of Denbighshire.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by May 12 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- 1, 12 Venue of 2011 RMT AGM (4,7)
- 3 Pot of money - or cat (5)
- 6 Portable dwelling (4)
- 11 Group that campaigns against cuts with 'bail-ins' (2,5)
- 12 See 1 across
- 13 Chief river of Pakistan (5)
- 14 Less than eager (9)
- 15 Course taken to combat illness or injury (9)
- 18 Short piece of writing (5)
- 20 Press, radio, television etc (5)
- 21 Absolve of blame or responsibility (9)
- 23 Attend uninvited (9)
- 26 Inexpensive (5)
- 27, 28 John McDonnell's workplace (5,2,7)
- 29 Person older than 12 and younger than 20 (4)
- 30 ET, for example (5)
- 31 Found on collar or football boot, or horse-breeding establishment (4)

DOWN

- 1 Person who plays particular wind instrument (7)
- 2 Parliament supporter in English civil war (9)
- 4 Meddle (9)
- 5 It gets wet as it dries (5)
- 7 Heathland plant - girl's name (5)
- 8 Type of grass, male saint (7)
- 9 Does deed or plays part (4)
- 10 Shiner (5,3)
- 16 Tory premier who introduced anti-union laws (8)
- 17 Pain in the gob (9)
- 19 Person set up to take blame (9)
- 20 Police photo (7)
- 22 Uncovered; laid bare; put to shame (7)
- 24 Suspension of hostilities (5)
- 25 Really bad (5)
- 26 Place to find 6s (4)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be November 4 each year. We will add a bonus dividend at the maturity date and pay the money direct to your bank account. There are no vouchers or hampers or anything of that kind – you decide how you want to spend your

money.

The bonus will be added to your savings if you complete all of your regular payments. Last years bonus was 2 per cent*, 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 Number				
Employer			RMT Branch				

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

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

DECLARATION

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

Your Signature		Date			/		/				
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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.

