

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

WINNING AT WORK

**5.7 % PAY DEAL AT
NETWORK RAIL**

**GROUND BREAKING
OLYMPIC DEAL AT
LONDON OVERGROUND**



Send off the
postcard and help
save our railways!



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PENSIONS
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MARCH 28
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PAGE 22**



www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Job Description*		Part Time	YES ☐ NO ☐

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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL



HAPPY NEW YEAR

RMT has secured a 5.7 per cent pay rise for maintenance and operations Network Rail staff, including former Thales staff, and a groundbreaking Olympics deal on London Overground which is a great way to start the year.

Meanwhile the rail privateers way of saying happy new year to passengers is by imposing inflation-busting fares increases, a brazen act that shows that the great rail fares privatisation swindle is still rolling along.

For instance Northern Rail announced fare rises of around 6.7 per cent while gaining a 34 per cent increase in profits.

These train companies have bled hundreds of millions out of our railways and they should be told that the game's up.

Yet all we are being fed is a TOC-funded media fanfare claiming that first phase of High Speed Two (HS2) could be running by 2026.

No one has fought harder for the investment and modernisation required to drag the UK's railways out of the slow lane than RMT and development of high speed links must be a key component of our rail plans.

However any attempt by the government to pay for these developments by cutting jobs, services and investment elsewhere in the system, along the lines set out in the McNulty rail review, will be met with the stiffest resistance from this union.

RMT is also demanding that High Speed Two be built, owned and operated in the public sector free from the greed and profiteering of the private rail companies whose exploitation of the industry has dragged our railways down for a generation.

That is why the campaign against McNulty must be intensified in the coming period in order to let the politicians know that people are sick and tired of more transport fragmentation, job cuts and privatisation.

So please send off the postcard in this magazine demanding that MPs support Early Day Motion 2299 urging the government to reject the McNulty report and deliver an affordable railway run in the public interest.

RMT members in Scotland will also receive a postcard to send to MSPs to oppose the proposed fragmentation of the Scotrail franchise.

Both these projects are informed by

the business model for rail being pushed by the European Union through various EU directives and rail packages. That is why RMT will be supporting the mass international protest on March 28 taking place in Brussels.

Get that date in you dairies now in order to get the maximum turnout in March.

EU diktat and political inaction are also behind the government's failure to act to save 10,000 jobs at Bombardier in Derby and in the supply chain by awarding the Thameslink fleet to the UK-based company instead of Siemens.

But it is not too late for the government to tell the EU what to do with its procurement rules, cut the lies and give this vital work to the Derby workforce, who are geared up and ready to go.

EU rules blocking state aid to Seafrance Ferries has led to its demise of the company with the loss of many seafaring jobs.

No government should be afraid to stand up to unelected and unrepresentative EU institutions in the interests of workers and their industries.

That is why RMT supports a referendum on EU membership. If Scotland can have a vote on independence then the rest of us can have a vote on independence from the EU.

Claims that EU social legislation is a reason for remaining in the EU is wearing thinner every day. For instance the UK courts have recently thrown out a claim for paid leave for offshore members under EU Working Time Regulations.

The union is also battling for bus workers up and down the country and RMT is currently battling to protect paid breaks for drivers at the Wilts and Dorset bus company.

Finally the recent sinking of the cruise ship *Costa Concordia* off the Italian coast has once more raised questions about safety at sea. It should be a warning to all transport workers that safety can never be taken for granted.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

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

RMT DECLARES NATIONAL DISPUTE OVER THREAT TO RAIL CONTROL CENTRE JOBS

RMT, along with sister unions RMTSSA and Unite, have declared a national dispute with Network Rail over the threat to Electrical Control Room jobs.

The dispute centres on plans by Network Rail to reduce the number of Electrical Control Room centres.

Unions have met with Network Rail and have pressed for an agreement that, whatever

happens in the future with regards to the plans to reduce the number of ECRO locations, there would be a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.

Management has failed to provide such a commitment and RMT had no option but to declare a dispute with Network Rail in order to protect jobs.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that electrical control

room operators delivered a critical service in running the nation's railways and the network could not operate without them.

"We have sought through negotiation a perfectly fair and realistic agreement on no compulsory redundancies at this time of major reorganisation, but Network Rail managers have failed to accept that and have

plunged us into this dispute as a result.

"Early in the New Year the three unions involved will meet to discuss a joint strategy, including the use of industrial action, to protect our members' jobs and livelihoods and to prevent a wave of compulsory redundancies from being bulldozed through by the company," Bob said. ■

MEMBERS AT LORNE STEWART STRIKE

RMT members at Lorne Stewart working on the Merseyrail Contract took part in a solid 24 hour strike earlier this month in addition to the indefinite ban on overtime and on call, having voted 100 per cent for strike action.

Lorne Stewart Services division provides the mechanical, electrical and

cleaning services to the Merseyrail Network covering the rail infrastructure for the Liverpool and Merseyside areas.

Members launched the protest after the employer offered a below-inflation wage-cut offer of two per cent and further stated there would be a pay freeze in 2012 as well, making it a pay freeze in three of the last

five years.

Daren Ireland, RMT Council of Executives member for North West, said that it was disgraceful that Merseyrail and Lorne Stewart had cut £500,000 from the contract.

"They are now continuing to take it out on our members whilst making massive profits," he said. ■

SCOTTISH SIGNALLERS STRIKE ACTION

Signallers in Scotland held a 72 hour strike of members working at the West of Scotland Signalling Centre from Christmas Eve onwards last month.

The dispute concerns management's continuing refusal to adhere to a long standing local arrangement where, when a resident post becomes vacant, the senior General Purpose Relief (GPR) is slotted into that position.

This has been in place for over three decades but management are suddenly refusing to apply this custom and practice arrangement. RMT members are outraged at the behaviour of local management over this issue and are demanding action.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members were furious at this refusal to comply with a local arrangement that offers genuine career progression opportunities.

"RMT remains available for talks at any time aimed at resolving this dispute," he said. ■





After constructive talks with London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL) RMT has secured a ground breaking rewards package for LOROL staff in exchange for some flexibility of work patterns during the Olympics.

The deal, which covers more than 500 frontline RMT members across the company at all locations, will mean enhanced payments for shifts worked during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The agreement will see additional pay for station, conductor, train-care, fleet-maintenance and revenue staff with an enhancement rate of 25 per cent paid (normal time plus one quarter) for shifts worked during games.

Over the period covered by the agreement, staff will see a minimum gross payment of £650 which could rise with additional shifts and overtime.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the deal

recognised the value placed on transport workers in delivering an effective Olympics and is a good one for RMT members, the travelling public and Olympic visitors alike.

"It's a common sense approach in planning ahead for the Games.

"It means that our members will get a minimum additional payment of £650 with the scope for more," he said.

Bob praised RMT representatives in helping secure

the agreement which recognises and rewards the additional efforts and flexibility required of RMT members during the Olympics to benefit passengers on London Overground routes serving the key hub at Stratford.

"The agreement shows the importance of the workforce having a skilled and experienced trade union on their side in negotiating the best deal possible to the mutual benefit of everyone involved," he said.



SAY NO TO MCNULTY

Please send off the postcard enclosed in this magazine to demand your MP supports Early Day Motion 2299 urging the government to reject the McNulty report

On top of inflation-busting rail fare increases of up to 30 per cent - or even more - over the next three years, the government's McNulty review of the railways is calling for fewer, more overcrowded rail services, the axing of tens of thousands of railway staff and reduced safety standards.

But like the bankers, railway bosses will continue to prosper while taxpayers foot the bill for the mess they have created.

Railway companies are being given the green light to make even bigger profits on top of the astonishing £11 billion in dividends and contractual costs that has been drained from the industry since privatisation.

RMT is asking you to send the Freepost postcard enclosed in support of Early Day Motion 2299 tabled by John McDonnell urging the government to reject the McNulty report and deliver an affordable railway run in the public interest.

The government-commissioned McNulty

review of the railways will worsen passenger services through the loss of thousands of frontline workers from trains, stations, ticket offices and safety-critical infrastructure and operational roles.

McNulty's proposals for greater commercial freedom for train operating companies will also result in cuts in services and more crowded trains. In addition the proposed the break-up of Network Rail will increase the fragmentation and inefficiency of the railways.

The McNulty proposals are also in line

with EU directives and 'open access' rules, "particularly with regard to the separation of railway infrastructure and undertakings and EU procurement and state aid constraints".

These EU procurement and state aid rules are behind the ongoing saga of the Thameslink train-building contract being handed to the German giant Siemens by the government instead of Bombardier based in Derby, threatening thousands of skilled jobs.

Keep up with the campaign to Save Our Railways at www.rmt.org.uk ■



SAVE SCOTLAND'S RAILWAYS

RMT members in Scotland will each receive a postcard to send to MSPs to oppose the proposed fragmentation of the Scotrail franchise.

The Scottish government has launched a public consultation on the future of the franchise - Rail 2014 - which raises the prospect of fare increases, more fragmentation, cuts to services, stations and staff levels, more overcrowded trains, more commercial freedom for private operators and more taxpayers' subsidy.

Scotrail bosses are being given the green light to make even bigger profits on top of the astonishing £74 million in dividends that it has drained from Scotland's railways in the last four years.

The proposals will:

- Break up the current unified operation into separate franchises



- Cut services and staff and increase the number of interchanges
- Deregulate fares and pass control of fares to private rail operators

- Remove management of stations from the responsibility of a single operator or to Network Rail

The break up and deregulation of Scotland's passenger railways will be detrimental to the Scottish economy, leaving a fragmented system that is less efficient and more costly to both tax-payers and passengers.

The Scottish government must retain accountability and control over the railway in order both to maintain the existing level of service provision and to work to improve rail passenger services in Scotland. ■

- Send the enclosed Freepost postcard to Transport Scotland to voice your opposition to its proposals.
- Write to your MSP to ask him or her to oppose these proposals
- Email Scottish transport minister Keith Brown at Keith.Brown.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

NETWORK RAIL FACES GRAYRIGG PROSECUTION



The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has launched criminal proceedings against Network Rail for a breach of health and safety law which caused a Virgin Trains Pendolino train to derail near Grayrigg on February 23 2007.

Earlier investigations and last year's inquest into the death of passenger Margaret Masson concluded that the derailment was caused by a poorly maintained set of points.

The Office of Rail Regulation is both the budget holder and the rail regulator and the union has consistently argued that the ORR should not be demanding yet more cuts from Network Rail which adds to the risk of having inadequate time and staff to complete proper patrols and maintenance.

The ORR is currently enforcing 15 per cent maintenance budget cuts at the Preston depot covering the Grayrigg area.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that no organisation had fought harder than RMT for the lessons of the Grayrigg disaster to be learned to stop preventable tragedies like Grayrigg from happening in the future.

"There remain systemic problems which have failed to be addressed since this derailment and they have been compounded by the ORR-driven cuts regime and the looming threat to jobs of the McNulty Rail Review.

"This prosecution does not let the ORR off the hook for its role as the driver of massive ongoing cuts and RMT repeats its call for an urgent public inquiry that establishes all the facts and which looks at the whole culture of penny-pinching and short-staffing that is prevalent on the railways," he said.

NR is facing a charge under section 3(1)

of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

The ORR said that the crash occurred as a result of "the company's failure to provide and implement suitable and sufficient standards, procedures, guidance, training, tools and resources for the inspection and maintenance of fixed stretcher bar points".

The stretcher bars hold the moveable rails a set distance apart when the points are operated.

The first hearing is due to take place at Lancaster Magistrates' Court on February 24. ■

GREAT WESTERN FRANCHISE PRE-EMPTS MCNULTY TICKET OFFICE MASSACRE

The tendering for the new Greater Western franchise, now underway and due to operate from April 2013, is being conducted under the terms of the Sir Roy McNulty Rail Review before the government has taken it through the parliamentary process, threatening jobs and passenger services.

The tender documents make it clear that bidding will be conducted under the framework set out by McNulty and that means the closure of ticket offices at 29 Category E stations and severe reductions in opening hours at a further 17 Category D stations.

The McNulty Rail Review maps out a plan for 30 per cent reductions in operating costs while protecting the profits of private train operators, making it clear that the cuts can only be made by savage reductions in staffing and passenger services, including ticket offices, and by bridging the gap through higher fares.

The government response to McNulty, expected to take the form of a parliamentary "Command Paper", has not yet been made yet ministers are conducting new tendering for franchises within the scope of its recommendations without parliamentary approval. ■

RMT MEETINGS and CONFERENCES, 2012

FEBRUARY

RMT Young Members' Conference	23/25	London
Road Freight/Transport Grades Conference	24	Doncaster
Signalling Grades Conference	25/26	Folkestone
RMT National Health and Safety Conference	29	Doncaster

MARCH

Catering and Hotel Grades Conference	2/4	Southport
RMT National Women's Conference	9/10	Weymouth
Supervisory Grades Conference	16/17	Edinburgh
RMT Black and Ethnic Minority Members'	14/15	London
Traincrew and Shunters Grades Conference	29/31	Gloucester

APRIL

Engineering Grades Conference	12/13	Kirkcaldy
Station Staff & Associated Grades	20/21	Teignmouth
Busworkers' Conference	20/21	Croyde Bay
Scottish TUC RMT Retired Members' Conference	26	London

MAY

Shipping BGM	16/18	Eastbourne
RMT National LGBT Members' Conference	18	Southampton
Offshore BGM	22/23	Dundee

JUNE

RMT National Conference of Branch and Regional Council Secretaries RMT	TBC	
Annual General Meeting	24/ 29	Torquay

RMT TAKES ROCK-SOLID ACTION IN PENSIONS STRIKE



DEFENDING PENSIONS!



Rock-solid strike action on Tyne and Wear Metro and the ferries led to a total shutdown of key transport services on the North East as part of a day of protest by millions of public sector workers on November 30 against government attacks on their pensions.

RMT Royal Fleet Auxiliary members were also involved in the action and pickets are out at Portland, Falmouth and on a joint protest with PCS members in Portsmouth amongst other sites.

Pickets were out in force at the Tyne and Wear Metro transport control centre, the ferry terminal and other key points as RMT members join with millions of others in the public sector day of strike action over the attack on pensions.

Members and supporters later marched from Gateshead to Spillers Wharf in Newcastle to a rally addressed by a range of speakers from the different unions including RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

"RMT transport workers in the North East and our members

on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the service that supplies the Royal Navy fleet around the world in times of both war and peace, are standing shoulder to shoulder with millions of other public service workers involved in the action.

"We are sending the clearest message to the government that we will defend our pensions to the hilt and the outrageous demand that our members should work longer, pay more and get less has been thrown back in the faces of this government of millionaire public

schoolboys.

"It's the bankers and the bosses who have gambled with our country's future and the men and women who make our services tick should not have to tolerate a worse pension, and be forced to work longer, to make up for their mistakes.

"RMT members on Tyne and Wear Metro and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have shown that they are not going to sit back and take this outrageous attempt to consign them to a life of poverty in their old age," he said.

Parliamentary column



FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR RAILWAYS

Our railways are under threat from a Tory-led government determined to drive through the misguided proposals in the McNulty report.

This ideologically-driven government is not remotely interested in what is best for passengers, or what would genuinely lead to a better way forward for the industry, but a single minded determination to cut spending on rail.

I have been impressed by the determined defence of the railways by our trade unions, and all those RMT, Unite, Aslef and TSSA members who are fully aware of the disastrous damage that McNulty would have.

Our rail industry does need radical reform, and the last Labour government started to make some progress in clearing up the mess created by the botched privatisation of the last Tory government.

Creating Network Rail and bringing track maintenance and signalling operations back together and in a not for dividend company was an important step forward. As a result, and the hard work of trade unions, our railways became safer and more efficient.

But I don't believe we went far enough. I think we were too timid when we were in government and should have done much more to tackle the fragmented structure of our rail industry.

The brief given to McNulty has not enabled him to take this broader look, so it is no surprise that he has not come up with the right solution.

That's why Labour has already ruled out three disastrous decisions that have been made by Ministers following the agenda set out in McNulty, and we will do all we can to stop the Tory-led government from taking them forward.

First, it's wrong for the focus to be entirely on shifting the burden from taxpayer to fare-payer, while doing nothing to tackle the

money leaving the industry in profit. Families up and down the country are hurting from a cost of living crisis that is making it harder to make stagnant wages cover rising prices. And hiking fares by an average of 6% next year, followed by an average of 8% for the two years, is the wrong decision.

Second, it's wrong to close ticket offices and sack frontline staff. I know just how much passengers value the human face of the industry, not least when we have one of the most complex systems of ticket pricing in the world.

Without staff, our railways will be less safe. And women in particular will fear using an unstaffed station or an understaffed train. Staff are a lifeline for passengers when journeys go wrong, or they need to be sure of buying the cheapest ticket – and we will stand with railway workers against closing ticket offices and cutting frontline staff.

Third, it's wrong to take us back to the dark days of Railtrack and break up our rail infrastructure. Worse still, Ministers are making plans to allow profit making to drive decisions over track as well as train services.

I do believe Network Rail needs significant reform, but we will oppose packaging up assets in with franchises or the reversal of the steps we took to bring infrastructure back together.

So what is Labour's alternative? It's clear the Tory-led government is to stick to the franchise model for the delivery of rail services.

If they are unwilling to look again at the whole structure of the industry, then they should at the very least reform the way these franchises are handed out so that we no longer reward irresponsibility at the top.

That means not rewarding companies that walk away from franchises to avoid payments to government, or who stealthily widen peak time to charge the highest

prices for more of the day.

Nor does it mean rewarding companies who average out the fare cap, so commuters pay way over the odds for a ticket, even if Tory Ministers have allowed for this. It's time for an end to the something for nothing in our privatised industries anymore.

Of course if Labour wins the next election then we will be able to go further. That is why the policy review that we are carrying out is looking at what should be the right structure for the rail industry to deliver rail services fit for the 21st century.

Labour is now committed to looking at the best way to tackle the fragmented structure of our industry and whether the subsidy and private profit model of our industry remains fit for purpose. And I rule nothing in and nothing out and we do not start with an ideological view that private is best.

If we are to continue to ask tax-payers to subsidise the running of the railways by £4bn each and every year, we cannot continue with a model where a few at the top can walk away with huge profits, while fares rise and services are nowhere near the quality that passengers expect.

The country wants us to find a better way to deliver rail service in Britain. They manage it in other parts of Europe and we can do it here too.

We need to work together over the coming year on developing our alternative model for the rail industry, and in the meantime stand shoulder to shoulder against the government's disastrous McNulty reforms which are nothing more than a prescription for high fares, deep cuts, fewer staff, further privatisation and more fragmentation. I am confident that together we can win this fight for the future of our railways.

Maria Eagle MP is Shadow Secretary of State for Transport



RFA members fighting for decent pensions

EU AND FRENCH GOVERNMENT BLAMED FOR SEAFRANCE COLLAPSE

French unions have slammed the European Commission, the French government and the country's national rail group (SNCF) for the liquidation of Calais-Dover operator SeaFrance, writes Jeff Apter in Paris.

The Paris commercial court rejected a co-operative venture backed by the northern branch of the CFDT ratings' union due to insufficient financial backing, the only plan before it. The cross Channel operator employed directly 880 people in France and 130 in Dover. Hundreds of other indirect jobs are at stake in the Calais area.

Previously, the EC's competition authority had refused various refinancing and restructuring plans presented by the SNCF, SeaFrance's 100 per cent owner that historically has been responsible for the Calais - Dover sea link.

The powerful CGT rail union accused it of abandoning SeaFrance's cross-Channel maritime route to promote Eurotunnel that takes SNCF's passenger and freight trains, and said management had accepted without a fight the European Commission's rejection of its SeaFrance survival plans.

France's government has come under fire for doing nothing to save SeaFrance and its workforce until the court's decision. The CFDT ratings' union was also criticised, including by its own TUC, for "not having acted honourably" to save jobs. It was slammed for previously refusing to consider the plan of France-based channel operator Louis Dreyfus Armateurs (LDA) and Denmark's DFDS to save 640 jobs and two ferries under the French flag.



Just a day after SeaFrance's liquidation and months before this April's presidential election, French transport minister Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet in a hastily arranged visit to Calais said the government's aim was to save a maximum number of jobs. She said President Sarkozy had asked the SNCF to provide jobs to 500 SeaFrance employees, but mostly not in the Calais area or in the maritime sector. She said that redundancy payments for SeaFrance workers would be over the legal maximum and could be used to invest in the co-operative in a possible agreement with other investors.

The minister also said LDA and DFDS were now offering to employ 300 French seafarers - half the number of its previous offer - and take two French-flagged ferries. LDA immediately confirmed it was in the running to take over the Calais-Dover link.

Marc Sagot, the head of the CGT union at SeaFrance doubted the SNCF's offer,

saying that two previous SeaFrance redundancy plans concerning 800 people in the last three years had provided only 15 jobs. His union had never believed in the viability of the co-operative's plan and, in the absence of European Commission, SNCF and government action, had backed the plan presented by LDA and DFDS.

Meanwhile, despite the liquidation of SeaFrance, a French Calais-Dover operation is still a possibility. The Paris commercial court appointed a mediator to save as many jobs as possible and sell the SNCF subsidiary's assets to pay off its debts.

Following SeaFrance's demise, in addition to the latest LDA/DFDS offer, talks on the future of a Calais-Dover operation continue with Eurotunnel, which could take "51%-100%" of the operator. Further private plans to buy what is left of the publicly owned operator could be forthcoming.

ROAD FREIGHT ORGANISING CAMPAIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the Road Freight Organising campaign, the union produced a questionnaire for all relevant members to gather information to help plan the campaign.

To encourage members to return questionnaires all returned forms were entered into a draw with the first three drawn out receiving £50 worth of RMT gear.

The winners, picked by assistant general secretary Mick Cash at the Road Freight Liaison Committee meeting in the boardroom at Unity House, were Howard John Aspinall, DHL Coventry; S V Ford, Freightliner Heavy Haul, Crewe Bedford House and Darren Sutton, Owner Driver at City Link Shrewsbury.

The union aims to visit road-freight depots to recruit

new members and find reps to build the strength and organisation of the union to improve its ability to represent and service members.

Mick Cash thanked all those who took the time to fill in the questionnaire and return them to RMT.

"The information you have provided will be put to good use," he said.



WINNERS: Mick Cash with conference secretary Andy Hill and conference president Pete Daniels in the Unity House boardroom with the three winning questionnaire forms.

MANUAL HANDLING

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

WHAT IS MANUAL HANDLING?

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 define it as “any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force”.

In effect it means any activity that requires an individual to lift, move or support a load will be classified as a manual handling task.

EMPLOYERS' DUTIES

- Employers have a general duty to ensure the health and safety at work of all employees under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974.
- Under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 the employer must, as far as possible, avoid the need for hazardous manual handling operations.
- Where a hazardous manual handling operation cannot be avoided, a thorough risk assessment must be undertaken.
- Measures must be introduced to avoid the risk where possible and to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable (when it cannot be avoided).
- The measures should encompass the provision of suitable training and information to employees. Training should include the principles of correct handling, a safe system of work and the use of any risk reduction measures provided by the employer.
- Precise information should be provided on the nature of the load to be handled, including

weight, centre of gravity, etc.

- Monitoring must take place to ensure the effectiveness of those measures, and reassessment must be carried out where necessary.

In the first instance, if a task has not been assessed under the regulations, contact your health and safety rep. RMT recommends that risk assessments of any kind are carried out in conjunction with the employer and the RMT accredited health and safety rep. If new equipment is installed or a working practice or piece of legislation changes then new assessments must be made to reflect this.

The assessment should look at four specific areas. To help you remember this approach, use the word TILE, the initial letter of each element: Task, Individual, Load and Environment. Some of the factors to consider in each element are listed below. This list is not exhaustive:

1. THE TASK

Does it involve twisting, stooping, bending, excessive travel, pushing, pulling or precise positioning of the load, sudden movement, inadequate rest or recovery periods, team handling or seated work?

2. THE INDIVIDUAL

Does the individual require unusual strength or height, are they pregnant, disabled or suffer from a health problem, or require specialist knowledge or training?

3. THE LOAD

Is the load heavy, unwieldy, difficult to grasp, sharp, hot, cold, difficult to grip, or the contents likely to move or shift?

4. THE ENVIRONMENT

Space constraints, uneven, slippery or unstable floors, and variations in floor levels extremely hot cold or humid, poor lighting, poor ventilation, gusty winds, clothing or PPE that restricts movement?

No manual handling activity is completely safe but using HSE guidelines, as part of a well thought out risk assessment will reduce the risks from manual handling activities. The guidelines may need to be lowered if there are environmental or other factors that could have an adverse effect or the activity involves twisting or bending, similarly if the task is being carried out frequently these guidelines should be lowered.

For further details on loads and recommended frequency of lifts please consult the HSE's Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC Tool) which is available for free on the HSE website.

Mechanical handling aids can reduce the risk of injury when used correctly. Even simple aids such as trolleys, sack trucks and wheelbarrows can all be used to move items. It is better to push rather than pull using your body weight and leg muscles to do the work. Make sure you keep the load under control, particularly on slopes. Take care with machinery that is not fit for purpose or that has been 'adapted' for use – this could end up being more dangerous than manually lifting bulky or weighty items.

In some cases more sophisticated manual handling aids may be required. Cranes, hoists, pallet trucks, conveyors and forklift trucks are used extensively in many industries



to eliminate manual handling. It should be remembered that although they will eliminate many of the manual handling risks their use will introduce others, and these risks must be assessed.

Another consideration is that many of these items require a periodic statutory inspection on safety critical components. Many such operations come with their own specific legislation, for example the Work at Heights Regulations 2005.

A fully comprehensive guide to the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 can be downloaded for free from the HSE's website. The document code is L23.

If you are injured in the course of your work and your employer is responsible then contact your branch secretary for a Personal Injury Claim Form, L1.

Your employer has a duty of care to you and must comply with the various workplace safety regulations to mitigate any hazards. If they are found negligent, you may be awarded compensation. Report any unsafe working practices to your RMT health and safety rep.



UK TAXPAYERS TO PAY FOR DESTRUCTION OF TRAIN-BUILDING INDUSTRY

Union calls on government to act to save 10,000 jobs at Bombardier in Derby and in the supply chain by awarding the Thameslink fleet to the UK-based company

RMT is demanding that the government reverse the decision to award the crucial Thameslink fleet contract to German giant Siemens following revelations that the Siemens bid was priced in Euros and with the ten per cent decline in the value of the currency since tendering the cost to the UK taxpayer on the £1.4 billion contract has soared by £140 million.

In a response to a series of parliamentary questions from Derby MP Chris Williamson, a member of the RMT Parliamentary Group, the Department of Transport confirmed that elements of each of the named rolling stock procurements are priced in foreign currencies, including the Euro, and that "up to the point of financial close any fluctuations in the value of the Pound against the Euro have the potential to impact upon the cost of these procurements to Her Majesty's government".

RMT believes that the fluctuation in the Siemens price, added to the social and economic cost of the loss of 10,000 jobs at Bombardier in Derby and in the supply chain, means that the case for reversing the original decision is now overwhelming and the delay in signing off the deal presents the government with a window of opportunity to do just that.

A key Commons committee has also called for the whole procurement process to be subjected to a full scrutiny by the National Audit Office.

The Transport Select Committee report confirmed everything that the union has been saying about the loaded and distorted procurement process that has left 10,000 jobs at Bombardier in Derby and in the supply chain, hanging by a thread including:

- The failure to include socio economic factors in the tendering process right from the start loaded

the dice against Bombardier

- More account was taken of the banking and financial status of Siemens than of the design, quality and excellence of the tried and tested Bombardier engineering
- The facts behind the decision to knock back the Bombardier bid have been shrouded in the cloak of "commercial confidentiality" despite the severe implications for UK train-building.
- There should be a proper rolling-stock procurement plan aimed at protecting and expanding jobs and skills and recognising UK design and build excellence.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed the report but said that the catalogue of failure behind the betrayal of Bombardier had sunk to a new low.

"This report confirms what RMT has said all along - that the procurement process was loaded against Bombardier regardless of the social and economic impact of dumping 10,000 manufacturing jobs.

"Political inaction, combined with EU diktat, came together in a poisonous cocktail to deliver a hammer blow to train building in the nation that gave the railways to the world.

"News that the taxpayer will now expected to subsidise Siemens to the tune of £140 million due to the collapse in value of the euro is one more reason to cancel this deal and back British train manufacturing.

"RMT has said for months that the chaos in the financial markets has delayed the sign off of the Thameslink deal and now that we have been proved right it is time for the government to cut the lies and give this vital work to the Derby workforce, who are geared up and ready to go, while there is still time," he said. ■



OFFSHORE HOLIDAYS DISMISSED

RMT offshore organiser Jake Molloy explains how the Supreme Court threw out a test case for the right to holiday entitlement for offshore workers

The Supreme Court has thrown out a claim for paid leave under the Working Time Regulations for offshore members.

Five Law Lords passed their decision last month, bringing the legal fight to an end. No more appeals, no more legal action and OUR MEMBERS HAVE NO RIGHT TO TIME AWAY FROM WORK AS PAID LEAVE and that's the LAW.

The fight for 'holidays' started back in 1992 with a trip to Brussels to lobby to have the EU Working Time Directive extended to offshore workers in the UK. Members wanted a slice of what their Norwegian counterparts already enjoyed and in 1992 that was a two-on three-off, two-on four-off shift system.

Our Norwegian brothers and sisters have moved on since then and now work a straight two-on four-off system. The move to the straight 2x4 was better to protect the health of the workforce as it's a fact that 'progress' in Norway is truly borne out of protecting the health and safety of workers.

The highest court in the land heard the union arguments in October 2011. Over eight years had passed since the European health and safety directive was extended offshore to offer better health protections, 13 years since the UK applied the Working Time Regs and nearly 20 years since the EU rolled the Directive out.

In that time Norwegian, Dutch and Danish offshore workers have all seen

'progress' with a reduction in annual working hours. During the same period nothing has changed for many UK workers, apart from the fact they do more training now and all during time 'off'.

It was a tortuous couple of days in the Supreme Court and the most frustrating part was listening to the QC acting for the employers.

Incredibly, Mr Kavanagh QC persuaded the Lords that offshore employers had designed the equal time two-on two-off shift system specifically to accommodate workers' holidays. He claimed that offshore workers were the same as school teachers and professional footballers who, like the offshore workforce, had seen no effect with the introduction of the working-time regulations.

The employers had in fact spent more than three years (2003-07) arguing that the regs didn't apply. So if 2x2 was designed to provide holidays, why spend hundreds of thousands of pounds pursuing that argument? And how could offshore workers be compared to school teachers and footballers when you consider the annual working hours of each profession? Nevertheless, the Judges bought into Kavanagh QC's arguments.

Thomas Linden QC, acting on our behalf, was repeatedly interrupted by the Lords as they struggled with the idea that someone who 'only' works 26 weeks a year could possibly be seeking more time off.

Mr Linden did an admirable job deflecting at times a barrage of dismissive comments and questions from the pompous Lords. He pointed out that every other category of 'shift' or part-time worker would have some time away from work when on holiday and that offshore workers were no different, they too should have time off work. Mr Linden stated our case with clarity, dignity and most of all honesty, more than could be said for the employers.

Our QC summarised the opinion of every 2x2 offshore worker in his closing remarks when he said "these offshore workers believe they have an entitlement to a holiday on the basis they work the equivalent of 42-hours per week for 52-weeks a year, minimum".

This doesn't include helicopter travel, training, overtime, delays, or the time spent offshore off-shift. And that was our case in a nutshell. We want a reduction in annual hours to improve the occupational health of our members and workers across this hazardous industry. We believe that's what the EU intended. At the same time, the offshore employers who claim - "health and safety is our priority" - have spent millions resisting it. We say shame on you!

The RMT Offshore Energy Branch is organising a series of meetings around the country for members to meet and discuss the ruling and how we can fight back. Log onto www.oilc.org for further information.

HELICOPTER CRASH REPORT REVEALS “MISUNDERSTANDINGS”

Offshore regional organiser Jake Molloy looks at the report on the 2009 fatal helicopter crash which killed 16 people

The 209-page official report into the fatal crash of Bond Helicopters flight '85 November' is an extremely complex in-depth analysis of the events before, during and after the fatal flight which killed the two crew and 14 passengers on board, two of whom were RMT members.

The report is difficult reading due to its highly technical nature, but there are aspects which need no explanation.

Investigators found all those on board had sustained multiple injuries consistent with “impact related forces”. The pathologist reported that “the forces involved were such that the accident was not survivable and that no additional safety equipment would have affected the fatal outcome of this accident.” The helicopter literally fell out of the sky after the catastrophic failure of the main rotor gear box, which separated from the aircraft fuselage, and it crashed into the sea off Peterhead, killing all 16 occupants.

The terror of the situation faced by all those on board and

the timeframe for it happening is captured in the reported voice recordings during the last few seconds before the accident. At 12.54:22 there was a low oil pressure warning from the main gear box; two seconds later an “expletive” is heard from the commander. The report then reads: “At 12.54:31 hrs, six seconds after the commander expressed alarm, he transmitted “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY” followed one second later by the co-pilot transmitting “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY, THIS IS BOND 85 NOVEMBER, ‘MERGENCY, CURRENTLY ON THE 055”. One second later, at 12.54:42 hrs, one of the flight crew uttered an expletive; this was the final radio transmission. This occurred 20 seconds after the Main Gear Box oil low pressure warning”.

For all workers in the industry these two short sections from the report send shivers up the spine. The report confirms the deep-rooted fears of thousands of offshore workers who know that all the survival training in the world is not going to help in situations

such as this. It is for these reasons that everything must be done to prevent such catastrophic failures of equipment and specifically the equipment which is keeping you in the air. And it is around this issue in particular that questions will inevitably be asked about the events prior to the crash.

There will be questions because the report reveals that apparent ‘misunderstandings’ between the helicopter operator (Bond Helicopters) and the helicopter manufacturer (Eurocopter) may have prevented a main rotor gearbox fault being identified. On March 25, A week before the tragedy, a “metallic particle” was found during maintenance. The report suggests that had a system called EDR - EuroHums Diagnostic Report - been used to identify what the ‘particle’ was, the outcome may have been different.

The report states: “The use of telephone conversations to relay complex technical issues which are not backed up by written communication allows for the possibility of a

misunderstanding or miscommunication and the issues remaining unidentified, with potentially significant consequences. The disparities between the statements and reports show this situation arose on 25 March 2009. Had written confirmation of the telephone conversations been provided or requested it is possible that the disparity would have been identified, by one or both parties, and rectified.”

The question for RMT is why wasn't the ERD system used? It seems perfectly reasonable to suggest that to err on the side of caution would have been appropriate approach.

Many of our members feel that if Bond wanted to avoid the need for a complete strip-down of the gear box, the ERD system would be the next ‘fall-back’ position. Instead, a series of phone calls and emails were used to justify the continued use of the helicopter. RMT will be meeting with the STUC to discuss an approach to the Crown office on this question.



RMT EDUCATION COURSES

Education officer Andy Gilchrist outlines educational opportunities this year at the union's purpose-built centre in Doncaster

All RMT members should take a look overleaf at the education programme on offer at your education centre in Doncaster for 2012.

These courses provide all those attending with the skills, competence and confidence to strengthen and build our union in the workplace.

The programme begins with the full core-skills programme:

1. Workplace representatives course at Level 1&2 – Attendance at a Level 1 course is vital to fully appreciate and gain the maximum from the other courses planned. In addition all those workplace representatives who attended a Level 1 course in 2011 or before should look to attend a Level 2 course in 2012.
2. Branch officials course at Level 1&2 – All existing, and aspiring, branch officials should look to attend a Level 1 course in 2012 where the key duties and responsibilities of the position are mapped out. If you have attended a Level 1 course then Level 2 will further support and assist you as a Branch Official, this course also now contains the Membership IT elements of the previous Branch Secretary's IT course and links it to building a stronger and more effective branch.

In addition several new courses have been developed for which attendance at a Workplace Representatives Level 1 course is a vital precursor:

1. Representing RMT members – Perhaps the most important role any of our reps/officials perform is to represent their brothers and sisters when a grievance is raised or they are facing discipline. This course provides you with all the key skills and confidence to do both.
2. Communication for RMT – Getting our message across is vital if we are to build strong RMT workplaces and branches, this new course will provide you with the ability to do this in a variety of

ways as well as understanding how the union nationally works to combat the worst excesses of some of the national media and get our message across.

3. Organising for a winning RMT – Organising is the way to ensure we have a strong RMT now and in the future, this course has been developed with the assistance of the RMT's own organising unit and sets out the strategies and activities that can build strong RMT workplaces.
4. Winning in the global workplace – Increasingly the problems you face in the workplace have a global dimension and so the solutions may also require a global perspective. This course uncovers the globalisation of work and how trade unions can fight back.
5. Pensions – Increasingly under threat, we need to ensure we have officials in every workplace that can advise members on where to get help and to offer safe and reliable information about something that they will be relying on for many years after they leave work, this course will provide those skills.
6. Union Learning Representatives – If you want to make a difference in the workplace and progress the RMT learning agenda for members then you should look to attend one of these courses

7. RMT political course – A week looking at and discussing the political world that we live in, to attend this course you should contact the RMT political officer James Croy at j.croy@rmt.org.uk

If you want to attend any of these courses then please contact the RMT national education officer at a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk or write to RMT Education, Unity House, 39 Chalton St, London, NW1 1JD

You will find a week at your excellent education centre beneficial to you and your workmates, enjoyable and interesting. ■



TEAR OFF AND SEND TO UNITY HOUSE

I wish to attend the

COURSE

Name

Branch

Contact details

RMT Education, Unity House, 39 Chalton St, London, NW1 1JDa

NATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRE																			
	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
JAN		B/HOL	B/HOL	CLOSED						Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)							ULR Co		
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
FEB					Branch Officials Level 1 days					Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)							Workplace Represe		
						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
MAR						Workplace Reps LEVEL 1 - (5 days)				Branch Officials LEVEL 2 - (5 days)							Political Course -		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
APR			PENSIONS				B/HOL			B/HOL	CLOSED						Workplace Represe		
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
MAY				Organising for RMT Seafarers - (5 days)						B/HOL	CLOSED						ULR Co		
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
JUN							WKP Reps			B/HOL	B/HOL	CLOSED					Workplace Represe		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
JUL			Winning in the Global Workplace - (5 days)							Branch Officials LEVEL 2 - (5 days)							Representation of		
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
AUG					Workplace Reps LEVEL 1 days					PENSIONS - (5 days)							ULR Co		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
SEPT			Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)							Branch Officials LEVEL 1 - (5 days)							Communic		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
OCT			Branch Officials LEVEL 1 - (5 days)							Organising for a Winning RMT - (5 days)							Workplace Represe		
						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
NOV						Representation of RMT Members days				Workplace Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days)							ULR Co		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
DEC			Winning in the Global Workplace - (5 days)							Branch Officials LEVEL 2 - (5 days)							Workplace Represe		

CENTRE - COURSE PLANNER 2012

S	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
ULR Course - (5 days)						Workplace Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days) NETWORK RAIL Tutors: G Hewitt & P Pinkney							Branch Officials Level 1 Tutors: G Burrows & J Jones						
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29				
Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days)						Winning in a Global Workplace - (5 days) Tutors: G Buchanan & P Pinkney							Workplace Representative LEVEL 1 - (5 days) Tutors: M Evans & A Lister						
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Course - Sun, 11th - Thurs,15th						Organising for a Winning RMT - (5 days) Tutors: D Gilbey & C Reilly							Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days) Tutors: G Harrison & D Jones						
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						
Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)						Workplace Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days) Tutors: K Lingwood & J Philp							Org for RMT Seafarers						
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
ULR Course - (5 days)						Understanding Struggle - PAST & PRESENT (5 days)							Workplace Representative LEVEL 1 - (5 days) Tutors: G Burrows & B Potts						
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days)						Branch Officials LEVEL 1 - (5 days) Tutors: C Reilly & D Gilbey							Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days) Tutors: K Murphy & J Jones						
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
tion of RMT Members - (5 days)						Organising for a Winning RMT - (5 days) Tutors: K Murphy & G Burrows							Workplace Reps LEVEL 1 (5 days) Tutors: R Knight & A Lister						
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
ULR Course - (5 days)						Workplace Representatives LEVEL 2 - (5 days) Tutors: J Philp & M Evans							B/HOL	CLOSED					
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
munication for the RMT						Branch Officials Level 2 (5 days) Tutors: G Hewitt & M Tosh													
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)						Political School - Sun, 21st - Thurs, 25th							Representation of RMT Members - (5 days) Tutors: G Harrison & C Reilly						
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
ULR Course - (5 days)						Workplace Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 dasy) Tutors: J Philp & M Tosh							CLOSED OWHIO A BROWN & BHL						
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
Representatives LEVEL 1 - (5 days)						CLOSED	B/HOL	B/HOL	CLOSED				B/HOL	B/HOL	CLOSED				

Conference statement

NATIONALISATION NOT PRIVATISATION

Transport trade unions gathered in London in January 2011 to discuss the need for transport workers to build resistance to European Union policies, which promote privatisation, fragmentation, social dumping, outsourcing and attacks on collective employment conditions and workers' rights. Continuing EU attacks on publicly owned networks and transport workers confirm this analysis and include:

1. On March 28 the European Commission published its Transport White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area demanding 'market opening' in all areas of transport;
2. On November 14 the European parliament rubberstamped a 'recast' of its first rail liberalisation package, imposing the EU's rail privatisation model – fragmentation, separation, competition – establishing a 'single European railway area' as a market for monopoly finance capital and to attack rail workers' national collective agreements and social rights;
3. Continuing catastrophic decline in maritime employment conditions and lifeline ferry services as a result of EU liberalisation of 'cabotage', EU treaties governing 'freedom of establishment' and continuing disastrous consequences from 'flags of convenience';
4. Enforced privatisation of urban transport networks under the EU regulation (2007) on public service obligations in local public transport by road and rail;
5. Abandonment of 'socialised transport' in favour of services run in the interests of corporate monopoly capital, where profit becomes the only criterion;
6. More expensive, less efficient public transport for citizens and users, where greed, the domination of financial interests and profit are allowed to destroy jobs, public transport services and communities.

Since our last meeting the intensifying political and economic crisis in the EU has not stemmed the drive towards privatisation of transport networks, or the flow of EU legislation demanding it.

In fact privatisation of transport and other national assets is a central demand of the International Monetary Fund/EU/European Central Bank troika to impose austerity and a mass privatisation programme on Greece and Portugal and to transfer assets to British, French and German banks. As the crisis of European banks and the 'Euro' intensifies, other workers will suffer similar attacks on their fundamental democratic rights. European Court of Justice decisions target trade-union rights and freedoms and promote the rights of capital and business in the EU, while austerity measures of national governments and EU institutions target the social gains of previous generations. Unless the EU and the corporate power that stands behind it are challenged by trade unions fighting for nationalised, publicly accountable public services, attacks on workers through privatisation and social dumping will continue and be assisted by recent judgments in the European Court of Justice.

The unions therefore called for a united demonstration in Brussels on the first anniversary of the publication of European Commission Transport White Paper on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 and Europe-wide national action by trade unions representing transport workers, during the week March 26-31, 2012 to:

- Defend their critical national infrastructure as a key component of national sovereignty and democracy.
- Target protests against EU institutions (European Commission offices, EU regulatory agencies, EU financial and political institutions, etc), which facilitate and enforce privatisation and liberalisation of rail, light rail, bus and ferry services (e.g. SeaFrance).
- Coordinate solidarity protests with transport workers and their trade unions where they are engaged in a struggles to oppose the effects of EU social dumping and call for defence of workers' and trade union rights and national collective bargaining.
- Demand that national transport infrastructure and services are owned, managed and maintained by sovereign national bodies accountable to citizens of those states.

Lisbon, November 2011

PROTEST ON MARCH 28 AGAINST EU TRANSPORT DIKTATS

RMT president Alex Gordon reports from a conference of transport trade unions in Portugal which vowed to protest in Brussels on March 28 2012 against the EU's privatisation drive

RMT is one of the trade unions supporting a united protest by transport workers' unions in Brussels on the first anniversary of the publication of European Commission Transport White Paper, Wednesday, 28 March, 2012.

The protest call was made at the congress of the Federation of Portuguese Transport and Communications Unions (FECTRANS) in Lisbon two days after workers brought Portugal to a standstill with air traffic controllers, metro, bus and rail workers, port and dock workers road hauliers and ferry workers, teachers and hospital staff joining a general strike against EU austerity

policies.

FECTRANS delegates debated the current attacks on democracy and employment rights in Portugal where new anti-union laws were introduced by the right-wing government last year, while Portugal's economy has now been placed under control of the so-called "troika" (the EU, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) as the price for the EU 'bailout'.

One speaker told delegates: "Here in Portugal we are occupied by a foreign troika represented by the EU, ECB and IMF and a domestic troika represented by the three main political parties who all agree to implement their policies".



PROTEST: Trade unionists march with flags and banners during the 24-hour general strike in November. People gathered in the streets of the capital during a nationwide 24-hour general strike to protest against harsh EU austerity measures the government has been implementing in the country.

Congress welcomed the airline pilots' and the postal workers' unions as new affiliates to FECTRANS and elected new general secretary, Jose Manuel Oliviera from railway union SNTSF.

I brought best wishes from RMT to Portugal's fighting trade unionists. I told delegates that RMT stands on the side of workers and trade unions who are fighting to ensure their public services and national infrastructure, including transport services and infrastructure are publicly owned and democratically controlled, not privatised by transnational corporations as the price for EU membership.

FECTRANS also hosted an international trade union meeting in Lisbon, which continued the work begun at RMT's international conference 'Nationalisation not Privatisation' held in London in January 2011.

The meeting was attended by trade unions and national trade union confederations from Britain, Italy, France, Cyprus, Spain and Portugal. A representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions also attended as an observer.

The meeting proposed actions to challenge the European Commission's 2011 Transport White Paper, and the so-called 'recast' of the EU first railway package, which are intended to continue the drive to privatise transport services in a "single European transport area".

An appeal for action was circulated to all transport trade unions (see left). ■



President's column



HS2 HYPOCRISY

19th century Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli described Tory government as "an organised hypocrisy". Times ten for this ConDem coalition.

So, what should RMT members make of Transport Secretary, Justine Greening's plans for High-Speed 2 (HS2) from London to Birmingham?

Greening, who previously confirmed Siemens would manufacture Thameslink trains in Germany and sabotaged plans to build Crossrail trains in Derby, now says HS2 is "essential for growth of the UK economy".

But, like Chancellor, George Osborne's 'national infrastructure plan' last November, nobody explains where money for HS2 comes from. Doubtless, as with the Olympic stadium, construction companies will choose the cheapest labour available in the global market, rather than provide training and apprenticeships for Britain's 3 million unemployed. Investments that boost firms' profits and share prices without creating new jobs for local workers, produce negligible benefits.

Strangely, Justine Greening didn't seem so concerned about jobs and growth when Bob Crow and I met her last month. In fact, she is preparing a "Command Paper" of Sir Roy McNulty's proposals for a 'staff-lite' rail network for the current parliament.

Labour Shadow Transport Secretary, Maria Eagle welcomed HS2. Likewise, London mayor, Boris Johnson backed the plan. No doubt the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dalai Lama are writing to The Guardian right now, claiming HS2 can deliver God's heavenly kingdom on earth.

Voices of opposition to HS2 have been parodied as feudal throwbacks and Home Counties nimbys, who don't want noisy construction workers upsetting their polo ponies. However, for railway workers a very real question arises.

What if the government is using the HS2 media circus, as political cover to distract attention from their real objective of launching 'Beeching Mark 2' - a massacre of our actually, existing rail network?

McNulty's proposals give train operators carte blanche to close one in three ticket offices, cut 'loss-making' services, make DDO-passenger the 'default mode' and smash up Network Rail for auctioning to the Tories' City of London paymasters.

McNulty aims for Britain's rail network to remain fragmented, privatised and easy pickings for government cuts and private profiteers, as part of a 'Single European Transport Area' open to privatisation, social dumping and competition from Helsinki to Athens.

Already, the new Department for Transport franchise for 'Greater Western' from April 2013, specifies closing 29 stations' ticket offices and cutting opening hours at 17 others - before MPs have even debated McNulty's review.

You can see how government ministers might hope to distract opposition to these cuts with futuristic, science-fiction, fantasies of HS2, while they get on with axing jobs and services and ramping up rail fares to boost train operators' profits.

Craig Bennett, Friends of the Earth policy and campaigns director points out: "We need to revolutionise travel away from roads and planes, but pumping £32bn into high-speed travel for the wealthy few while ordinary commuters suffer is not the answer."

"High-speed rail has a role to play in developing a greener, faster transport system, but current plans won't do enough to cut emissions overall - ministers should prioritise spending on improving local train and bus services instead." Hear, hear!

Paying for HS2 by cutting jobs, services and investment elsewhere, as McNulty proposes, will meet stiff resistance led by RMT.

This is why Bob Crow makes clear: "We are demanding HS2 is built, owned and operated in the public sector, free from greed and profiteering of private rail companies, whose exploitation of the travelling public has dragged our railways down for a generation."

RMT members will join transport trade unionists from across Europe in Brussels on Wednesday 28 March, to expose the organised hypocrisy of the ConDems, the European Commission and their 'Single European Railway Market'.

Put the date in your diary now and book your leave. Details will soon be available on RMT's website and from your branch secretary. I look forward to seeing you there. And a very Happy New Year to you and your family!

Alex Gordon



RMT WARNS BEWARE 'LEGAL LOAN SHARKS'

RMT's Credit Union held its annual general meeting last month amid the growing scandal of pay-day loan companies like Wonga.com charging interest rates of over a staggering 4,200 per cent

Credit Union AGM:
Watch the video on
RMTv at rmtv.org.uk

A new report by a group called R3 has found that 45 per cent of the population struggle to make it to pay day each month before running out of cash and that 3.5 million adults are considering taking out a pay-day loan in the next six months.

Pay-day loans provide access to small sums of money until a person's next pay-day, but are controversial because of the rate of interest they charge which can, in some cases, be over 4,200 per cent APR.

However RMT Credit Union chairman Mick Lynch, addressing this year's Credit Union's AGM at Unity House, said that the unions set-up was a mutual loans and savings co-operative which was safe, trustworthy and with the most competitive interest and loans rates around.

He warned that pay-day companies were preying on the misery caused by the economic

crisis.

"Our advice to someone thinking about taking out a pay-day loan is, don't do it.

"Credit unions in Britain already help nearly a million people to manage their money and they only exist to do this, not make a profit for outside shareholders.

"The RMT Credit Union is run by RMT members for RMT members, so join today," he said.

R3 president Frances Coulson also warned that payday loans were not the best way to resolve debt issues and often led to "escalating financial problems".

The companies all have friendly names like Wonga, PayDay UK and Kwikcash but they have very unfriendly interest rates including Wonga.com which has a representative APR of 4,214 per cent.

The Consumer Action Group

reported one case of a £400 pay-day loan which could not be paid back and which one company refused to discuss with the victim until the borrower received a debt-collection demand for £3,424.

Labour MP Stella Creasy is campaigning against what she calls 'legal loan sharks' and introduced a bill to deal with them, but did not gain government support.

"These companies are just popping up from nowhere and it's all completely legal.

"There are millions of people who can't make ends meet and lack of regulation means they're prey to loan sharks like this," she says.

For more information about the RMT Credit Union and its products go to the back of this magazine or, better still, join up today.

FOR BREAD AND FREEDOM

RMT president Alex Gordon and retired shipping member Stuart Hyslop report on a visit to the headquarters of a Portuguese seafarers' union

Portugal's first overseas shipping company founded in 1377 expanded after the unification of Portugal in 1411 to found the world's first global empire.

Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, Vasco da Gama reached India in 1498, and from 1519–1522 Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition to circumnavigate the Earth.

The economic and military fortunes of Portugal have depended on her seafarers for 800 years. Older RMT members may recall the famous 'Santa Maria', a luxury Portuguese cruiseliner taken over by rebels led by Portuguese military officer Henrique Galvão in 1961 to overthrow the dictator, Salazar, and bring colonial independence.

Today, an important part of the story of Portuguese seafarers is preserved in the shabby Lisbon offices of the Union of Merchant Seamen of Portugal (SMMP - Sindicato dos Marinheiros Mercantes de Portugal).

The union today is barely active with a handful of remaining members as a result of the same factors faced by

British Merchant Marine: flags of convenience, social dumping, bulk carriers and the added difficulty of a government-backed sweetheart deal since the 1980s between ship owners and other maritime unions designed to smash the SMMP.

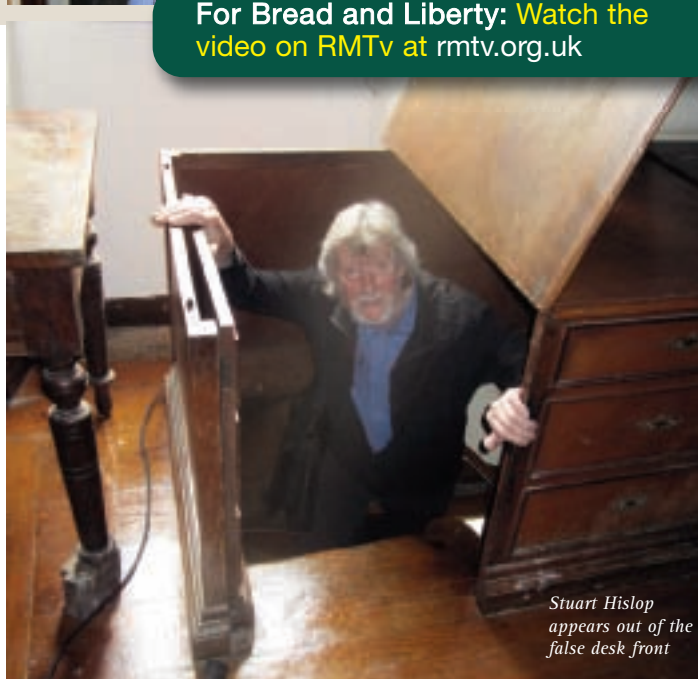
The SMMP was founded in 1916 as its slogan says: "In the struggle for bread and for freedom" ("Na luta pelo pão e pela liberdade").

The early trade union movement from the First Portuguese Republic (1910–1926) was threatened by a military coup in May 1926, which installed the fascist-corporatist 'New State' ("Estado Novo"). Under Salazar's dictatorship trade unions and working class political parties were heavily repressed.

The SMMP offices bear witness to the underground struggle to survive of Portuguese trade unions. The walls are decorated with marvellous murals depicting the lives of Portuguese seafarers painted by a political refugee from Salazar's dictatorship who used the union office as a safe house. Unfortunately, a number of the paintings are in need of repair and unless resources are found to rescue them will be



For Bread and Liberty: Watch the video on RMTv at rmtv.org.uk



Stuart Hyslop appears out of the false desk front

lost forever.

Undoubtedly, the most unusual object is the desk of the general secretary, which contains a false front concealing a spiral staircase leading to a secret apartment where the muralist, who signed himself M A Santos but is said to be the anarchist artist, Emidio Santana, remained hidden for two years.

SMMP's office today accommodates a rooftop restaurant next to one of Lisbon's most dramatic viewing points, graphic designers' offices

and a film studio.

The beautiful modernist lettering above the glass doors and cabinets and a framed edition from Mayday 1925 of Portuguese syndicalist newspaper, *A Batalha* (The Battle) bear silent testimony from the 1920s to a great seafarers' trade union of one of the world's ancient maritime nations, locked away above the modern port of Lisbon and of the last time Europe was plunged into a corporate dictatorship. ■



LEGAL VICTORIES

RMT recovers millions of pounds in compensation and other legal victories on behalf of members. Below are a few of the latest successful cases

MEMBER HELD AT GUNPOINT RECEIVES COMPENSATION

A member who was threatened at gunpoint by a robber has received compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) after help from his trade union solicitors.

The member was left suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after the terrifying ordeal in August 2006.

The Southern Railways employee was helping a colleague to close the ticket office for the night at Sydenham station in Kent when a fake gun was held to his head by serial armed robber Richard McDonald.

McDonald had walked out of an open prison just days earlier and had recruited his cousin Edward Woodbridge to help rob the station.

Armed with a butcher's knife Woodbridge threatened his colleague, forcing her to handover thousands of pounds in cash.

Both men were later arrested and pleaded guilty to robbery and possession of an imitation firearm with intent to commit an offence.

The RMT member, who was struck across the head during the hold-up, needed months of counselling after suffering from flashbacks and nightmares.

He was unable to return to work for several months and is now working in a non-customer facing role in a different department.

Following the robbery the union looked into a possible claim of compensation from CICA.

CICA is a government organisation which pays money to those who have been physically or mentally injured because they were victims of a violent crime.

RMT instructed its lawyers, Thompsons Solicitors, to investigate a claim and was able to secure £45,550.

"The robbery was terrifying, we both thought we were going to be killed.

"I'm anxious and sometimes find it difficult to sleep at night. It has had a profound effect on my life.

"Fortunately I've now been able to return to work but I'll never be able to work as platform staff again.

"I'm grateful to RMT and Thompsons for supporting me in my claim.

"I was worried about how I would pay my mortgage with having to take so much time off work and fortunately this compensation will help me financially," the member said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow added that members too often faced dangerous situations at work.

"Our union consistently campaigns for safer workplaces where rail workers are not put at risk of attacks by the public.

"But they may always be vulnerable to criminal actions and we support them in their claims for compensation from the CICA.

"Our member had to take a long period off work and has returned to a lower salary because of this dreadful experience. It is right that he has received this award to help mitigate his losses," he said.

Harriet Wheeler from Thompsons Solicitors said that CICA allowed the innocent victims of violent crimes to claim compensation for the injuries they sustain, the trauma they experienced and the losses they incurred as a result.

"Their assailants rarely have the means to compensate the

victim, even if they are brought to justice.

"Successive governments have looked at reforming the CICA scheme and removing workplace victims from its scope.

"This case is evidence of why the CICA is vital for those who suffer traumatic ordeals at work," she said.

BUS DRIVER COMPENSATED

A member whose bus driving career was ended after being seriously assaulted by a drunk passenger has received £16,000 from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

He suffered psychological trauma and his attempts to return to work failed as a result. He was eventually made redundant on ill-health grounds.

The member had reached the end of his route and left his cab to make sure that all the passengers had alighted. A drunk youth sitting at the back insisted that the bus should carry on further. The member explained that this was not the case on a Sunday.

As the youth walked towards the front of the bus, with the apparent intention of getting off, he suddenly grabbed the member, ripping his shirt and putting his hands around his neck. He started to choke his victim and threatened to kill him.

The assailant's girlfriend tried to intervene, but the attack only stopped when a member of the public pulled the youth off.

The incident was recorded on CCTV and was reported to the police.

The member's employment was terminated several months after the attack. He had tried to return to work several times but suffered anxiety attacks when

driving a bus. RMT's lawyers submitted a claim to the CICA and the final award secured by Thompsons was for his injury and his past and future loss of earnings.

AVOIDABLE ACCIDENT INJURY

A train-fitter member was injured at work after being told by his manager to jet wash the underside of a train.

To do this, he had to stand in an uncovered concrete pit. Both he and a number of his colleagues raised concerns about doing this as the floor of the pit was covered in snow.

Their concerns were dismissed by their line manager who told them "it was only water" and that they had to get on with it.

He did as he was asked and started washing the underside of the train. After taking a comfort break, he was walking back when he slipped on a board and fell into the pit. The member suffered a nasty laceration as a result and needed a skin graft. His recovery was complicated as he picked up an MRSA infection.

He has been left with a large permanent scar over his shin and has to wear a prescribed sun block as this area will always be hyper sensitive.

He received £16,500 in compensation for his injuries and associated losses. Dimuna Gething of Thompsons Solicitors in Bristol said that the accident and the ensuing injuries were entirely avoidable.

"In the conditions he should not have been asked to carry out these tasks," she said.

Signaller compensated

An RMT member arrived at work and drove towards the signal box.

There had been some alterations in the area as there

were contractors working and a large metal meshed temporary fence and gate had been erected.

As the member unlocked the padlock and removed the chain, the gate fell from its position and towards him. He instinctively put his arm out to protect himself but the gate fell, knocking him onto the bonnet of his vehicle with the gate on top of him.

An investigation revealed

that the gate had no hinges or securing base blocks. Lighting was poor, given the early hour and the distance of the gate from the nearest light source.

The member suffered a laceration to the hand along with neck and back injuries that continue to cause him problems.

A claim was brought against Network Rail, which offered the member £2,700 compensation. Following further negotiations,

the claim. Following further negotiations, the claim was settled for over £4,000.

COMPENSATION

A train conductor member was on duty in the rear cab of his train when he stepped on some loose flooring in the cab, lost his balance and suffered a strain injury as a result.

The problem with the floor had been reported some two

weeks earlier but was not repaired until after his accident. He brought his claim through the RMT's Legal Assistance Scheme.

The evidence against Northern Rail meant that they had to accept liability for the accident and after some negotiation Mr Ross accepted an offer of settlement. ■



CONVERSATION PROTECTION FOR WHOM?

Iain Birrell of Thompsons Solicitors responds to the government's plans for "protected conversations at work"

Business secretary Vince Cable's announcement that the government will be consulting on introducing "protected conversations" into workplaces is the latest move to weaken employee rights in favour of employers.

The conversations will allow employers to avoid liability for what they say to staff.

The government has already pledged to extend the qualification period for taking an unfair dismissal claim from one to two years and is proposing reducing consultation periods for collective redundancies, weakening protections for workers when their jobs are transferred to different employers and restricting access to employment tribunals by charging fees.

Employers' organisations have convinced ministers that they are being inundated by vexatious claims and that businesses are so terrified of hiring people that it is paralysing the UK economy. They base these claims on anecdote not evidence.

The "protected conversations" proposal came after venture capitalist and Tory donor Adrian Beecroft popped up as adviser to David Cameron's policy guru Steve Hilton with a report recommending that employers

be allowed to sack workers at will and without explanation in return for a compensation payment. This would, he claimed, promote economic growth.

Although Cable and then deputy PM Nick Clegg appeared to block the plan saying, as the trade unions always have, that making people scared for their jobs will stop them spending, it was not entirely buried. Cameron announced that he wanted to make it "so a boss and an employee feel able to sit down together and have a frank conversation – at either's request".

This assumes that there is a level playing field between workers and their bosses (or even that the workers have the upper hand). In the recent employee status case of Autoclenz Ltd v Belcher, the Supreme Court explicitly recognised the fundamental inequality in bargaining power between individual employees and employers.

The government fails, deliberately or not, to understand that inequality.

And so it invites us to infer that managers cannot manage effectively if they can be held to account for what they say to staff, and how they say it. Instead they want the freedom

to have difficult conversations without risking liability.

Enabling them to do so will, presumably, allow them to manage out the underachievers, the "workshy" and the awkward more easily, and certainly within the two years they will have before they risk unfair dismissal procedures for not following the procedures that would normally protect a worker during any discussion about capability.

What if these protected conversations go wider than capability, or misconduct, to redundancy, pay or grievances and disciplinaries? What if they involve discriminatory conversations? Will an employee be allowed to be accompanied by his or her union rep to a protected conversation and what will be allowed to be reported and to whom?

On what basis could unfair dismissal proceedings be litigated if details of the protected conversation cannot be disclosed?

If protected conversations effectively rip up the rules about discrimination and consultation, they will be a rogues charter for managers looking to bully, cajole and abuse.

Responsible employers may not use them to deliberately

deny employees their legal rights, but there are plenty of employers who already try to don the cloak of "without prejudice" to try to conceal their guilt.

The industrial relations and union rights consequences of protected conversations with no or ineffective safeguards are far reaching. Any number of individual rights might be hobbled, which will certainly achieve the Beecroft vision, but they may also prevent unions being able to refer to why collective bargaining talks broke down so as they had to ballot members for action.

The government's view of good industrial relations is to tip the scales further in favour of employers by watering down and removing employment rights while restricting access to justice. At a time when those in employment in the UK need confidence in their future, driving employment rights down to the level of developing economies will create massive job insecurity and is economically illiterate.

There is no evidence that employers are scared of taking on staff because of employment laws. Anecdote should not drive policy. This is a callously calculated attack on working people. ■

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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

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

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



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





WHAT'S NEW ON RMTv

Catch the latest video updates on RMT's own on-line station at www.rmtv.org.uk

CHANNEL 1 – RMT IN ACTION

Message to London Underground train operators – How RMT supports the role of train operators and their colleagues on the London Underground.

Day of Action – Campaigning against McNulty RMT - Tyne and Wear Metro Strike, November 30, 2011

Vulnerable Workers – A short film by the RMT Vulnerable Workers Project about the issues faced by vulnerable workers in Britain today.

CHANNEL 2 – NEWS BULLETINS

Steve Todd – Shipping bulletin

Channel 3 – History Channel

Arise ye workers – the dockers' fight

CHANNEL 4 – RMT EXTRA

For Bread and for Liberty - Former NUS activist and RMT Executive member Stuart Hyslop takes a look at the fascinating history of the Sindicato Dos Marinheiros Mercantes De Portugal.

Day of Action – Public Sector Dispute, November 30, 2011

GET THE LATEST FROM RMT AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/RMTUNION WWW.TWITTER.COM/RMTUNION

RMT ELECTION RESULTS

GENERAL SECRETARY

Bob Crow has been re-elected unopposed to serve a further five-year term as RMT general secretary.

RMT COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES

The following were elected to serve a three-year term beginning on January 1 2012

GENERAL GRADES

Region 1 – Scotland

Denis Connor (Glasgow No 5 Branch)

Region 2 – Manchester & North West

Kevin Morrison (Blackpool & Fylde Branch)

Region 3 – North West & North Wales

Daren Ireland (Liverpool No 5)

Region 10 – London & Anglia

Derrick Marr (South East Essex Branch)

Michael Sargent (Dover District General Grades Branch) had earlier been elected unopposed to represent General Grades Region 9 – South East

SHIPPING GRADES

Region 2 – Karlson Lingwood (Holyhead Shipping Branch)

Region 4 – Andy Gordon (Aberdeen Shipping Branch)

Malcolm Dunning (Dover Shipping Branch) and Darren Procter (Southampton Shipping Branch) had both been previously elected unopposed to represent Shipping Grades 1 and 3.

SENIOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

Mick Cash has been re-elected for a further five-year term as RMT senior assistant general secretary



SKILLS FOR LIFE

Adult Learning is about developing your ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute numbers and the written word

Over half of all adults in this country have no formal qualifications and this can impact on their everyday life and limit their employment choices.

This does not mean a lack of 'intelligence' and certainly should not be seen as anything to be ashamed about. For a lot of us school was not an enjoyable time and maybe not the best days of our lives.

This can impact on our willingness to take up learning as an adult. There is also the embarrassment factor as very few people are happy to admit even to themselves that they would benefit from help and support to improve their literacy and numeracy, let alone to their family, friends and colleagues, and fear they may be laughed at if they do.

Many clever people have numeracy or literacy issues, but are very good at hiding it, which is a skill in itself. Life can be so much easier if you can write a really effective letter of complaint, spot an error on a household bill or help with your child's homework, and increase your potential to take up further learning and training, as well as being able to avoid embarrassing mistakes at work.

We are all missing out: lower standards

of literacy and numeracy in adults can cut people off from society, reduce their potential, diminish their confidence and affect their children's educational prospects. Studies have shown that adult learning can have a huge impact not only on individual learners but on society as a whole; improved literacy and numeracy skills can boost confidence and encourage individuals to get more involved within their communities, their families, the workplace, and the trade union movement.

Skills for Life (SfL)

SfL training is designed to help you build on and improve your existing skills in reading, writing, maths, as well as information and communications technology; these are skills that we all use in everyday life. There are five levels of qualifications for literacy and numeracy, building up to the equivalent of a GCSE A*-C.

SfL qualifications are based on national standards, so once qualified everyone can see what you're capable of.

Literacy courses cover speaking, listening, reading and writing; numeracy courses cover numbers, fractions and data,

multiplication and subtraction, measurement, shapes and time. Before starting, a confidential one-to-one assessment is carried out with a qualified tutor, so that you begin learning at an appropriate level and only cover the areas you need help on.

You can take an SfL qualification if you:

- are over 16 years of age
- have left compulsory full-time education
- do not have an up-to-date level 2 English or maths qualification (such as a GCSE)

WILL EVERYONE KNOW IF YOU TAKE UP SFL TRAINING?

Only the people you choose to tell will know that you have discussed or taken up training; this is confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone else, including your employer and colleagues.

FIND OUT MORE

You can get more information on SfL and other adult learning from your local RMT Union Learning Rep or by contacting Lindsay Rutland at RMT Learning on 020 7529 8820, or e-mail l.rutland@rmt.org.uk

GORDON'S LEARNING SUCCESS

After attending an RMT Learning 'Silver Surfer' event, helping older members to use the internet and develop their computer skills, retired member Gordon Jones has been working on finishing his memoir on life on the railways and his work as a lifelong member of the Salvation Army.

In his spare time, Gordon helps with the work at the Hope Centre in Liverpool, which provides support and a vital lifeline to people in the local

community who are vulnerable, homeless or have an addiction to drugs, as well as raising funds to help them continue this essential work.

As an RMT member for all of his working life on the railways, Gordon is living proof that union activity and union learning does not have to cease when you retire. His success shows that RMT Learning can help people from all walks of life to start and continue on their lifelong learning journey ■



GROUNDBREAKING LEARNING DEAL AT NETWORK RAIL

New initiative at Network Rail will help members to improve their skills in English and Maths

Network Rail recently agreed with the union to launch a groundbreaking pilot scheme to pay back learners for the time they put into attending a literacy or numeracy course.

There has been no previous agreement with NR that outlines any payment for members undertaking this training so this pioneering development has spurred on lots of activity amongst existing NR Union Learning Reps (ULRs) to encourage members to take up the opportunity.

In the pilot areas - Liverpool, Doncaster and Bristol - ULRs have been working hard to set up English and maths courses to start early this year. The first step was to set up and run enrolment days at the local depots, which were advertised as Learning at Work events. Anyone interested had the chance come along to find out more about what is involved and to sign up for a course.

ULR Dave Edwards organised the first Learning at Work event in November at Edge Hill depot which attracted more than 35 members. Representatives from Hugh Baird College will be providing the training along with a tutor from the local TU Education department, assisted by RMT regional organiser Andy Warnock-Smith and RMT learning development workers Emily King and Graham Chesters.

The day was a great success with over 20 people signing up for a literacy course. The ULR has organised the training so that the college will be able to

deliver the course using computers and learners will also receive some basic IT training.

There was also a session in Bristol in December with ULRs John Bebbington and Gary Abbot putting a lot of work into organising and promoting the day. Over 30 people attended and Rebecca Ridd from Filton college was there to help people enrol and take them through the initial assessment process.

"It is fantastic to see so much interest and enthusiasm in learning from RMT members and it is clear what a difference the new scheme for deferred paid release will make in supporting learners to attend their chosen course each week and gain a qualification," she said.

ULRs Carlo Pezzulo and Mark Eastwood have been drumming up a lot of interest for the Learning at Work open day planned to take place at the Doncaster,

"With this new support from Network Rail paying members for the time they invest in improving their skills, we expect the enrolment day in Doncaster to be as successful as those in Liverpool and Bristol and courses to be set up at Ten Pound Walk depot to start in January," Carlo said.

For more information on any of the courses for Network Rail employees planned to run in the New Year please contact your local ULR in Liverpool: Dave on 07954 416 811, in Bristol: Gary on 07817 762 712 and in Doncaster: Carlo on 07917 268 101. ■



BLACKPOOL MEETING

RMT general secretary Bob Crow visited Blackpool and the Fylde Coast branch to discuss the ferocious attack on the railways in the form of the McNulty report. Bob highlighted the threat to safety, services and jobs. He also blasted plans for massive fare increases and called for the broadest possible alliance between rail workers and passengers to defeat the threat from McNulty.

Bob answered a number of questions from members about

issues with First Transpennine Express, Northern Rail and Network Rail.

The branch is growing in membership and activities, with persistent lobbying of local MPs on current issues and other campaigning work. The branch also has a high profile amongst the companies it organises in and across the local community. Also present was RMT North West Organiser Andy Warnock-Smith and Relief Regional Organiser North Craig Johnston.



London Underground Engineering branch held a long service presentation evening. forty year badges went to John Byrne, Jim Stradling, Micheal Hayes and Earl Dolphy. twenty five year badges were presented to Steve Joseph, Paul Jackson, Augustine Tellis, Ed Walsh and 10 year badges went to Carl Anderson, Martin Daoud, Phil Fennell, Anthony Mack, Gary Petford and Arif Wazir.

SOUTH HANTS AWARDS



Bob Crow presenting awards to Peter Wyman (25 years), Trevor Wells (25 years), David Legg (40 years), Martin Hinsley (25 years), Les Ricketts (40 years), Graham Knott (25 years), Steven Edwards (25 years), Graham Cousins (25 years).

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

Keen footballer Rob Hughes was viciously attacked by five British youths outside a nightclub in an unprovoked attack while on holiday in the resort of Malia, Crete on June 17 2008.

He was fighting for his life in a Crete hospital after the savage attack and underwent four operations on his brain.

His alleged attackers, from the Surrey and Sussex areas, were allowed to fly home by Greek police because of a loophole in the law despite being identified by eye witnesses.

It is a testament to Rob's courage and determination, along with the dedication of his family, that after being given only a slim chance of survival he now starts what may be a long recovery process.

Rob's family had to endure the near loss of Rob and the knowledge that his attackers were allowed to fly back to the UK without charge because under Greek law a crime has to be reported within the initial 48 hours.

In addition they face a huge financial burden learning just recently there is a very high likelihood that the family will have to pay for lawyers' fees. Added to the money they have already spent just staying out in Malia this will cause them future hardship.

Rob's story has touched the football community which has rallied with everything from ground collections to benefit matches at Bromley and Sutton arranged to raise much needed funds for Rob and his family.



Rob's mother says she will not give up the battle of trying to get Justice for her son Robert.

"It's not been easy as I also care for my other son Steven who is now 35-years old and has been disabled since birth," she said.

Channel 4 has been filming Robert and the family for nearly a year. The documentary will be on TV next year under the heading of the Best of British in the lead up to the 2012 Paralympics. ■

Details of how to donate to Rob Hughes:

Donations can be made at any Lloyds bank or by transfer to:
Lloyds TSB

Acc no. 77358650

Sort code 773009

If you wish to arrange a collection or fund raising event please contact:
support.rob.hughes@hotmail.co.uk

NEW YEAR, NEW OFFER

25% OFF Home Insurance

Beginning the New Year you may be looking for ways to save on your insurance. UIA is now offering RMT members a massive 25 per cent off home insurance, plus a year's FREE Home Emergency Cover, worth £48*.

If you're interested in saving even more, then RMT Members can also combine Buildings & Contents insurance for an EXTRA five per cent discount.

UIA also offer Interest Free Direct Debits if you choose to spread the cost throughout the year.

Other benefits include up to £75,000 cover for your home's contents and up to £1 million for rebuilding your home.

**The 25 per cent discount and Free Home Emergency Offer is subject to our usual acceptance criteria and is only available when the reference News112 is quoted. Certain Postcode restrictions apply. To be eligible for the offer a quote must be requested before 24.04.12. Offer only available to new customers. Please note that Free Home Emergency Offer may be withdrawn at any time. UIA (Insurance) Ltd is a member of the Association of British Insurers and is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act-No.2898R. The RMT is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.*

For more information and a quote, you can call us on **0845 842 8421**

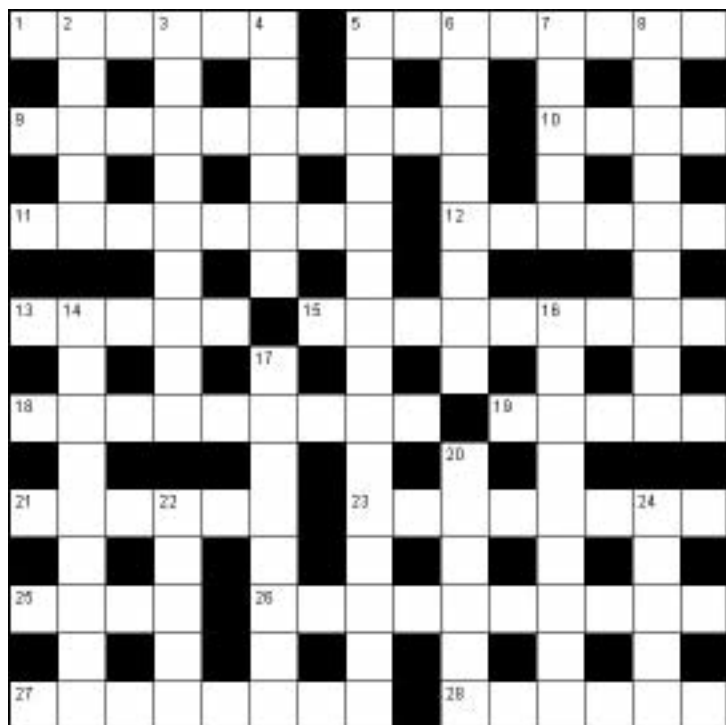
(Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Calls will be charged at local rates.

Or you can visit our website: www.rmtinsurance.co.uk/offer Ref.NEWS112



£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 75. Set by Elk



No. 74 solution...

The winner of prize crossword no. 73 is G Colambro, Stockport.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Seek review of verdict or sentence (6)
- 5 Least blunt (8)
- 9 1970s band from Derry, formerly featuring Feargal Sharkey (10)
- 10 Given the Beeching treatment (4)
- 11 Site of most UK oil and gas fields (5,3)
- 12 Stinging plant - can be used for soup (6)
- 13 Inland waterway (5)
- 15 Britain's rail network needs such lines (4-5)
- 18 Bigger than hills (9)
- 19 Vessels (small enough to be carried by ships?) (5)
- 21 Eaten for dessert - or used in hair? (6)
- 23 Waited around (8)
- 25 Two-wheeled, pedal-powered conveyance (4)
- 26 Form of words or position adopted by meeting (10)
- 27 Officiated at sporting match (8)

- 28 Room divider, or flat surface for film (6)

DOWN

- 2 Kids' seasonal entertainment, in short (5)
- 3 Condition caused by protracted close-up working in poor light (9)
- 4 Most recent (6)
- 5 Given the tabloid treatment (15)
- 6 Once-banned, highly alcoholic spirit, known as the 'green fairy' (8)
- 7 Braid of intertwined strands of hair (5)
- 8 Most pungent (9)
- 14 Say sorry (9)
- 16 Device used to throw image onto 28 (9)
- 17 Without a worry (8)
- 20 Joints connecting feet to legs (6)
- 22 European vegetable! (5)
- 24 Wear away (5)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be 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 (1.5% in 2011) 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 £85,000 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

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.

Date

/ /



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.

