

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

CLEANERS FIGHT FOR FAIR PAY



4.7%
pay deal at
London
Overground

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THIS ISSUE**



**NO TO MCNULTY
PAGE 8**



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL



FIGHTING BACK

It is incredible that cleaners working at the prestigious St Pancras International Eurostar terminal are having to fight for the London living wage.

The workers employed by Initial have not had a pay increase for maintaining the opulent terminal in four years and are miles short of £8.30 an hour lauded by London mayor Boris Johnson. We are calling on Network Rail to stop this exploitation by its cleaning contractors in the run up to the Olympics.

And it is important to remember that we can win. We have scooped a very impressive 4.7 per cent pay deal for our members on London Overground. Following strike action, RMT has also achieved a settlement at Heathrow Express and the threat of industrial action on London Midland Trains led to the reinstatement of Tina Dukes.

By standing firm we can defend workers in the industries we organise in. The McNulty rail review represents the biggest challenge for rail workers since the infamous Beeching report which closed huge swathes of the network.

RMT has launched a campaign to fight this Con-Dem vision for rail repeated in its command paper which would see 12,000 job cuts, rocketing peak-time rail fares and private train operators seizing control of track maintenance.

For passengers it will mean the double scandal of being mugged by those who set the fares and then by criminals using the destaffed services as a cover for violence and assaults.

It also sets us on course for a return to the dark days of Railtrack that led to the disasters of Hatfield and Potters Bar.

Bus workers also face an uncertain future as the bus monopolies sell off routes, such as in

North Devon, and cut costs as government policies squeeze the sector in the insane drive for so-called 'austerity'.

But, while we see cuts in the minimum wage, it's tax cuts for the superrich. If we are 'all in it together' as the Tories claim, it certainly don't feel like it.

The recipe of further fragmentation and privatisation is hanging over Caledonian MacBrayne and Northlink lifeline ferry services in Scotland. We are working closely with the Scottish TUC to resist this privatisation mania served up EU rules demanding tendering and sell offs to their carpet bagging friends in the corporate sector.

By time you read this RMT will also have marched in Brussels with thousands of other transport workers from across Europe in opposition to EU directives no-one voted for that will turn Europe's varied transport networks into the playthings of big business in order to extract profit.

EU rules are also encouraging social dumping particularly in the shipping and North Sea energy sector not preventing it as some have claimed in the past.

In order to confront these issues we need to be educating our membership about the threats that face their industries and their jobs.

Therefore the union is expanding the education centre in Doncaster by building five new bedrooms and two new classrooms. I would encourage all members to think about taking up education opportunities provided for at the centre and by our hardworking union learning reps.

We must remember that knowledge is power and unity is strength.

Kind regards

Bob Crow

ST PANCRAS CLEANERS CONTINUE PAY FIGHT

RMT has suspended strike action by St Pancras cleaners in a pay dispute with Initial on the Eurostar contract in order for further negotiations to take place.

Striking cleaners at St Pancras International won fantastic support from the public in the fight against poverty pay last month.

Around seventy pickets and supporters launched 48-hour strike action with horns and drums, bringing a carnival atmosphere to the London Eurostar terminal.

The workers employed by Initial have not had a pay increase for maintaining the opulent Eurostar terminal in four years and have been

offered a pathetic 13p taking them to £ 6.76 an hour, miles short of Boris Johnsons London living wage of £8.30 an hour.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was disgraceful that the cleaners who mopped up in the St Pancras champagne bar suffer poverty pay.

"RMT is appalled that Network Rail, a public body still reeling from its own bonus scandal, has not lifted a finger to stop this exploitation by its cleaning contractors in the run up to the Olympics," he said.

Bob Crow warned the company that vulnerable workers were be exploited by Initial to break the strike rather than seeking a negotiated settlement ■



FIRST SELLS NORTH DEVON BUS OPERATION

First has signed an agreement to sell its North Devon bus operations to Stagecoach Group for £2.8 million, pending approval from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

If the sale is approved by the OFT then the transfer of operations would take place during the summer. Included in the sale would be current bus routes, the depot site in

Barnstaple and a number of vehicles. All affected staff would be transferred with the services.

First spokeswoman Karen Baxter said: "Operating bus services in the UK, and particularly North Devon, has become increasingly challenging".

First staff employed in North Devon will transfer in their

existing roles to their new employer under normal Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 – TUPE which will protect specified existing employment rights for staff.

The North Devon business comprises of around 100 staff members, a fleet of around 30 vehicles and ten routes, services

1, 2, 3, 5/5C, 8 - operates summer only - 30/30C, 31, 32, X7 and X9 as well as the depot facility in Barnstaple.

The North Devon operations will become part of Stagecoach South West, which employs around 900 people and operates more than 320 buses on around 120 routes across Devon and Somerset.

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER APOLOGISES TO UNION

The Independent newspaper printed an apology earlier this month and has paid £5,000 – including a £2,500 donation to the RMT Widows and Orphans fund – after printing a libellous story about RMT last December.

The newspaper made offensive and libellous remarks about RMT Tube drivers and the general secretary Bob Crow

in reference to a strike that had nothing at all to do with the union.

The apology, which appeared on page 2 of its edition on March 17, said: "In our article 'The high street of the future: huge chains and a few boutiques' (December 30, 2011), we referred to Bob Crow and his drivers "serving as the belated appearance of the

Grinch that stole Christmas".

"In fact the reference to a Tube strike was one called by ASELF and not RMT, which did not call a London Tube strike at that time.

"We are happy to set the record straight and to apologise to Mr Crow for the error".

Bob Crow said that it was not the first time that complete

untruths about RMT have appeared in the media, large sections of which are openly hostile to trade unionism.

"Rest assured that the union will continue to strive for the record to be put straight whenever necessary, and will continue to pursue the truth over illegal telephone hacking and email intrusions," he said. ■



WATERLOO BACKS CARLISLE CLEANERS

Waterloo branch recently arranged a special meeting for Carlisle Cleaners members as the existing cleaning contract is due to be taken over by Churchill cleaning company.

This would affect members in South West Trains locations including Clapham Yard, Exeter, Farnham, Woking, Staines, Guildford and Strawberry Hill.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow and assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski addressed members on how the union would protect members affected. Bob advised that they would be protected by TUPE agreements and that the union would do everything to protect members during the transfer.

Pat Sikorski said that a mapping

exercise would be co-ordinated between the branch and the organising unit.

Waterloo branch secretary Rickey Goodman said that the successful meeting had been well attended and further meetings and visits would be arranged to update members on further developments.

TUBE LINES BALLOT

Rare being balloted for industrial action to back the union's demand for equal pension and travel-pass rights.

The union is demanding that all Tube Lines staff, including ex-Alstom staff at Stratford Market depot, be allowed to join the TfL Pension Scheme and receive the same travel concessions as those who work for LUL, including former

Metronet staff.

Parity would bring Tube Lines staff free travel within London and 75 per cent of the cost of travel on the mainline railway – the concession that all Tube staff, including ex-Metronet people, already get.

The RMT executive endorsed the ballot following a unanimous call for action by workplace reps when they met following several months of

stonewalling by Tube Lines bosses.

"This is a straightforward demand for parity with other Tube staff," said RMT general secretary Bob Crow.

"We have gone through all the negotiating channels on both these issues but Tube Lines has refused to budge.

"Former Metronet employees have been allowed back into the TfL Pension Fund and now also

have the same travel facilities as other LUL employees.

"Tube Lines is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Transport for London and there is simply no excuse for refusing to give equal pension and pass rights.

"The union remains ready to talk, and a strong mandate for industrial action will show Tube Lines and TfL the depth of anger there is over this blatant lack of fairness," said Bob. ■

DLR CLEANERS WIN RECOGNITION

Carlisle Cleaning Services staff working on Docklands Light Railway have won recognition for their union, RMT.

The company offered voluntary recognition after the union recruited around 50

workers, around 90 per cent of the workforce.

DLR branch secretary Darren Arnold, DLR reps and regional organiser Steve Hedley visited depots at Beckton and Poplar at night to explain the importance of union membership and the

union's aspiration of gaining the London living wage of £8.30 for all cleaning staff.

Following recognition the union is launching a campaign for better pay, an Olympic bonus and travel facilities.

Steve Hedley congratulated

DLR branch members for their determination in recruiting cleaners to the union.

"This is the true spirit of industrial trade unionism uniting all grades under the RMT banner," he said. ■

DEAL AT HEATHROW EXPRESS



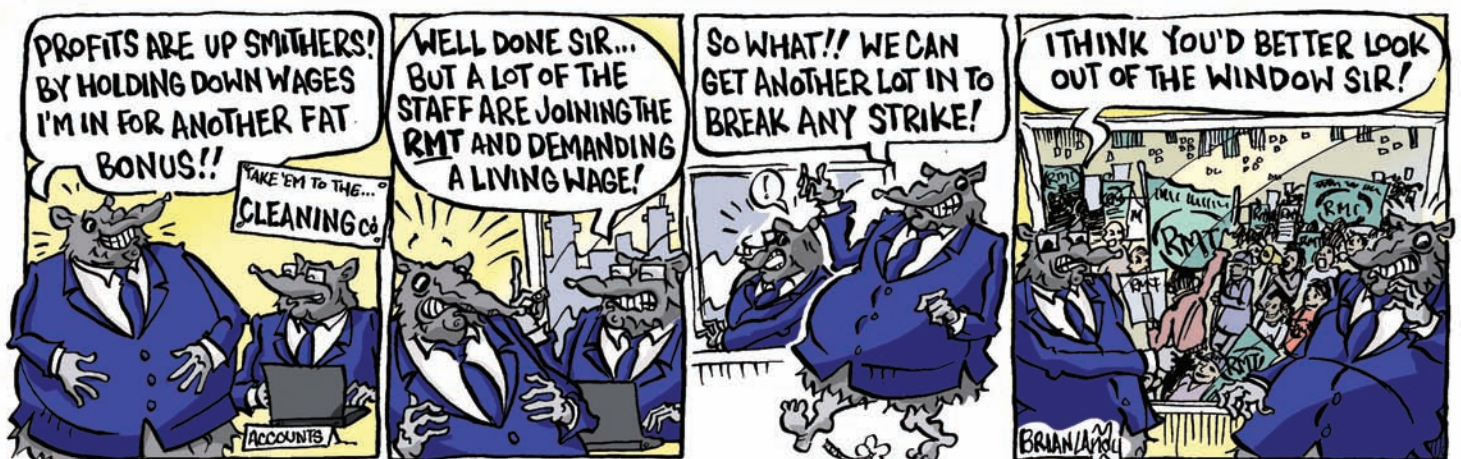
RMT and Heathrow Express can confirm that the disputes which were the subject of the industrial action ballot related to the dismissal of RMT member

Zahid Majid and suspension from duty of RMT member Liaqat Ali have now been resolved and no further industrial action will follow in respect of them.

The full withdrawal of this industrial action follows from constructive discussions between the parties facilitated by ACAS and these matters have been

resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.

To that end, normal employee working patterns will resume immediately. ■





WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

A day of action to defend health and safety has been called to mark this year's Workers' Memorial Day, Saturday April 28.

Worker's Memorial Day is marked every year all over the world by demonstrations, vigils and other activities.

Every year more people are killed at work than in wars. Most don't die of mystery ailments, or in tragic 'accidents'. They die because an employer decided safety just wasn't that important. Workers' Memorial Day commemorates those workers.

The TUC is calling on health and safety rep, trades councils and safety campaigners to make April 28 a day of action to defend health and safety from ConDem government attacks on regulation and enforcement, cuts

that can only increase the massive toll that health and safety breaches already take on workers.

It has never been more important to organise for maintaining the regulations that are in place.

Together we must fight to resist further attacks that will weaken protection and make workers more vulnerable to workplace hazards.

The TUC has produced posters and leaflets for the day. There will also be a series of bulletins to assist reps and activists to organise for the day with important discussion topics. The first two, 'Defending Regulation' and 'The Need for Enforcement' are available online on the TUC website at www.tuc.org.uk.



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

Nationalisation Not Privatisation - International Demonstration in Brussels March 28, 2012. A message to members urging them to attend this year's demonstration in Brussels against the EU's transport privatisation drive.

RMT Young Members' National Conference 2012 - Highlights from this year's conference.

CHANNEL 2 - NEWS BULLETINS

CHANNEL 3 - HISTORY CHANNEL

CHANNEL 4 - RMT EXTRA

Solidarity for striking Greek workers - Highlights from the demonstration held on March 12, 2012.

Free the Miami 5 - The Miami Five are five Cubans falsely accused, and jailed by the US government, of committing espionage against the United States.

The Fight for Health and Safety - John McDonnell's speech to the 10th annual RMT Health and Safety conference.

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



RMT called on Network Rail to abandon plans to sell off plant division Hydrex, warning that the re-privatisation of the operation that NR had to rescue from bankruptcy only months ago, would place hundreds of essential, skilled jobs at the heart of the rail industry at risk again.

Hydrex is the largest provider of road-rail vehicles to the rail industry and a key supplier to Network Rail and its infrastructure contractors.

Network Rail Infrastructure acquired the rail division of Hydrex Equipment Ltd from administrators KPMG to ensure the continuity of construction work.

RMT called on Network Rail to keep the Hydrex skills, organisation and workforce in house in light of the previous private sector failure

The plan to jump back into further fragmentation and destabilisation would be of no benefit to the workforce or the

industry.

RMT has written to Network Rail Chief David Higgins to ask him to reverse the decision.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union intended to use every tool to persuade Network Rail to call off its plans to throw workers back out to the mercy of the private sector.

"Network Rail did the right thing in November last year when it bought the collapsed Hydrex from the administrators

to save over 500 jobs and to bring a core aspect of NR's business in house.

"To risk an action replay of that catastrophic private sector failure, just a few months later, makes no operational or business sense whatsoever and simply destabilises a key area of rail activity with the associated threat to jobs and working conditions as the same old gang of spivs and chancers who failed before move back into the frame," he said. ■

RMT SECURES VICTORY IN SCOTTISH SIGNALLERS' DISPUTE

RMT has reached a settlement in a long-running dispute over career progression at the West of Scotland signalling centre following a campaign of industrial action which has seen services severely disrupted in a series of rock-solid strikes since last Christmas.

Discussions and negotiations with the union

have been ongoing since management decided to ignore a long term custom-and-practice arrangement at West of Scotland Signalling Centre concerning the filling of vacancies.

As a result of those negotiations a form of words has now finally been agreed and signed off between RMT and Network Rail management which has resolved the

dispute.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the negotiated settlement had only been possible as a result of the determination and solidarity shown by RMT members at the West of Scotland Signalling Centre.

"RMT members have stood together during this difficult period to demonstrate to management in the strongest

possible terms that they will not accept blatant disregard for a long agreement over the application of career progression agreements.

"The whole union applauds our members for supporting the massively successful, rock solid strike action which has forced management to hold serious and meaningful negotiations with RMT to resolve the issue," he said. ■

A RECIPE FOR EXPLOITATION AND GREED

Government command paper on rail gives green light for massive job cuts, fare hikes and the return of Railtrack

RMT has launched a campaign to fight the Con-Dem vision for rail contained in its command paper which would see 12,000 job cuts, rocketing peak-time rail fares and private train operators seizing control of track maintenance.

The announcement to implement these proposals, lifted from the McNulty review, came as train operators, through their front organisation ATOC, admitted that they were planning to use an increase in rail demand as an excuse for jacking up fares and pumping

up profits.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the government rail plan had little to do with efficiency as claimed, but was a recipe for exploitation with the train operators given the green light to rob passengers blind to travel on overcrowded and unsafe trains in the name of private profit.

"Aging ticket offices and guards will turn stations and trains into no-go areas.

"For passengers it will mean the double scandal of being mugged by those who set the

fares and then running the risk of being mugged by criminals using the destaffed services as a cover for violence and assaults.

"This plan also sets us on course for a return to the dark and dangerous days of Railtrack that led to the disasters of Hatfield and Potters Bar.

"For the first time since the creation of a nationalised Network Rail the way is being paved for private companies to run localised, mini-Railtrack



POSTCARD: Handing rail infrastructure and signalling operations to a private operating company threatens a return to the era of Railtrack, which was responsible for a number of fatal train crashes and was subsequently shut down. Copies of postcard above available from Unity House.

concessions in the name of greed and profit.

"At least 12,000 jobs are placed at risk as a result of this industrial vandalism on the tracks and RMT has conference policy stating that the assault on jobs and working conditions set up by McNulty, and now mirrored by the government, will be met by a national campaign of resistance including industrial action," he said.

The paper also proposes longer rail franchising with less specification.

The government plans to introduce permanent austerity to the rail network by stating that "as part of the process for selecting future franchises, proven records of successfully reducing costs in the past and clear plans for the future will be assessed".

SAVE AIR AMBULANCE

RMT is supporting an on-line petition to get VAT taxation removed from the fuel bills of air ambulance charities.

Unlike the lifeboat service RNLI, under European Union rules these charities are not exempted from the tax. The Air Ambulance Service is also forced to meet rising fuel prices year on year on top of VAT.

The Air Ambulance Service has saved successive governments millions of pounds funded by charitable donations given by the public to run what has become an essential service.

Whilst the lifeboat service has been exempt from VAT on fuel costs since 1977, a similar

privilege has not been afforded to the Air Ambulance Service.

The e-petition calls on the government to return in the form of grants to Air Ambulance Service providers all the future VAT which the Treasury collects from them so that the service is in practice exempt from VAT in the same way as the Lifeboat Service.

For a debate to be triggered in the House of Commons 100,000 signatures are needed.

The union urges you to sign the petition, and please circulate it widely so support can be built. The petition can be found at:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/29349>

NO TO 'DEEP ALLIANCING'

The idea of 'deep alliances', as a forerunner to infra-structure privatisation, is already being piloted on a joint operation on South West Trains from April 1, 2012 and has long been demanded by the train operators as a way of seizing complete control of the network and maximizing profits.

Kate Hoey MP has tabled Parliamentary Motion 2810 urging the government to ensure that safety and affordable fares are put before commercial considerations on South West Trains.

The union has produced postcards in support of the motion to be used by passengers and rail workers alike.

It is proposed to decentralise and fragment Network Rail, weaken its ability for national management and remove its responsibility for managing the infrastructure in some areas through granting more concessions across the network. The areas earmarked for this to be initially introduced are Kent, Wessex and Anglia.

It is also proposed to give train operating companies a role in enabling, training and licensing staff from the train operator and Network Rail to carry out operational duties on behalf of each other, will often work in the same "integrated control centres", and to allow train operating companies to have a say in determining where and when engineering works take place.

Network Rail's funding will be delivered locally and indirectly linked to how much profit the local train operating company makes.

In contrast to McNulty, the union argues that the government could save 30 per cent of the current rail costs at a stroke by ending the fragmentation and exploitation which is enshrined in privatisation and by returning to a railway run under public ownership as a public service. ■

Parliamentary column

DEFEND TRANSPORT MANUFACTURING

The UK rail industry has gone through some turbulent times in recent years.

The publication of the McNulty report in May last year saw recommendations aimed at economising the industry and saving vast sums of money which have previously been spent subsidising the railways. The industry has been fragmented for a number of years - a lasting legacy of the botched privatisation carried out in the dying days of the last Tory government. Privatisation has resulted in huge bills being footed by fare payers and tax payers. However, I do not believe the McNulty report addressed these pressing issues or delivered sensible cost-saving options. At a time when families were, and still are, feeling the economic pinch the report recommended a 30 per cent increase in rail fares over three years. This problem has become worse over time and has effectively priced passengers out of rail travel.

There is no doubt that changes must be made to our rail system, to reduce passenger fares, secure jobs and alleviate the burden on the taxpayer, but we need government to demonstrate that it values the rail industry before it can be reformed; something it has singularly failed to do.

The industry suffered a massive body blow last year when Bombardier, the last remaining UK train manufacturer, lost out on the lucrative Thameslink contract. The loss of the 1,200 carriage contract meant that the Derby plant's future was in jeopardy. Its future beyond 2014 is still uncertain.

I wrote on numerous occasions to the Secretary of State and Minister responsible for the procurement of the contract to no avail. They blankly refused to reopen the tendering process. The Transport Minister, Theresa Villiers, acknowledged "that there would be

disappointment in Derby". She was not wrong. But we continued to fight and marched through the streets of the city with over 10,000 people in support of Bombardier workers.

But, still, the government refused to accept the way in which they set out the tendering process was disadvantageous to Bombardier and they failed to take into account the socio-economic impact the tender of the contract would have. The loss of Thameslink had a devastating social and economic impact in Derby with 1,400 skilled workers being thrown out of work and onto the dole queue.

After receiving the hardest knock in its history, Bombardier has dusted itself off and applied for the Crossrail contract. Just days ago the shortlist was revealed. Bombardier again finds itself pitched against old German rivals Siemens; also on the shortlist are Japan's Hitachi and CAF of Spain. The Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening, announced to MPs last week that the government has adopted a new "responsible procurement" policy. She claims the new policy will mean bidders have to outline how they will provide apprenticeships and opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses.

The decision made last week by the government to include new procurement rules relating to jobs and training is a welcome move and has justified Labour's position that the Thameslink procurement could have been restarted all along. A similar clause in the Thameslink procurement may have resulted in the outcome being very different. Although the government has made some amendments to the procurement rules, concerns still remain about the financing arrangements.

Chris Williamson
Labour MP Derby North ■

JOB'S BATTLE AT DFDS



RMT is in talks with DFDS Seaways over the implementation of a scheme called Project Light Crossing, designed to cut costs and jobs in Dover.

The plan has sparked anger among workers, while industry experts claim it will mean dangerously low numbers of deck hands on DFDS ships, which operate in the world's busiest seaway.

A total of 18 jobs in DFDS's deck department have been earmarked for the axe and RMT is fighting to keep those employees.

RMT members are taking part in a vote over possible strike action in protest.

A letter has been sent to all deck ratings by shipping EC member Malcolm Dunning

"DFDS are considering a counter-proposal from RMT attempting to retain six jobs. However, DFDS would want you to agree to a pay freeze for 2012 to finance the retention of these jobs.

"This is your call now and so I have attached a referendum ballot paper asking a simple question.

"This exercise needs to establish your, the members', position so that RMT can reflect your views and if necessary prepare an official ballot for industrial action," the letter says.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has urged the operator to provide adequate shift patterns and break rotas for those staff left on board but a source involved with the Light Crossing project said: "At a time when the 25th anniversary of the Herald of Free Enterprise is in everyone's thoughts, this decision to reduce deck departments is worrying.

"Some people in the port, who have been in the industry for more than 40 years, have said if this goes through, levels of personnel in the deck department will be the lowest they have ever seen," the source said.

EU THREATENS THOUSANDS OF SHIPPING JOBS

Strict new pollution controls will cost thousands of British shipping jobs, force ferry fares to rise by a fifth and may even drive operators out of business, MPs have been told.

The UK maritime industry has warned that ports including Newcastle, Hull, Harwich, Teesport and Rosyth would be particularly badly hit by tougher limits on sulphur emissions in the North Sea.

Ferry companies said their fuel bills would rise by tens of millions of pounds a year, resulting in passenger fare

increases of 20 per cent, fewer services and job losses.

They also claimed that more traffic would be transferred to the roads and higher freight costs would mean higher import costs.

The so-called Annex VI controls, to come into force from 2015, are backed by the British government as part of an international convention revised in 2008.

The European Commission wants to bring the regulations into European Union law, but with additional requirements -

resisted by the UK - for passenger ferries to observe the limits even when they are outside special emission control areas.

The Commons Transport Select Committee supported the government, saying the costs of tighter controls would be outweighed by the health benefits, estimated at £1.1 billion a year from 2020.

But it urged the government to block the EC's 'gold-plating' of the regulations with the additional restrictions on passenger ferries.

"These regulations will impose significant costs on operators, and we therefore agree that the Commission should impose no additional burdens on operators at this time over and above the requirements of Annex VI," it said.

Maritime UK, which represents shipping and ports, said the regulations would cost jobs.

Vice chairman Lars Olsson told the committee the regulations would place an additional financial burden on

up to £3.6 billion on shipping.

“The problem we have as an industry is that we cannot absorb this additional cost and we have to offset it by adding it to transport prices, for both passengers and freight,” he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd warned of thousands of seafarers’ jobs being at risk “if companies were forced into having to withdraw vessels because they cannot comply by a certain date.”

P&O Ferries said its fuel costs would rise by about £60 million a year, adding: “This will change routes which today are marginal, to be heavily loss making routes. This is completely unsustainable, with job losses inevitable.”

It said ferry services within the North Sea emissions control area would face “severe economic cost pressures” from 2015 and non-economic routes would have to be closed.

“Within the UK, short sea and ferry services on the longer North Sea Routes from Rosyth, Newcastle, Teesport, Hull and Harwich are particularly exposed to these job losses,” it said.

“Many of these areas are already suffering from high unemployment due to the ongoing recession over the last three years, and further job losses will hit these communities hard.”

Brittany Ferries told the committee its costs would rise

by at least £40 million.

“To absorb additional costs of this magnitude passenger fares and freight rates would have to increase by 20 per cent which will inevitably result in a fall in business,” it said in written evidence to the committee.

“Because of our longer routes, which unavoidably use more fuel, our passenger fares and freight rates are already significantly higher than those on the Dover Straits.

“We are, consequently, relatively more sensitive to fuel prices so these increases would make us uncompetitive, particularly as the Tunnel will not be affected by these regulations.

“This will result, at the very least, in a reduction in frequency of services and the closure of routes and, at the worst, a cessation of business,” it said.

Parliamentary Transport Committee chair Louise Ellman said that the government must work with industry to identify available abatement technologies and help overcome barriers to the development of this equipment.

“But when tough emission standards were first imposed on cars, suitable technology emerged far more rapidly than much of the motor industry forecast and cost far less than was predicted at the outset,” she said. ■

NORTH SEA OFFSHORE INVESTIGATION REVEALS ‘EXPLOITATION’

A joint trade union week of action in the North Sea offshore oil and gas sector to stamp out ‘social dumping’ in the sector has found evidence of the exploitation of Romanian workers in the port of Hartlepool.

The week of action was launched in Aberdeen last month by North Sea trade unions and affiliates of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) from Norway, Denmark and the UK, backed by unions from around the world.

They were concerned about the increasing number of ‘flag of convenience’ (FOC) and so-called ‘national’ registered vessels operating on a regular basis in the North Sea, leading to dramatically reduced opportunities for traditional national seafarer jobs, as companies employ and exploit low cost labour from countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, India, Romania and the Philippines.

The key organiser of the week ITF’s Offshore Task Force Group announced that it plans to alert the UK government’s Low Pay Unit and the UK Health and Safety Executive and ask them

to look into the employment and suspected labour abuse of Romanian rig workers in the port of Hartlepool and the apparent non-payment of wages to them in line with the UK minimum wage.

Around 50 Romanian workers contracted by Romanian company Grup Servicii Petroliere (GSP), a member of Upetrom Group, to work on their offshore rig GSP Britannia, which is currently berthed in Hartlepool’s Able Seaton Dock, say that they have not been paid since October 2011.

An ITF inspection uncovered that many of these workers appear to have been paid half of the UK minimum wage – receiving only around £3.50 per hour for a 12 hour day, seven days per week. In addition the crew have no contracts of employment.

There is one British captain and two Croatian engineers on board the rig and they appear to have been paid their wages.

Another 100 GSP company employees in Romania are also seeking assistance from the ITF office in Constanta, stating that they have not been paid since

October 2011.

The ITF has been trying to negotiate on behalf of the workers but says that the company keeps making promises and is reported to have made threats to the workers if they complained to the ITF.

Around 17 of the Romanian crew were due to be sent home from the rig after a month working on it. They are unlikely to receive any pay when they get home.

Replacement crew are then likely to join the rig not knowing if they will get paid at the end of their shift. The crew has asked the ITF to investigate their rights to receive the UK minimum wage and other rights under UK legislation.

ITF Offshore Task Force Group Chair Norrie McVicar has been working to negotiate a deal with the company. He has contacted the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for advice about the status of the rig and has been told that the rig is technically not a vessel or considered under the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) Code so falls outside their remit.

The owners of the offshore

Jack-up Rig GSP Romania have been contacted by the ITF both in the UK and Romania and it appears that the company is in financial difficulties.

Norrie McVicar said that it was social dumping at its worst:

“We call upon all right minded people and trade unions in the region to get behind the campaign to stamp this exploitation out.

“We’re very disappointed in the company’s response to date, as they say one thing about paying wages and do another and our experience is that they can’t be trusted.

“The sad thing is that many of these workers have families with bills to pay and are being bullied out of receiving their just wages, being denied their rights, and are not being paid in accordance with the UK minimum wage.

“We are being told by these men that the Able Dock Yard is witnessing human beings so frightened to speak out they will work for food just to survive.

“This type of company should never be trusted to work in the North Sea,” he said. ■

IF IT ISN'T SAFE... *DON'T DO IT*

Signalling grades meeting in Folkestone warn that poor planning was putting lives at risk

Conference was appalled by the poor planning of line-side blockages – formally T2/T12 – by Network Rail across the country.

Tim Breed, North Staff said that poor planning and mistakes were putting members' lives and careers at risk.

"I am not prepared to continually attend disciplinaries due to poor planning," he said.

Network Rail lead safety rep Adrian Yates, South London Rail, called on signallers to report issues arising from line

blockages to safety reps and record them in order to get a clearer picture nationally.

"We need to challenge management in order to protect signallers," he said.

Kelvin Eastham, Three Bridges, said that line blockages were a big issue.

"Line blockages should be properly done on a T3 possession and something needs to be done before a tragedy occurs," he said.

Chris Knibb, Warrington, said that line blockages were

"getting out of control".

"We have no additional protection and it is all down to the signallers and, as for T3s, it's all sub-standard protection," he said.

Conference requested an urgent meeting be held with Network Rail to address these concerns.

Gary Abbott, Bristol Rail warned: "if it isn't safe don't do it".

Conference also opposed changes to working practices and rules that involve the removal of secondary protection for track workers carrying out engineering works which also involves signalling staff becoming the sole means of protection.

Mark Bellenie, North Staffs, said that such practices placed great risks to all rail workers and the travelling public,

Kelvin Eastham said that NR

was one company and should act like one and improve communications over maintenance issues.

MODERN AGREEMENTS

Phil Boorman, Ashford No1, called for a review of existing working agreements currently in place for signal workers.

"We need one common agreement book for all to abide by," he said.

He pointed out that employment law had changed considerably since the last PTR&R book was produced nearly 30 years ago.

"New area council representatives are struggling to make sense of the current agreements.

"If we have one modern agreement we can ensure that the company abides by it, ensuring that proper processes for dealing with our members



are utilised,” he said.

Kelvin Eastham, warned that it was important that certain local conditions applicable in some areas were not lost in the process of collating a single rulebook.

ONE PERSON, ONE JOB

Tim Breed, North Staffs, called for ‘one person, one job’ following the announcement by Network Rail of a 30 year plan to decimate signalling and operation grades jobs.

“Only fully qualified signalling staff should carry out signalling duties otherwise we will towards multi-skilling and job sharing.

“If we don’t put a stop to this, people will be taken off the street to do the work,” said Dave Crawford, Three Bridges.

Gary Abbott said that as a mobile operations manager (MOM) he supported the concept of only signalling staff carrying out the work.

MOMS ON CALL

Conference was “alarmed” at Network Rail’s use and interpretation of the current “on call procedure”, especially towards MOMs.

Jim Taylor, Newcastle Rail and Catering, said that the ‘on

call’ arrangements were unsafe due to the lack of a sufficient rest periods afforded to MOMs between their rostered day to day safety critical shift patterns.

Alan Rogerson, Newcastle Rail and Catering, said that the company was using on-call procedures to save money.

“It’s got to be illegal and dangerous to call out MOMs time and again on any given night,” he said.

Conference called on the union to seek legal advice as to whether or not the Network Rail “on call procedure” is legal and meets the requirements of current terms and conditions and appropriate legislation.

VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES

Conference called on the union to insist that all voluntary severance terms and conditions meet with current national agreements.

Gary Abbott said he was proposing the motion in the light of Network Rail Scotland’s recent attempt to offer sub-standard voluntary severance terms in the initial précis document.

“The package is not very good at best but to actually cut it down further is not on,” he

said.

He warned that the concentration of signalling into fewer locations was displacing signalling members and could lead to the undermining of standard voluntary severance terms.

Paul Kemp, Surrey and Hants, said that Network Rail was seeking to save money by not allowing those who want to go to leave the industry.

Conference agreed that it was wrong that some were being forced to stay, whilst others who wish to stay in their area, were being forced to move away or leave the industry.

Ian McKellar, Glasgow, warned members not to sign up to voluntary redundancies until it was clear a better deal could not be gained.

ANNUAL LEAVE EQUALITY

Conference called for the annual leave matrix to be either abolished or amended to allow for equality between staff who work ‘office hours’ and shift workers.

Kelvin Eastham said that at present all workers had a starting point of 28 days under 10 years service increasing to 30 days .

“However we have to work

the majority of weekends/bank holidays etc and we are penalized with fewer days leave and lose days pro-rata under the matrix system.

“Surely there must be a case for a fairer system, not least to compensate and acknowledge the fact that we work anti-social shifts 24/7 365 days a year.

Paul Hooper, North Staffs, pointed out that signallers only attain 28 days when managers get more.

“It’s high time we had equality,” he said.

ELECTED REPS

Conference called for the creation of two full time co-ordinator positions covering all grades represented by the conference.

Mark Bellinie said that full-time co-ordinators were currently in position within Network Rail maintenance and operations staff should be afforded the same level of representation.

Qualification for election to these positions should be from the current serving national lay council representatives and should be elected on the same basis.



LEOMINSTER AND HEREFORD CALLING

Leominster and Hereford branch secretary and signal worker Sian Champken visited RMT headquarters recently with fellow signal worker Iain Burgoyne.

Sian was Leominster branch secretary when it merged with Hereford in 2002.

“We currently have 65 members who are predominantly signallers, P-way, S&T workers and Arriva Trains Wales Station staff.

“Whilst this seems a small number, the area has seen a huge decline in staffing levels due the change in the railway structure over the last 30 years or so and on closer examination, we actually have a very high proportion of the



local workforce as members,” she said.

Sian and Iain have increased activity around the branch as both feel strongly about the importance of keeping the local branch going to maintain a union presence in the area.

“We are a close-knit rural area and felt that having local people representing the union

was of benefit to both the union and members as it made the union more approachable and not just a bunch of faceless names,” she said.

It can be difficult for the branch to meet regularly due the nature of the shift patterns and the geographical spread of the membership. They meet in the Hereford GWRSA railway

club regularly for an update and a few pints.

“The vast majority of information from the branch is distributed electronically and Iain and myself are readily contactable if anyone needs any help from the branch.

“We feel this present structure works well in an area such as ours,” said Sian. ■



ORGANISING ROAD FREIGHT WORKERS

Delegates to the annual RMT Road Freight Transport conference assembled in Doncaster last month at a time of major pressures on the industry and those who work within it

Conference president Pete Daniels, who announced that he would be standing down after many successful years in the hot seat, outlined the turbulent times in the road freight industry with continuing problems at major players like UPS, City Link and Freightliner where the ballot of MSO's for industrial action was on-going.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash pointed out that even in the toughest of times it is a proven fact that where there is union organisation there are better pay and conditions and the union needs to get that message across in our recruitment campaigns in the Road Freight sector.

Mick outlined the range of government attacks on worker's rights, homing in on the continuing increase in the retirement age and specifically how that affects those whose job involve driving and heavy lifting as a matter of course.

Working on beyond a civilised retirement age, with that kind of wear and tear on body and soul, not only punishes Road Freight staff but

also denies the million young people registered unemployed the opportunity to get a foot on the jobs ladder.

Questions to Mick from the floor brought up the issues of bogus-self employment and the abuse of the Swedish Derogation to get round agency workers rights at DHL. Other contributors reinforced the point that cutting hours and forcing staff onto what are effectively zero hours contracts is now rife in the road freight industry as employers use the threat of unemployment and the overarching atmosphere of austerity to hammer down terms and conditions.

An aggressive new management team has been swung in at City Link with the sole intention of driving down costs.

Mick Cash told the conference that an over-riding priority must be to work on a strategic plan with the Organising Unit to expand membership density and profile in road freight to head off the growing wave of attacks.

Donald Graham from the

organising unit fleshed out the organising strategy in a working paper, mapping density and setting out clear recruitment targets. The paper was received enthusiastically by the conference.

Guest speakers to the conference included Graham Chesters from RMT Union Learning who took the delegates through the background to the work of the ULF and explained how branches and activists can get directly involved in taking the project forwards at local level.

Pete March, on behalf of the Council of Executives, gave the report back to conference on progress with last year's motions and sparked off some further lively contributions from the floor.

Moving on with the agenda, motions to the 2012 conference covered a number of subjects. Leeds Goods and Cartage raised the issue of drivers being threatened with disciplinary action for not taking vehicles out on the road that are clearly unroadworthy and defective.

In debate it emerged that defects are not being signed off as repaired and safe by a competent person leaving drivers facing the risk of intimidation and bullying by managers if they object. The motions calling on the union to raise these issues with the

employers to get the practice stamped out were carried unanimously.

An emergency motion dealt with other unions attempting to gain a foothold with employers on the basis of signing away the right to negotiate on terms and conditions for RMT in return for recognition.

The successful motion asked that the union take a formal complaint to the TUC calling for the practice of another union offering what are effectively sweetheart deals in order to undermine effective RMT organisation to be stopped within the road freight industry.

The conference wound up expressing its thanks and appreciation to Pete Daniels for his years of hard work on behalf of the road freight sector.

Kevin Hughes from the union's solicitors Thompsons reminded delegates and visitors that it was the 80th anniversary of the annual conference.

He set out a series of parallels between events in 1932 and 2012 including austerity, cuts and mass unemployment with the working class paying for the mistakes of the financiers and bosses.

"With a world banking crisis and disturbing events in Europe triggered by the failures of politicians and big business maybe things are not so different," he said. ■

RMT TAXI DRIVERS SECURE PEDICABS VICTORY

After months of campaigning RMT's London taxi branch, with the support of the RMT parliamentary convenor John McDonnell, has removed proposals enshrining the right to register pedicabs and provide them with rank spaces contained in the London Local Authorities Bill.

If the Bill with the offending clause had been enacted it would have meant the introduction of a fully fledged licensing and right to ply for hire regime for pedicabs,

undermining the tightly regulated licensed taxi trade.

"The idea that someone on a lashed together pedicab should enjoy the same rights as a taxi driver who is tightly regulated on safety and knowledge was one that RMT taxi branch had fought tooth and nail, alongside parliamentary convenor John McDonnell," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said.

"Everyone in the taxi trade knows that

RMT has led the way in this fight and it is the hard work and determination of our members, using the full resources of the organisation, which has secured this important victory.

"However, we are well aware that the pedicabs have a history of bending and breaking the law and of flouting public safety and the RMT campaign to get them off the streets of London altogether will continue," he said. ■



LONDON TAXI MEMBERS PROTEST

RMT's London Taxi branch organised a 'drive in' at Stratford Broadway last month to protest about a number of issues which are seriously affecting the trade, especially in suburban areas.

Suburban drivers, those licensed for areas outside of the centre of London, are being systematically denied the opportunity to work as taxi rank spaces are removed.

Unlike taxi drivers in central London, suburban drivers rely on the provision of rank spaces at rail stations and other public venues to be able to work yet the proliferation of minicab licensing has impacted on the available work available to these

drivers.

Taxis have also been excluded from Olympic Lanes, part of the Olympics Route Network, despite the fact that the London Taxi is a highly visible and important icon of London that was used to help secure the 2012 Olympics.

Attempts to engage with the Transport for London Taxi Directorate have met with resistance, denying RMT taxi driver members the opportunity to discuss their concerns. These difficulties have been exacerbated by Transport for London's policy of introducing a colour-coded identifier which drivers will have to place on the front and rear windows of their

taxis to show whether they are licensed for "All London" (Green) or just certain suburban sectors (Yellow).

London Taxi branch secretary Stan Murat said that it was divisive and set taxi driver against taxi driver even if yellow identifier drivers were driving in central areas legitimately.

"Transport for London (TfL) has also failed to halt the explosion of private hire vehicle licensed minicabs which severely impacts on the availability of work for regular yellow identifier drivers, normally referred to as yellow badge drivers.

"TfL appears to be

systematically removing taxis from suburban operations to increase the number of minicabs available to work," he said.

Stan also warned that the Knowledge of London (KOL) test for new taxi drivers had been severely reduced over the last year with substantial resignations by examiners who resented the interference by new management in their established methods.

"We are seeking to bring to the attention of London's travelling public the way that the taxi trade is being treated by the Mayor Boris Johnson who is responsible for transport in London. ■



DEFENDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

A packed health and safety conference in Doncaster marked its tenth year with a workplace charter

Over 150 delegates attended the tenth national Health and Safety advisory conference held at Doncaster Trades Centre which saw the launch of the union's new health and safety reps' charter.

Delegates also took up the chance to get a limited edition enamel badge marking the tenth anniversary of the first health and safety conference held in Birmingham.

Introducing the charter, senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash predicted it would be a great success.

"This charter is about organisation, about bread and butter stuff at the workplace.

"One of the crucial things I want to get across is that the government is trying to do away with health and safety rules by claiming they were all 'red tape'.

"It is a really difficult time for us and we have a broader role and not just at the workplace and the charter will

help to emphasise that.

"It is about organisation, it is about representing and ensuring we get safety in the workplace but it's also about working in the community and the wider world to help stop these attacks on working class people," he said.

RMT Parliamentary Group chair John McDonnell MP also warned delegates that "this government is coming at us in terms of health and safety".

Earlier conference chair Jim Philp had invited delegates to stand for a minute's silence in honour of all the workers needlessly killed in avoidable accidents over the last twelve months.

RMT president Alex Gordon spoke about the recent eighth anniversary of the tragic incident at Tebay that saw four RMT members lose their lives.

"Since this entirely avoidable tragedy there have been a further 23 incidents of runaways on the nation's railways and

this fact alone highlights the continuing disaster of privatisation," he said.

Alex spoke about the need for Network Rail to give a definitive date for the installation of secondary protection and warning systems that would prevent incidents like Tebay from happening again, and which, scandalously, still have not been introduced.

He spoke of Britain's need for a "national transport renewal plan".

"We need to renew, refurbish and rebuild Britain's transport infrastructure, and we need to do it safely with proper occupational, environmental and social planning.

"This cannot be left to the market and the privatisation of Britain's railways, a large part of our ferry industry and our bus industry, is an enormous obstacle to the refurbishment, renewal and rebuilding of our transport infrastructure.

"Unfortunately, the current

ConDem coalition is making £9 billion of cuts to public transport spending and the Labour shadow transport secretary confirmed that she intends to keep £6 billion of these cuts if Labour is elected.

"RMT will continue to put forward the alternative of public investment in a fully re-nationalised, publicly controlled transport network," he said.

The theme of this year's conference was Occupational Health, back to work – not out of work.

Speakers included Dr Steve Boorman – Occupational Health Director for Abermed, Tim Springett – Head of Employment at the Chamber of Shipping and Sharon Allaway a health risk management consultant. The speakers participated in a lively panel discussion with RMT Health and Safety Reps' and debated a range of related subjects.

Conference motions also dealt with a range of



occupational health issues as well as condemning the continued ConDem governments attacks on staffing levels and Health and Safety legislation.

Jim Leavy, Watford, painted a vivid and grim picture of a decayed and broken future railway system if left in the hands of the privateers.

The successful branch motion urged the EC to continue to fight reductions in station staffing in order that the well-being of members and the travelling public could be safeguarded.

Lewis Peacock, LU Engineering, spoke passionately about the cuts in jobs and safety standards inherent within both the McNulty report and London Underground's "operational strategy" paper.

The motion, congratulating the RMT campaign against McNulty, called on the union to produce detailed safety propaganda to emphasise the safety fears and facts as part of a clear health and safety strategy to stop these destructive cuts.

Steve Metcalfe, Lancaster, returned to the Tebay tragedy

in 2004 and called on the union to launch a campaign to force Network Rail to take action to safeguard members.

He thanked comrades for their support at the recent memorial event but said the union "should condemn Network Rail for its deliberate prevarication" and asked that they provide "comprehensive secondary protection".

David Whiteside, Glasgow Shipping presented a motion on behalf of Southampton Shipping, asking that a campaign be mounted to bring the health and safety of

seafarers to a comparable level of that of other workers.

"Current legislation covering seafarers is not of an acceptable level when compared to HSE legislation that covers all other workers," he said.

In his closing speech Mick Cash said that occupational health had been a great theme for the conference and that delegates had heard some good speakers making some interesting points even if they were not universally agreed upon. ■

Hear John McDonnell's speech in full at www.rmtv.org.uk

HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARTER

RMT general secretary Bob Crow outlines why the union has launched its new health and safety charter and how it can be used

RMT's new health and safety charter is designed to support and assist accredited health and safety reps in the workplace and I believe that it will be a useful tool in making workplaces safer places.

It should be read in conjunction with the RMT health and safety handbook, which contains details of the more common legal requirements relative to such issues in the workplace.

It is a long-standing RMT demand that its members are

entitled to work in safety without having their health damaged.

All our experience tells us that the only way to begin to realise that demand is to have well-organised workplaces which, as well as winning decent wages, conditions, pensions, and sufficient time off, achieve a safe and healthy working environment through well-structured health and safety procedures, proper facility time and resources for health and safety reps, and proper

investment in safe and efficient plant and machinery.

As trade unionists we have learned that we can never rely entirely on the law to protect us – not least when we have a right-wing government intent on weakening health and safety legislation.

But where we can we should use the law to protect us, and one weapon we do have is the protection provided to RMT safety reps by the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee (SRSC) Regulations,

or Brown Book.

RMT is committed to developing support for its health and safety reps, and the charter has been produced as a result of a decision of RMT's Council of Executives responding to RMT's 2010 health and safety conference.

As with all RMT publications, the feedback from those who use it will help us improve future editions, so please do not hesitate to let me know how it can be improved. ■

RMT WOMEN ARE AT THE HEART OF THE RESISTANCE



Resist McNulty and government cuts and tackle workplace sexism head-on was the call from RMT women meeting in Weymouth

The urgent need to resist the “pure madness” of vicious government cuts was a key theme running through the RMT women’s conference, held in the Dorset resort of Weymouth last month.

The disproportionate impact of austerity measures on women workers was underlined repeatedly by delegates, who resolved to recruit, organise and build resistance to the attack on the transport industries and welfare.

The publication of the government’s ‘command paper’ on the railways on the eve of the conference underlined that rail workers faced a massive fight, and conference chair Janet Cassidy welcomed a 60 per cent leap in the number of delegates who had registered for it.

Thompsons Solicitor Mark Grey gave a stark reminder of how women workers were bearing the brunt of the cuts.

Women were disproportionately hit by cuts in benefits, child-care, pensions and the very front-line services they were being sacked from.

The Equality Act, introduced by Labour, had been blunted by the present government’s failure to implement provisions with the excuse of cutting ‘red tape’, but it was a “total myth” that discrimination regulations restricted economic growth, said Mark

There was no need for austerity cuts at all, said executive member Janine Booth, reminding delegates that the country’s £70 billion deficit was dwarfed by £120 billion in taxes dodged annually by the rich.

There were welcome signs that working people were fighting back, not least with strike action against pension cuts, but resistance needed to grow.

It was a source of great disappointment that the merger with TSSA would not, for the moment, be going ahead, added Janine.

The “pure social and economic madness” of the government’s hatchet plan for the railways was highlighted by assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski, who reminded delegates that it threatened 12,000 jobs.

McNulty had identified that Britain’s fragmented and privatised railway was the most expensive in Europe – but his ‘cure’ would make it far worse.

Every grade would be

affected by the cost-cutting drive which, if not defeated, would unleash a race to the bottom in pay and pensions for those deemed ‘lucky’ enough still to have a job.

McNulty was part of the government’s drive to make working people pay for the economic crisis, and to boost profits for privateers who had already drained billions from the industry.

“We need to brace ourselves and get organised to resist it, with a national campaign,” said Pat.

Scotland had its own and equally nasty McNulty in the form of Scottish government proposals to splinter Scotrail, noted Janet Cassidy.

Government cuts were already having a detrimental effecting on the transport

industry, with communities hit at every level, said Mary Jane Herbison, Glasgow.

The cuts affected every area of life – from air ambulances to buses, coastguards and leisure facilities, said Penny Calcutt, Sheffield.

Even before McNulty, staff cuts had already created problems of under-staffing and difficulty in taking breaks and people being denied the chance to work flexibly, said Beverley Harris, St Pancras.

“The ConDems are tearing apart everything we have fought for over the years, and the time has come to make a stand,” Beverley said.

19TH CENTURY SEXISM

Too many employers are still perpetuating 19th-century sexism in the workplace, delegates agreed.

Analysing the results of the union's survey of women members, Janine Booth noted that nearly three-quarters of respondents believed there was a sexist culture in their workplace.

The survey had shown that basic sexist language and attitudes – including chestnuts like women should stay at home with the children – remained far too prevalent, and two-thirds believed their employer was not doing enough to challenge it, said Janine.

Where employers had domestic violence policies, they might look good on paper, but all too often they were not being implemented, noted Sheryl Dennis, Waltham Cross.

SOLIDARITY WINS, SAYS CAROLE

Guest speaker Carole Vallyelly brought greetings from the South West TUC's women's committee and commended RMT's support for 150 hospital domestic workers striking against a culture of bullying by Carillion at Swindon's Great Western Hospital.

After a near-unanimous ballot, the largely Goan workforce had already taken seven days of strike action, seeking an end to bullying and discrimination, a fair holiday scheme and recognition for their

union, GMB.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow had responded swiftly to a call from Paul Kenny, his counterpart at GMB, by pressing for the London Transport pension fund to disinvest in Semperian, the hospital's PFI owner, if the dispute remained unsettled.

Carole also recounted the inspiring story of the Ascott Martyrs, 16 women from Ascott-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire who were imprisoned in 1873 after trying to persuade men from the next village taking the jobs of men who had been dismissed for joining the newly formed Agricultural Workers' Union.

Their prison sentences had been greeted by a demonstration of 3,000 people, and the episode remained an example of solidarity, said Carole.

- The 125th anniversary of the Bow match-women's strike should be celebrated by the union with a rally, publicity and a commemorative plaque, delegates agreed.

The dangerous and oppressive conditions they had faced were detailed by Brenda Sutton, Piccadilly and District Line West, who said that the 1,400-strong strike remained an inspiring example of solidarity.

- RMT should produce a regular women's newsletter, delegates agreed.
- The union should support the work of Sindyanna, a women workers' co-operative associated with the Workers' Advice Centre in Galilee, conference agreed, asking that the union explore the possibility of promoting its fair-trade merchandise.
- Conference chair Janet Cassidy paid tribute to the “fantastic work” for the women's committee done by Pat Wilkinson, who has retired, and welcomed her successor as RMT equalities officer, Jess Webb.
- The 2013 women's conference will be in Nottingham

WOMEN'S COURSE

Victoria Line driver Charlie Rayment reports on an RMT women's course

Recently I attended a two-day RMT course for women in the London Transport region run by the Workers' Educational Association.

Council of Executives representative Janine Booth told me about it and I jumped at the chance to go.

The course highlighted issues of sexism and issues women face in the workplace. There were activities, discussions and debates. I learnt a lot about the structures of the union and how to become more involved.

This course was extremely interesting and very informative as well as fun. One highlight was our guest speaker, historian and writer Dr Louise Raw who talked about the match women's strike of 1888.

Annie Besant was drawn into this battle around 'New Unionism' by a young socialist, Herbert Burrows. He had made contact with workers at Bryant

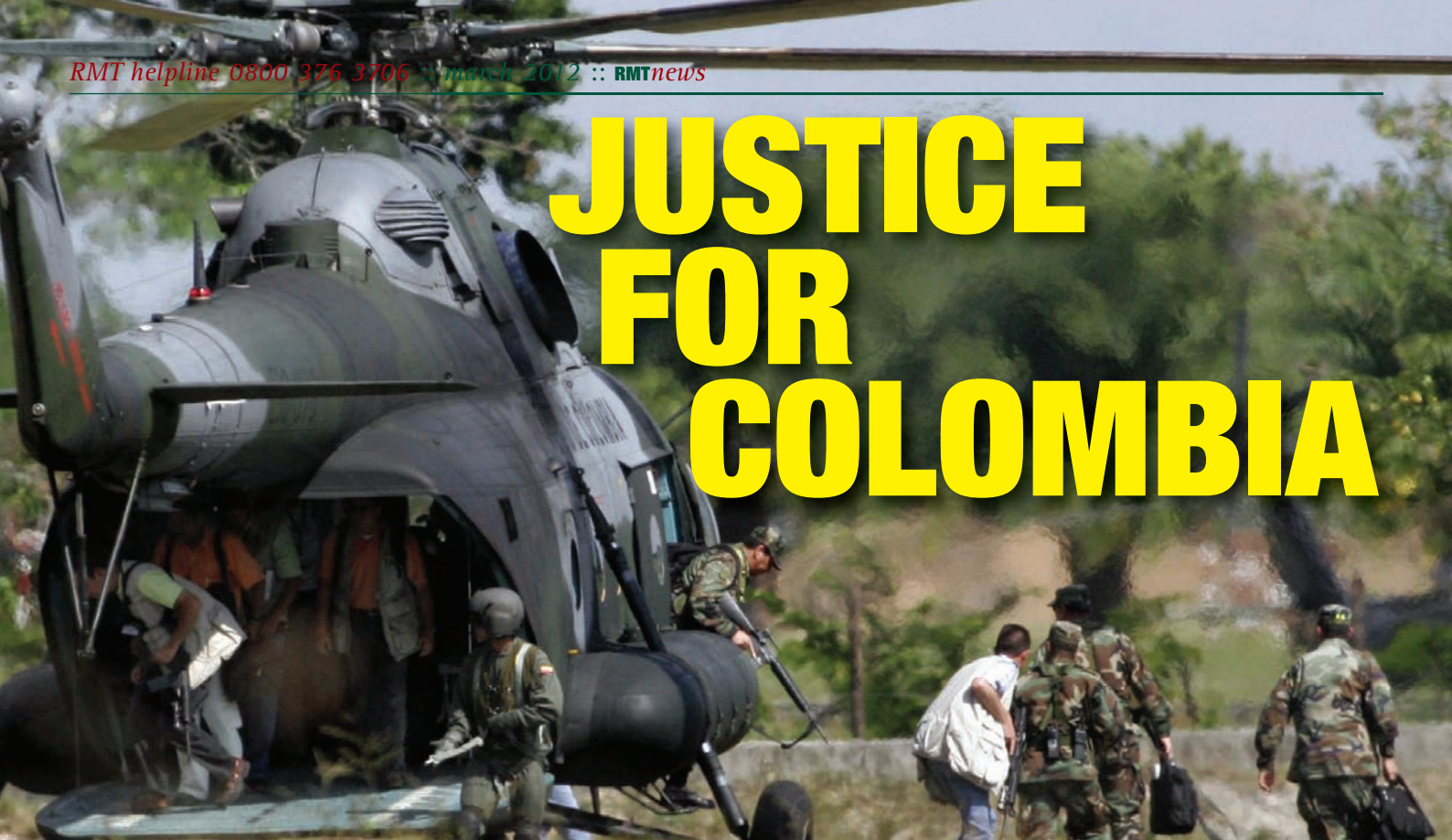
and May's match factory in Bow, east London, who were mainly young women and were very poorly paid. They were also prey to industrial illnesses, like the bone-rotting 'phossy jaw', which was caused by the chemicals used in match manufacture. Some of the match workers asked for help from Burrows and Besant in setting up a union.

Besant met the women and they set up a committee, which led the women into a strike for better pay and conditions, an action that won public support. Besant led demonstrations by 'match-girls', who were cheered in the streets, and prominent churchmen gave their support. In just over a week they forced the firm to improve pay and conditions. Besant then helped them to set up a proper union and a social centre. I would highly recommend this particular course. ■



COURSE: Suzanne Lewis, LU Engineering branch, Maria Atkins, Harrow-on-the-Hill stations rep and Nora Sullivan, Euston stations group

JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA



Victor Figueroa of Justice for Colombia asks you to urge your MP to sign Early Day Motion 2276 condemning widespread human rights abuses and calling for peace in Colombia

When most people hear of Colombia they often think of football or drug barons.

Hardly anyone thinks of the real Colombia, a country that has been torn apart by civil war for more than 40 years, where trade unionists have been routinely targeted for torture and assassination by government forces and their paramilitary allies.

Justice for Colombia (JFC) was set up ten years ago in response to the horrific death toll on trade union members that has seen nearly 3,000 people killed since 1985. Thousands more have received death threats, and thousands have been forced to flee. Many trade unionists have been imprisoned for their politics. Alongside trade unionists, women's rights activists, progressive politicians, community activists, gay rights activists, environmentalists, afro-colombian and indigenous activists are also targeted by right-wing paramilitary death squads.

They are among the millions that have suffered directly or indirectly as a result of the vicious armed conflict.

Colombia has the highest number of internally displaced people in the world, over five million – more than Iraq, more than Sudan. Nearly 13 per cent of the population are internal refugees of some sort. Hundreds of thousands have been killed, over 50,000 brutally tortured and disappeared – more than in all the notorious South American dictatorships combined.

What lies at the root of this conflict is the vast inequality that afflicts this incredibly rich and diverse country. Nearly half the population lives in abject poverty. Many more live on the breadline.

Huge shanty towns surround the main cities where vast armies of unemployed subsist from day to day, falling victim to crime, drugs and violence. In many rural areas there are no roads, no schools, no hospitals. Meanwhile, less than 100

families control most of the country's wealth and spends a quarter of the state's budget is military-related.

This situation has only been sustainable because of the violence employed against those who voice an alternative. Army officers have colluded with politicians to create ultra-right wing paramilitary groups which have killed thousands of people and continue to target government opponents. During the 1990s Colombian governments implemented Thatcherite reforms aimed at privatising the national industries, lowering taxes on the export of raw materials and 'shrinking' the public sector. The result has been to worsen inequality.

Today Colombia's trade unions continue to be targeted for voicing an alternative to the neoliberal agenda. Three trade unionists have been killed so far this year.

Last year over 20 were assassinated. Many live and work under threat, but they

can't be free of repression until the armed conflict ends. JFC, as the voice of British trade unions on Colombia, campaigns to protect trade-union rights, and to free political prisoners, five of whom were released last year. International support has also saved the lives of many who live under threat.

Colombian civil society organisations believe that the violence against them will not end until the war itself ends, and this is why JFC is supporting their efforts to initiate a peace process. To support JFC's work on Colombia, affiliate your branch, or make a donation. You can also ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 2276 on peace in Colombia. With your help we can make a difference.

Contact:
Justice for Colombia
4th Floor, 75-77 St John St,
London EC1M 4NN
Phone: 020 7324 2490
Web: www.justiceforcolombia.org

YOUNG MEMBERS MEET

RMT's well-attended young members' conference meeting in London celebrates tenth anniversary

Around 30 delegates heard RMT lead Health and Safety Rep Ross Marshall address the tenth RMT young members' conference.

Ross chaired the first ever young members' conference in 2002 and spoke about the differences between then and now and how they had to battle initially against scepticism about holding such events.

Having won over the doubters he said that the RMT young members conference was the most progressive in the trade union movement and was the only such event to have changed TUC policy.

This point was reiterated by RMT general secretary Bob Crow when he said "if it wasn't for a resolution from the young members' advisory committee that went to our executive, there wouldn't be a motion-based young TUC conference taking place across the length and breadth of Britain.

London regional organiser

Steve Hedley told conference that young members "will be the people in the years ahead that are going to be picking up the baton in this union, which is a proud, democratic and fighting union and carrying that baton forward".

Steve spoke of how, with over one million unemployed youths in this country and with the ConDem government introducing new pension laws that will make people work until they drop, it was up to the young members to stop these attacks through massive, co-ordinated campaigns.

Assistant general secretary, Pat Sikorski emphasised the importance of young people getting involved in the union.

Dimitris Palmyris (right) from the World Federation of Democratic Youth had flown in from Cyprus specifically to address the conference.

He told delegates that "as an organised front of the workers

and especially as the youth of a workers trade union, you inevitably play an important role in the struggles of the working class of Britain, by your example".

"I am saying this because what is presented to us today as a universal truth is that there is no need to organise, no need to be in the trade unions, student unions, any kind of structure that can possibly threaten the imperialistic interests and their repression against peoples, workers and the youth.

"The reality is that the need for organisation, the need of the youth to rise up and struggle for their rights in an organised, massive way, with clear objectives and goals is absolute.

"It is our only weapon against a world that is becoming more and more aggressive, more and more barbaric," he said.

There were also speeches from Ian Pattison from Youth Fight For Jobs as well as guest speakers from Thompsons Solicitors and RMT Learning and RMT Credit Union.

There was a lively debate from delegates discussing a number of motions. Conference decided unanimously to call on RMT to continue to publicly

support all strike action taken against the pension attacks and the government cuts and counter the government anti-trade union propaganda.

Delegates called on the union to co-ordinate, as far as possible, any future strike action the union takes with strike action taken by the public sector unions and to support a general strike against the government's cuts agenda.

Young members also voted to request that the union should aim to adopt a policy of avoiding wherever possible, a reduction in the complement of grades in any negotiations and conduct a survey to establish the amount of unfilled vacancies within our industries.

Highlights of this year's conference can be seen at www.rmtv.org.uk ■



WHY RMT IS MARCHING!



Transport workers from across Europe are marching in Brussels this month on the first anniversary of the European Commission's Transport White Paper, which orders states to surrender transport networks to corporate interests

Transport unions across Europe are demanding an end to European Union transport 'liberalisation' that force member states to introduce 'market competition' to outsource and privatise transport networks across ferry, bus and rail networks, attacking the fundamental concept of 'socialised' public transport.

Privatisation of transport infrastructure and services along with other key national assets is a core demand of the IMF/EU/ECB troika now imposing austerity and mass privatisation on Greece and Portugal.

The transfer of ownership and control of transport to Europe's biggest private banks and corporate monopolies is an attack on national democracy and an anti-democratic veto by finance capital over the sovereign rights of the people.

EU competition rules to

enforce rapid 'liberalisation' of 'cabotage' in ferries and deep sea shipping since 1986, have led to massive attacks on seafarers' jobs, pay and conditions of employment through widespread social dumping.

An increasing number of ships operate around European coasts under 'flags of convenience', and are employing low-cost labour from Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Ukraine, the Philippines and beyond with no national protection of employment rights.

EU diktats have created a damaging split between train services and maintaining safe railway infrastructure in the name of "opening up to the market".

British Rail was privatised over 15 years ago by a Conservative government, which implemented EU Rail Directive

91/440/EEC, introducing an artificial 'vertical split' between control of train services and rail infrastructure to create an 'internal market' in railways, which are natural monopolies that function best under seamless vertical integration and public ownership.

The European Commission's 2011 'Transport White Paper' imposes EU rail liberalisation, first implemented in Britain with disastrous results, as "a single European railway area" now to be repeated across Europe in defiance of the wishes of the public.

Private rail companies and shareholders have extracted billions of pounds from railway privatisation in Britain, while public subsidy of private rail firms is today five times greater than when Britain's railways were nationalised.

EU rail privatisation, which no-one voted for and no-one

wants except big business interests, is destroying rail networks across Europe.

The dysfunctional 'vertical split' between train services and rail infrastructure is a barrier to public investment in social rail services.

Liberalisation of rail freight has led to the loss of hundreds of goods yards and thousands of jobs, and the shift of cargo to road transport to make freight services profitable, at a cost to safety, the environment and society.

Liberalisation of international passenger rail services led to attempts to cut safety standards in train services using the Channel tunnel. The latest 'recast' of the European 1st rail liberalisation package will mean rail workers' jobs are 'outsourced' to private sub-contracting agencies.

Now the Commission is preparing a 4th rail package to

President's column



ALTERNATIVES TO PRIVATISATION AND AUSTERITY

RMT members joined unions representing transport workers from across Europe to protest in Brussels on March 28 against the EU's privatisation drive.

For decades EU directives covering postal services to ferries to energy to health care have directed governments to open public services up to competition, which means closing them to public ownership and control.

Selling off state-owned, publicly-run companies cheap to the private sector has become the European Commission's primary purpose.

Of course, the neoliberal cliques that dominate the Tory, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties don't need encouragement and they willingly bend over backwards for the corporate shilling.

This month, the ConDem coalition's Health and Social Care Bill passed through parliament. 62 out of a total of 217 peers who voted for the bill in the House of Lords have financial interests in private health companies, which they did not disclose. The attack on our National Health Service has been mounted by politicians bought and paid for by private health insurance firms and 'Big Pharma'.

Institutional corruption still shocks when it happens in parliament. However, in the merry-go-round of EU corporate lobbying such systematic corruption and corporate lobbying is the rule, not the exception.

The EU's privatisation model is particularly dysfunctional for public services. An artificial separation between distribution networks and services they supply benefits private-sector cherry-picking to the detriment of planned public enterprises.

The latest EU diktats ordering Greece, Portugal and Ireland to privatise state assets are a smash-and-grab by powerful French and German monopolies and banks. It represents the emasculation of national sovereignty in order to end the independent democratic life of those countries, conferring on them the status of EU colonies, by removing their essential infrastructure from democratic public control.

The EU's 2009 Lisbon Treaty is designed to make returning public

services to public ownership constitutionally impossible, whatever the peoples of Europe vote for.

A similar process of dismembering Network Rail under the misnomer 'deep alliances' is proposed in the UK government's Rail Command Paper. Whatever criticisms RMT has of Network Rail, it must be acknowledged the firm has succeeded in putting engineering back in charge of Britain's railways, which were in a ruinous state following the multiple train crashes under Railtrack. Now government policy is to put private train operators in control of devolved Network Rail regions, which raises the likelihood of creating 'Railtrack mark two'.

This retrograde step must be reversed for the safety of rail workers and the traveling public. As RMT has suggested, why can't Network Rail take over train operators and run services in a joined-up, publicly owned railway? We could call it, I don't know, British Rail?

This May local elections will provide an opportunity to set out an alternative to policies of privatisation, cuts and austerity that the EU, the ConDems and local authorities are all agreed on.

In some constituencies RMT members are standing as candidates to oppose cuts and privatisation. I wish Paul Reilly, our Nuneaton branch secretary well in his contest. From such small acorns do mighty oaks grow.

I am proud to be standing alongside RMT's London Transport regional organiser, Steve Hedley, for election to the Greater London Assembly on May 3, as part of the Trade Unionists and Socialist Coalition.

If elected we will see it as our duty to fight for the slogan we took on the streets of Brussels: "For Nationalisation, not Privatisation!"

This demand is echoed by transport workers and public service users all over Europe who are sick of the EU's neoliberal dogmas and government-by-corporation.

RMT members don't just want a bigger slice of the cake, we want the whole bakery.

Alex Gordon



force national railway authorities to privatise domestic passenger rail services.

That is also why EU leaders are interested in the McNulty report in Britain which seeks to make workers and passengers pay for a railway dominated by corporate interests.

The EU proposes to take railway, bus, metro and ferry services and infrastructure out of the control of accountable public bodies and create a single European transport network dominated by private sector monopoly interests.

Portugal's CGTP transport union general secretary Armenio Carlos has made a call to confront these neo-liberal attacks on workers.

"We are at a crossroads, either we surrender or we fight.

"Our people have already proved that at the various times we were occupied, we did not surrender, we always responded by defending our sovereignty," he said. ■

Supporting heritage railways

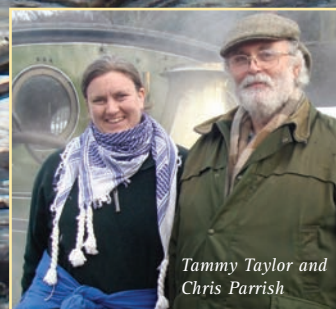
Brian Denny visits
the North Yorkshire
Moors Railways
heritage line to meet
members that keep
the steam tradition
alive in Britain



Gary Stainburn



Armstrong oiler



Tammy Taylor and
Chris Parrish



Delegates at last year's RMT annual general meeting backed calls for a political campaign for government support to ensure that heritage railways can prosper and develop as part of a national integrated transport system.

The union represents full-time and volunteer workers up and down the country in this unusual sector and most are concentrated in one of the biggest heritage railways in the world, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR).

The NYMR became a charitable trust in 1973 when it reopened the line, which had been closed as part of Beeching's infamous closure programme carried out on behalf of the road lobby.

There was even audacious talk of the trust taking over the whole north east network during rail privatisation in 1996, but the charity's membership, which now stands at around 11,000, rejected the proposals.

It is not until you make the 18-mile journey by diesel then steam across the beautiful North York Moors National Park from the market town of Pickering through Goathland to the village of Grosmont that you appreciate the scale of this enterprise.

At the locomotive sheds at Grosmont RMT branch secretary Chris Parrish and his team proudly maintain the mighty steam and diesel engines that draw over 350,000 passengers here each year, as well as many a film crew.

It is also the largest concentration of RMT membership of both full-time and volunteer staff who have

the skills to strip down and rebuild any engine you can throw at them.

Evidence of this is everywhere in the workshops from a huge firebox being built from scratch, a partly dismantled DMU diesel unit up on ramps, the stately Sir Nigel Gresley LNER steam locomotive brooding behind another huge fully restored 1954 smoking engine waiting to go into service this summer.

The ingenuity and tenacity of these dedicated workers can also be seen in the coal hopper, designed and built on site, the restored signal boxes and the intriguing Armstrong oiler unit.

As we enter the building housing this mysterious entity, branch chair Tammy Naylor explains that an Armstrong oiler lubricates the piston rods on steam engines by soaking up lubricants through capillary action.

"The company that produced them went bust so we bought the machinery and learnt to make them ourselves," she says, casually pointing at a loom from another era.

Today orders come from around the world for these small but vital bits of rare kit.

Chris, who has been here since 1979 when he arrived with his Southern Railway steam engine, patiently points out the unique skills set and commitment required to keep the engines and carriages as well as Armstrong oilers in service.

"Everything is hand built right here as well as hand maintained and hand driven and that requires hundreds of volunteers and full time staff,"

he says.

The numbers required increase during the summer season when most visitors pass through. Most union members have had previous experience but increasingly more people are learning they might need the protection of the union.

RMT safety rep and branch vice chair Ray Stewart, a volunteer who pays part-time subs, says that people from all walks of life give up their time to keep the railway running.

"We have vicars, teachers, dustbin men and even bank workers," he says with a laugh while pulling pints at the Grosmont Crossing Club run for NYMR workers and friends.

He explained that he joined the union after an incident on the line convinced him he needed protection.

"I realised that, through no fault of my own, I could end up injured or in court and the best legal protection is in the union," he says.

The benefits of union membership also emerged for carriage and wagon fitters who found themselves in a long-running dispute over payments for 'Fitness to Run' examinations on Network Rail infrastructure. Heritage trains sometimes run from Pickering right through to the coastal resort of Whitby using the Esk Valley line.

The non-payment for examinations led to industrial action in the form of a work to rule. This led to arbitration through ACAS and a satisfactory settlement for the union.

The union also negotiated a 2.5 per cent pay increase this

year, the same award made to RMT members on the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways heritage line.

Gary Stainburn, who drives the little 'chuffer' named Joem that steams from Goathland station to Grosmont, welcomes the support of the union for heritage railways and drives home the importance of the NYMR to the local economy.

"The railway has a turnover of something like £6 million a year but it is worth over £30 million to the local area as it brings in tourists and enthusiasts alike," he says.

Yet the future is by no means certain; NYMR runs at a loss, resources are scarce and the assets, including the workforce, are sweated which can cause tensions and contradictions in a largely volunteer-run organisation.

That is why the union believes government support is required to keep this part of our national heritage on the rails.

The nation that produced rail travel should acknowledge this heritage and nurture it for all to enjoy.

Staff, full-time and volunteers alike, are extremely proud of their railway and it is clear that without their hard work the line would have disappeared decades ago along with the elegant engines and carriages that run along it all year round.

You don't have to be a train-spotting anorak to visit the North Yorkshire Moors Railway but there is a chance you might end up being one, it really is a great unionised day out.



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





LEGAL

DENYING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Jeeva Sethu of Thompsons Solicitors looks at the latest government attack on the rights of workers who are the victims of crime at work.

RMT members who are injured in the course of their duties as a result of a criminal act will be restricted in the types of injuries they can claim compensation for through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS), if reforms being pushed by justice secretary Kenneth Clarke become law.

The Ministry of Justice consultation *Getting it right for victims and witnesses*, which Mr Clarke claims is intended to give victims of crime more support, is actually going to ensure less support. It proposes that offences connected with trespass on the railway, including suicide or attempted suicide, be removed from the scheme. Many other types of injuries will no longer qualify for compensation and others will see much lower awards.

The consultation proposes removing injuries that are in the lowest bands of the scheme – bands 1 to 5. These carry the tariff of £1,000 to £2,000 and include temporary anxiety, temporary partial deafness, some types of fractures and injuries to teeth.

Injuries in bands 6 to 12 which attract between £2,500 to just below £11,000 will be reduced in value. So eye injuries, scarring to the limbs and torso and other injuries will be reduced from £2,500 to £1,000. Moderate injuries resulting in continuing significant disability such as a fractured collar bone will be reduced from £4,400 to £2,400.

Temporary anxiety is the injury that most train drivers who witness suicides suffer and claim compensation for. The other types of injuries in the bands to be removed or reduced are typically the kind that rail workers, bus drivers and other members who deal with the public and are the victim of assaults at work might suffer.

Removing these bands would therefore make many members in this position ineligible to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) for an award, even if offences connected with trespass on the railway were not excluded.

The government's justification for removing railway offences from the

scheme is that suicide is not a criminal act.

It was established in the 1980s that those killing themselves in front of a train were committing a crime of violence. Even though the House of Lords was not convinced that suicide was within the CICS, the government was persuaded that railway workers should be able to claim compensation for the trauma of seeing someone commit suicide by jumping in front of a train or from having to deal with the aftermath of the suicide.

It was accepted in 1990 that the best way to compensate those who suffered was to allow payments to be made under the CICS. Although the Labour government also proposed, in 2004, to remove railway suicides from the scheme, it agreed not to after a strong campaign by railway unions.

Further restrictions to eligibility include that there will be no award if the incident was not reported to the police as soon as reasonably practicable, if the victim has an unspent conviction (even a minor



motoring conviction) and if they have lived in the UK for less than six months.

The current scheme allows incidents to be reported to a body other than the police, such as the employer. This is often more appropriate when someone has been assaulted in their workplace, and many drivers report suicides in this way. Changing this rule is likely to deter some victims from claiming.

The proposals are being dressed up as supporting victims of crime, when in fact they are a kick in the teeth for victims of crime including those injured in the course of their work.

As a money-saving measure they offer little. Far from giving more support to victims of crime, this is another cynical move by this government to deny access to justice to vulnerable and hard-working people. ■



RMT EDUCATION OPEN DAY AT LINCOLN

RMT Union Learning Rep and Lincolnshire Road Car branch secretary Dave Grant organised an educational open day last month for bus drivers at Stagecoach East Midlands and staff at East Midlands Trains.

Dave was previously a successful Skills for Life (SfL) learner and he was keen to build up learning activity so he set about looking for a suitable location and other facilities. Stagecoach runs both the bus company and East Midlands Trains, he considered that the best way to move things forward was to undertake a joint venture with the rail staff and ULRs at Lincoln train station.

After sourcing a good quality local training provider, Dave and RMT development worker John Dougherty met with them to decide on a strategy for the event.

John said that it was always important to do the research regarding providers in order to ensure good-quality learning experiences for members.

"A bad learning experience can have an equally negative impact on the work ULRs do in the workplace.

"ULRs should look at developing Service Level Agreements with providers in order to maintain support and commitment for our members," he said.

Having seen how working in partnership has meant a successful result, Dave is now looking to work closely with the new RMT ULR at Lincoln station, with the intention of organising some classroom-based learning sessions for the members to attend on-site.

The open day was well attended by many different grades of rail and bus workers, some of whom signed up for SfL literacy, numeracy and computer courses on the day. With the support of RMT regional organiser Dave Collinson the Six Book Challenge is also being taken up.

Dave Collinson said that after being invited to the open day at Lincoln station, it was great to see the work that ULRs at Stagecoach and East Midlands Trains were doing.

"Working in partnership with each other showed us that we can overcome some of the barriers to learning that our members face," he said.



CHALLENGE: RMT regional organiser Dave Collinson and Alan Cook from Union Learn promote the Six Book Challenge

THE SIX BOOK CHALLENGE

The Reading Agency launched the Six Book Challenge in 2008 and since then around 17,000 people have completed the scheme.

The idea is to encourage less confident readers to read six books within a set period of time, usually over at least three months. Participants record their reading in a diary in order to receive a certificate, incentives and the chance to enter a national prize draw. Workplaces also have the chance to win a visit by a top author.

Most participants read books, but the scheme can be used to introduce people to text in a variety of formats such as magazines,

newspapers, websites and even digital games. This can be particularly effective if participants are at the start of their reading journey and need material that is both accessible and of interest to them.

Union Learning Reps can register their workplaces to take part and negotiate with their employers to help out by purchasing packs of materials. These include reading diaries, certificates, participants' leaflets, information flyers, posters and bookmarks. Most run the Challenge from early in the year until the summer but it can start and finish at any point during the year.

Letters...

BRILLIANT REPRESENTATION

Dear editor,

As a proud RMT member I would like to show my sincere appreciation to the union and my RMT rep in particular, Mark Harding. At all times he professionally handled my case concerning termination of employment with London Underground due to immigration status.

I really appreciate the role Mr Harding played in all my hearings with LUL including the appeal hearing. Despite the complex nature of my case Mr Harding was able to convince LUL management to re-engage me after my immigration issue had been sorted out. Thank you very much for such brilliant representation.

Yours sincerely
Akintoye Akinyeye

STAFF TRAVEL E-PETITION

Dear editor,

I am a non-safeguarded train driver working out of Caterham depot and I have an e-petition for all staff to sign calling for the re-introduction of staff travel boxes for all non-safeguarded railway staff in order to fall in line with the rest of Europe.

At the moment we can travel free in Europe, like others Europeans, but when it comes to our own country other Europeans travel free but we have to pay.

To see the petition google e-petitions and type in 'To reinstate staff travel boxes for non safeguarded railway staff'. It calls for the restoration of staff travel boxes for all non safeguarded railway staff, after completion of 11 years continuous service to exceed retirement to fall in line with the rest of European staff travel.

The 11 years continuous service is for loyalty to the railway industry, one year probation and 10 years service.

Yours sincerely
Dean Anderson

WATFORD BRANCH

NOMINATES

STEVE HEDLEY

FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

LU ENGINEERING BRANCH

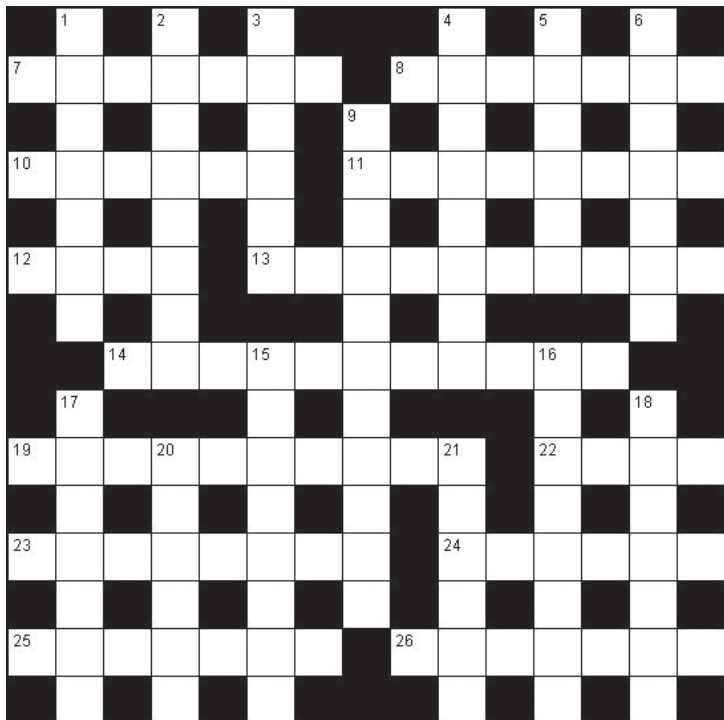
NOMINATES

STEVE HEDLEY

FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 77. Set by Elk



No. 76 solution...

The winner of prize crossword no. 76 is James Benner, Bourne Lincs.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 7 Twin-winged aircraft (7)
- 8 Peeping toms (7)
- 10 Small lobsters, aka Dublin Bay prawns, usually served deep-fried (6)
- 11 The 'kick' in coffee (8)
- 12 Open air pool (4)
- 13 Sweet, buttery biscuit (10)
- 14 Easy-peel, usually seedless mandarin-type citrus fruits (11)
- 19 Last general secretary of NUR, and first of RMT (5,5)
- 22 20 fluid ounces - fits neatly in the hand! (4)
- 23 Waymarker (8)
- 24 Tended back to health (6)
- 25 Rotted (7)
- 26 Hirsute of face (7)

DOWN

- 1 13, for example (7)
- 2 Samuel, first president, in 1887, of the National Union of Seamen, best remembered for the life-saving line named after him (8)
- 3 Slow-moving mollusc with mobile home (6)
- 4 Litter thrown at wedding parties! (8)
- 5 Thin decorative covering, often of wood (6)
- 6 Parent's father, commonly (7)
- 9 Bean counters - may follow 'turf'! (11)
- 15 Overhaul of appearance, cosmetically (8)
- 16 Rulers of empires (8)
- 17 Split, separated (7)
- 18 Made irate (7)
- 20 Instruction book - by hand (6)
- 21 Mauled by critics (placed in a bowl) (6)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

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

money.

The bonus will be added to your savings if you complete all of your regular payments. Last year's bonus was two 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			/		/				
----------------	--	------	--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM — please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname		Address	
Forename(s)			
Home phone			
Mobile phone		Postcode	
Email address			
Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

2 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

4 **Mr** ☐ **Mrs** ☐ **Ms** ☐ **Miss** ☐

5 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐ RMT Family Member ☐

6 **How much do you wish to save £** This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th ☐ or date you next get paid weekly ☐ if 4 weekly (Fri) ☐ date here.....

7 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

9 **I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted.**

Your signature

Date

We are checking new member identification electronically. To do this, we now carry out searches with credit reference agencies who supply us with relevant detail including information from the Electoral Register. The searches will not be used by other lenders to assess your ability to obtain credit.

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

If we cannot verify your identity and address by this method, we will ask you to provide paper documentation instead. Full details of these can be supplied to you by calling 020 7529 8835.



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd Direct Debits for the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with RMT Credit Union Ltd, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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

0800 376 3706

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

Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It is also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

Members can do this via the RMT website, telephone the RMT helpline above, or writing to the membership department at RMT head office, Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

