

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

RFA MEMBERS STRIKE TO DEFEND PENSIONS



**OVER 100 MPS SLAM
MCNULTY
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**BUS WORKERS MEET
PAGE 14**



**LUCKY LANDING
PAGE 11**



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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Job Description*		Part Time	YES ☐ NO ☐

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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL



POTTERS BAR REMEMBERED

Ten years ago the lethal consequences of privatising Britain's railways were lodged indelibly in the public mind with the images of the disaster at Potters Bar.

Seven people died and 76 were injured as a direct result of actions by MPs determined to destroy the notion of a publicly owned railway run as a public service.

The faulty points with loose and missing bolts that caused the tragedy were supposed to be maintained by the contactor Jarvis working under the direction of the private company Railtrack.

To prove the extent of the corrosive relationship between politicians and big business that led to privatisation in the first place, one Jarvis boss was none other than former Tory Mayoral candidate and former cabinet member Steve Norris.

Yet RMT demands for a joint public inquiry into both Potters Bar and the Grayrigg derailment has been ignored by successive governments.

Inquests and safety investigations have repeatedly exposed the part played by the failures of privatisation but the political class has run scared of an examination that would shine the light on the ideology that led to the horror of Potters Bar in the first place.

This is because they are hell bent on dragging us into an action replay through the McNulty proposals for rail which demand further fragmentation, decimation and privatisation.

McNulty's core objectives – de-staffing trains, stations and track, gold-plated 15 year franchises and opening up infrastructure once again for profit – are already well in train.

Across Europe similar transport privatisation is also being rolled out by undemocratic EU diktat onto member states that have run railways as public services for decades.

In the face of all of this our fight for a safe and secure railway goes on.

Working with sister unions across Europe, the TUC, commuter groups and communities RMT will be holding more days of action, building on the work so

far. Potters Bar is a reminder of just what is at stake.

RMT has also called on the SNP administration in Scotland to call off their planned sell-off of the Northern Isles Ferries service to private outfit SERCO. This whole botched privatisation plan has descended into chaos with one private bidder mounting a legal challenge against another. This is no way to run essential, lifeline ferry operations that are a fundamental public service.

RMT gave evidence to the Transport Select Committee in Parliament against proposals for more competition in local bus markets.

Bus and coach fares have increased in real terms by 20 per cent over the last decade yet the wages and conditions of bus workers have continued to stagnate as a direct result of a Thatcherite privatisation that should be reversed at the earliest opportunity.

The serious gas leak from Total's Elgin platform and the recent crash of another Puma helicopter also show that offshore health and safety isn't all it should be.

EU proposals to centralise regulation of offshore oil and gas safety will only make matters worse.

Even employers agree with RMT that the proposed EU regulation would undermine the regulatory regime of offshore safety and environmental protection.

RMT members on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary took 24-hour strike action this month alongside other public sector workers.

The hammering the Con Dems took in the polls this month should also serve as a wake-up call from working men and women that we will not roll over and take the hit for their crisis.

As part of that fight back against Con Dem and EU austerity there will be the huge demonstration on Saturday October 20 in London. So bring your banners and be a part of an alternative vision both here and across the world.

Bob Crow

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

STIRLING SIGNALLERS STRIKE IN ROSTERS DISPUTE

Signal workers in the Stirling area in Scotland took rock solid strike action in a dispute over rosters in early May with more action planned for the end of the month after voting 100 per cent for industrial action.

Pickets were out in force for the latest 24 hours of strike action on May 10 2012.

RMT has for some time been trying to negotiate 12-hour rosters for signallers in the Stirling area. The company initially declined the union's request claiming that there was no desire to introduce 12-hour shifts amongst the workforce.

In order to prove that the company claims were false, RMT conducted a referendum which resulted in an overwhelming 15 to 1 vote in favour of the proposal. Unable to argue a lack of support for union proposals, Network Rail started making bogus claims of additional cost.



MEETING: Stirling signallers discuss tactics

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "Our members are rock solid in support of the second wave of action today and pickets are out in force sending a clear message to the employers that RMT is determined to win this fight.

"RMT will not allow Network Rail to ride roughshod over the clear democratic will of our

members to improve the quality of their work/life balance.

"Although management has so far refused to budge they cannot ignore the strength of feeling demonstrated by the second day of action today and RMT remains available for talks aimed at resolving the matter," he said.



TUBE CLEANERS BALLOTTED FOR STRIKE ACTION

RMT is balloting tube cleaners working for ISS and Initial for both strike action and action short of a strike in disputes over pay, pensions and benefits.

RMT is demanding that the cleaners, who do some of the dirtiest jobs often in appalling conditions to keep the tube running, should receive a substantial, above inflation pay increase and an Olympic Bonus in line with the payments offered to LOROL staff.

The union is also demanding a sick-pay scheme, free travel passes and improvements to the pension scheme

Despite attempts to resolve

these issues with the companies through negotiations both ISS and Initial have failed to come up with offers that reward the tube cleaners with pay, pensions and working conditions that reflect the crucial role that they play in delivering a clean and safe tube environment.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that RMT was determined to secure a fair deal for cleaner members.

"These staff are an integral part of the London Underground team and should be properly rewarded as such and not just seen as a money-making tool to be exploited for every last

penny in the interest of private profits.

"In the run up to the Olympics it is simply scandalous that the staff who will be keeping the transport system clean for the millions of visitors to the city are being treated like dirt.

"RMT urges Londoners to back this campaign for justice for our cleaners and join us in forcing the Mayor and London Underground to drag ISS and Initial back to the negotiating table to resolve these disputes," he said.



FREIGHTLINER STRIKE BALLOT OVER ROSTERS AND RESTRUCTURING

RMT is balloting for both strike action and action short of a strike of Freightliner fitter members at Southampton depot in a dispute over rosters and restructuring.

Despite protracted negotiations lasting over a year, Freightliner has now thrown workable proposals to negotiate with the union but also withdrawn their own suggested modified plans and returned to their original restructuring which represents an outright attack on staff working conditions.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that RMT representatives had been negotiating these restructuring proposals with Freightliner for well over a year and just when a resolution appeared achievable, the company withdrew all concessions previously tabled.

"Freightliner has conducted itself in a completely disingenuous manner.

"It is as a result of the aggressive and underhand tactics of the company that the RMT executive has taken the decision to conduct a ballot of all our members at Southampton for strike action and industrial action short of a strike.

"The union is confident that our members will show their strength of feeling to the company by returning a massive yes vote in the ballot for industrial action," he said.



STRIKE AT TUBE LINES

London Underground Tube Lines staff, including the Emergency Response Unit, took 72 hours of strike action last month following a four to one vote in support of a dispute over pensions and benefits justice.

RMT has been demanding that all Tube Lines staff, including ex-Alstom staff at Stratford Market depot, be allowed to join the Transport for London Pension Scheme and receive the same travel concessions as those who work for LUL, including former Metronet staff.

The union call for justice has been on the agenda ever since LUL took over Tube Lines as part of the rescue operation after the failure of the tube privatisation project

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.

Tube Lines staff are responsible for both maintenance and upgrade work on the Jubilee line, Northern line and Piccadilly line.

They also provide a number of services across the network including the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), Distribution Services and Trans Plant.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members had delivered a massive mandate for action following a straightforward demand for parity with other Tube staff.

"This dispute is about justice and about ensuring that all groups of staff under the umbrella of London

Underground receive the same rights and benefits and our members have no choice but to strike to secure those basic rights," he said.

RMT has warned that the failure of tube bosses to agree a simple harmonisation of the most basic employment conditions could be linked to a secret plan to reprivatise the maintenance work unleashing the nightmare of a PPP2.

"We understand there are already vulture companies hovering in the wings for another shot at robbing London blind through PPP2 and reducing the network to chaos.

"Instead of playing games with our members' pensions and benefits tube bosses should be getting round the table and resolving this straightforward dispute," he said.

LUL FACE PROSECUTION OVER RUNAWAY

London Underground is to be prosecuted by the rail regulator over a runaway engineering train which occurred on the Northern Line at the start of the morning rush hour in August 2010.

Maintenance firm Tube Lines is also to be prosecuted by the Office of Rail Regulation.

A grinder came perilously close to colliding with a passenger train and RMT warned at the time that it was a serious mistake on the part of London Underground to downplay the potential consequences.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the very least LU should rule out any suggestion that Tube Lines should be re-privatised, to take all contracted work fully in-house with staff integrated on LU terms and conditions.

"We want an assurance that the cuts programme, and the associated pressure on staff to cut corners, should be brought to an immediate halt," he said.



LONDON MIDLAND PROFITEERING FROM TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

RMT has published leaked internal documents showing that London Midland plans to profit to the tune of £1.25 million a year from their programme of savage cuts to ticket offices and staffing levels.

London Midland are blazing a trail for the McNulty plans to axe ticket offices and eliminate station staff and, as RMT have exposed from leaked Department of Transport emails, are doing so in direct collusion with the government.

Now leaked financial reports, marked confidential, show that the company owned by Govia plan to make a cash profit of

one and quarter million pounds from the ticket office closures in the face of total opposition from staff, passengers, transport groups and disability organisations.

The London Midland plans would close a dozen ticket offices completely, result in savage cuts at 86 out of 90 offices and threaten over 100 jobs. They have been opposed by 18,000 people in responses to the public consultation along with passenger groups, statutory monitors, disabled groups and politicians.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the documents

Train company 'plans to cut ticket offices to save £1.25m'

show that for vandalising ticket offices and destroying jobs across the service London Midland and its shareholders stand to profit to the tune of £1.25 million.

"We warned from the leaked Department of Transport emails that this was a 'cash for closures' programme and the extent of the money that the company plan to rake in from

this scandalous assault on jobs and services is now laid bare.

"Passengers, staff, politicians and user groups will be rightly angry when they see what this trail-blazer for the McNulty cuts means in cash terms for the profiteering private rail companies and we will be using this information to jack up the national campaign of resistance to ticket office closures," he said. ■

PENSION ACTION ON EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS

RMT is balloting members for strike action and action short of a strike in a dispute over pensions on East Midlands Trains.

Management has proposed to reduce the Joint Contribution Rate (JCR) in the East Midlands Trains section of the Railways Pension Scheme despite the objections of the union.

RMT representatives have

made it clear that reducing the JCR is irresponsible at a time when pension scheme investments and the economic climate are volatile.

As a result of management ignoring RMT requests to maintain the present JCR, members will be balloted for industrial action.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that while staff will

receive a small financial gain from a reduction in contributions it was clear that the biggest winner will be the employer by saving around £750,000 each year.

"This short-term measure could well have serious long-term implications for the health of the fund as the volatile financial markets head downwards on the back of the

Eurozone crisis.

"This refusal to withdraw the proposal is irresponsible and only suits to line the pockets of shareholders.

"The employer may alter as a result of a change in franchise but the pension scheme members will remain the same and it is they who will be left to pick up the pieces after future valuations are downgraded," he said. ■

TYNE AND WEAR METRO STRIKE VOTE

RMT members working on the Tyne and Wear Metro delivered a 100 per cent vote for strike action in a dispute over the pay and conditions.

The ballot result comes after extensive talks with the operating company DB Regio failed to produce a realistic offer this year on pay and conditions.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union had no option but to ballot for action in defence of member's standard of living.

"In the face of the insulting zero pay offer from the company we have had no option but to ballot for action in the battle to eliminate poverty pay and to improve our member's standard of living.

"This fight is about securing pay justice on Tyne and Wear Metro it's as simple as that," he said.

Labour MP Grahame Morris Labour MP for Easington joined RMT Churchill Cleaners from the Tyne and Wear Metro at the



Newcastle May Day and he has supported their campaign in Parliament for Metro free travel. Strike action on Tyne and

Wear Metro last autumn during the pension's dispute led to a 100 per cent shutdown of services. ■



ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY MEMBERS STRIKE FOR DECENT PENSIONS

RMT members on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary took 24-hour strike action this month alongside other public sector workers.

Following the national day of action observed by RFA members and many other public sector workers last year, further talks have taken place with the government in the dispute over radical pension cuts.

There has been no further

progress and the unacceptable proposals by the Con Dem government to make all public sector workers pay more and work longer for a reduced pension are still in place.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that RMT members on the RFA, the service that supplies the Royal Navy fleet around the world in times of both war and peace, had stood shoulder to shoulder with

hundreds of thousands of other public service workers.

"We sent the clearest message to the government that we will defend our pensions to the hilt and the demand that our members should work longer, pay more and get less will be thrown back in the faces of this government of millionaire public schoolboys.

"The hammering the Con Dems took in the polls in May

should serve as a wake-up call from working men and women that we will not roll over and take the hit.

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

RMT DEMANDS HALT TO SCOTTISH FERRIES SELL OFF

RMT has called on the SNP Administration in Scotland to call off planned sell-off of the Northern Isles Ferries service to private outfit SERCO as it emerged that the plan is now bound up in a legal challenge from another prospective bidder.

SNP Ministers attempted to smuggle out the news that the

lifeline Northlink routes were to be sold off to SERCO in a deal worth almost £250 million at teatime on the Friday after the local elections when all eyes were on the count in areas like Glasgow.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the whole botched privatisation plan had descended into chaos with one

private bidder mounting a legal challenge to another.

"This is no way to run essential, lifeline ferry operations that are a fundamental public service.

"The SNP administration got this decision badly wrong and this legal challenge gives them a chance to stop digging the hole, drag themselves out and

reverse this unwanted and unnecessary privatisation of ferry services," he said.

RMT is seeking urgent meetings and assurances in terms of jobs and working conditions and the fight to defend Scottish ferry services from cuts and privatisation goes on.

OVER 100 MPS SLAM MCNULTY

RMT holds meetings with trade councils across the country to highlight the threat to rail network

More than 100 MPs have signed an early day motion (EDM) 2299 criticising government proposals for the future of railways based on the McNulty report.

The EDM, put down by John McDonnell MP, warns that the McNulty review "will worsen passenger services through the loss of thousands of frontline workers from trains, stations, ticket offices and safety-critical infrastructure and operational roles".

The TUC joined forces with rail unions for a day of action on May 28 to distribute postcards to passengers at key railway stations warning of the impact of McNulty.

Trades councils have also been holding public meetings opposing the government's proposed cuts to jobs and services in the rail industry.

New research has found that while fare prices are going through the roof, investment by train operating companies in the railway network has been halved over the last five years.

There has been an 80 per cent reduction in investment in stations – while there has been over twice as much spent on back office functions such as IT and web costs. There has also been a 15 per cent reduction in private investment in new rolling stock and a 100 per cent reduction in funds spent on track and signals.

On the tenth anniversary of the Potters Bar disaster, RMT has warned the government that another tragedy on Britain's railways was "inevitable" if plans to bulldoze through the McNulty Rail Review proposals go ahead.

McNulty's key recommendations – massive job cuts, de-staffing both on trains and on track along with opening up infrastructure to private companies through the creation of a series of mini-Railtracks – now form the basis of a Government Command Paper

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said

that under the McNulty plans adopted by the government, rail infrastructure was going to be run for profit, setting up the same poisonous set of conditions that led to the disasters of the past under Railtrack.

"We have witnessed the lethal truth at Potters Bar and Hatfield that when profit is the motive, repairs and maintenance work gets ignored and delayed because companies want to maximise returns for shareholders.

"This is what happened in the run-up to previous tragedies, corners were cut and the government cannot be allowed to simply ignore the facts in the interests of a pro-privatisation ideology.

"Though the ConDems are not going for full-scale privatisation of Network Rail, they're pushing through localised "deep alliances" where effectively the train-operating companies are calling the shots.

"The first of these ill-conceived, mini-Railtracks kicked off on South West Trains only last month and RMT is in no doubt

that the end result will be further unnecessary deaths and injuries on the railways," he said.

TUC Deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady said that MPs from across the political spectrum were voicing the concerns of thousands of their constituents who feel ripped off by private train operators who inflict heavy fare rises while cutting staff on trains and stations and keeping investment in decent facilities on trains and stations to a minimum.

ASLEF general secretary Mick Whelan recalled the previous transport minister, Philip Hammond, warning last year that the railways could become 'a rich man's toy'.

"The Command Paper is a detailed blueprint of how to deliver that scenario," he said.

TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes said that passengers were being told that they are expected to stand for further fare increases, fewer trains which will be more overcrowded and fewer staff delivering a less safe and more confusing environment in and around stations.

It is a national disgrace designed to benefit shareholders and allow government to deny responsibility," he said. ■





TORIES ATTACK WORKERS' RIGHTS

When David Cameron and Nick Clegg launched the first peacetime coalition government in Britain since the 1930s they set out a shared agenda to establish a new politics, a new economy and a stronger society.

On all these three objectives, they have comprehensively failed.

Instead the Tory-led coalition has been compromised by the hacking scandal, BSkyB bid and been caught out offering dinners to donors. It has delivered the worst unemployment for 16 years and the first double-dip recession for 37 years.

It has attacked core local services for the young, elderly and disabled with cuts that have been too far and too fast.

However it is the coalition's stance on workers' rights and reforming employment protections under the guise of 'tackling red tape' that shows there is nothing new about the politics of this Tory-led government.

The failure of George Osborne to maintain the economic growth and falling unemployment left to him by the last Labour government in 2010 has pushed the issue of greater flexibility in the labour market back to the top of the Tory agenda.

Following its criticism of the coalition, condemning its failure to consider how austerity policies would affect women, disabled people and ethnic minorities, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has now been stripped of its duty to promote equal opportunities and has had its budget and workforce cut by half.

Most recently, Theresa May has launched a determined attack on equality protections, including a review of the public sector equality duty and a significant curtailment of the power of employment tribunals to hold employers to account.

Following decades of decline in employment protections and the powers of trade unions to protect their members, important measures were put in place during the final years of the last Labour government. These included long-fought for issues such as greater protections for temporary and agency workers. All these achievements now look likely to come

under sustained attack as the pace of labour market reform hits breakneck speed.

The most controversial element of reforms is the long-delayed report by venture-capitalist Adrian Beecroft.

It seems that the troubled economic forecasts and the need for the Prime Minister to be seen to have a 'pro-growth agenda' has strengthened his resolve to push ahead with radical reforms on workers' rights. This return to the hard-right agenda of the nasty-party shows just how out of touch and out of ideas this government really is. It may raise some tensions with a small section of the Liberal Democrats in Westminster but their record in standing up to their Tory partners is a poor one.

The austerity agenda alone has already unfairly hit the poorest and most vulnerable in society hardest and this bonfire of employment protections for these same people should be seen for the vicious discriminatory attack that it is. Leaked reports of some of Beecroft's recommendations include removing 'third-party harassment' protections for workers, removing any duty on employers to check the eligibility of their foreign workers and an end to the mandatory 90-day consultation period for redundancy programmes.

Britain's workers remain some of the least protected in the industrialised world.

If Beecroft gets his way the relationship between employees and their employers will return to the era of industrialisation itself.

If Cameron pushes ahead with such radical reforms there are many in the Labour Party who will have to accept that this is class warfare instigated by a Tory elite that must be challenged in the starkest of terms. Labour must commit to repealing any such changes and put before the electorate a coherent plan for reinstating employment protections for the future.

Grahame Morris
MP for Easington

DEFENDING BUS WORKERS

Union gives evidence in parliament against proposals for more competition in the local bus markets

RMT gave evidence to the Transport Select Committee report into the Competition Commission's proposals for more competition in the local bus markets where most RMT bus members work.

The Competition Commission has taken over two years to produce a 500-page report on local bus markets which boils down to 'let the market rip' but with a few regulatory concessions to local authorities.

The Commission completely ignores the devastation that the Thatcher government's deregulation of non-London bus services in 1985 has caused to local bus services and workers, who continue to be transferred between private operators like possessions.

The power over local bus services enjoyed by the big five bus companies, Go Ahead, First Group, Stagecoach, Arriva and National Express, has led to a serious decline in terms and

conditions for our bus members and their colleagues. As a result, bus workers have fallen down the pay league table of transport sector workers.

RMT's south west regional organiser Phil Bialyk put the union's position to the committee, highlighting the damaging effect of a deregulated bus system on the workforce.

He quoted the latest "liberties" being taken by FirstGroup at RMT members' expense in the south west of England, citing Devon and Cornwall bus workers being passed around between Stagecoach and Go Ahead.

RMT also alerted the committee to the situation that coach drivers in Plymouth were faced with when First Group dropped them after losing a local contract and the new operator refused to recognise even the basic TUPE protections for the workforce.



The increased casualisation of bus workers was continuing due to the absence of strong regulations to preventing this process becoming more common.

Such examples of a fragmented and unregulated bus system impressed upon the committee the reality of working in this vital but undervalued transport sector and the impact that privatisation has had on a generation of bus workers.

Areas like the south west, with a predominantly rural population, continue to lose out under a bus system that allows private bus operators free rein to withdraw services at the drop of a hat and hike fares as often as possible.

RMT explained to the committee that even the 'quality

contracts' scheme introduced nearly five years ago would, if any were to actually exist, represent a step in the right direction.

"A quality contract and franchising is not the best thing but it would go a long way to providing stability in the network," Phil Bialyk said.

The union's policy on the need to renationalise the bus industry was also clearly restated.

Bus and coach fares have increased in real terms by 20 per cent over the last decade yet wages and conditions of bus workers have continued to stagnate. This is a direct result of a Thatcherite privatisation that should be reversed at the earliest opportunity.

FRENCH TRANSPORT GIANT BUYS LEADING BUS AND COACH OPERATOR

French transport giant RATP Dev UK has announced the acquisition of Epsom-based bus and coach company H R Richmond, expanding RATP's bus operations in Britain.

The RATP (Autonomous Operator of Parisian Transports) Group is a state-owned public transport operator headquartered in Paris, France. Formed in 1948, the group has its origins

as the public transport operator for the city of Paris.

Today is the world's fifth largest urban transport operator with 14 underground railway lines, three tramway lines, 350 bus lines and the shuttle services to the two Ile-de-France airports.

RATP Dev UK is an RATP Dev subsidiary that was established last year to develop

the Group's expansion by exploiting the deregulated transport industry in Britain which is underpinned by EU transport diktats.

The company already operates London United Busways Ltd, Bournemouth Transport Ltd (Yellow Buses), Bath Bus Company Ltd and Metrolink RATP Dev Ltd in Manchester.



FRENCH MONOPOLY: The RATP Group has its origins as the Paris public transport operator.

LUCKY LANDING

As another Bond helicopter ditches into the North Sea, RMT calls for the grounding of Super Puma Euro-copters

An EC225 Euro-copter Super Puma operated by Bond Helicopters ditched in the North Sea on May 10 some 25 miles off Aberdeen while on route to the drilling rig *Maersk Resilient*.

This aircraft type is similar to the 85N 'Miller flight' that was also operated by Bond and which tragically crashed into the sea on April 1 2009 killing all 16 on board after the gearbox suffered a catastrophic failure.

RMT immediately called for the release of as much detail about the latest ditching incident to address concerns of members and offshore workers generally.

There was a total of 14 personnel on-board, two crew and 12 passengers. All escaped into a life-raft and were recovered by the coast guard helicopter and the Peterhead lifeboat.

The aircraft crew put out a "may-day" call reporting an indication of low oil pressure in the main gear box, before they initiated a controlled landing on the sea.

RMT has approached Bond Helicopters seeking details about several other 'alleged' events in which members claim their aircraft suffered engine failures during April, March and January of this year.

These alleged events were in Bond operated EC225 aircraft and clearly concerned one member who wrote to the union saying: "As we were approaching the shore the pilot advised we would have ten minutes to go and to prepare ourselves for landing.

"Within two minutes the aircraft jolted, tilted left and right, pitched back and forth and lost altitude. The engine made strange noises as well as the rotors, this went on for what seemed like an age but was probably only about 30 seconds to a minute.

"From my position in the aircraft I could see most people and there was shock and horror all over their faces, a repeat of the Miller incident was definitely in our thoughts!"

Since the event the Air Accident Investigation Branch



(AAIB) has produced a preliminary report confirming that a 360-degree circumferential crack on the bevel gear vertical shaft had been identified. This crack had resulted in the shaft ceasing to turn the oil pumps which provided the supply of oil to the main gearbox.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy said there were concerns about this latest event for those flying regularly with Bond, those concerns compounded by reports about other incidents.

"I had already raised the issue of alleged engine failures and the like with the Helicopter Safety Steering Group (HSSG) prior to the May 10 ditching, and they in turn were talking to Bond.

"As a result of the ditching an 'extraordinary meeting' of the HSSG was convened and sought assurances about the safety of these aircraft and we

want Bond to conduct an independent review of its operations in general.

Jake provided Bond with a report setting out members' concerns and he anticipated further meetings to discuss these matters.

"These guys got really lucky, if the shaft had failed at a different point, we could have lost the rotors as was the case with the tragic Miller flight in April 2009.

"They were also lucky with the weather as the sea was relatively calm, had it been a bit rougher the aircraft could have rolled immediately on hitting the water.

"The pilot's did a great job getting it down and getting everybody out and we'll have to wait on the full AAIB investigation to see what can be learned from this incident," he said.



EU HANDS OFF OFFSHORE SAFETY

Oil & Gas UK and UK trade Unions have joined forces to oppose European Union proposals to centralise regulation of offshore oil and gas safety.

The employers' group joined with RMT and Unite to warn that the proposed EU regulation "would, in practice, undermine the current UK regulatory regime and the high standards of offshore safety and environmental protection

that this drives".

Eurocrats proposed a series of regulatory steps last October, including aggressive coordination of EU members' regulatory systems.

Oil & Gas UK and RMT have opposed the proposal, arguing in favour of existing UK regulation of offshore safety.

"If implemented, the proposed new regulation would necessitate the rewriting

and/or revocation of significant parts of the existing world-class UK sector-specific legislation," a joint statement said.

The statement also criticises the proposal for not involving the industry and workforce and for creating "widespread compliance confusion and project delay".

It warned that the EU text was "poorly drafted in a number of important areas and

contains numerous examples of errors and ambiguity which will lead to unintended consequences".

The proposal "will shift regulatory control away from member states to the oversight of the EU, with the potential for further prescriptive intervention at a later date".

It also points out that "the European Commission does not have any technical competence in this area". ■



FIGHTING MCNULTY

Packed Station Staff grades conference resists job cuts and ticket office closures

This year's Station Staff and Associated Grades conference met in the beautiful setting of Teignmouth along the route of Brunel's South Devon Railway.

The organisers were delighted to be able to report that around half of the delegates were new faces, a positive sign that the union is recruiting new activists building a strong and vibrant organisation for the future and president Chris Riley opened conference with a warm welcome to the South West to all those in attendance.

Proceedings got under way with a "state of the industry" presentation from assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski.

Pat focussed on the threats, changes and challenges that had been thrown at the union in the 12 months since conference last met, most notably the government's adoption of all of the core recommendations of the McNulty Rail Review in a Command Paper.

"We know what's at stake now, thousands of jobs, the wholesale closure and running down of ticket offices and the drive to a faceless railway in the

name of profit regardless of any consideration for either safety or customer care," he said.

Pat described the whole McNulty package as the "ATOC masterplan" – drawn up by the train companies for the train companies with the connivance of a ConDem government in hoc to big business.

Tribute was paid to the union campaign on London Midland to defend ticket offices under the guidance of RMT regional Organiser Ken Usher.

London Midland is seen as a pilot for the ticket-office closure programme set to be unleashed across the rest of the country where the company are finalising a financial package with the government that will result in virtually every booking office being either restricted or axed – in reality a 'cash for closures' scandal.

The RMT-led campaign has secured 18,000 individual objections and engaged the support of passenger groups, disability organisations, politicians and the wider public in a model of the kind of resistance that the union will need to mobilise to stop

McNulty on a national basis.

Pat Sikorski said that there should be no doubt the government, particularly the LibDems, were vulnerable and our message was "we are coming to get you".

"They are right to be nervous as the thousands of people who use our ticket offices are key voters in key seats and we have a real opportunity to ramp up the political pressure and turn this into a massive popular issue," he said.

Dennis James, Birmingham Rail, explained how the London Midland campaign had motivated members and built from the grassroots and warned delegates, "it's us today and you tomorrow."

Dennis also sent out the alert that industrial action would be required alongside the political and public campaigning to force the closures issue with the government.

Ross Marshall, Camden, briefed the conference on the pressures on London Underground staff in the run up to the London Olympics.

"Staff are being bundled

through safety critical licence training in one day and regulations that are there to protect both the public and our members are being bent to try and cope with the sheer numbers of the Olympics," he said.

Ross also pointed out that right-wing Tory Brian Coleman – since dumped by the London electorate – had refused even to acknowledge complaints and concerns in his role as chair of the Fire Authority. RMT is continuing to campaign loudly and publicly on the Olympics safety issue.

Phil Jones, Cardiff, drew the comparison with events at the Millennium Stadium where agency staff had been swung in on a temporary basis and later ended up taking over station environmental jobs. Concerns were raised that a similar underhand manoeuvre may be under way on the new Greater Anglia franchise.

Craig Pearson, Liverpool, said that Merseyrail had developed the theme, explaining how the rapacious operators from the Carlisle group were using their foothold gradually to take over



increasing roles putting RMT members' jobs on the gateline at risk.

"There's no pension, minimal sick pay and no security – this is all about driving down the quality of passenger service and delivering the work on the cheap," he said.

A presentation by Paul Curtis from British Transport Police sparked off a lively debate over the protection of both staff and passengers from assault and abuse.

Dennis Connor, for the RMT executive committee, pointed out that having the BTP's targets set by the Association of Train Operating Companies, who fund the policing, is a classic case of the "tail wagging the dog".

Conference discussed a wide range of motions agreeing positions on key issues including fatigue, winter weather working, fire regs, fitness for duty and hepatitis vaccinations.

An emergency motion moved by Caroline Parry, Gloucester on the dangers of lone working in the event of a serious incident such as a bomb alert was agreed.

Another successful emergency motion attacked the pressure heaped on staff to carry out safety checks even when working under difficult circumstances.

The process was described as "lumping responsibility onto staff that could lead to the loss

of your jobs", and personal experiences were presented which revealed how the procedure was being abused by train operators as just another way of fitting up and getting rid of staff. A number of sackings had occurred at just one station, Waterloo, alone.

In closing the meeting, outgoing conference secretary Mike Llewellyn was given a warm send off after many years of service and Ross Marshall swas voted into the hot seat. ■

Youth unemployment hits 1,000,000

Longest slump in peacetime as Britain slides into recession

Austerity blamed for Britain's double-dip

Elderly 'losing out by £500m a year in the funding of care'

Eurozone break-up 'could trigger new Great Depression'

STUDENT LOANS CHIEF IN TAX AVOIDANCE DEAL

KIDS' MISERY AS 1M JOBS AXED IN CRUNCH

YOU'D THINK THE GOVERNMENT HAD BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN ATTACK YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK.

IT'S NOT AS IF THIS COUNTRY was exactly short of issues. We face urgent problems like a stricken economy, record youth unemployment and the gap between the super-rich and everyone else. Yet the government is devoting precious time and energy to attack, of all things, rights at work.

A stealthy series of changes that add up to a wholesale assault. Already an extra year to wait for protection against unfair sackings, with reduced maternity rights and more dangerous workplaces in the pipeline. These sly attacks have nothing to do with getting the economy moving. They come from the same people who fought the minimum wage and paid holidays. By slicing away a bit at a time, they hope no-one will notice. But we have, and you should too. Visit the website to find out more, and tell ministers they've been rambling.

TUC

VISIT www.tuc.org.uk/stoptheattack TO FIND OUT MORE

STOP THE ATTACK



BUS WORKERS FIGHT BACK

The need to stand up and fight to defend bus industry jobs, pay, pensions and conditions was the rallying call from the RMT bus workers' conference

RMT bus workers renewed their resolve to fight to defend jobs, pay, pensions and conditions at their annual conference, held in the north Devon resort of Croyde last month.

It was a watershed conference, said Paul Dyer of host branch North Devon, at a time when the movement and working people were facing massive attacks from a government of millionaires.

It was a key strength that RMT was "one union, regardless of sector or grade", and "the best fighting union in the country", said Paul.

The big-five bus operators were attempting to maintain profitability by making staff shoulder the burden of massive cuts in local government and government bus subsidy, said southwest organiser Phil Bialyk.

"The bus industry is under attack, but don't swallow that we're all in this together, because if I was earning a million, I'd be £40,000 a year better off - while the government is penalising the low-paid, and cutting benefits and services."

The union had made strides

towards a single rate of pay and a single set of conditions with First Group, but now the employers were going on the offensive.

"They want your paid breaks, your sick-pay schemes and your jobs, but RMT isn't there to negotiate exit terms, but to protect jobs, pay and conditions," said Phil

The response should be to aim at 100 per cent organisation in every depot, said Phil, who had a word of advice for reps: "don't have a kettle in the union office - take your break in the canteen, because that's where you'll find out what your members are worried about."

A nationalised bus industry was the union's aim, but 'quality contract' franchises would be better than the free-for-all that existed, and the union had lobbied MPs alongside sister unions to put a brake on the shameless siphoning of public money, said Phil.

Delegates railed against the use by the big bus operators of low-cost subsidiaries in order to drive down pay and conditions.

The Go-Ahead group was

using it cynically as a strategy aimed ultimately at picking apart negotiated terms and conditions, said Jim Ide, Poole and District, and, if unchecked, could lead to bad feeling and division.

The union was wise to the ploy, but if not challenged now it would fester and the chance to fight it must be grasped now, added Mark Gale, Poole and District.

MASSIVE ATTACK

A massive squeeze on unions and attacks on workers' legal rights by the "rotten" ConDem government were outlined by general secretary Bob Crow.

Changes to industrial tribunals had already imposed, with workers now unprotected by the law for two years, the imposition of prohibitive new tribunal fees and the doubling of costs if you lose.

Tribunals would no longer have to be balanced with three members, there would be no more witness expenses, and if the union continued to take the same number of cases, it would cost close to £1 million a year.

Attacks on time-off for union

reps also presented a potentially "colossal" cost to the union said Bob.

But the response had to be to build the union and nurture a new generation of activists: "It is people that hold the union together - you are the union," said Bob.

Looking outward, the union had doubled its investment in reps' education, expanding the Doncaster education centre at a time when most unions had long closed theirs.

The massive attacks on jobs, public services and benefits should have had opposition MPs jumping up and down in anger, but the bulk of the political mainstream supported privatisation, cuts, illegal wars and anti-union laws.

"People won't just vote Labour because they hate the Tories and LibDems - we are at the same crossroads we were at 107 years ago when we broke with the Liberals," said Bob.

There were growing signs that people were rejecting austerity, and RMT had to place itself firmly with that resistance.

"We must stand for social justice and fight to change

society, or we will be the first generation to leave a Worse situation for those who come after us," said Bob.

"It is a straightforward choice. You can lay down and be kicked or you can stand and fight."

That choice had become a personal one for Wessex organiser Peter Gale, who drew a parallel with his own fight to overcome serious illness and was given a rousing welcome back by conference.

"If you are determined to stand up and fight back the best place to do it is in RMT," said Peter.

"It all starts with

organisation – we must strive for 100 per cent membership in every depot, identify the reps and get them trained," he said.

Organisation was key to building the union, said Phil Boston, organising unit, and every member was capable of helping RMT to grow.

Successful recruitment was about a non-aggressive approach, and being sensitive to potential members who might, for example, have problems filling in a form.

The union had to brace itself because the worst from the government was yet to come, said conference president Joe Hayes, Salisbury No 3.

"We have organisation and education to be proud of and we have to be there for the members," he said.

- Delegates asked the union to look at the problem of bus companies monitoring social networking sites looking for complaints about staff, and using them as the basis for disciplinary action.
- Union lawyers had won more than £5 million in compensation for members in the last year, noted Thompsons Solicitors' Malcolm Cherry – but he warned that the government, egged on by insurers, was putting the squeeze on costs,

compensation and criminal-injuries payouts.

- A call for union subs to be frozen was rejected by delegates, who agreed that it would result in unacceptable cuts to member services.
- Delegates sent their best wishes to conference secretary Keith Murphy, who was unable to attend due to ill-health, and to assistant general secretary Mick Cash who had suffered a family bereavement. ■

Delegates agreed that the 2013 bus workers conference would be held in Skegness.

SCOTTISH TUC OPPOSES FERRY SELL OFF

Scottish TUC delegates backed RMT concerns that the SNP Scottish government's Ferry Services Draft Plan will lead to the fragmentation and privatisation of the Clyde and Hebrides routes.

The Draft Plan commits to "opening the market to greater competition" and "less prescriptive specification".

Congress agreed that the government was embarking on a process that could lead to a massive attack on jobs and conditions of employment, social dumping, cuts in services and increased fares.

The 1992 EU Cabotage Regulations also require Clyde and Hebrides services to be put out to tender every six years, further threatening the future of Scottish Ferries, as services next have to be put out to tender in 2013.

Congress resolved to support public ownership, resist EU regulations for compulsory tendering of service and insure the fullest possible protection for services, jobs, pensions and conditions.

RMT general secretary Bob



RMT's STUC delegation

Crow seconded a motion highly critical of the EU 'austerity drive and calling for resistance to EU directives and treaties that privatise public services and undermine democracy.

Congress also backed RMT

opposition to the government attacks on health and safety which would increase the number of deaths and accidents at the workplace.

Delegates applauded RMT's campaign for improved safety in the offshore sector,

including seeking the adoption of Norwegian standards which provide far stronger standards for safety representatives, including greater worker involvement, training and enforcement powers. ■

NO TO LONGER RAIL FRANCHISES

Train crew and shunting grades warn that longer franchises proposed under McNulty proposals will spark more profiteering



RMT's train crew conference kicked off in Gloucester on the day that the government confirmed the approved bidders for the new, gold-plated Great Western rail franchise.

As the first franchise to be let under the McNulty rules, assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski condemned those queuing up to plunder the Wales and West Country route as "the usual bunch of pirates".

He pointed out that on First Great Western RMT had now set out battle lines over the

attempts by the company to undermine the safety role of the guard on the Class 180 trains being reintroduced on the franchise:

"We know exactly what's at stake, this is about the erosion of the guard grade in the interests of profit and about blazing a trail for McNulty where Driver Only Operation is the default position," he said.

Conference heard that now that the gauntlet has been thrown down over the 180 stock RMT would be stepping up the

fight, relaunching the Guards' Charter and building a workplace and public campaign harnessing opposition to the assault on the safety critical role of train based staff.

Conference president Billy Kimm, Liverpool 5 set the economics out in stark terms: "In this time of cuts and austerity if the government was serious about saving money they would take the simple and obvious step of renationalising the railways.

"Shareholders in the private

rail companies have seen a 44 per cent increase in their dividends, that's where all the money has gone," he said.

Bill Hendy from RMT Union Learning explained to conference how even a good idea like modern apprenticeships has been abused and exploited by greedy private companies in the interests of profit:

"Instead of giving young people hope, we have increasing evidence of companies ripping off the funds available for the apprenticeships and then riding



VICTORY: RMT members on Chiltern have won the battle to retain full control for guards over door operation on Class 67 Mark 3 stock units

roughshod over their promises, offering the bare minimum of training and turning them into a government-subsidised cheap labour scheme.”

Delegates were urged to continue to support the important work of Union Learning and to act as eyes and ears on the ground to monitor abuses of apprenticeship schemes.

A wide range of motions covering the working conditions of train crew members were debated by the conference.

Sparking off a particularly lively debate was a motion from Liverpool 5 on Managing for Attendance. Delegates explained how in many areas what should be a supportive process is instead turned on its head and used as just another mechanism to intimidate and bully staff.

Even worse, in some parts of the industry the attendance policies had been so distorted

and corrupted that people were now afraid to take time off sick and were turning up at work when they should be off, as the process was used as a control and disciplinary tool.

Conference agreed wholeheartedly to step up the campaign of action around Managing for Attendance.

Similar abuses of procedure were dragged out into the daylight during the debate on a composite motion on Duty of Care carried unanimously.

Delegates explained how Duty of Care has been used and abused by managers both to pass the buck and to place staff in an impossible position – ending up having to defend themselves against charges when they were actually the ones under attack and placed in a vulnerable position.

As one delegate from Manchester asked: “Where’s the duty of care to staff when EDL

yobs are smashing up a train? Where’s the duty of care when drunken yobs are abusing passengers and staff?”

Tributes were paid to outgoing president Billy Kimm on his retirement and a warm welcome extended to his successor, Andy Duggan.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow sent out a rallying cry over the McNulty fight:

“McNulty is our biggest issue, it affects all grades and it must be defeated. The fight against a faceless railway is the fight of our lives and with a campaign rooted in both the workplace and in the community we will win”. ■

CHILTERN GUARDS VICTORY

Conference heard of a fantastic victory secured by RMT members on Chiltern in a battle to retain full control for guards over door operation.

Following a year-long fight, supported by all grades including the drivers, the company had been forced to back down from plans that would have seen drivers in control of the doors.

Controls to allow DOO had already been fitted in to the Class 67 Mark 3 stock units up

at Doncaster, making the victory even more significant.

AGS Pat Sikorski congratulated the workforce for standing together and winning a difficult dispute.

“The stunning victory by our members on Chiltern over guards’ control of the doors on the Mark 3 stock is proof positive that solidarity across the grades wins and is a fantastic boost to everyone campaigning against DOO in the face of the McNulty assault,” he said.

WOMEN AGAINST THE CUTS

RMT equality officer Jess Webb reports on the effect of government cuts on the lives of working women

At last year's RMT national women's conference a resolution was passed on the topic of women against the cuts.

This called for support for *Merseyside Women Against the Cuts* and *London Women Against the Cuts*, along with raising awareness about these campaigns and the TUC briefing on this topic within the union.

The TUC also produced a briefing titled 'The gender impact of the cuts' which outlined the impact that cuts to jobs, services and welfare would have on women.

At the time of writing many of the cuts were yet to take effect. However, even at that early stage it was already apparent that the government's deficit-reduction strategy would disproportionately disadvantage women and families, particularly those on low incomes.

The TUC updated this briefing recently giving an overview of the ways in which women in both the public and private sectors have been affected by the public sector cuts, as workers, as benefits claimants and as service users.

This comprehensive briefing is in the women's section on the RMT website. In summary it shows how the government's attacks on the public sector are having a disproportionate and disastrous effect on women in three main ways:

- More women will lose their jobs simply due to the fact that significantly more women than

men are employed in the public sector

- Women are more reliant on the services than the public sector provides and therefore stand to lose more from cuts to services
- Women are more likely to depend on the welfare system and will be hit hard by cuts to benefits.

The topic of the gender impact of the cuts was taken forward at this year's conference. The TUC briefing of the impact of the cuts was given to the delegates and breakout groups pooled their experiences and knowledge of what was happening in their areas. RMT delegation leader to the TUC women's conference Tracy Darker noted the examples delegates were sharing and took them to the conference to be included in their mapping exercise. Besides the cut back in child tax benefits and increases in unemployment which were universal, local examples included the closure of children's play areas, citizen advice bureaus and libraries. ■

In addition, a request for examples on the global recession within the transport industry had been received from the International Transport Workers Federation.

Again delegates pooled their experiences which have been fed back to the ITF. Should any member wish to send in any evidence regarding the real experience of the cut backs, please do contact the Equal Opportunities Officer, j.webb@rmt.org.uk. Oxfam - A Gender Perspective on Welfare Reform.



"Research commissioned by the TUC shows that female lone parents will lose 18.5 per cent of their net income"

Many campaign groups, charities, community groups, and NGOs have also published responses to government policies. A selection of these can be found at the following websites:

The Fawcett Society
www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

Women's budget group
www.wbg.org.uk/

Working Families

Comprehensive Spending Review:
The Impact on Working Families

www.workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/pdf/article/341

Child Poverty Action Group

WREXHAM INDEPENDENT ELECTION VICTORY

RMT Wrexham branch secretary and Wrexham Independent Group chair David Bithell explains how his group has increased the number of seats in local elections

In the May local elections in Wales the Wrexham Independent Group increased its representation on the council by winning ten seats.

As our group of members increases we will continue to work with other councillors in Wrexham and across North Wales to support more improvements to the rail network.

First elected in 2004, I am currently deputy leader of the council and vice chair of the executive board, a key decision making body for the council.

I also deal with environment and transport issues and represent the Wrexham Council on the North Wales regional leadership board, looking at how we can work collaboratively across the region to improve services.

I am a rail working group member and a member of the Board on North Wales Transport Consortium (TAITH).

Since setting up the rail group we have lobbied for rail improvements both locally, regionally and nationally. The figures produced by the ORR (see below) show that passenger numbers continue to grow.

I know that members in North Wales have questioned, and rightly so at times, why we are now 'all Wales', but the level of investment by the Welsh government is significant. We must support the aim of bringing more investment to Wales which will see more passengers using rail.

One on the major

improvements we have lobbied for both as a council, TAITH and the local RMT branch is the redoubling of the line between Wrexham and Chester at the cost of £45.4 million. Singled in 1980, the recent announcement by the Welsh government to support journey time improvements between north and south Wales will ensure that seven of the 9.5 miles of single track are doubled together with line speed enhancements of up to 90mph between Gobowen and Shrewsbury and from Chester to Saltney.

This will allow for the rerouting of the original north to south express train from Holyhead to Cardiff to operate via Wrexham and enable us to campaign for more frequent services to and from Wrexham, North Wales and the North West.

We have also looked at improvements on the Wrexham Bidston line, working with TAITH and the Mersey Dee Alliance on cross-border issues to improve the frequency of the services together with line-speed enhancements.

Currently work is being carried out to increase the line speed with the ultimate aim to have a 30-minute service operating from Wrexham to Bidston. Although the current franchise agreement does not allow for more services, I hope the Welsh government will be looking at a new franchise agreement in Wales to support growth.

Some of the other projects

we have been working on include lobbying for improved timetabling between Chester, Wrexham and Shrewsbury which currently has an hourly service pattern with trains between Holyhead, Cardiff, Holyhead and Birmingham International Airport via Wrexham General.

A lot of work has gone into support investment at stations and significant improvements have been at Ruabon and Chirk as well as an access lift installed on Platform 4 at Wrexham General. A continued investment programme has been ongoing throughout Wrexham County Borough including bus,



rail interchanges and car park extensions at Chirk, Ruabon and Wrexham General.

There are also CCTV and customer information scheme projects at all stations and Chirk station will shortly benefit from funding to improve disabled access via a new Department for Transport programme at a cost of £1.2million, this will include some match funding from the consortia. ■

Data from the ORR (Office of the Rail Regulator) shows consistent increases in passenger numbers on this line of route as follows:

Year	Station	Journeys	Growth	%
2002/3	Wrexham General	364267	-	-
2004/5	Wrexham General	391693	27426	7.53%
2005/6	Wrexham General	401242	9549	2.44%
2006/7	Wrexham General	436468	35226	8.78%
2007/8	Wrexham General	487713	51245	11.74%
2008/9	Wrexham General	534256	46543	9.54%
2009/10	Wrexham General	584176	49920	9.34%
		Total Growth	219909	
Wrexham General		Growth 2003 to 2010	219909	60.37%

2002/3	Ruabon	28470	-	-
2004/5	Ruabon	32414	3944	13.85%
2005/6	Ruabon	39854	7440	22.95%
2006/7	Ruabon	46623	6769	16.98%
2007/8	Ruabon	54369	7746	16.61%
2008/9	Ruabon	61578	7209	13.26%
2009/10	Ruabon	71346	9768	15.86%
		Total Growth	42876	
Ruabon		Growth 2003 to 2010	42876	150.60%

2002/3	Chirk	31532	-	-
2004/5	Chirk	32094	562	1.78%
2005/6	Chirk	36295	4201	13.09%
2006/7	Chirk	42762	6467	17.82%
2007/8	Chirk	50688	7926	18.54%
2008/9	Chirk	54988	4300	8.48%
2009/10	Chirk	56310	1322	2.40%
		Total Growth	24778	
Chirk		Growth 2003 to 2010	24778	78.58%

CELEBRATING MAY DAY

May 1 is internationally known today as Workers' Day or May Day, a celebration of the labour movement the world over.

But during medieval times May Day was dedicated to an earlier symbol of social justice, Robin Hood, and saw songs and plays performed up and down the country to celebrate the coming of spring.

Rumour has it that Mayfair in London is named after a particularly debauched and raucous festival held during the 18th century.

International Workers' Day began life as a commemoration of the 1886 Haymarket massacre in Chicago. During a general strike for the eight-hour workday police fired on the workers, killing dozens of demonstrators and their own officers.

In 1890 May Day was formally recognised as an annual event. In 1955, even the Catholic Church dedicated May 1 to 'Saint Joseph The Worker'.

However in the United States and Canada the official holiday for workers is Labour Day in



September as US President Grover Cleveland feared that commemorating Labour Day on May 1 could become an opportunity to commemorate the Haymarket events.

In Britain it wasn't until 1978 that the Labour government introduced the May Day Bank Holiday on the first Monday each May and May 1 is still a national holiday in more than 80 countries and celebrated unofficially in many other countries.

Some Tories are currently campaigning to abolish the annual May Day bank holiday. Such is their hatred of organised labour the Conservative Party wants to deprive millions of a day off each year.

Right-wing governments have traditionally sought to

repress the message behind International Workers' Day, with fascist governments in Portugal, Italy, Germany, and Spain abolishing the workers' holiday.

In April 1933, the recently installed Nazi government declared May 1 the 'Day of National Work', an official state holiday, but all celebrations were to be organised by the government. Any separate celebrations by communists, social democrats or trade unions were banned.

Today May Day is celebrated across the country each year with events organised by trades councils and local committees. It remains a focus for the ongoing struggle for peace, democracy and trade union rights. ■



THE 10TH ANNUAL

RMT GARDEN PARTY FOR CUBA IN ASSOCIATION WITH CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Wednesday, June 20, Maritime House, Clapham, London, 7pm

Live Cuban music, food, free bar

Special guests include:

Wives of the Miami Five

HE Alicia Castro –Argentinian Ambassador

John McDonnell MP

Mick Whelan, General Secretary, Aslef

Tony Woodley – former General Secretary, Unite

Stephen Cavalier, Chief Executive, Thompsons Solicitors

Bob Crow

Tickets available at £15

Credit card bookings on 0800 376 3706, or send cheques, payable to RMT, to: Cuba tickets, RMT, 39 Chalton Street, London, NW1 1JD



EU ATTACKS WORKERS' RIGHTS

European Commission proposes to restrict trades union rights and gives courts the right to decide on the 'proportionality' of any collective action by workers

Labour movement calls for a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union grew recently after the European Commission unveiled further attacks on trade-unions rights enshrined in new EU Regulations known as Monti 2(1).

Monti 2 was drawn up to deal with the controversy that has raged around two famous anti-trade union judgments by the European Court of Justice – recently renamed the Court of Justice of the European Union – known as the Viking and Laval cases.

Institute of Employment Rights director Carolyn Jones explains that in those cases, the court decided that the right of employers to roam the globe looking for cheap labour to provide 'goods and services' trumped the fundamental rights of workers to take action to protect their terms and conditions of employment.

"So in Viking, a Finnish ferry company undermined the terms of Finnish seafarers by reflagging in Estonia and hiring cheaper Estonian workers.

"In Laval, a Latvian company

undermined the terms of a Swedish collective agreement by employing cheaper Latvian workers to work on a Swedish building site," she said.

In both cases the trade unions concerned took strike action in defence of their terms and conditions.

In both cases, the ECJ decided that Article 43 (freedom of establishment) and Article 49 (freedom to provide services) of the EC Treaty were more fundamental than the right to strike.

The application of Viking and Laval in the domestic courts of EU Member States has been the subject of complaints to the ILO supervisory bodies, which in turn have made it very clear that the law as developed by the ECJ is not consistent with obligations arising under ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

One such complaint was taken by the pilots union BALPA which, during a dispute with BA was threatened with legal action and unlimited fines, not because the union had acted

in breach of domestic law, but because its proposed action would constitute a breach of the employer's right under the EC Treaty, Art 43 (now TFEU, Art 49) following the decision in Viking.

In response, the ILO Committee of Experts has made clear that the effect of Viking as reflected in BALPA was to take the UK even deeper in breach of Convention 87.

According to the Committee, 'the omnipresent threat of an action for damages that could bankrupt the union, possible now in the light of the Viking and Laval judgments, creates a situation where the rights under the Convention cannot be exercised'.

Today Monti 2, the new technocratic rules proposed by the European Commission in March, undermines the right of trade unions to engage in collective bargaining at a stroke. It restricts the right to take collective action in a number of ways:

- It does not ensure that economic freedoms do not take priority over

fundamental social rights or that, in case of conflict, fundamental social rights will take precedence

- It reinforces the 'proportionality' test as developed by the European Court of Justice in the Viking case which leaves it up to the ECJ and national judges to decide if collective action is necessary
- It reinforces the interpretation given by the ECJ in Viking and Laval cases and does not solve the problems resulting from the judgments

According to professor Keith Ewing of the IER, the Monti 2 Regulation "fails to address the changing nature of human rights law on the right to strike".

Instead, the Regulation would codify the ECJ decisions into EU law, leaving ECJ and national judges to use a 'proportionality' test that is narrow and is weighted in favour of business interests.

"There will be no solution to the Viking and Laval problem until there are clear rules indicating that collective action may be taken in accordance



EU WAIVES THE RULES: In 2007 the European Court of Justice ruled in favour of Viking Line's right to impose social dumping by replacing Finnish seafarers with low wage Estonian labour. The EU court ruled that an international trade union campaign against 'flag of convenience' shipping was in breach of EU rules on 'free movement'.

with human rights principles, and until the threat of unlimited damages is lifted from trade unions for exercising a fundamental social right," Keith Ewing said.

Carolyn Jones points out that the failure of the Regulation to correct the growing imbalance between the economic rights of employers and the human rights of workers highlighted the limitations of 'Social Europe' as presented by Delors and embraced by the labour movement in 1988.

"The Treaty for Stability, Coordination and Governance signed by the Eurozone governments in March 2012 promises to take Europe still further down the path of austerity by imposing draconian cuts on nation states in the name of deficit reduction.

"If unions continue to be restricted in how they can legally respond to those cuts, then perhaps alternative action is now required.

"One such action that would help focus the minds of the EU would be to support calls across Europe for referendums on EU membership," she said.

RMT has long argued that the 'Social Europe' agenda has always been a smoke screen to absorb the organised working class into EU structures while delivering very little to workers.

Speaking recently at a People's Pledge meeting⁽²⁾ calling for a referendum on EU membership Bob Crow warned that unelected EU institutions directly represented Europe's biggest banks and their interests, removing elected governments and imposing mass unemployment, social dumping and unending austerity everywhere.

"It is time that the trade union movement demanded a referendum in order to build resistance to capitalist greed and austerity whether it's the EU or its junior partner, this rotten Con Dem government," he said. ■

1. EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 'Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services' Brussels, 21.3.2012, COM (2012) 130 final 2012/0064 (APP),
2. www.peoplespledge.org

President's column



DEFENDING TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

This month a very rich man called Adam Beecroft, who calls himself an 'venture capitalist', was invited by the government to propose changes to workplace rights.

This is the same man who used to run a company called 'First Care' that provides "Absence Management from Day One" to NHS Trusts, train operating companies and utility companies. That's right, you or someone you know has probably come across them bullying sick staff back to work, or terminating their contract of employment on 'capability grounds'.

One of Mr Beecroft's proposals, which Tory spin-doctors cut out of the final report, was "to remove regulations surrounding employment of children".

Yes, that's right. It does mean what you thought, Britain's bosses want to deregulate child labour.

You can understand their thinking. We live in an increasingly integrated global market where 'UK plc' competes with what we used to call 'developing countries'. With the Olympics coming to London, why should we be at a competitive disadvantage in the thriving 'Olympic merchandise spin-off' industry? There are footballs to be stitched and T-shirts to be ironed. The devil finds work for idle hands.

To quote comedian Jeremy Hardy, "My daughter asked me for a new pair of football boots. I told her, 'You're 12 years old. Can't you make yourself a pair?'"

But they're not joking. A TUC report from 2007 - 'No Medal for the Olympics' - found evidence of 12-year olds making 2008 Beijing Olympics bags, headgear, stationery and other products. Adults were earning 14p per hour (half the legal minimum wage in China) and working up to 15 hours per day, seven days a week. Imagine the profits!

Ironically, it was a Tory government that introduced the 1833 factory act first limiting employment of young people under eighteen, as well as children, banning night shifts and providing for factory inspectors.

Of course, in those days the Tory

party, representing mainly the 'landed interest', was keen to clip the wings of its Liberal political rivals representing industrial capitalists. Today, they're all in it together and it looks like they want to turn the clock back for workers' rights to the 19th century, or earlier.

So what gives the likes of Beecroft the brass neck to imagine that we will allow the tiny group of plutocrats who he speaks for to turn us into 'profit-making serfs'? Partly, it is the desperation of the uber-rich, who while they amass wealth at an ever-greater rate can see the global capitalist system is dying of financial sclerosis.

Mainly however, the arrogance of super-rich, parasites comes from a conviction that democracy doesn't matter any more, so why should they care what the rest of us think? No-one in Britain voted for a ConDem austerity coalition.

No-one in Italy voted for Monti as prime minister. But if governments don't do as the bankers tell them, Goldman Sachs and the EU can just replace them with 'technocrats'.

This also means relentless attacks on democratic workers' rights across the EU. Before being crowned Italian prime minister last year, Sr Monti was commissioned by the European Commission to draw up Regulations on EU employment and trade union rights.

His 'Monti 2' Regulations were published in March this year and put trade union rights in Europe back by over 100 years.

The EU has simply regulated into law anti-trade union decisions made by EU judges - in a court with no jury - to ban strikes where they interfere with cross-border trade. This is an EU charter for strike breaking and social dumping.

The response of trade unionists should be that democracy was always at the heart of our movement. In July we will celebrate the trade union roots of democracy at the Durham Miners Gala and the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival. I look forward to seeing you there.

Alex Gordon

LEGAL

DEALING WITH ACOUSTIC SHOCKS

Keith Spicer, national co-ordinator of occupational deafness at Thompsons Solicitors, warns that employers are doing too little to protect workers' hearing from injury

In the last few years there has been an increase in incidents where employees have suffered hearing damage after being exposed to acoustic shocks at work while using telephones. Little is being done to protect employees from injury.

Thompsons recently recovered substantial compensation for a telephone advisor who suffered damage to the hearing in their left ear when the phone gave off a very high feedback-type noise.

Colleagues had previously suffered a similar experience and completed incident forms, but nothing was done by their employer.

The term acoustic shock is broadly defined by the HSE as "incidents involving exposure of short duration, high frequency, high intensity sounds through a telephone head set".

RMT members who use telephone headsets at work should be alert to such incidents and report them to their health and safety reps.

In most cases the length and noise exposure from an acoustic shock will not be sufficient to cause noise induced deafness. The sound may only last a few seconds, or the exposure stops as soon as the employee removes the ear piece. However, temporary deafness, tinnitus, pain or numbness around the ear, head and neck, and sensitivity to certain sound frequencies (known as

hyperacusis) are recognised symptoms caused by a acoustic shock:

Experts say that sudden acoustic sounds are random occurrences but arise from three possible causes:

- An electrical event such as lightning or a fault on the telephone system.
- A fault in the call centre or office equipment, or with the transmitting or receiving equipment.
- A high level noise produced by a malicious caller such as a whistle, or siren or an accidental noise such as a child screaming near the phone or a fire or burglar alarm being set off near the phone.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The Department and Trade and Industry issued recommendations in 1989 that sound to headsets be limited by acoustic limiters to a maximum of 118 decibels. These limiters were introduced in 1991 by major manufacturers of telephone equipment.

The legislation which protects employees is the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (to carry out risk assessments), the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

Under the noise at work

regulations:

- The maximum personal daily noise exposure, averaged over an eight hour day – called the 1st action level – is 80 decibels.
- The maximum of the 2nd action level daily exposure is 85 decibels.
- The maximum Peak sound level – a single exposure to sound – is 135 (1st action) and 137 (2nd action) decibels.

The first action limit requires the employer to carry out a risk assessment to get an indication of whether there is a risk to the health of employees, to place them under a health surveillance scheme and carry out hearing tests. They must also provide information, instruction and training about the risks from noise exposure and make hearing protection available to those that request it.

The second action level requires employers to reduce the noise level to the lowest possible that is practical to do, to make the work area a noise protection zone and supply hearing protection.

The maximum peak level requires employers to comply with the requirements set out for levels one and two. If the Peak levels are exceeded then the employer may be in breach of the regulations.

However, the 2005 regulations do not mention call-centre workers or refer to acoustic shock or the processes that produce it.

Currently, if limiters are fitted then it is unlikely that an employer will be in breach of the noise at work regulations.

In October 2004 the HSE issued a revised guidance note

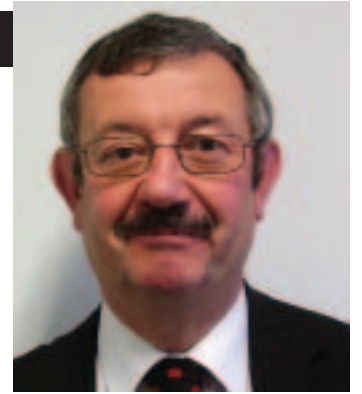
for employers on acoustic shock. The organisation's initial thoughts were that "Acoustic Shock Syndrome" with the latest designs of limiters could not cause hearing damage and although the latest guidance appears to accept this is not the case, its only advice to employers is to implement a traceable recording system of incidents and to retain the data set out in the guidance note.

The HSE continues to study research from other countries and has still not sought to change the relevant legislation to make reference to acoustic shock injuries to workers using telephone headsets, to reduce the Peak level to 100 decibels or to require all telephone equipment to have acoustic limiters limiting the maximum sound to 100 decibels. This is the safest maximum level for preventing acoustic shock.

Instead, the HSE says that, in general, call handlers' daily personal noise exposure is unlikely to exceed the 80 dB lower exposure limit, provided good practice in the management of noise risks is followed.

Clearly what constitutes "good practice" is open to interpretation because the guidance is so vague. This means that succeeding in a claim for compensation caused by acoustic shock relies on the victim being able to prove that the employer was in breach of the relevant regulations.

Unless the alleged faulty equipment is retained and tested, and unless records are kept of all incidents by union health and safety reps, pursuing a claim will be very difficult.



RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





LEARNING AT NETWORK RAIL

Over 50 RMT members have been attending adult numeracy or literacy courses as part of a pilot scheme running with Network Rail.

The scheme has been running for three months and was organised across three locations: Doncaster, Liverpool and Bristol. After putting in the work required the participants on the courses are now reaping the rewards having gained a Level 2 qualification in their chosen subject.

A Level two qualification is equivalent to GCSE A*-C and for a lot of members this has meant returning to the classroom for the first time since school, and gaining the qualifications they missed out on.

Bristol signaller Harvey Brant said: "It's a long time since I've been in a classroom and I was very nervous about going back in there, but it is a much different atmosphere to my previous experiences of classrooms and throughout the course I have grown in confidence. I'll definitely be recommending it."

Each member followed a learning plan tailor-made for them. They were put forward for the Level Two exam when their tutor felt they had succeeded in building on their existing skills in reading, writing or maths and were ready for the test.

Bristol union learning rep Gary Abbott said that he was proud of every one of the members that has completed the courses here in Bristol.

"It has been a huge achievement for each one of

them and I am already seeing how it has affected their confidence for the better," he said.

The most important element of the pilot scheme is that it was union-led. The local ULRs in each area played a key role in promoting the courses and encouraging members to take part.

ULRs are able confidentially to broach the sometimes sensitive issue of literacy and numeracy with their peers and promote the benefits in a way that management can't, or are not inclined to.

RMT Education Officer Andy Gilchrist said that ULRs were able to talk to people in confidence without it going any further.

Another successful student Peter Rygol said: "We are all part of the union, we trust our union."

"If a manager asked you to go on a course you'd do it anyway but you've got a lot more faith in it being organised by the union," he said.

As part of the pilot scheme, those who completed courses

have been paid by Network Rail for the time they committed to gaining their qualification.

Although this was undoubtedly an initial incentive to anyone signing up, for many this was quickly exceeded by the benefits of up skilling in English or maths.

Adam Potts from Liverpool said: "The initial £500 payment was a great incentive but after doing the course myself I feel that the benefits and lifelong skills that I've learnt far outweigh the initial monetary incentive".

One key benefit for these members is they have now gained a qualification that is based on national standards so everyone can see what they have achieved and are capable of.

The success of the pilot scheme has proved that there is demand for literacy and numeracy training among Network Rail employees and that they are willing to put in the work to achieve a qualification.

RMT senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that

these were only the first 50 or so members to benefit from gaining a qualification.

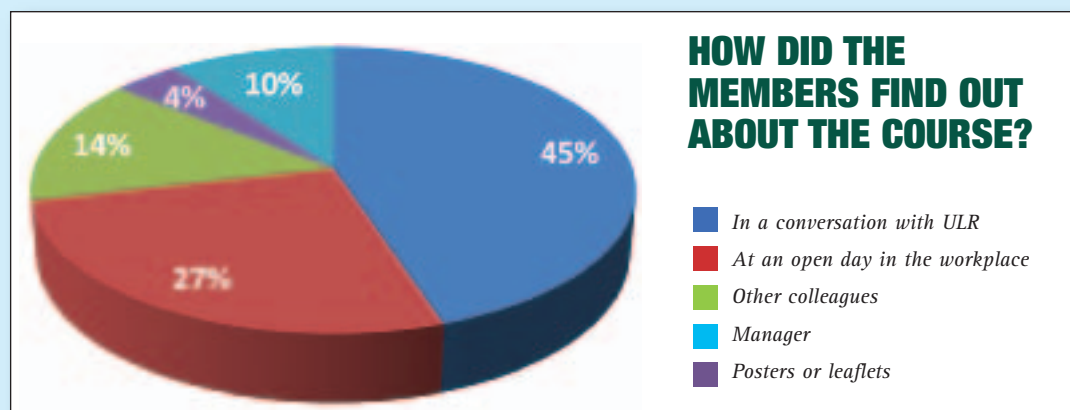
"This has been a boost to their confidence and helped towards fulfilling their potential.

"We will now look to Network Rail to roll out this highly successful scheme across the country so that any member wanting to improve their skills will be able to do so," he said.

Anyone can take a Skills for Life qualification if they are over 16, have left compulsory full-time education and do not have an up-to-date Level 2 English or maths qualification (such as a GCSE). Other learning initiatives are taking place within companies across the country and RMT union learning reps are able to give more information on what running in your workplace or area.

Only people you choose to tell will know that you have discussed or taken up training.

To find out who your local ULR is please contact Lindsay Rutland at RMT Learning on 020 7529 8820 or email l.rutland@rmt.org.uk



Letters...

FACEBOOK PAGE

Dear editor,

I started a Facebook page recently for all RMT branches to communicate with each other, called 'RMT Page for all Branches Nationwide', and it has really taken off with 223 members and counting thus far. Please would you look it up and give it some publicity in the next RMT magazine as we have a real opportunity to utilise this as a viable means of communication and encouraging people. This is an active page with many members from all over the UK wanting to achieve the same goal and your help would be appreciated.

Yours Sincerely, Phil Jones
RMT Company Council Representative

NO 'SNAIL MAIL'

Dear editor,

I would like to take exception to the use of the phrase 'snail-mail' used in the information box on page 17 of the April newsletter. Is this a slight on our hard working postmen or the postal system in general?

My father was a postman who retired eight years ago after 35 years' service. He was also a proud member of the Communication Workers' Union.

The majority of failures in today's post office lie in its modern (mis)management and not in its hard working posties. It is also a reflection on modern life whereby people are no longer prepared to wait a day or two for a letter to arrive, they expect it now. So please don't demean other workers in RMT publications, leave that to the gutter press.

Yours Sincerely, Gary Churchward,
Exeter guard

PEOPLE'S PLEDGE THANK YOU

Dear editor,

On behalf of all of us at the People's Pledge campaign, I should like to thank Bob Crow, RMT and the No2EU campaign for helping us to achieve such a stunning result in our recent EU referendum campaign in Thurrock, Essex.

Voters in Thurrock were the first in the country to be given the opportunity of voting as to whether they wanted a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. The results below demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of voters do want a referendum. In addition, the voting figures in a constituency with traditionally one of the lowest turn-out records in the country, demonstrates the genuine appeal of our campaign. It also shows that when people are given the opportunity to vote about issues they care about, they do so - and in large numbers.

Numbers voting agree: 13,111 (89.9%)

Numbers voting disagree: 1,479 (10.1%)

Ballots cast: 14,590

Turn out: 30.39%

Over ten thousand Thurrock voters also signed the pledge, further increasing the pressure on the sitting Tory MP and her Labour challenger. So, thank you for taking the time out to speak at the No2EU meeting in Thurrock, and for your own personal and continuing support for the pledge.

The People's Pledge is planning the next stage of the campaign to take place concurrently in three constituencies which we hope will include a new People's Pledge trade union section. Clearly there are hundreds of thousands of trades unionists up and down the country, who believe as RMT does, that Britain should have a referendum on EU membership.

Yours fraternally, Mark Seddon,
People's Pledge spokesman

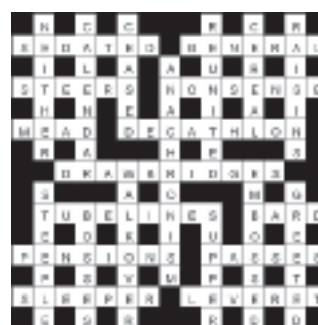
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EXETER 2 BRANCH NOMINATES PAT SIKORSKI FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	LEICESTER & RUTLAND BRANCH NOMINATES PAT SIKORSKI FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DOUGLAS SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATES PAT SIKORSKI FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	ANDOVER & SALISBURY RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES PAT SIKORSKI FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
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ASHFORD BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EASTLEIGH BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	FINSBURY PARK BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASST GENERAL SECRETARY	KINGS CROSS NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	ORPINGTON BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
CAMDEN BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EAST HAM BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	GLASGOW 1 AND 2 BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	LU FLEET BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	PADDINGTON BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
DARTFORD AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EAST LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	GLASGOW 5 NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	MARCH AND DISTRICT LONDON NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
DEPTFORD BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EAST SUSSEX COAST WAY NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	HAMMERSMITH AND CITY BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	MORDEN AND OVAL BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	STRATFORD BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR ASST GENERAL SECRETARY

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 78. Set by Elk

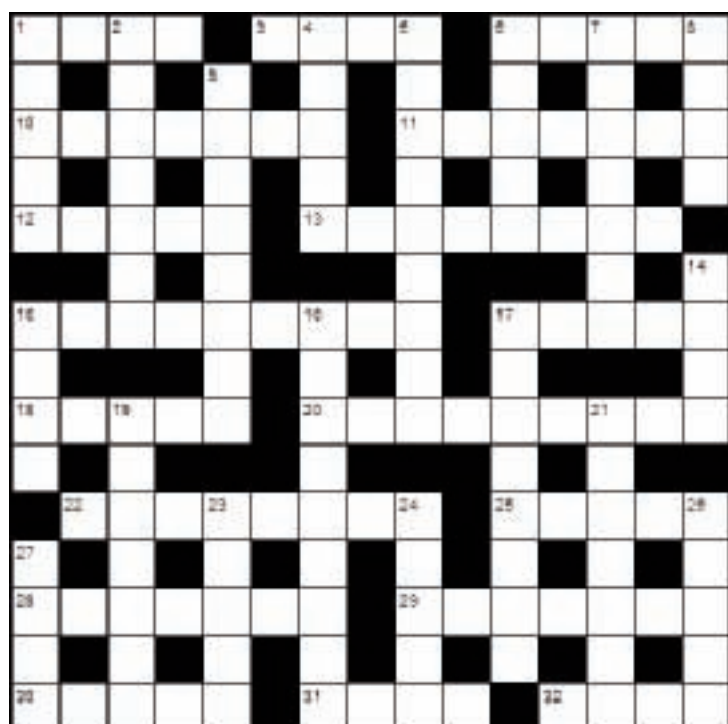


No. 77 solution...

The winner of prize crossword no. 77 is Scott Fowler, Fleetword, Lancs.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by June 28 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- Socialist island 90 miles from USA (4)
- Royal overthrown by the Russian Revolution (4)
- Beautiful noise? (5)
- Underwriter (7)
- Post by plane (7)
- Jimmy, 1983-2001 (5)
- Sidney, 1975-1983 (8)
- Soviet space traveller (9)
- Byes, wides, no-balls, collectively (5)
- (Semi)aquatic fish-eating mammal (5)
- Sam, 1986-1990 (9)
- Potty - or eaten with cheese (8)
- Pointed projectile propelled by bow (5)
- European goat-antelope, whose hide is used for polishing (7)
- Unpleasant-looking (building) (7)
- Wear away (5)
- US university or lock manufacturer (4)
- Root vegetable cultivated for sucrose (4)

DOWN

- Immature bird (5)
- Ticket to ride (for pensioners?) (3,4)
- Propeller (5)
- Reflective of how things are (rather than abstract) (9)
- Walk in step (5)
- Small, golden-brown member of the onion family (7)
- Baby bovine (4)
- Entrance flush with floor or ceiling (4-4)
- Cook in oven (4)
- Bob, 2002-present (4)
- Without purpose (9)
- Schooled (8)
- Twister (7)
- Singing to recorded backing track (7)
- Routine (and boring?) task (5)
- Odour (or the sense that detects one) (5)
- Cereal crop (5)
- Skin condition (4)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

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

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

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

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

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

money.

The bonus will be added to your savings if you complete all of your regular payments. Last 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			/		/						
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RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

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

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

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



A FUTURE THAT WORKS!



October 20, 2012

**Mass demonstration against
austerity in London**

The TUC is organising a mass demonstration against austerity in London on Saturday 20 October 2012. A march through central London will culminate in a rally in Hyde Park.

